



Use Week of:

Unit 15 • Session 5

Judah Taken Captive

BIBLE PASSAGE:

2 Chronicles 36

STORY POINT:

Judah ignored God's prophets and
was captured.

KEY PASSAGE:

2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How did God plan to fix what sin
broke? Before He created the world,
God planned to send the Messiah
to save sinners.

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LEADER Bible Study

Warnings had come from the prophets for decades. God patiently waited for His people to turn from their sin. The Northern Kingdom of Israel had fallen to Assyria, and the prophet Jeremiah spared few details when he warned Judah what would happen if they did not turn from their evil ways. (See Jer. 25:1-14.)

But the people of Judah did not change their ways. The kingdom had been declining for years, despite King Hezekiah's—and later, Josiah's—efforts to prompt nationwide repentance. When King Josiah died, the people went back to their old ways, worshipping idols and disobeying the Lord.

The time of judgment had come. God used Nebuchadnezzar—the king of Babylon—to deport the people from Judah to Babylon where they would live in exile for 70 years. Nebuchadnezzar went to Judah when Jehoiakim was king. He put Jehoiakim in chains and took him to Babylon. Jehoiachin became king, and Nebuchadnezzar came back for him too. Many of the people in Judah were taken, along with treasures from the Lord's temple. Nebuchadnezzar put Zedekiah on the throne in Jerusalem.

The people of Judah were unfaithful to God. Zedekiah rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and God poured out His wrath on Judah. Nebuchadnezzar showed no mercy to the people of Jerusalem. The Babylonians set fire to the Lord's temple and the king's palace. They destroyed the wall around Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar's armies carried most of the people away to Babylon as prisoners; only poor farmers were allowed to stay and work the land. The people were held captive in Babylon, serving the king for 70 years.

Yet God did not abandon His people. The prophet Jeremiah told what would happen next: “The days are coming ... when I will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah” (Jer. 30:3). God was going to save His people from captivity and raise up a new King—a forever King—from the line of David. (See Jer. 30:9.)

The BIBLE Story

Judah Taken Captive

2 Chronicles 36

The last four kings of Judah came from King Josiah's family. His three sons—Jehoahaz (jih HOH uh haz), Jehoiakim (jih HOY uh kim), and Zedekiah (ZED uh KIGH uh)—and his grandson Jehoiachin (jih HOY uh kin) each ruled as the king of

Judah for a short time.

Jehoahaz was not king for long. He did what was evil, and the king of Egypt came and made Jehoahaz a prisoner. The king stole silver and gold from Jehoahaz. Then he put Jehoahaz's brother Jehoiakim on the throne. The king of Egypt took Jehoahaz to Egypt.

When Jehoiakim was king of Judah, he too did what was evil. The king of Babylon attacked Jehoiakim, made him a prisoner, and took him to Babylon. The king of Babylon stole some of the things from the Lord's temple and put them in his own temple. When Jehoiakim was taken away, his son Jehoiachin became king of Judah.

Jehoiachin was king of Judah for just three months. He too did what was evil. The king of Babylon sent for Jehoiachin and brought him to Babylon. The king of Babylon made Jehoiachin's uncle Zedekiah king of Judah.



Like his brothers, Zedekiah did what was evil. He led the people of Judah to do evil things too. The prophet Jeremiah warned Zedekiah that God would punish him, but Zedekiah did not listen.

God was angry with the people of Judah. They sinned and did not obey God. But God loved His people. He wanted them to turn back to Him. God sent prophets to warn the people, but the people did not listen.

Finally, it was time to punish the people of Judah for their sin. God allowed the king of Babylon and his army to attack Judah. Many of the people died.

The king of Babylon took everything out of the Lord's temple and carried it back to Babylon. Then the king and his army **burned the temple. They tore down the wall around the city and burned the palaces. Anything they did not take with them was destroyed.**

All of the people who were still alive were taken back to Babylon. The king forced them to be slaves. **Everything the prophet Jeremiah had warned about happened, just like God said it would.**

Christ Connection: God was right to punish His people for their sin, but He kept His promise to provide a king through David's family. Ultimately, God punished our sin through His Son, Jesus, and made Him our King forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

• Draw pictures:

Draw four crowns—one for each king of Judah in the story—and cross them out as each king's reign comes to an end.

• Use lighting

effects: Dim the lights to portray the severity of Judah's situation.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Judah Taken Captive

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KEY PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time they received a warning. Were they aware of the consequences? Did they listen to the warning or ignore it? Why?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Judah Too” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Judah Too” on the activity page. Guide kids to color in the first letter and then every other letter to discover what happened to Judah.

SAY • What words did you discover? (*Judah was captured.*)
Wait a second. I remember hearing about the Northern Kingdom of Israel being captured. Judah was too? Let's find out what happened.

LOW PREP

- paper
- pencils
- masking tape or painter's tape (optional)

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Plane crash!

