

SHARE THE BIBLE LESSON
WEEK 30

God punishes Judah

2 Kings 21:1-18; 24:1-25:30



DAY 1

God's anger against Manasseh • 2 Kings 21:1-18

READ 

2 Kings 21:1-18

EXPLAIN 

The truth of 2 Kings 21:1-18

How could the son of the most faithful king be so wicked? Instead of trusting God's promises like his father Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:5; 19:15-19), Manasseh trusted in false gods, worshiping everything but God (21:1-9). His idolatry was evil, even more wicked than the idolatry of the Canaanites whom the Lord removed from the land (21:9-11). By provoking God's anger, Manasseh guaranteed God's punishment. This punishment would be so terrifying that people would shudder just to hear of it (21:12). The worship of anyone or anything in God's place is irrational (21:2), useless (21:6), rebellious (21:4), faithless (21:7-8), evil (21:9-11), and destructive (21:12-14). Even though Manasseh repented at the end of his life (2 Chr 33:12-16), the damage was done. He left behind a legacy of sin (2 Kgs 21:17), one that even Josiah's reforms could not undo (23:26-27). May Manasseh's flagrant disobedience be a warning: turn from evil and seek God before it is too late (Isa 55:6-7). Those who do will find compassion, but those who do not will be punished severely, for God hates those who do evil (Ps 5:5).

ASK 

1. Who was the most wicked king of Judah? *Manasseh.*
2. What sins did Manasseh commit? *He built high places, worshiped idols (even in God's temple), sacrificed his son, practiced witchcraft, and killed innocent people.*
3. What did God think about Manasseh's sin? *God was angry with Manasseh's sin. He hates sin.*
4. Was Manasseh the only one who sinned? *No. All Judah had rebelled against God since the exodus from Egypt (2 Kgs 21:15).*

DISCUSS 

1. Look again and explain how worshiping anyone or anything but God is irrational (21:2), useless (21:6), rebellious (21:4), faithless (21:7-8), evil (21:9-11), and destructive (21:12-14).
2. What might you be valuing more than God? Why do people continue to prioritize other things above God, even though it is so pointless and wicked?

DAY 2

God's punishment of Judah • 2 Kings 24:1–25:26

READ

2 Kings 24:1–25:26

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kings 24:1–25:26

Sometimes it seems like you can disobey and not get in trouble for it. But be warned: when God judges, judgment comes quickly (Prov 6:15), as it did upon Judah. First, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt (605 B.C.). At this time he took captive some of the Jewish nobility, including Daniel (Dan 1:1–3). Then God sent raiders to punish Judah (602 B.C.) (2 Kgs 24:2–4). Then in 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar took King Jehoiachin, his family, and 10,000 officials, soldiers, and craftsmen to Babylon, including Ezekiel (24:10–16; cf. Ezek 1:1–3). Finally, God banished Judah from His presence (2 Kgs 24:20). There was a two-year siege, during which the people in Jerusalem suffered extreme misery, including cannibalism (25:3; Lam 2:20; 4:10). Finally in 586 B.C., Jerusalem was captured, the temple was destroyed, and the city walls were torn down (2 Kgs 25:9–10). All but the very poorest were taken to Babylon (25:12). In the stupidity of wickedness, the remaining Judeans assassinated the governor Nebuchadnezzar had appointed and disobeyed God by fleeing to Egypt, just as God had predicted (25:25–26; Jer 42:9–43:7; Deut 28:68).

ASK

1. Who did God send to destroy Judah?
God sent the Babylonians.
2. What did Judah suffer, lose, and leave when God punished them?
They suffered a brutal siege. They lost their temple, buildings, walls, gold, bronze, and many lives. They left the promised land. God took away all that God had given them.
3. Why did God destroy Judah?
Because God hates sin and promised to punish sin.

DISCUSS

1. Much suffering comes directly from sin. But what other explanations do people give for their trouble? Without knowing the real problem, will people find the right solution? What are some wrong solutions people try in order to fix problems caused by sin?
2. Judah watched the 10 northern tribes go into exile, but they failed to learn from their example. How can you learn from others' mistakes (1 Cor 10:1–11)?

