

GOD'S NATION FELL

CORE PASSAGE: 2 CHRONICLES 36:11-21

CONTEXT

Josiah was a good king over Judah who followed in the ways of his ancestor David, and he obeyed the Lord in almost all that he did. Josiah's faithfulness brought restoration to God's people. But after Josiah's death, his successors—three sons and a grandson—did not follow in his faithful footsteps. Each one did what was evil in the Lord's eyes. They did not obey God but pursued wickedness and rebelled against His ways and His punishments. Their continual disobedience brought about God's judgment that resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple and exile from the promised land for God's people.

KEY CONCEPT

God warns people with compassion but will also judge evil.

As you examine 2 Chronicles 36:11-21:

- Recognize the compassion of God in sending messengers to warn and call His people to repentance.
- Understand that apart from Christ, everyone will reach a point of no remedy from the just wrath of God against sin.



TIMELINE

Assyria Besieges and Conquers Israel, Deporting the People (2 Kings 17)

Judah's Remaining Kings Return to What Is Evil in the Lord's Sight (2 Kings 23–24)

SESSION STUDY:
Babylon Besieges and Conquers Judah, Deporting the People (2 Kings 25; 2 Chronicles 36)

Hezekiah and Josiah Restore the Worship of the Lord (2 Kings 18–20; 22–23)

Jeremiah Prophesies Judgment on Judah and a New Covenant (Jeremiah 1–38)

Ezekiel Prophesies to the Exiles (Ezekiel 1–48)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** 2 Kings 23:31–25:26

☐ **Day 2:** 2 Chronicles 36:1–21

☐ **Day 3:** Jeremiah 39:1–44:30

☐ **Day 4:** Jeremiah 45:1–52:30

☐ **Day 5:** Lamentations 1:1–5:22

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 79



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

2 CHRONICLES 36:11-16

THOUGH GOD WAITS PATIENTLY FOR REPENTANCE, HE WILL JUDGE EVIL.

Underline all the words that indicate Zedekiah's rebellion. Circle the result.

11 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. **12** He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah at the LORD's command. **13** He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar who had made him swear allegiance by God. He became obstinate and hardened his heart against returning to the LORD, the God of Israel. **14** All the leaders of the priests and the people multiplied their unfaithful deeds, imitating all the detestable practices of the nations, and they defiled the LORD's temple that he had consecrated in Jerusalem. **15** But the LORD, the God of their ancestors sent word against them by the hand of his messengers, sending them time and time again, for he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. **16** But they kept ridiculing God's messengers, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until the LORD's wrath was so stirred up against his people that there was no remedy.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS JUST: God establishes standards for His moral creatures that are in accordance with His righteousness, and His moral creatures will be judged according to those standards (Leviticus 11:44-45; Romans 2:5-11; 2 Corinthians 5:10). It would be unjust if God did not uphold His righteousness, for such a failure would require God to violate His own righteous character. Since humanity has sinned by failing to live up to God's righteous standards, God has taken it upon Himself to make provision by being both just and the justifier of those who place their faith in Christ (Romans 3:25-26).

Key Concept: God warns people with compassion but will also judge evil.



Zedekiah was the last of Josiah's three sons to reign and the last king of Judah. He did not learn from his father's obedience and faithfulness but instead did what was evil in God's eyes. Even though the prophet Jeremiah shared God's warnings and declarations, Zedekiah pridefully ignored Jeremiah and relied on the feel-good messages of false prophets who promised God would never allow His people to be driven from the land (Jeremiah 28:1-4).

In the aftermath of a previous, smaller-scale exile (29:1-2), Zedekiah had been appointed as king by Nebuchadnezzar, the powerful king of Babylon whom God had appointed to bring punishment on Judah for their disobedience. But Zedekiah disobeyed God and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, also leading the people and even the priests toward evil behavior. A reckoning was coming as the Lord had foretold (Deuteronomy 29:16-29).

What are some ways we can grow in humility to listen to and accept godly rebuke and correction?

Despite the people's rebellion, the Lord was patient. He repeatedly sent messengers and prophets, such as Jeremiah, to call them to repentance. He even sent a message to the people who had been carried away to Babylon to encourage them that God would bring them back to the land of Judah after seventy years (Jeremiah 29:1-28). The Lord did this because He wanted His people to repent of their wicked ways and follow Him.

