



11

God Judges Judah

Key Theme

- God judges sin.

Key Passages

- 2 Chronicles 36:11–12, 36:17–20

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how God judged Judah's sin.
- Describe how the Babylonians treated the Israelites.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will use the signs posted on the walls to complete their Memory Verse Review Sheets. They will match the numbers on their sheets with the numbers on the signs and fill in the missing words. They will then read and/or recite the verse to the class or to each other.



Activity 1: God Judges Judah Class Notes

Students will fill out the God Judges Judah Class Notes as you study the lesson. Pass out the class notes before you begin to teach.



Studying God's Word

For hundreds of years God warned Judah through His prophets and called the people to repent. They didn't turn from evil, so God used Babylon to destroy Judah. The Babylonians killed most of the people, destroyed the Temple of God, and took survivors to Babylon as slaves.



Activity 2: God Judges Judah Review

Students will play a review game to answer questions about today's lesson.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO



COME ON IN

- Print the Memory Verse Review Sheets from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Print the eight Memory Verse Review Signs from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Tape the Memory Verse Review Signs to the walls around the room.



GOD JUDGES JUDAH CLASS NOTES

- Print one God Judges Judah Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Babylon and Judah Map from the Resource DVD-ROM.



GOD JUDGES JUDAH REVIEW

- Print and cut out the God Judges Judah Review Question Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM. Keep the answer key for your use.
- Put them in a small bag or other container.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Review Sheet for each student
- Eight Memory Verse Review Signs
- Masking tape

- God Judges Judah Class Notes
- God Judges Judah Class Notes Answer Key for your use
- Pencils

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Babylon and Judah Map

- God Judges Judah Review Question Strips in small bag or container
- God Judges Judah Review Answer Key
- Small bag or container
- Music player



Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

God hates sin. We can have no doubt about that after looking at the calls of the prophets for Israel and Judah to repent. As we walk through biblical history, we have already seen God's judgment on Israel—they were wiped out by the Assyrians back in 721 BC. Now we look to the fall of Judah, beginning in 607 BC. Jeremiah was one of the last prophets to call Judah to repent, but they continued to rebel against God—and now it was their turn to face judgment. The fall of Judah and Jerusalem to the south was very similar to the fall of Israel and Samaria to the north. Despite numerous warnings from prophets over many centuries, the kings and people continually sought to worship false gods (with a few exceptions). Through the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah, God had finally fixed a day of judgment for Judah. The lion from the north (Jeremiah 4:5–8), Babylon, was about to attack and carry away the rest of the Jewish nation.

Just as God used Assyria to deliver judgment to His people in Israel about 125 years earlier, He was about to send Babylon to deliver judgment to Judah. Babylon's king at this time was Nebuchadnezzar. This wicked king was the one God chose to bring His judgment to Judah.

Nebuchadnezzar was the son of the previous Babylonian king, Nabopolassar. God used King Nabopolassar to destroy and conquer the Assyrians in 626 BC. This was after the Assyrians had destroyed the Northern nation of Israel. God would now use Babylon again—this time to bring judgment on Judah.

Historically, one strategy for gaining complete power over an enemy was to remove most of the conquered nation to other lands. If you remember from the lesson on the fall of Israel, this was what the Assyrians did to the Jews in the Northern nation of Israel. In our account today, we will see that the Babylonians were to do the same. In order to completely weaken the nation of Judah, they would move the people out and settle them in other nations.

The destruction of Judah by Babylon occurred over three phases. The city of Jerusalem and the Temple were not totally destroyed until the third phase.

During the first phase (607 BC), Nebuchadnezzar moved King Jehoiakim and many of the princes and nobles out of Judah as described in Daniel 1:1–4. His goal was to train them to be good Babylonians and to

put them into service in his court. In the second phase (599 BC), Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiachin captive and moved the king and thousands of others to Babylon (Jeremiah 52:28; 2 Kings 24:10–16). These were devastating events for the people of Judah. But the worst was yet to come.

Now came phase three. Imagine yourself as one of the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem in 588 BC. Nebuchadnezzar had been harassing your nation for almost 20 years, and now his army was camped around the city again! Would you survive this time? Would you be taken away this time? Would you be separated from your family? Or worse yet, would you have to watch them die at the hands of the Babylonians? All of this and more did occur when Babylon finally came to put an end to Judah.

