



LESSON 30

God punishes Judah

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



The LORD hates and punishes sin.



“And the LORD said, ‘I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and I will cast off this city that I have chosen, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there’” (2 Kgs 23:27).

Supporting Truths

1. The LORD hates sin.
2. The LORD punishes sin.
3. The LORD is sovereign to punish.
4. The LORD is faithful to punish.
5. The LORD is gracious even when He punishes.

Objectives

1. Describe Manasseh's sin.
2. List the things Judah lost, the things Judah left, and the things Judah suffered.
3. Recount the historical events God used to punish Judah.
4. Match the many promises of punishment with their fulfillment.
5. Explain why Jehoiachin's release from prison is included in the story.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God punishes Judah • 2 Kings 21:1-18; 24:1-25:30



Lesson Summary

Manasseh undid all the good that his father Hezekiah had done. He even worshiped false gods in the LORD's temple. He practiced witchcraft and child sacrifice. The people of Judah joined him in his sin, having rebelled against God since the days of the exodus. Although God had been very patient, the time had come to punish Judah just as God had promised. God used the Babylonians to punish Judah, destroying the temple and city walls. But God also gave hope by preserving the line of David.

Spotlight on the Gospel

God's judgment against Judah proves that mankind is thoroughly sinful. It shows God hates sin and punishes sin, especially the sin of those who claim to be God's people but do not follow Him. But there is hope. Through Jehoiachin the Messiah came, and He bore God's righteous wrath against sin. Whoever believes in Him is forgiven and has been given a new heart, a heart of obedience. But whoever does not believe in Jesus is condemned.

LAST WEEK



God is glorified by
protecting Judah
2 Kings 18:1-19:37

THIS WEEK



God punishes Judah
*2 Kings 21:1-18;
24:1-25:30*

NEXT WEEK



God shows mercy to
Jonah and Nineveh
Jonah 1:1-4:11

DIVIDED KINGDOM

Lesson Commentary

The LORD hates and punishes sin.

Long before Israel's first human king, Moses warned the people that God would bless faithful obedience but curse faithless disobedience (Deut 28). The curses included: drought (28:24; cf. 1 Kgs 17:1), defeat by enemies (Deut 28:25; cf. 2 Kgs 18:13), and ultimately exile from the promised land (Deut 28:63–68). If Israel turned away from God, God would turn away from Israel, removing the many blessings He had given them. Israel had already experienced defeat and exile for their defiant sin (2 Kgs 17), but instead of learning from Israel's punishment, Judah was following in the footsteps of their brothers to the north. Now they would learn firsthand that the LORD hates and punishes sin, just as He promised.

The LORD's anger against Manasseh (21:1–18)

Instead of trusting the LORD's promises like his father Hezekiah (18:5; 19:15–19), Manasseh trusted in false gods, worshiping everything but the LORD (21:1–9). Manasseh's idolatry had six characteristics. First, it was irrational. Manasseh rejected the true God and worshiped the gods of the nations whom God had driven out before them (21:2). And he did this in spite of the fact that God had just removed the northern tribes for doing the very same thing! Idolatry—loving, obeying, and worshiping anyone or anything in God's place—is stupid.



THINK ABOUT IT

Idolatry exchanges the glory of immortal God for images resembling mortal man (Rom 1:23).

Second, Manasseh's idolatry was useless. Those who worship false gods, like Baal, do so only for what they can get out of it, doing whatever it takes to manipulate their god to give them whatever their hearts desire (1 Kgs 18:26–29). Manasseh even

resorted to witchcraft and killing his own child (2 Kgs 21:6). But, as the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel learned, false gods have no voice, cannot answer, and do not pay attention (1 Kgs 18:29). This is because they do not exist (Isa 44:18–20). The search for security apart from God leads to total insecurity.

Third, Manasseh's idolatry was rebellious (2 Kgs 21:4). By defiling the temple, he rejected what it

stood for: the God who forgives (Lev 16:1–16), sustains (Exod 25:23–30), and answers prayer (Exod 30:1–10; Rev 8:3). He also openly violated God's commands against idolatry (Deut 12) and witchcraft (Deut 18:9–13), two sins which God hates.

Fourth, Manasseh's idolatry was faithless. He rejected both God's presence (2 Kgs 21:7) and God's promise (21:8). Instead of believing God's prophets, he likely killed them (21:10–16). Because Manasseh refused to acknowledge God, God would not make his paths straight (Prov 3:5–6). Instead, God would bring upon Judah the punishments Manasseh had so callously ignored (Deut 28:16–63).

