



11

God Judges Judah



Key Passage

- 2 Chronicles 36:15–17

Lesson Focus

- God is just. He must punish sin!

Lesson Overview



Come On In

Students will color the Jeremiah Coloring Sheet and/or play with play dough.



Circle Time

Prayer—Using the Flip Chart Prayer Page discuss prayer and give each child the opportunity to pray after determining what type of prayer you will offer today.

God's Word—Students will learn that God's anger grew toward the people because of their sins. God sent an army to destroy their homes and take the people captive. God is just—He must punish sin.

Song—Students will sing songs to help them remember the lesson of the day. Lyrics to the songs are found on the Flip Chart Song Page and the Song Sheet at the back of the Teacher Guide.



Activity 1: Destroy the Idols!

Students will play a fun game to remind them that we can't love the things in our lives more than we love the one who gave those things to us.



Activity 2: Sequence of Events

Students will stand in order and describe the events as pictured on their event sheets. If time allows they can color the sheets in class or take them home to finish.



Memory Verse Review and Activity

Students will review the memory verse as they pass a ball or toy around the circle while saying the verse.



Applying God's Word/Snack

Students will review the lesson while enjoying the snack for the day.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



FOR THE TEACHER

- ☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.
- ☐ Go Before the Throne.

- ☐ Student Take Home Sheets



COME ON IN

- ☐ Print one Jeremiah Coloring Sheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- ☐ Provide play dough if appropriate.

- ☐ Jeremiah Coloring Sheet for each student
- ☐ Play dough
- ☐ Cookie cutters



CIRCLE TIME

- ☐ Practice the songs on the Song Sheet at the back of this Teacher Guide.

- ☐ Lesson Flip Chart
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Stuffed animal for prayer time



DESTROY THE IDOLS!

- ☐ Print the Things Children Love Pictures from the Resource DVD-ROM so each child will have one.

- ☐ Things Children Love Pictures
- ☐ Trash can
- ☐ Masking Tape



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

- ☐ Print the five God Judges Judah Sequence of Events Coloring Sheets from the Resource DVD-ROM. Each student should have at least one picture.

- ☐ Five God Judges Judah Sequence of Events Coloring Sheets
- ☐ Crayons



MEMORY VERSE REVIEW AND ACTIVITY

- ☐ No preparation necessary.

- ☐ Lesson Flip Chart for review
- ☐ Soft ball or other small toy



APPLYING GOD'S WORD/SNACK

- ☐ Prepare and bring snacks.

- ☐ Lesson Flip Chart
- ☐ Snacks



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.

➤ As you teach, refer often to the Lesson Flip Chart Page to keep the children engaged. When reading the lesson Scriptures, stand up, be enthusiastic, look at the children, and emphasize the answers to the questions you will be asking. This will help to keep the children interested.



COME ON IN

As children arrive . . .

- They will color the Jeremiah Coloring Sheet.
- If there is time, they can play with play dough.

During this time you should be at the door welcoming the children as they come in and directing them to sit down at the tables and begin the activity. Have an aid/helper ready to engage the children with the activity.



REVIEW

Using the Flip Chart, quickly review the previous lessons 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 Flip Chart Pages. Remind the children of each lesson's focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



Circle Time

In an orderly manner, have the children assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs. Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any other props you brought or prepared for this lesson.

PRAYER

This prayer time is designed to get children to begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to get them to understand that they can pray. Use a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—or appropriate object to pass around the circle as each child gets his/her turn to pray. Only the child with the stuffed animal is allowed to pray or speak during this time. Using the same stuffed animal or other object all year will add continuity and structure to this time.

We start our Bible study with prayer. Let's pray. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there. Then determine which type you want the children to pray today.

- I love you prayers—Adoration
- I'm sorry prayers—Confession
- Thank you prayers—Thanksgiving
- Please prayers—Supplication

Today Adoration is suggested. You might proceed this way:

Today let's say prayers of adoration—and tell God how much we love Him.

The prayers you begin with should be specific to your needs. This will model to the children that you believe God does care about all the details of your life, and you pray to Him about these things. Your example will increase their confidence in praying to God.

I'll start. Dear God, I praise you because you are good! I love . . . (insert personal prayer).

➤ Prior to making your transition to Circle Time, we suggest you take time for restroom breaks and hand washing.

