

## *Promised Land 2 Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Eleven: The Fall of Judah*

*2 Kings 23:31-25:30, 2 Chronicles 36, Habakkuk, Obadiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations*

Read 2 Kings 23:31-25:30 with 2 Chronicles 36 and Jeremiah 39-44 and 52, adding the last kings of Judah to your chart.

- 1) Two world powers and several different kings of Judah were involved in the drama of Judah's final years of monarchy.
  - a) Which world powers were involved (see 2 Kings 23:33-34 and 24:1, 7)? **Egypt and Babylon**
  - b) Which three of Josiah's four sons eventually became kings of Judah, and in which order did they reign, according to 1 Chronicles 3:15 and 2 Chronicles 36? **Josiah's fourth son, Shallum (also known as Jehoahaz), reigned immediately after his father. Josiah's second son, Jehoiakim (also known as Eliakim), was put on the throne after his brother Jehoahaz was deported to Egypt. Following a brief reign by Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, Josiah's third son, Zedekiah (also known as Mattaniah), became Judah's last king.**
  - c) One other descendant of David reigned briefly, a grandson of Josiah. What was his name? **Jehoiachin**
- 2) Compare the following references, noting the stages involved in the deportation of the residents of Judah and Jerusalem (the dismantling of the Judean monarchy). List the groups and individuals involved in each stage:
  - a) 2 Kings 24:1 with Daniel 1:1-3, 6 **In 605 B.C., after winning the Battle of Carchemish, the neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar marched down into Judah. No deportation is mentioned in 2 Kings, but according to Daniel 1:3, individuals from the royal family and nobility were among those exiled and Daniel was among them (Daniel 1:6).**
  - b) 2 Kings 24:12-16 with Ezekiel 1:1-2 **In 598-97 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem. Jehoiachin surrendered and was deported, along with much of the upper and middle class of Jerusalem: royalty, much of the army, the artisans and craftsmen -- 10,000 people. Ezekiel was also part of this deportation.**
  - c) 2 Kings 25:1, 9-12 **When Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C., he deported all the remaining residents of Jerusalem, leaving only a few of the poorest residents to work the land.**
  - d) Jeremiah 52:28-30 (The final deportation mentioned in Jeremiah 52 is not recorded in 2 Kings. It is possible that all three of the deportations Jeremiah references are in addition to those mentioned in 2 Kings.) **According to Jeremiah 52, three deportations took place: in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year (598 B.C.), his eighteenth year (587 B.C.), and his twenty-third year (582 B.C.). These dates do not correspond to the deportations given in 2 Kings. Apparently, they represent minor deportations, whereas 2 Kings describes major deportations (compare the numbers). It has been suggested that Jeremiah listed these smaller groups to show how thoroughly and persistently the Babylonians dismantled Jewish society. Some take the first two deportations given in Jeremiah 52 as the same as the two listed in 2 Kings 24:14 and 25:11, explaining that the dates were calculated on a different basis. In this case, the third deportation listed in Jeremiah 52 would have been the last of four total deportations (three of which are found in Daniel and 2 Kings and one of which is recorded in Jeremiah 52:30).**
  - e) 2 Kings 25:22-26 with Jeremiah 42:1-43:7 **The few Jews who had found their way back to Israel, together with the poorest of the land (those who had remained in Judah under Gedaliah's governance) fled to Egypt and forced Jeremiah to flee with them. They did so against the Lord's express command.**

- 3) Compare 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 with 2 Chronicles 36:21-22 and Jeremiah 29:10-11. What do you learn about God from these verses and how does this encourage or challenge you today? **The Lord faithfully sent His prophets to warn Judah of destruction. He punished their sin, yet, even as they were heading into exile and persisting to reject Him, He offered hope: His assurance that after seventy years, He would bring them back and prosper them. Personal sharing**

Habakkuk prophesied during the years in which the Assyrian Empire was waning and the Babylonians were becoming powerful.

- 4) According to Habakkuk 1:2; 12; 2:2 and 3:1, who participated in a dialogue? **The dialogue was between the prophet Habakkuk and the Lord.**
- 5) Habakkuk had two complaints.
- What indication do you find in Habakkuk 1:1-4 that Habakkuk's first complaint was about injustices being committed by his own people in Judah? **Habakkuk said he was made to look at this injustice and it was "before him," an indication that he was an eyewitness to it. He described oppression and perversion of justice, the same criticisms made by the other writing prophets.**
  - How did the Lord answer Habakkuk's first complaint in 1:5-11 (see also Habakkuk's responses in 1:12 and 3:16b to help understand the Lord's answer)? **The Lord said that He was in the process of rising up the Babylonians, a ruthless and powerful military force, to bring calamity on Judah.**
  - What moral problem did this cause in Habakkuk's mind, according to 1:13-17 (this constituted Habakkuk's second complaint)? **Habakkuk did not understand how a righteous and pure God could use an exceedingly wicked nation to punish a nation that was comparatively less wicked.**
  - How did the Lord answer this second complaint in chapter 2 (see especially verses 3b, 8, and 16)? **In His own time, the Lord always ensures ultimate justice. He told Habakkuk that eventually He would punish Babylon for her disgraceful treatment of other nations.**
  - What is the significance of Habakkuk 2:20, in the context of Habakkuk's complaints and the Lord's responses? **The verse speaks of the Lord's role as Judge of all the earth. He has the final say and His justice will silence everyone; there will be no legitimate complaints left.**
- 6) How did the Lord's answers change Habakkuk's perspective, so that he could respond with the optimism expressed in 3:16-19? How is Habakkuk's conclusion also an answer to your own complaints? **Habakkuk concluded that the Lord is sovereign and just. Based on the broader perspective he had been given, he was confident that he would "go to the heights" (keep God's long-range plan in view) once Judah began to be overtaken by disaster. Habakkuk expected trouble but trusted in God's larger plan. Personal sharing**

The book of Jeremiah gives us one of the best examples of the ministry of a writing prophet.