A clear picture of the devastation caused by this judgment is found in 2 Chronicles 36:15–21. Because the people had mocked God, His warnings, and His messengers, because they had despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, the wrath of the Lord came against them. The Babylonians, here called the Chaldeans, came into Jerusalem. They killed the young men and had no compassion on the men, women, aged, or weak. All the articles from the house of God were taken to Babylon. They burned the house of God, burned the palaces, destroyed all the precious possessions, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem. And those citizens of Jerusalem who were not killed during this rampage were moved far away to Babylon and became servants there.

But in spite of the devastation of Judah and Israel, all was not lost! God already had a plan to restore Jerusalem, to rebuild the Temple, and to continue the line of Abraham through King David and on to the coming Messiah.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

As mentioned earlier, the history of the final fall of Judah and Jerusalem is a bit complex, coming in three phases over 19 years and involving four different kings of Judah. The first phase occurred after the good King Josiah (who was the sixteenth ruler in the Southern Kingdom) died. His son Jehoahaz ruled for only three months (2 Kings 23:30–32). Then, Pharaoh Necho from Egypt captured him and set another son of Josiah, Jehoiakim, over Judah, making him pay tribute to Egypt (2 Kings 23:33–35). As had been the pattern, these two sons of Josiah did what was evil in the sight

of the Lord. Judah was beginning to crumble, and the first phase of her destruction was about to begin.

The Babylonian leader Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians and took control of all of Egypt's lands, including Judah (2 Kings 24:7). So, for the first three years of his reign, Jehoiakim was subject to Egypt, but for the last eight he was subject to Babylon (2 Kings 23:36–24:4). In 607 BC, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem and defeated Jehoiakim, who had rebelled against him (2 Kings 24:1–2). The Babylonians carried away some of the articles of the Temple and many of the young nobles, including Daniel (Daniel 1:1–4). This began the 70 years of captivity that Jeremiah had prophesied (Jeremiah 25:11).

The second phase of the captivity happened about seven years later. Nebuchadnezzar had restored Jehoiakim to the throne in Jerusalem, but he later died and his body was thrown outside the gates of the city (Jeremiah 22:18–19). Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin (also called Jeconiah or Coniah) reigned for three months after his father's death. In 599 BC, the Babylonians returned and carried away more than 3,000 Jews, including Jehoiachin, along with all of the articles of the Temple (2 Kings 24:10–16; Jeremiah 52:28). The brother of Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, was set up as the puppet king under the control of Nebuchadnezzar. His reign extended from 599 until 588.

588 BC marked the third phase of Judah's captivity. Nebuchadnezzar returned and utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple and the people were either killed, taken away into captivity, or left to tend the land for the remainder of the 70 years (2 Kings 25:8–21;

2 Chronicles 36:15–21). It would be another 49 years before Cyrus would allow the captives to begin returning to rebuild Jerusalem. So the 70 years of captivity, which will be discussed in the next lesson, lasted from 607 BC with the first deportation by Nebuchadnezzar until 537 BC when Cyrus fulfilled the prophecies Jeremiah and Isaiah made hundreds of years prior. In an interesting parallel, the return to rebuild Jerusalem also happened in three phases . . . but we will have to save that for another lesson.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Father in heaven, I know that all Scripture is given by your inspiration, and is profitable for me. But there are times when I read my Bible and honestly wish I could change the events! I love happy endings. And the destruction of a people and the Temple is not a happy ending. But Lord, you did ordain a happy ending. Sweet Jesus. King of Kings. He is the happy ending. Thank you for the hope that you give in the darkness. You bring beauty from ashes. Even though the Temple was burned, you remembered your people and spared a remnant of the line of David who would bring forth a son we could call Savior. He would save His people from their sins. Give me grace, dear Lord, as I teach this week.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.



COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will complete the Memory Verse Review Sheet by matching the numbers on their sheets with the same numbers on the wall signs to find the missing words. They will then read and/or recite the verse to the class or to each other.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



God Judges Judah Class Notes

MATERIALS

- God Judges Judah Class Notes
- God Judges Judah Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Print the class notes for each student. Pass them out at the beginning of class.

We will complete these class notes as we study today. Don't work ahead. We'll do it together.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As we complete our class notes, we will see how the Lord used Babylon to punish Judah because the people would not stop worshipping idols, and they would not turn back to God.

► Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.



Studying God's Word

READ THE WORD

Refer to the Lesson 10 Lesson Theme Poster. God had warned the people of Judah through His prophet Jeremiah. God told them to turn back to Him, turn away from their idolatry, and praise Him alone. But they would not listen. They would not return to God. So God gave Jeremiah a message of destruction for Judah—they would finally be taken over and destroyed by the wicked nation of Babylon. We are going to read about that today. The Bible tells us what the nation of Judah was like right before God's judgment took place. I'll read that now. Listen carefully. *Read 2 Chronicles 36:11–12.*

2 Chronicles 36:11–12

EXAMINE THE WORD

Were you listening? Let's see if you can answer a few questions.