➤ Preschoolers need to move. This is a good opportunity to get them to move. Make an orderly transition to the Circle Time. You can have carpet squares if you want to sit on the floor, or help them to move their chairs into the circle.

Pass the stuffed animal around the circle giving all the children an opportunity to say a prayer of adoration.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll get into God's Word.

GOD'S WORD

These first five questions will be repeated each week. The repetition of these questions will help to solidify these simple but foundational truths in the children's minds at a young age.

- ? Who made you? *God.*
- ? What else did God make? *All things.*
- ? Why did God make you and all things? *For His own glory.*
- ? Can you see God? *No, I cannot see God, but He can always see me.*
- ? Where is God? *God is everywhere.*

The following activity should be repeated at the beginning of each lesson to encourage anticipation and enthusiasm for looking into the Word of God. Use a sticky note to mark today's passage before you begin.

➤ Before Bible Pass Around, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Bible Pass Around

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. *Hold up Bible.* God's Word is true, and we can trust what it says. But where should we look? One of you will help me with that. We're going to play Bible Pass Around. Whoever ends up with the Bible must hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about! Here's what we're going to do. I want everyone to count with me up to the number *choose a number.* You may also choose to practice the alphabet, recite the books of the Bible, sing one of the lesson songs, or recite the memory verse as you do this activity. We'll start right here. Hand the Bible to the first student.

As we say each number (or word) you must carefully pass the Bible to the person beside you—remember we don't want to drop it or tear it. Then when we get to the last number (or word), whoever has the Bible will hold on to it until we are ready to start our lesson. Are you ready? Let's begin. *When finished with Bible Pass Around you may want to have the student with the Bible stand next to you until it is time to open it.*

God loved His people very much. He gave them rules to obey to keep them safe. If the people listened to God and did what He said, then they would be strong and happy! But if they disobeyed, God would have to punish them for their sins.

Since God loved His people, He sent prophets to them with messages and warnings. This is how God spoke to His people before the Bible was written. *Refer to Lesson 2 Flip Chart.* He used the prophet Amos to warn the people to obey

➤ When the Bible Pass Around Activity is completed, continue with the lesson.

God, or God would punish them. God is just. He must punish sin. *Refer to Lesson 3 Flip Chart.* Then there was Hosea. God used Hosea and his love for his wife to show just how much God loves His people. *Refer to Lesson 5 Flip Chart.* And then there was the prophet Nahum. He went to the city of Nineveh and warned the people to turn back to God, or God would punish them!

Refer to Lesson 7 Flip Chart. Do you remember Isaiah? He was the prophet who spoke to King Hezekiah. He told the king that God would answer his prayer and save the people from their enemy! *Refer to Lesson 9 Flip Chart.* He also told us that Jesus would come and save His people from their sins! *Refer to Lesson 8 Flip Chart.* We also learned about Micah. Micah had good news. He told the people where Jesus would be born and what He would do for sinners 700 years before Jesus's birth! *Refer to Lesson 10 Flip Chart.* Last week we met a prophet named Jeremiah. He warned the people that if they did not stop worshipping idols, God would destroy them.

? What is an idol? Do you remember? *Allow discussion.*

Refer to Lesson 10 Flip Chart. An idol is anything we put above God. In Jeremiah's time the people had made statue idols. They were worshipping the statues instead of God. An idol can be anything in our lives that we love more than God. The people in Jeremiah's day had turned away from God. God sent Jeremiah to tell the people to return to the Lord—to worship God alone!

But the people would not obey God's Word. They just kept sinning! Well, God is just. And He must punish sin. God told them that He would send a terrible army to destroy them and take the people away from their homes. That is what God said, and that is what God did! Let's see what happened. We are going to read from a book called 2 Chronicles. It's in the Bible. Let's open it now! *Make this a special time as the student brings the Bible, and he/she opens it to where the sticky note is.* **Here it is in my Bible.** *Show the students where the book is. Let them look at it. Carry it around your circle. Read 2 Chronicles 36:15–16.*

? What did God send to the people? *2 Chronicles 36:15. Warnings.*

? Why would God keep sending the prophets with warnings? *2 Chronicles 36:15. Because God had compassion on His people.*

? What does compassion mean? *Allow discussion.*

It means He loved the people. Compassion is love for someone, and God kept warning the people because He loved them!