- 7) In what period of Israel's history did Jeremiah minister, according to Jeremiah 1:1-3? **Jeremiah prophesied from the reign of Josiah, king of Judah, into the Babylonian captivity.**
- 8) Skim the following passages and record what you learn or what impresses you about Jeremiah's life and ministry:
- Jeremiah 1 **The Lord called Jeremiah to such an intimidating task that he felt like an overwhelmed child. Although Jeremiah was afraid, the Lord gave him assurance of His presence and enabling.**
  - Jeremiah 16:2, 5, 8 and 27:2 **Jeremiah lived a difficult life. The Lord denied him a wife, children, mourning, and celebration, in order to make him a living illustration of the attitude the people of Judah should have taken (expectation of being overtaken by disaster at any moment). In order to convey God's message, Jeremiah was also called to other hard tasks, such as wearing a yoke around his neck.**
  - Jeremiah 1:6, 14:13a, 32:17, but also 12:1, 20:7 **Jeremiah had an amazing relationship with the Lord. He held a high view of God (his regular way of addressing Him was "Ah, Sovereign Lord"), yet he was also comfortable voicing his complaints.**

- d) Jeremiah 11:18; 18:18; 20:1-2, 7-9; 26:7-8; 32:2-3; 36:19; 37:15-16; 38:6 **Jeremiah was despised and always in danger: plots were made against his life, he was imprisoned, thrown into a pit, argued with, and had his writings burned. Nevertheless, he could not stop being God's mouthpiece.**
- 9) What repeated themes do you find to be part of Jeremiah's message:
- 4:4, 6:11, 7:20, 10:10, 25:15 **God's wrath over Israel's sin**
  - 32:3, 28; 37:8 **The capture and ruin of Jerusalem by Babylon**
  - 2:8; 14:13; 23:2, 11 **The leaders, priests, and prophets' role in leading the people astray**
  - 3:12; 3:14; 3:22; 4:1; 24:7; 26:3, 13 **Repentance**
  - 6:9a, 23:3, 31:7-9, 50:20 **God's preservation and forgiveness of a remnant of the people**
  - 25:11-12, 29:4-14 **The exiles return to Judah after seventy years**
  - 30:3, 32:42, 33:6-11 **Future restoration and prosperity for God's people**
- 10) Which of the following verses from Jeremiah speak to a particular need you have today? Jeremiah 2:19, 6:16, 10:23, 15:20, 17:7-8, 23:23-24, 23:29, 29:11, 31:3, 33:3 **Personal sharing**

Lamentations is a lament over Jerusalem at the time of its destruction. Traditionally, Jeremiah is credited for writing it.

- 11) What aspect of the Fall of Jerusalem is described by the following verses?
- 1:11, 19; 2:11-12; 4:4-5, 9-10; 5:9-10 **Famine**
  - 1:1, 4-5, 18; 2:9; 5:2 **Exile**
  - 1:10; 2:6-7 **Looting of the Lord's Temple**
- 12) Why are the verses in Lamentations 3:21-27 fitting as the centerpiece of a Biblical book about suffering? For what will you wait patiently on the Lord today, trusting in His faithfulness? **These beautiful verses call the sufferer to faith in God's love and mercy. They offer hope and the exhortation to wait quietly on the Lord for salvation. Personal sharing**

Read the short 21-verse book of Obadiah. Obadiah prophesied against Edom. The date of his ministry is debated, since Israel was affronted by Edom on more than one occasion. Jerusalem's destruction by Babylon is one of the most likely periods in which to date it.

- 13) According to Genesis 25:24-26, 30b; 32:27-28; 36:6-9 and Deuteronomy 2:4-5, what was the relationship between Israel and Edom? **Esau and Jacob were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. For this reason, their descendants were referred to as "brothers." Later, the Lord renamed Jacob "Israel." Esau was also called "Edom."**
- 14) According to Obadiah, what was Edom's offense against Israel (see also Psalm 137)? **The Edomites stood by and did nothing to help while Babylon ravaged Israel. Instead, Edom gloated and rejoiced over Israel's misfortune and took advantage of her in her vulnerability (Obadiah 1:11-14; Psalm 137:7).**
- 15) Read Obadiah 1:15 with Acts 17:30-31, Romans 2:16, 2 Timothy 4:1, and Revelation 19:11-16.
- Through whom will all men eventually be judged? **Jesus Christ**
  - How can you be sure you will survive God's day of wrath (see Romans 10:9-11, Ephesians 2:8-9, and 1 Peter 3:18)? **Salvation is available to those who confess Jesus as their Lord. It is a gift of God's grace that cannot be earned but occurs by faith. This is possible because Jesus died in our place, "the righteous for the unrighteous."**
  - How will this knowledge change the way you live and think today? **Personal sharing**