Fifth, Manasseh's idolatry was evil, more wicked even than the idolatry of the Canaanites whom the Lord removed from the land (2 Kgs 21:9–11). But how could this be? Weren't the Canaanites as bad as it gets (Lev 18:1–3; Deut 9:5; 12:31)? Yet Manasseh added to the Canaanite's sin by spurning all of the LORD's blessings. Never before had a nation been so richly blessed by God, and never before had a nation so thoroughly squandered that blessing. The only thing worse than a whole-hearted sinner is a whole-hearted sinner who takes the LORD's name and blessings and uses them for evil.

Sixth, Manasseh's idolatry was destructive. By provoking the LORD's anger, Manasseh guaranteed the LORD's punishment. This punishment would be so terrifying that people would shudder just to hear of it (2 Kgs 21:12). It would be unavoidable, as certain as the LORD's destruction of Israel in the north (21:13a). It would be thorough, like wiping a bowl clean (21:13b). In the face of the LORD's wrath, Judah would be helpless, easy prey for their enemies (21:14).

The worship of anyone or anything in God's place is irrational, useless, rebellious, faithless, evil, and destructive. 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

THINK ABOUT IT

Manasseh thought his way was best, but turning away from God leads only to destruction (Ps 1:4–6).



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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).

The LORD's punishment of Judah (24:1-25:26)

Judah's destruction came quickly. First, Nebuchadnezzar attacked Egypt (605 BC). Then later that same year he invaded Judah, taking some of the Jewish nobility—including Daniel and his friends (Dan 1:1-3)—captive. Then the LORD sent raiders to punish Judah (602 BC), showing that He is sovereign, faithful, just, and immovable (2 Kgs 24:2-4). He was sovereign, using the nations around Israel to accomplish His



THINK ABOUT IT

God's rich kindness, patience, and forbearance are meant to lead us to repentance (Rom 2:4).

purpose (24:1-2). He was faithful, because He did what He said He would do (24:2). He was just, giving the punishment that was deserved (24:3). And He was immovable, because the time for judgment had come (21:4).

Then in 597 BC Jehoiachin, king of Judah, surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar, who took Jehoiachin, his family, and 10,000 officials, soldiers, and craftsmen to Babylon, including Ezekiel (24:10-16; cf. Ezek 1:1-3). They had rejected the temple where the LORD promised to be present with them, so now the LORD was stripping away the glories of the temple (2 Kgs 24:13). They had rejected the LORD who had brought them into the promised land, so now the LORD was throwing them out of the promised land (24:14).

Finally, the LORD banished Judah from His presence (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). This horror and misery was exactly what the LORD said would happen if Israel did not cling to Him (Deut 28:54-58). Finally in 586 BC, Jerusalem was captured, the temple and many other buildings were burned, and the city walls were torn down (2 Kgs 25:9-10). All but the very poorest were taken to Babylon (25:12).

Even then, Judah still continued to multiply evil. The remaining Judeans, led by Ishmael, assassinated the governor Nebuchadnezzar had installed over the land of Judah (25:25). Fearing Babylonian retaliation, all the remaining people fled to Egypt (25:26; Jer 42:9-43:7). This final act of disobedience was exactly what God said would happen (Deut 28:68).

God punishes evil. He is very patient, giving many opportunities to repent and mercifully forgiving those who do. But His patience eventually comes to an end, when it is too late to repent, when God punishes evil with great wrath (2 Pet 3:9-10).

The LORD's faithfulness to David (25:27-30)

After several chapters of sin and sadness, there is a glimpse of hope. Around 561 BC, 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). All was not lost, for God's promise to David remained intact (2 Sam 7:12-16). David's dynasty had survived the curse of exile. There was still hope.

This hope is realized in Jesus Christ. As a descendant of Jehoiachin (Matt 1:12), He was the true Son of David. The line of David had been cut down to a stump, but a shoot sprouted up from that stump once again (Isa 11:1). In Him both Jew and Gentile hope (Rom 15:12), because the story of Israel's fall shows us that our salvation depends on God alone. Left to ourselves, we are sinful, and not one of us seeks for God (Rom 3:10) or lives for God's glory (3:23). All of us, apart from Christ, can expect only certain and unavoidable doom, worse than even Judah's final destruction (2:9). But Christ died to bear God's wrath against sin (3:24-25) and to give new life to all who believe in Him (6:4-5). In Christ we can be made new creations (2 Cor 5:17), righteous in God's sight (5:21) and able to live lives pleasing to Him (5:9, 14-15).