Now listen to this again. It tells us what the people did when they heard God's message from the prophets. *Re-read 2 Chronicles 36:16.* There are some big words here. It says the people mocked the prophets of God; they despised their words and scoffed at them. This means the people did NOT listen at all! They made fun of the prophets and did not believe them. God got angry at

2 Chronicles 36:15–16

➤ Re-read the verses or the portion of the verse(s) that answer the questions you are asking of the text. The children should hear God's Word and know that they can answer questions from it. It is not too hard for them!

the people. And we'll see He finally had to punish the people for their sin. Their sins had gone too far! The people wouldn't listen to the prophets, and they just kept sinning!

Listen to this carefully! It's kind of hard, but I think you are all smart enough! What did God do next? *Read 2 Chronicles 36:17.*

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. God sent an army to destroy them. They destroyed everything. It did not matter if the people were young or old, strong or weak. Some of the people in Judah died. And the people who did not die were moved to another land.

The people had made God angry. They had sinned against Him and did not listen to Jeremiah's warnings. They did not listen to any of the warnings God gave them. Finally, God had to punish their sins.

Because God is holy, He hates all sin. We know that everyone has sinned against God. The Bible tells us this! The Bible also tells us that God is just, so He must judge our sin. We are guilty before God, and He must punish us.

? So, what do we do? Do we have any hope at all? *Allow discussion.*

Yes! God has a plan that can save us from His punishment. God is just, that's true. But He is so merciful. And because of His mercy and love for us, He made a way that we could be forgiven of our sins. Now, He still must judge sin and punish it. But His way includes Jesus Christ.

? What did Jesus do? *Allow discussion.*

Jesus died on the Cross.

? Why did He do that? *Allow discussion.*

He did it so whoever believes in Him will not have to be punished by God. You see, Jesus took the punishment. Jesus never sinned. And when He died on the Cross, He died for all who would ever turn away from their sins and believe in Him!

The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever would believe in Him would have eternal life. Everyone who is sorry for his sins, trusts Jesus, and believes in His Word becomes a child of God! God's children know in their heart that they don't like their sin, and they don't want to sin because it hurts God. God's children love God, they want to worship Him alone; they love His Word—the Bible, and they hate their own sin!

SONG

What a lesson! God warned the people of Judah through the prophet Jeremiah. The people did not turn back to God, and God sent the army to destroy them. God's people did not listen to Jeremiah. Let's sing "Jeremiah's Song." *Sing the song.*

Great! You know, God hates sin. He is just, and He must punish all sin! It is important to remember that . . . and to remember that God put the punishment for sin on Jesus! Jesus died so that His children could live forever! Let's sing the song "God Must Punish Our Sin." *Sing "God Must Punish Our Sin."*

Great singing everyone! Now let's sing our Memory Verse Song. *Sing the Memory Verse Song while marching around the room!*

➤ Turn to the Flip Chart Song Page and Memory Verse Page during this part of the lesson.



Destroy the Idols!

MATERIALS

- ☐ Things Children Love Pictures
- ☐ Trash can
- ☐ Masking tape to mark a throwing line
- ☐ Crayons

INSTRUCTIONS

Print copies of the Things Children Love Pictures so each child will get one. Let the children color the pictures while you discuss.

? **Who likes this?** *Go through each picture as you pass them out—one picture to each child.*

While they are coloring. These are pictures of things we like! It's good to enjoy the things we like. They are from God. But, if any of us

start to like one of these things, or anything else, more than we love God, it is an idol. We must get rid of it!

When finished coloring. Let's stand here in a line. Wad your paper in a ball and toss it into the trash can. God wants us to love Him more than anything else. When we love anything more than God, He is not pleased with us. Have the children toss their papers into the trash can.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God wants us to worship Him alone. Every wonderful thing we have comes from God! And He wants us to enjoy them. But we should worship the one who gave these things to us and not the things themselves.



Sequence of Events

MATERIALS

- ☐ God Judges Judah Sequence of Events Coloring Sheets
- ☐ Crayons

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out the God Judges Judah Sequence of Events Coloring Sheets. Each child needs to have one. More than one child can have the same event. Call out the numbers 1–5. Children will bring their picture up. Allow them to describe what is happening.