DAY 3

God's faithfulness to David • 2 Kings 25:27–30

READ

2 Kings 25:27–30

EXPLAIN

The truth of 2 Kings 25:27–30

After several chapters of sin and sadness, there is a glimpse of hope. Around 561 B.C., after Jehoiachin had been in prison for 37 years, he was released and honored above all the other kings in Babylon (2 Kgs 25:27–28). God was still keeping His promise to David (2 Sam 7:12–16). David's dynasty had survived the curse of exile. Eventually, David's line would lead to

Jesus Christ (Matt 1:12), the true Son of David. He is your only reason for hope (Rom 15:12), because the story of Israel's fall shows that your salvation depends on God alone. Left to yourself, you are sinful and do not seek God (Rom 3:10) or live for God's glory (3:23). Apart from Christ, you can expect only certain and unavoidable doom. But Christ died to bear God's wrath against sin (3:24–25) and to give you new life if you believe in Him (6:4–5). In Christ you can be made a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), righteous in God's sight (5:21) and able to live your life pleasing to Him (5:9, 14–15).

DAY 3 CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ASK 

1. Who was released from prison at the end of the story?
After 37 years in prison, Jehoiachin was released.
2. What did this show?
This showed that God was not finished with the line of David. The Messiah would still come through David's family.
3. Who is Jehoiachin's descendant?
Jesus (Matt 1:12).

DISCUSS 

1. Nothing can cancel God's promises. Not even your sin! What does this teach you about God?
2. How does the story of Jerusalem's fall show God's faithfulness both to punish and to bless?

DAY 4*God punished Babylon • Jeremiah 25:1-14***READ** 

Jeremiah 25:1-14

EXPLAIN **The truth of Jeremiah 25:1-14**

How could God use the wicked Babylonians and a pagan king to cause such pain and misery to Judah, His chosen people? Judah deserved to be punished, because she had persisted in her sin and would not listen to God's prophets (Jer 25:1-7). Judah would be made a "destruction," "a horror," "a hissing," "an everlasting desolation," "a ruin," and "a waste" (25:9, 11). Their punishment would be so severe that all signs of laughter and happiness would be removed (25:10). All this would be done by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, whom God even called "My servant" (25:9). Does that mean Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were doing right? No; instead, it shows God's sovereign power. He is able to use even godless kings and nations to accomplish His perfect will. But God is also just. Once He was done using Babylon, He would severely punish Babylon and its king for their wicked violence, making their land an "everlasting waste," just like they had done to Judah (25:2). They would become slaves (25:14), even as they had made many others slaves.

ASK 

1. Who did God use to judge Judah?
Babylon and its king.
2. What does God's use of Babylon, a godless nation, reveal about God's power?
That God is all-powerful. He reigns over all people and nations.
3. Would Babylon escape God's judgment?
No. After God used them for His purpose, He would send other nations to punish Babylon.

DISCUSS 

1. What wicked nations or rulers do you know of? Are they outside of God's control? Will they escape God's justice? How does this give you comfort, courage, and hope?
2. When one person or nation defeats another, does that mean the winner was a better person or nation in God's eyes? Why do the more wicked sometimes win?

DAY 5

Jesus will punish every unbeliever • Revelation 20:11–15

READ

Revelation 20:11–15

EXPLAIN

The truth of Revelation 20:11–15

Do you take God's kindness for granted? God is very kind and patient, giving many opportunities to repent and mercifully forgiving those who do. But the purpose of His patience is to lead us to repent (Rom 2:4). Eventually, His patience comes to an end. When a person dies in unbelief, the opportunity to repent is over (Heb 9:27). They will be kept for the final judgment, when God will punish evil with great wrath (2 Pet 3:9–10). After Christ's 1,000-year earthly kingdom (Rev 20:1–6), Satan will lead a final rebellion against God and His people (20:7–9a). God will destroy this rebellion with fire from heaven (20:9b), and He will throw Satan into the lake of fire to be tormented day and night forever (20:10). Then God will gather all the unbelievers of all ages for final judgment (20:11–15). At this event, called the great white throne judgment, Jesus will judge every unbeliever according to their deeds (Rev 20:13; John 5:22–29; Acts 17:31). Then He will cast into the lake of fire all those whose names are not found in the book of life (3:5; Dan 12:1).

ASK

1. Does there come a time when it's too late to repent of our sins?
Yes. God will judge every unbeliever at the great white throne judgment.
2. How will unbelievers be judged at the great white throne judgment?
According to their deeds while on earth, since they never accepted Christ's righteousness.
3. What is the book of life?
A record of every person who has received salvation.

DISCUSS

1. How would you respond if someone said, "I want to have fun now, and I can repent later"? Why is it important that you do not delay to call upon Jesus for salvation?
2. Pray for the salvation of three family members or friends.

NEXT WEEK

God shows mercy to Jonah and Nineveh

Jonah 1:1–4:11