Observe the Text

- ? Who was the king of Judah during this time? *2 Chronicles 36:11. Zedekiah.*
- ? That answers #1 on your class notes. What is the answer to that? *True.*
- ? And how old was King Zedekiah when he became king? *2 Chronicles 36:11. 21 years old.*
- ? How long was he the king? *2 Chronicles 36:11. 11 Years.*
- ? Where did he rule or reign over? *2 Chronicles 36:11. Jerusalem.*

Yes. Zedekiah was the king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem—the capital of Judah. The Bible tells us he was the king for 11 years.

- ? Now let's get into King Zedekiah's behavior. How did he act toward the Lord? *Re-read 2 Chronicles 36:12, if necessary. He did evil in the sight of the Lord.*

He did evil in the sight of the Lord. Jeremiah had come to the king with warnings, yet the Bible says that the king would not humble himself to listen to God's prophet, Jeremiah.

- ? Look at #2 on your class notes. Will someone read that for us? Is that true or false? *False.*

That is false. Zedekiah was certainly not a good king.

- ? What was God's message through Jeremiah to the people of Judah? Who can read that from this Lesson Theme Poster? *Refer to Lesson 10 Lesson Theme Poster. Return, O Judah, to the Lord. Assign a reader.*

Yes. For years Jeremiah warned King Zedekiah and the people of Judah to turn away from their wicked ways and false gods. He told the king to turn

► Re-read the verses or portions of the verses as necessary to help the students hear the answers directly from the biblical text.

back to the one true God. The Bible says that King Zedekiah would not humble himself before Jeremiah. He would not listen to Jeremiah even though Jeremiah spoke the words of God!

- ? So who can read #3 on your class notes? Is that statement true or false? *True.*
- ? And someone read #4. How will you answer that one? *True.*

Discover the Truth

God sent Jeremiah to Judah to tell them to return to the Lord or they would be punished. But, the Bible tells us King Zedekiah ignored the Lord's message. The people would not listen. They continued to do what was evil in God's eyes. After all the warnings, the people would not change their ways. They would not turn back to God. They were disobedient, rebellious, and sinful toward God. And God was finally about to judge them.



READ THE WORD

God's judgment had come. But remember, God had warned the people over and over to turn back to Him. God sent His prophets to them. But the people made fun of the prophets of God and would not listen. They would not believe that God's punishment would really come to them. Finally, God became angry. The Bible tells us what God did. Listen carefully as I read 2 Chronicles 36:17–20. *Read the verses aloud slowly and dramatically, so the students understand the serious nature.*

2 Chronicles 36:17–20

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? This sounds horrible—and it was. God must punish sin, and the people were sinning! Who did the Lord bring against the people of Judah? *Re-read 2 Chronicles 36:17 if necessary. He brought the Chaldeans against them.*
Refer to the Babylon and Judah Map from the Resource DVD-ROM. The Chaldeans were also known as Babylonians. They lived in Babylon. Take a look at this map. The Babylonians were a great and powerful nation. They controlled most of the nations around Israel. They were a wicked, cruel, and vicious nation! This is who God sent to punish the people in the small nation of Judah.
- ? Look at #5 on your class notes. What word will finish that sentence? Look at the word bank on your notes. These words complete the sentences. *Destroy.*
- ? The Chaldeans, or Babylonians, were going to destroy God's people and their land. And listen again and tell me what the Chaldeans did to the people when they got to Judah? *Re-read 2 Chronicles 36:17. Killed them.*

The Chaldeans were mean! They came in and killed the young and old and the weak and the strong. It was terrible. God must punish sin. And Judah had sinned against God for a very long time.

- ? Now. Look at #6 on your class notes. How will you finish that? *Killed*. And can someone read that for us? *Assign a reader*.

Once in Judah, the Chaldeans did something with all the treasures that were in God's holy Temple. Listen to this and tell me what they did. *Re-read 2 Chronicles 36:18*.

- ? What did the Chaldeans do with the treasures? *Took all the treasures from the Temple and took them to Babylon*.

- ? After they emptied the Temple of all the treasures, what did they do to the Temple and to Jerusalem? *2 Chronicles 36:19. They burned the house of God and the city of Jerusalem*.

- ? Wow! This was very bad for Judah. Look at #7 on your class notes. Who can complete that? *Burned*. And will someone read that please? *Assign a reader*.