THINK ABOUT IT
Are you prepared to face God's judgment (Heb 9:27)?



Lesson Outline

Yahweh hates and punishes sin.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. God hated Manasseh's sin (21:1–18).
2. God punished Judah's sin (24:1–25:26).
3. God kept His promise to David (25:27–30).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The LORD's anger against Manasseh (21:1–18).
 - Manasseh defiled the temple with idols (21:1–9).
 - Manasseh and Judah's sin provoked God to punish them (21:10–15).
 - Manasseh murdered many people and led Judah into great sin (21:16–18).
2. The LORD's punishment of Judah (24:1–25:26).
 - Raiders attacked Judah (24:1–7).
 - Nebuchadnezzar plundered the temple and took 10,000 captives (24:8–17).
 - Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem's walls and temple and carried more people into exile (24:18–25:21).
 - The Judeans who were left fled to Egypt (25:22–26).
3. The LORD's faithfulness to David (25:27–30).
 - King Jehoiachin was released from prison (25:27).
 - King Jehoiachin was honored by the king of Babylon (25:28–30).



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

1. **Who was the most wicked king of Judah?**
Manasseh.
2. **Why was he so wicked?**
He worshiped idols in God's temple.
3. **Who did God send to destroy Judah?**
God sent the Babylonians.
4. **Why did God destroy Judah?**
Because God hates sin and promised to punish sin.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

1. **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.
2. **What does Manasseh's idolatry show us about the worship of idols?**
Idolatry is irrational (stupid, foolish), useless, rebellious, faithless, evil, and destructive.
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).
5. **What does Judah's punishment show us about God?**
God is sovereign, able to punish as He pleases. He is just, punishing sin as it deserves. He is faithful, punishing just as He says. He is immovable, firm in His decision to punish.
6. **What did Judah suffer, lose, and leave when God punished them?**
They suffered a brutal siege. They lost their temple, many buildings, city walls, gold, and bronze, and many even lost their lives. They left the promised land. In other words, they lost all that God had given them.
7. **Who was released from prison at the end of the story?**
After 37 years in prison, Jehoiachin was released.
8. **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.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

ENVISION INVASION

Not all the children will grasp the concept of an invasion. It involves an unlawful entry into one's space and an infringement of one's rights and privileges. Ask the children whether they have some space at home that is theirs—a place where they keep their special toys or where they can play uninterrupted. How do they feel when siblings invade their space and privacy? This could be further demonstrated when the class breaks up into groups to play games or do a craft. Some “invaders” could be appointed to go into each group and carry off some of the crafts or members of the group. Today's lesson will teach us about some invaders God-appointed to punish Judah.

DIVINE TIMEOUT

As God's chosen people, Israel enjoyed a number of special rights and privileges. Many of these were closely connected to the land that God promised to give them. The exile was God's removal of these privileges as a form of discipline upon the nation. The children can relate to this in the form of “timeout” when they have disobeyed. The exile was time out of the promised land and time out of God's blessings.



ILLUSTRATE

WIPE THE DISH

Color the outside of a plate or coffee mug with a dry erase marker. During the lesson, wipe the dish clean in front of the children. Tell the children that because of Manasseh and Judah's sin, God said He would “wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down” (2 Kgs 21:13). Explain that this meant God would punish them by destroying their city and removing the people from the land.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

Make a stack of blocks to represent the city of Jerusalem and place them on a table in front of the children. With each invasion, remove a number of blocks from the tower. This depicts the removal of Israelites from the land at each invasion. After the final invasion, the whole country came crashing down!



APPLY

EXILE POP-UP

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheet, scissors, yarn, hole puncher, tape, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Before class time, make a paper-man chain by folding an 11x 4.5-inch piece of paper lengthwise into an accordion shape. Trace the template on the craft page onto the strip, and cut out the shape. Unfold the accordion; it will make a chain of four paper men. Punch holes in the hands and feet. (Make enough chains so each student has one). Pre-cut card and verse from craft sheet. During class have children decorate the men. Thread yarn through the holes. Glue one half of each end person to the inside. Glue the verse inside the card.