Form two teams. Consider playing boys versus girls. Instruct the teams to move to opposite sides of the room. Explain that they have just survived a plane crash and

landed on a desert island. The only things they have to survive are the objects on their side of the room. Use a tape line to divide the room, if necessary.

Provide paper and a pencil to each team. Challenge them to identify and list on their paper 10 things from their side of the room that would be beneficial to their survival. Prompt them to rank the items based on necessity. After several minutes, allow each team to share its list.

SAY • Surviving on a desert island would be hard! You all had good ideas for making the best of the resources you had. Imagine being in a new land, far from home. Would you survive? We'll find out how God's people from Judah ended up so far from home.

OPTION 2: Hard and soft experiment

Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth for easy cleanup. Invite kids to help you mix 1½ cups cornstarch and 1 cup water in a large bowl. Mix the ingredients using a spoon or your hands (or allow a kid to volunteer to mix).

Demonstrate how, when handled gently, the mixture is soft and flows like a liquid. If you push against the surface with force (hit with a spoon), it seems hard like a solid. Allow kids who touched the mixture to wash their hands with soap and water.

SAY • This mixture—sometimes called *oobleck*—acts hard like a solid and soft like a liquid. Did you know that the Bible describes our hearts as being soft or hard? Our hearts can be soft and open to God or hard and against Him. In today's Bible story, we will hear what happened when the people of Judah had hard hearts.

Option: If your classroom is short on supplies, allow kids to list items not found in the room.

- 1½ cups cornstarch
- 1 cup water
- mixing bowl
- spoon
- plastic tablecloth (optional)

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

- leader attire
- shoulder bag
- envelopes
- Bible

[Leader enters wearing dark pants, a light blue shirt, and a hat. He or she is carrying a bag across the shoulder that contains envelopes and a Bible.]

LEADER • Hey there! Beautiful day today, isn't it? I'm [*your name*], mail carrier in training. Did you know that the average mail carrier delivers more than 1,500 pieces of mail every day? [*Gesture to your bag.*] No wonder this bag is so heavy! As much as I think I will enjoy being a mail carrier, I've been a little surprised by some of the things I've been learning in training. Our training instructors showed us yesterday how to use our mail bag as a defense against dogs! Mail carriers also face dangerous weather conditions like extreme heat or icy sidewalks. Who knew delivering mail could be so dangerous?

[Retrieve a Bible from the bag.] Long ago, when God's people were living in the Southern Kingdom

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

of Judah, they faced danger too. Enemy nations threatened Judah and, as you'll hear in the Bible story I want to share with you today, God even used Judah's enemies as part of His plan.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • When we hear a story from the Bible, we need to remember that the story is part of the bigger story God tells us through the Bible—the story of God's plan to rescue sinners. Keep our big picture in mind when you listen to today's story. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.***

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • God had been so patient with His people. He sent prophets to tell them to turn back to God and to warn them about what would happen if they did not. But the people did not listen to the prophets.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel had been destroyed, and then—180 years after Israel's fall—God allowed Judah to be taken captive. God loved His people too much to let them continue in their sin. Let's find out what happened.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Chronicles 36. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Judah Taken Captive."

LEADER • Jehohaz, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Jehoiachin

• Bibles
• "Judah Taken Captive" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster
• Story Point Poster

were the last four kings of Judah. They all did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. The people of **Judah ignored God's prophets and was captured.**

God allowed Nebuchadnezzar (NEB yoo kad NEZ uhr), the king of Babylon, to attack Judah. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and burned the temple to the ground. Any people who had not been killed were taken back to Babylon as slaves. This all happened in 597 B.C. and was a major event in the history of the Israelites.

When God's people were taken away to Babylon, they might have thought their lives were over—that the story of God's people was over. They had a chance to be God's special people and they had blown it, right?

Well, God did not give up on His people. Yes, they had been unfaithful. But God is always faithful. He had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "Look, the days are coming when I will restore the fortunes of my people. I will restore them to the land I gave to their ancestors and they will possess it" (Jer. 30:3).

Christ connection

LEADER • God was right to punish His people for their sin, but their story wasn't over. God kept His promise to provide a king through David's family.

How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners. Ultimately, God punished our sin through His Son, Jesus, and made Him our King forever.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 197 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 5” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how they should react to failing at something. Guide them to discuss the hope we have in Jesus, who has secured our victory over sin and death.

• “Unit 15, Session 5”
questions from kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Hold up a football and a Bible. Ask for volunteers to tell what they remember about the football team and the Christian coaches in Baltimore. Ask the kids to explain in their own words what sports ministry is.

• football
• Bible

LEADER • Football is the way these coaches make friends with teenagers so that they can tell them about Jesus. But it doesn't have to be football or any sport. God can use whatever you enjoy doing to make Himself known.

You make friends on your teams or in your classes or in your neighborhoods, and then you have the opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

Take time to pray that your kids will tell their friends the good news about Jesus.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Chronicles 7:14.

• Key Passage Poster
• “I Will Hear” song

LEADER • This key passage shows us God's heart for His people. He wants us to turn from our sin and turn to Him. The Lord hears, forgives, and heals. Sing this key passage song with me to remember this important truth.