Now we are going to review today's lesson. These sheets are numbered 1 through 5. They tell about the lesson today. As I call your number, I want you to come up here, hold your picture up, and tell us what is happening in your picture. *Describe the event*

according to the script below in Connect to The Truth. If time allows they can color the pictures after the review.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Review all the pictures as you send the children back to their seats. 1) The people were worshipping idols. They did not worship God alone. 2) God loved His people—He wanted them to turn back to Him. 3) God sent His prophet Jeremiah to warn the people about God's punishment. 4) The people would not listen to God. They laughed at Jeremiah and made fun of him. 5) God finally had to punish the people for their sins. He sent an army to destroy their city and take them away from their land.



Memory Verse Review and Activity

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.

MATERIALS

- ☐ Flip Chart Memory Verse Page
- ☐ Soft ball or other small toy

INSTRUCTIONS

Now come on over here. We are going to memorize God's Word! *Have students sit in the Circle Time area. Review the verse from the Flip Chart*

Memory Verse Page, pass a ball or other small toy around. As each student receives the object, he or she will say or sing the next word of the verse until the verse is complete. Encourage the children to recite the verse on their own.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

If God did not give us His Word, we would not know how to please Him! The Bible tells us everything that is helpful for us to live a life that pleases God. As we memorize God's Word, we put it in our hearts so that we might not sin against God. So let's do our best to learn the memory verses from God's Word.



Applying God's Word/Snack

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

After thanking God for your snack, review today's lesson using the Flip Chart and any other props you've used today.

God's people were not worshipping Him alone. They were worshipping idols! God loves His people and gave them many opportunities to stop sinning. He sent the prophet Jeremiah to warn them that if they didn't turn from their sins, God would have to punish them. God is just, He must punish sin! When the people heard this, they laughed at Jeremiah. They did not take God's Word seriously. Because of the people's sins, God sent a strong and powerful army to take over Judah and destroy everything. They received the punishment their sins deserved. God is jealous for His glory! He wants us to worship Him alone!

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

Because God is holy, He hates all sin. And because God is just, He must punish sin. That means He must punish our sin, too. That is bad news for us! But God made a way for us to be saved from His punishment. That way is through Jesus Christ! Jesus was perfect and never sinned! But He died on the Cross so that whoever would turn to Him—believe and trust in Him—could be forgiven of their sins. Jesus took the punishment for the sins of everyone who listens to Him and trusts in Him.

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



Group Prayer Time

- Thank God for His Word that tells us about His prophets.
- Praise God for sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sins.
- Pray that God will give us hearts to worship Him alone.

Do you still have more time? Review the past quarters using the Flip Charts, add another coloring sheet, recite and review the current and past memory verses, sing more songs, bring out play dough. Keep the children occupied with intentional, God-centered activities until their parents come to pick them up.

Song Sheet

JEREMIAH'S SONG

(To the tune of "Where Is Thumbkin?")

Sing this song while playing musical instruments.

Jer-e-mi-ah, Jer-e-mi-ah,

(Where is thumbkin? Where is thumbkin?)

God used him. God used him.

(Here I am. Here I am.)

"Go and warn the people,"

(How are you this morning?)

"Go and warn the people,"

(Very well, I thank you.)

Worship God, God alone!

(Run away, run away.)

ISAIAH 53:6

(To the tune of "The Itsy Bitsy Spider")

All we like sheep have go-one a-astray;

(The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout.)

We have tur-urned, every one, to hi-is o-own

way;

(Down came the rain and washed the spider out.)

And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us

all.

(Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.)

Isaiah 53 and ver-er-er-erse 6.

(So the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again.)

GOD MUST PUNISH OUR SIN

(To the tune of "Ten Little Indians")

Hold up your fingers to count the sins.

One little, two little, three little sins,

Four little, five little, six little sins,

Seven little, eight little, nine little sins,

God must punish them all.

God sent, God sent, Jesus to ear-earth.

Jesus, Jesus, died on the Cro-oss,

All who believe will not be punished.

Holy God is merciful.

Think of fun ways to sing. For example: Get children in a circle holding hands. They can go in one direction and at each verse quickly reverse direction. Put one or more than one child in the middle of the circle. Go around them then move in and back out! Get them into a straight line. Have them follow you around the room.