*Exile Pop-Up
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

SLOW TO LEARN

Have your parents ever told you not to do something, then your brother or sister does that exact thing right away? That's like Manasseh and Judah: they saw the Canaanites punished for idolatry, and they saw Israel punished for idolatry. You would think they would avoid idolatry. But they didn't. In today's lesson we'll see that they committed the very same sin. We think they were foolish (and they were), but we do the same thing. We've seen lots of warnings in the Bible to stay completely true to God, but how often do we disobey God?

GOING, GOING, GONE

Begin the lesson by discussing some of the privileges that Israel enjoyed as God's special people (Jerusalem, the king, land, the priesthood, the Law, the temple, God's presence, abundant food, etc.). You can briefly revisit God's blessings of Deuteronomy 28. Place objects representing these blessings (a crown, some dirt, a scepter, a Bible, a picture of the temple, some fruit, etc.) on a table at the front of the class. At the end of the lesson, explain that because of their sin, Israel lost more and more of their privileges until they finally lost the entire land.



ILLUSTRATE

MUD FIGHT

Have you ever played in the mud? Did you get really dirty? Your parents might not have liked cleaning all the mud off of you. But what if you had the mud fight in the living room? That would be much worse. That's like what Manasseh did when he worshiped idols in God's temple.

PROVOKED TO ANGER

Ask the children what makes them angry. What makes them angry is what "provokes" them to anger. Normally when people get angry, they do so for selfish reasons, and they try to take revenge on whoever harmed them. What do they think provokes God to anger? The sinfulness of people makes God angry. However, God doesn't express His anger in selfish temper tantrums. Rather, God responds to sin by disciplining sinners. He disciplines His children so that we can share in His holiness (Heb 12:5–11). Explain that discipline is a deterrent to help the sinner to stop sinning and to start obeying God. Discipline is the most loving thing a good God can do.



APPLY

GOD'S JUDGMENT ON JUDAH

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheets, brown and black construction paper, yarn, scissors, hole punch, tape, and crayons.

Directions: Have students color and cut out the cards from the craft sheets (six total). Match the three pairs and punch two sets of holes in the top of each set. Create links to shackles by cutting and taping together strips of black construction paper. Make two ends for the shackles from brown construction paper. Weave yarn through the holes on the cards and also in between the shackles to hold all together as one (see picture below). Tie off the ends of the yarn.

*God's Judgment on Judah
See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

NATIONAL TRAGEDY

Jeremiah saw firsthand the destruction of Jerusalem. His book, Lamentations, describes the horrific destruction he witnessed at the hands of the Babylonians. Read the first chapter of Lamentations to the class, identifying the sorrow of Jeremiah (1:1–11) and the sorrow of Jerusalem (1:12–22). Tell the class that in today's lesson we'll learn why God allowed such devastation to take place.

TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION

Bring some carpenter's tools to class: hammer, saw, chisel, file, etc. Explain that these tools can be used to create or to destroy: it all depends on the desire of the one holding the tool. In today's lesson, God used numerous foreign nations to destroy Jerusalem because of its sin (2 Kgs 24:2–4). These nations attacked Israel, but their actions (and strength) were from the Lord.



ILLUSTRATE

RAY OF HOPE

Bring a tiny flashlight to class. As you describe Judah's fall, turn off the lights. When Judah fell, their hopes went dark. They were crushed, broken, exiled, and miserable. But look (turn on the tiny flashlight): there is a little glimpse of hope. And one day this little glimpse of hope will become a light coming into the world to bring men out of darkness into God's light (John 1:1–13).

SLAVE TO SIN

Use a chain or rope to illustrate sin's hold over us. Judah's rebellion, which began from the time of the exodus, shows that mankind is a slave to sin and needs to be set free.



APPLY

DO YOU HEAR THE WORD OF GOD?

Read Matthew 11:20–24 to the children. Tell the children that in this passage, Jesus is warning those people who hear the Word of God taught. He tells them that the day of judgment will be easier for the people of Sodom than it will be for the people who hear the Word of God and do not believe. Manasseh heard the word of God, but he still plunged Judah into greater and greater idolatry. He was able to see the miracles God had done for His father, Hezekiah. He probably even had heard and seen his father praying. Manasseh, though, chose not to follow God and followed idols instead. Because of his choices, and the nation's sin, Judah would be severely judged.