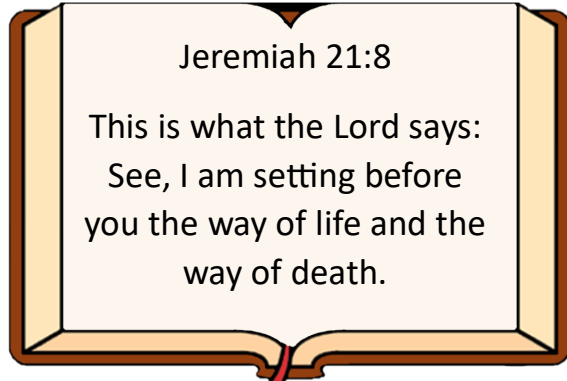


2 Kings 17, 23-25
Jeremiah 25, 29, 37-39

Name _____

Weekly Memory Verse



God's People Are Taken Captive

Draw a picture from the lesson.

According to the verse, what is the Lord setting before us?



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Lesson Link

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Many hundreds of years before Jeremiah lived, God gave His people, the Israelites, the land of Canaan to be their own land. He also gave them laws to live by—laws that set them apart as His holy people—laws that demonstrated that Israel worshiped a holy God.

God promised to protect them from their enemies and to make their nation great if they obeyed Him. But if they did not obey Him, there would be consequences for their disobedience. They would experience difficult problems and be captured by their enemies and taken to a foreign land. While many people obeyed God, most of them chose to disobey God's laws again and again, even though God gave them many warnings about the consequences of their sinful actions. Finally, God allowed them to suffer the consequences, and they were divided into two separate nations.

Samaria was the capital city of Israel. From there the kings of Israel ruled that land. There were nineteen of them all together, and every one of them led the people in worshipping other gods.

Assyria was located many miles to the east of Samaria in the northern part of present-day Iraq. It wasn't long before God allowed the Assyrian army to invade Israel and take some of the people captive to Assyria, just as Isaiah had prophesied. Then the kings of Israel were forced to pay a large sum of money to the Assyrian king every year. Eventually King Hoshea, the last king of Israel, refused to pay the tax. When the Assyrian king found out about this, he became very angry and put Hoshea in prison. Then he invaded the entire land of Israel and took the rest of the people captive to Assyria.

The Israelites were scattered throughout Assyria and soon lost their identity as Israelites. They became known as the lost ten tribes of Israel.

Some of the kings of Judah were true to God, following His holy way. They faithfully led the people in worshipping the true and living God as they offered their sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem. But most of the kings were unfaithful to God and turned the people's hearts away from God and His ways. Like Israel, they refused to listen to the prophets that God sent to warn them of punishment for their sinful ways.

It had been a little more than 100 years since Israel was taken captive to Assyria. During that time the Babylonians grew in power and eventually conquered the Assyrians. The capital city was Babylon. When Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon, he began to conquer all the surrounding nations, advancing westward toward Judah. He was a powerful and cruel king, causing the people of Judah to be terrified of him and his army. Eventually God allowed Nebuchadnezzar to invade Judah and to make the people his subjects right in their own land.

When the king of Judah rebelled against him, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem, bound the king in chains, and took him prisoner to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar returned to Jerusalem three months later and removed all the treasures from the temple of the Lord and from the palace of the king. He also took many prisoners. Zedekiah, Josiah's youngest son, became king over those who remained in Judah.

Zedekiah rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar's authority. Jeremiah warned him not to do this, but he would not listen. As a result, Nebuchadnezzar returned with his army and camped outside the walls of Jerusalem. Zedekiah closed the gates and tried to keep the Babylonian army out.

One year later the Babylonian army broke into the city of Jerusalem and burned it down. They took everything of value, burned the palace and the temple, and broke down the walls around the city of Jerusalem. The rest of the people, except for the very poorest who were left to farm the land, were taken as slaves to Babylon. The Babylonian commander gave Jeremiah permission to stay in the land of Judah as well.

How different life became for the people who were taken to Babylon. They were now prisoners in a strange land, living among people with very different customs, language, food, and religion. There was no temple in which to worship the true and living God. Jeremiah had told them they would be there for seventy years. That was a long time, and many people were going to live and die in Babylon without ever seeing Judah again. It was a sad time for God's people.

However, God did not forget His people or stop loving them. He gave them a promise of hope for the future. He promised to take them back to their own land after the seventy years of captivity were over. He also told them he was going to punish the king of Babylon for his wickedness and cruelty toward them. God did not abandon His people. He was going to take care of them while they were in Babylon.

Circle the correct answer

The Israelites were taken as captives because they *(had a small army, had sinned against God, were taken by surprise)*.

Circle the correct answer

King *(Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah, Jehoiachin)* came against Jerusalem.