It sounds like everything was ruined, and all of the people died. But, some people in Judah escaped with their lives. They escaped, but they were carried off to Babylon. The Bible tells us what happened to them when they got there. Listen and you can tell me. *Re-read 2 Chronicles 36:20. They became servants in that city*.

- ? That's right. Now look at #8 on your class notes. Can someone read that? *Assign a reader*. What word will finish that sentence? *Servants*.

Discover the Truth

Wow! It is not good to make God angry! God warned the people in Judah over and over again about their sin and disobedience, but they would not listen. God must judge sin. And God sent the Chaldeans, or Babylonians, to destroy many of the people in Judah, the city of Jerusalem, and His own Temple. The people who lived through the battle were taken away from their homes out of Judah and made servants in Babylon.

- ? This is a sad but good lesson for us. Can someone read the very last line on your class notes? *Assign a reader*.

God is holy. That means He won't put up with any sin in our lives. And God is just. That means He must punish the sin because it is wrong. But God is also merciful. That means He shows His kindness. He showed His kindness for a long time as He warned the people to stop sinning. But they just would not listen, so He finally sent the Babylonians (Chaldeans) to destroy the nation and take the people to another land.





God Judges Judah Review

MATERIALS

- God Judges Judah Review Question Strips in a small bag or container
- God Judges Judah Review Question Answer Key
- Music player

INSTRUCTIONS

Print and cut the questions into strips and place them in a bag or other container. Have the students sit in a circle. This game is like hot potato, but no one will be out. As you pass the bag around, you can play music, recite the memory verse, count to a certain number, say the books of the Bible, etc. Stop the passing by stopping the music, reaching the number you are counting to, shouting stop, etc. When you stop the passing, whoever has the bag will take a question out and answer it. If the student can't read, have him bring it to you. Read it for him, and give him the opportunity to answer.

If the student does not know the answer, you can have another student help. Once a question has been asked, keep it out of the bag. Continue play until all of the questions are gone. If a student has already answered a question and the music is stopped on him, he can pass the bag to the student on his left or right.

We are going to play a review game to see what you remember from today's lesson.

Explain how to play, then play.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Great job!

God is pleased when we study His Word. God was merciful when He gave many warnings to the people of Judah. He told them judgment would come if they would not turn to Him. God loved His people and His Temple. But the people refused to listen, so God sent the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to bring His judgment. The Babylonians killed many people, destroyed the Temple, and burned the city. And those people not killed were taken out of their nation and moved to another land where they were made servants.



Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

The Lord judged the sin of the people of Judah, and He used Babylon to do it! The Babylonians conquered Judah by killing most of the people, burning the Temple, and taking all the special treasures from it. They tore down the city wall, and anyone left alive was taken to be a slave in Babylon!

This was God's punishment and judgment on Judah's sin. God used the nation of Babylon to destroy Judah. Remember that God did the same thing over 100 years earlier when He sent the Assyrians in to destroy Israel. *Refer to the Lesson 4 Lesson Theme Poster and the History of Israel Poster.*

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

God's people, God's Temple, and God's city were destroyed by a wicked nation. And all of this was according to God's plan. Again, it's not a good thing to make God angry. It's not a good thing to ignore God's warnings. It's not a good thing to be disobedient to God. Why? Because God is holy, He hates all sin, and He must judge sin. It is not that God is mean. Remember, God showed mercy and patience for many years as He warned the people to please come back to Him.

God must judge all sin—even ours. And the Bible tells us we are all sinners. So, what do we do? Will we be punished for our sins? God's punishment for sinners is hell forever. And that is terrible. But there is hope!

God made a way for us to be forgiven of our sins. God's way includes Jesus Christ, the perfect God-man, who took the punishment—God's punishment—for all the sins of those who would turn to Him, trust in Him, and repent of their sins. The word repent means to change your mind about something. In this case, repent means that you want to change the way you are. It means you want to turn away from your sin because you know God loves you, and He hates your sin. Then you turn to God. You tell God you are sorry for the sin in your heart, and you pray that God will help you to stop sinning each day.

The Bible tells us about God's plan. It is in John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This is the gospel. When we repent of our sins and trust in Jesus, we receive salvation because of what Jesus did when He suffered and died on the Cross.



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children to practice the memory verse this week.



MEMORY VERSE

Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.



GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for sending Jesus so we can be saved from the punishment we deserve.
- Thank God for the Bible where we can learn about Him.
- Ask God to help us always be faithful to worship the one true God.