

Lesson 10– Judah Alone, Captivity, Return from Captivity, and Years of Silence

Text – 2 Kings 17-25, 2 Chronicles 33-36, Ezra – Esther, Haggai – Malachi

Main Characters – God, Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Manassah

Key Verses

- 2 Kings 17:18 – God was angry at Israel for its idolatry and sent them away and left only Judah
- 2 Kings 25:1-21 – Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came and destroyed Jerusalem. He took a large portion of the people of Judah into captivity at this time
- Ezra 1:1-2:1 – Cyrus king of Persia releases the captives and they return back to their own towns

Lists

Prophets Before Captivity

Jeremiah, Isaiah

Prophets During Captivity

Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel

Prophets After Captivity

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Transitions and Main Storyline:

Divided Kingdom to Judah Alone: Eventually, God had enough of Israel's constant sin and rebellion. He allowed Assyria to come into the land and destroy the nation of Israel completely. Judah had also been sinful during this time, and was about to be destroyed as well. However, due to Hezekiah's godly leadership, they were spared. He reformed the temple worship and got rid of Baal and the other idols.

Judah Alone to Captivity: After Josiah dies, the last good king of Judah the nation went downhill rapidly. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked Judah 3 different times after Josiah's death. On his 3rd visit he destroyed Jerusalem and took many of its inhabitants away to Babylon. Judah was subject to Babylon for a total 70 years.

Captivity to Return from Captivity: While in captivity, the Babylonian empire fell to the Medo-Persian Empire. In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia the captives were released and commanded to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the Lord. After returning to Jerusalem the people faced significant challenges rebuilding the temple and the wall. Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to consider their ways and complete the tasks at hand. The people listened and fulfilled their responsibilities.

Return from Captivity to Years of Silence: Having learned their lesson, the people, now called Jews, no longer had trouble with idols but continued to struggle spiritually. They did not give God the proper fear and respect He deserved. They robbed Him by keeping the best of their flocks for themselves and gave him the lame, sick and blind. The prophet Malachi rebuked them for this kind of worship. However, he also gave hope in saying that God would send a prophet to prepare the way for the Lord (Jesus).

Years of Silence to Life of Christ: The Old Testament closes with God promising, through the prophet, Malachi, that He would send Elijah the prophet to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers (Malachi 4:5-6). The New Testament begins with the promise of John the Baptist's birth (Luke 1:8-17) saying that he would fulfill this role (Luke 1: 16-17). John the Baptist was to be the one to prepare the way for the Christ.