

Questions / Answers

1. Why did God punish the people of Israel?
Because they were wicked and disobeyed God's laws.
2. How were the people of Israel punished?
The Assyrians conquered them and took them away as captives.
3. How long did the Kingdom of Judah exist after Israel was conquered?
Over 100 years.
4. Who was the last king of Judah?
Zedekiah.
5. Why did God punish the Kingdom of Judah?
Because they were wicked and disobeyed God's laws.
6. How were the people of Judah punished?
The Babylonians conquered them and took them away as captives.
7. What promise had God made to David about his kingdom?
His kingdom would last for ever. One of his sons would always be king.
8. How would God keep this promise now that the kingdom was destroyed—the people were taken away and there was no king?
God overturned the kingdom UNTIL a righteous man—Jesus—came. God will give the crown to him and he will rule for ever.
9. What promise of hope did God give the people before their captivity?
After 70 years they would be able to return to their land again.
10. The Jews returned but had no king. Which empires ruled over them?
The Persian Empire, the Greek Empire and the Roman Empire.

Memory verses

Ezekiel 21:25—27 Jeremiah 29:10

Discussion

Read 2 Samuel 7:13—16; Ezekiel 21:25—27 and Luke 1:30—33. Discuss the way in which God will keep His promises to David although the wickedness of men seemed to spoil his plans.

Writing

Read Jeremiah 39:1—14. Describe the capture of Jerusalem. How long was the siege? What happened to King Zedekiah? What happened to Jeremiah?

CBM Senior Lessons



Lesson 27 Captivity and return

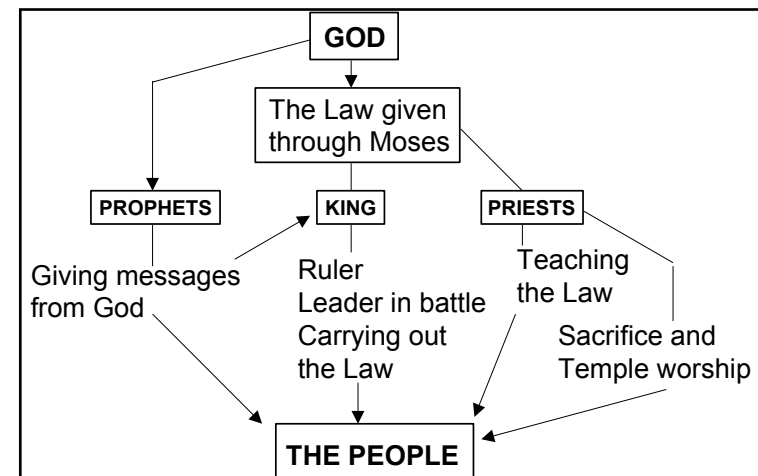
READING 2 Kings 17:5—14; 24:17—20; 25:1—10; Ezekiel 21:25—27

LESSON

God loved the people of Judah and Israel. They were His own special people. God promised that He would care for them and bless them in their land if they loved and obeyed Him. But if they disobeyed Him and worshipped idols, then He would allow their enemies to destroy them and take them as captives out of their land.

God did everything He could to help the people to love and obey Him. He gave them a Law so that they knew how to obey Him. He gave them kings, to lead them and to rule by God's laws. He gave them priests to teach them God's laws and to help them to worship Him in the Temple. God also sent prophets to bring His messages to the king and to the people.

All the kings of northern Kingdom of Israel were wicked. They led their people to worship idols and to disobey God. God was very patient with the people of Israel. He waited about 200 years for them to repent and turn back to Him. He sent prophets to warn the people that He would punish them if they did not repent. But they did not listen to God. So God punished them and they were taken as captives out of their land.



A great and powerful nation called Assyria made an empire by conquering all the surrounding nations. The King of Assyria attacked and conquered the kingdom of Israel. He took the people away from the land God had given them. They were taken away as slaves and captives to live in Assyria. The people were punished because they disobeyed God and broke the promise they had made to Him. God had warned them that they would be taken captive if they did not obey Him and God always keeps His promises.

The Kingdom of Judah in the south had some good kings. They did love and obey God some of the time. The people of Judah stayed in their own land for over 100 years after Israel were taken captive. But they also had many wicked kings. God sent prophets to try to turn the people back to Him. But they would not listen. Eventually the people of Judah became so wicked that God punished them. Zedekiah was the last King of Judah. He was a very weak king. God sent Jeremiah the prophet to tell Zedekiah and the people to turn back to God and obey Him. But Zedekiah and the people did not listen.

The Assyrian Empire was defeated by the king of Babylon. The Babylonians became an even greater and more powerful empire than the Assyrians. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, attacked the Kingdom of Judah. He captured Jerusalem. He broke down the walls and burnt down the temple and the city. Nebuchadnezzar took King Zedekiah and the people of Judah as slaves and captives to live in Babylon.



God had promised David that his kingdom would last for ever. God promised that one of David's descendants would always rule over the Kingdom. But the kingdom was destroyed. There was no king left. The people were taken as captives to other lands. Had God's purpose and His promises failed? No! God always keeps His promises. God's people failed to keep their covenant (promises) with God. But God provided another way to keep His promises.

God sent the prophet Ezekiel with a message to Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. We read this message in Ezekiel 21:25 - 27. God told Zedekiah that the wickedness of Judah was so great that God would take the crown away from the kings of Judah. God would overturn the kingdom which He had established. The kingdom would not exist again UNTIL a righteous man came who would be the right man to rule God's people. Then God will give the crown to that righteous man. We see in this prophecy the wonderful way in which God keeps His promises, even when men spoil His plans.

The kingdom would not be destroyed for ever. God would wait until the time when a righteous king would come. Jesus Christ is that righteous man. He lived a perfect life. He is a descendant of David, the King of Israel. God is waiting to fulfil His promises. Jesus will soon come to be king over all the world for ever. God will give the crown to Him. Then God's promises will be fulfilled.

Before the people of Judah were taken captive, God sent prophets with a promise of hope. The prophets said that God would bring them back to their own land. God said that the people would be captives in Babylon for 70 years. Then God would bring them back to the land He had promised them. They would rebuild Jerusalem and the temple.

After 70 years the Babylonian empire was attacked and conquered by the Medes and Persians. The king of the Persians was called Cyrus. Cyrus made a law that the captives could go back to their own land and rebuild their temple. 70 years after King Nebuchadnezzar took the people of Judah captive many of the people went back to the land of Israel. The people rebuilt the temple and the walls of Jerusalem. God's promise was fulfilled exactly.

God allowed His people to go back to their own land. But they were never a kingdom again. God had taken away the crown and there was no king. The Israelites, or Jews as they were then called, lived in their land for about 500 years. They were always ruled over by one of the great empires. They had no king of their own. First the Persian Empire, then the Greek Empire and finally the Roman Empire ruled over them. The Jews were waiting for the promised King of David's descendants who would come to set them free from the Roman rule.