Lead boys and girls in singing “I Will Hear.”

• "Once and For All"
song

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Proverbs 3:11-12.

LEADER • We heard in today's story that **Judah ignored God's prophets and was captured.** God was right to punish His people because they sinned. The Bible says that God corrects His people and disciplines them because He loves them. God kept His promise to provide a king through David's family. Ultimately, God punished our sin through His Son, Jesus, and made Him our King forever. Let's sing.

Sing together "Once and For All."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord, You tell us in Your Word that our sin separates us from You. Thank You for sending Jesus and for forgiving us of our sin. Give us power through Your Spirit to obey You. We are thankful for Your love for us. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- pencils
- numbered cube

Guide kids to sit around a table. Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading 2 Chronicles 7:14 aloud together. Then distribute paper and pencils. Give one kid a numbered cube. Explain that when you say “go,” kids will begin writing the key passage on their papers.

The player with the cube will roll the cube until he rolls a 4. He shouts “Pass!” and passes the cube to the player on his right. Other players pass their papers to the right and pick up writing where the previous player left off. Continue rolling and passing. The first player to finish writing the passage and reference on the paper in front of him wins.

SAY • God's people in Judah became captives in the land of Babylon, but that was not the end of their story. God's plan was not to leave them under their enemies. ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.***

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- “Kings of Israel and Judah” printable

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 36. Direct kids' attention to the lists of

kings from the “Kings of Israel and Judah” printable.

SAY • Israel had been ruled by only bad kings, and the Northern Kingdom was destroyed. Judah was ruled by a few good kings, but mostly bad kings. Josiah was a good king, but the last four kings were bad: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah.

Judah ignored God’s prophets and was captured.

[Remove the arrow indicating a reigning king.]

Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Chronicles 36:15-16.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did God allow the Babylonians to capture Judah? Did God give up on His people? *Remind kids that God promised to bring a Messiah into the world through His people, and God always keeps His promises. Explain that the prophet Isaiah spoke about a remnant of God’s people that would return to God, and like a small plant growing out of a tree stump, a righteous King would rise up and rule over God’s people.*
(Option: Choose a kid to read Isa. 10:33–11:1.)
2. How are we like the people of Judah? *Lead kids to discuss that like the people of Judah, we deserve to be punished for our sin. But God loved us and sent His Son to take the punishment we deserve. Jesus never sinned. He died on the cross in our place, and He is alive!*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 3:21-24.)
3. Can anyone’s sin be too much for God to forgive? *Point out that for generations, God’s people had rebelled against Him. They broke His laws and worshiped false gods. But when Jesus died on the cross, He died for all our sins—past, present, and future. No sin is beyond Jesus’ forgiveness for everyone who trusts in Him.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:8-11.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



- “Missions Event Planning Guide” printable
- pencils
- boxes (optional)
- poster board (optional)
- construction paper (optional)
- markers

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

OPTION 1: Sports ministry project

Distribute copies of the “Missions Event Planning Guide” to kids. Explain that the guide will help them think about things they can do when planning a missions event. Review some of the topics on the guide.

SAY • Since we’ve been learning about sports ministry, we can plan a missions project to collect sports equipment to give to kids who might not have any. When we help others, even by giving them baseball gloves or footballs, we can show the love of Jesus. We can tell them that God has a plan for them and wants to give them a new life.

Lead kids through each step of the planning guide, helping them to think about where to collect supplies, how to decorate collection boxes, where to put the posters, and the kinds of equipment they will ask church or community members to donate. As time allows, begin to decorate the posters and boxes. This project can continue for several weeks. Consider donating the supplies to an inner-city ministry, school, or family shelter.

LOW PREP

- slips of paper
- marker

Tip: Reduce or increase the number of kings to capture based on the size of your group.

OPTION 2: Capture a king

Prepare a slip of paper for each kid. On up to half of the papers, draw a small crown. Leave the rest blank. Form two teams and instruct them to sit across from each other.

Distribute the slips of paper, instructing kids to look at their papers but to not let anyone else see what is on their paper. Explain that kids with a crown on their papers are kings. Players from each team will take turns calling the names of players on the opposite team. If a player called is a king, that player sits behind the team who called her.

If a player called has no crown, play passes to the other team. The first team to capture four kings is the winner.

SAY • The kings in today's Bible story did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. God sent prophets to warn the people, but **Judah ignored God's prophets and was captured.** God sent Judah into captivity because of their sin, but He promised to gather them back together one day and give them new hearts and power to obey Him. [See Ezek. 11:14-21.] ***How did God plan to fix what sin broke? Before He created the world, God planned to send the Messiah to save sinners.*** Ultimately, God punished our sin through His Son, Jesus, and made Him our King forever.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus. Pray that God would soften kids' hearts to know and love Him.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "The Last Kings" on the activity page. Kids should look up the Scripture references to fill in the chart.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "The Last Kings"
activity page,
1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.