But God's patience and compassion were not met with gratefulness or humility. Instead, God's messengers weren't just ignored but ridiculed and abused, and by extension, so too was God Himself. Having reached a tipping point, the Lord would no longer allow their evil to persist, and His wrath, His appropriate and just response to their rebellion, became unstoppable.

How have you been treated as you have shared the gospel with others?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

2 CHRONICLES 36:17-21

NO ONE CAN ESCAPE GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT APART FROM REPENTANCE.

Circle each "he" that refers to the Lord, and underline each "he" that refers to Nebuchadnezzar.

17 So he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their fit young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary. He had no pity on young men or young women, elderly or aged; he handed them all over to him. **18** He took everything to Babylon—all the articles of God's temple, large and small, the treasures of the LORD's temple, and the treasures of the king and his officials. **19** Then the Chaldeans burned God's temple. They tore down Jerusalem's wall, burned all its palaces, and destroyed all its valuable articles. **20** He deported those who escaped from the sword to Babylon, and they became servants to him and his sons until the rise of the Persian kingdom. **21** This fulfilled the word of the LORD through Jeremiah, and the land enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation until seventy years were fulfilled.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Because of God's compassion, Jesus came to make a way of salvation for those who will believe in Him and repent of their sins. But there will come a time when all who harden their hearts against the Lord will be judged.

Key Concept: God warns people with compassion but will also judge evil.

Here we see the final result of Judah's rebellion against God. After multiple attempts to extend compassion to His people, God determined to judge their evil. Like many before him, Zedekiah had failed as a leader, but the people failed in their willingness to follow the Lord, ignoring the warnings of the prophets. Now the Lord would use King Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, or Chaldeans, to tear it all down and take His people away. The description of God's judgment for Judah is stark and shocking, a reminder of the seriousness of sin and the just punishment for disobedience from which no one is exempt.

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“God’s wrath in the Bible is never the capricious, self-indulgent, irritable, morally ignoble thing that human anger so often is. It is, instead, a right and necessary reaction to objective moral evil.”¹

—J. I. Packer (1926–2020)

For those who reject the gospel, both out of willful rebellion and sin-veiled ignorance, there will come a day when there is no remedy. God must punish sin, but in His mercy He has provided the means of salvation through His Son, Jesus. We have been given this gospel message to share with the world.

How might you communicate with others the remedy for God’s wrath that God has provided in Jesus Christ?

The exile, though a form of judgment, was not the final word for Israel. Verses 20-21 allude to the fulfillment of God’s words spoken by Jeremiah, who foretold the length of their exile as seventy years (Jeremiah 29:10). Jeremiah also had a message of hope for those who would be taken to Babylon: “This city will bear on my behalf a name of joy, praise, and glory before all the nations of the earth, who will hear of all the prosperity I will give them. They will tremble with awe because of all the good and all the peace I will bring about for them” (33:9). God promised to restore His people and bring them back to the land. While there must be judgment for sin, there is also hope for salvation and restoration. And just as God kept his word regarding His wrath against Judah, He also keeps His word for the ultimate blessing of His people.

How does this passage challenge your perspective on the seriousness of sin in your own life?



NO REMEDY

Read the Scripture passages and briefly summarize the actions of the key figure(s) in the space provided.

2 CHRONICLES 36:11-14: “ZEDEKIAH . . .”

2 CHRONICLES 36:15: “BUT THE LORD . . .”

2 CHRONICLES 36:16: “BUT THEY . . .”

2 CHRONICLES 36:17-21 “SO HE . . .”

How can we avoid reaching a point of “no remedy” with the Lord?
How can we help others trust in God’s remedy in Jesus Christ?



Key Concept: God warns people with compassion but will also judge evil.



HEAD

What would God have us believe and do in response to Judah's destruction?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

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Read through Psalm 79 in light of a difficult situation you face. Then pray for God's help (v. 9), and pray for God's justice (vv. 6-7) as well as His compassion for any adversaries, just as the Lord has shown His compassion to you in Christ Jesus.



HEART

How has God shown love and mercy toward you? How have you extended that love and mercy to others?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will you encourage others to stay accountable and obedient to God's Word even when it's difficult?

