

Israel Is Carried To Assyria

2 Kings 17:5-41

MEMORY VERSE

2 KINGS 17:39

“But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Two small objects such as a marble or coin.

As many paper plates and tongue depressors as the number of children in your class, markers or crayons, scissors, and glue.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

“Secret! Secret! I’ve Got a Secret!”

In our lesson today, we will learn that the Israelites sinned against the Lord and tried to keep it a secret. We can never keep anything from the Lord. This fun game will help us to learn about keeping some things hidden.

Have your class form two teams. Give each team an item that they will try to keep hidden from the other team (for older ages you may use a small item like a marble or coin, for younger classes you can use a larger item).

Have your teams form a line and then sit on the floor facing the other team. Allow enough room behind each team for them to pass the object. Each team will take turns. You will next ask a question to the team who is not chosen to pass the object (you can use review questions from previous lessons; keep them simple enough that the children who were not there can get them). While that group is answering the question, the other group is passing the item behind their backs. As soon as the first team correctly answers the question, then the team moving the item must stop.

Choose someone from the “question” team to guess who has the item. Switch which team does the “question” and which team does the “moving.”

You can keep points and have the winning team serve small prizes to the others. Possible scoring: If “question” team guesses who has the item, “question” team gets a point. If “question” team guesses wrong, then the “moving” team gets a point.

LESSON TIME!

Sin has consequences. Though God warned the children of Israel time and time again that judgment would come if they turned away, they did not heed His warnings. They chose to rebel, to follow the ways of the nations around them and to worship false idols. God had desired to bless Israel! How foolish Israel was to bring destruction upon themselves. In 721 BC, the northern kingdom of Israel fell to Assyria.

2 KINGS 17:5-6

Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years.

In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria, and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

Assyria invaded the land of Samaria. After three years of war, the Assyrians won. They took the Israelites captive, took their homes and land, and moved them to Assyria.

Judgment had come upon Israel. Wicked kings had turned the heart of the people away from their God and led them into idolatry and sin--not one single king of Israel since the time of Solomon until the captivity was a good king. God had been faithful to His people, but His people had not been faithful to Him. **We should be faithful to our faithful God.**

2 KINGS 17:7-12

For so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had feared other gods,

and had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made.

Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that were not right, and they built for themselves high places in all their cities, from watchtower to fortified city.

They set up for themselves sacred pillars and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree.

There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger,

for they served idols, of which the LORD had said to them, "You shall not do this thing."

When God brought His people out of slavery in Egypt, He gave them the Ten Commandments to show them how to live. The people were taught the Ten Commandments from the time they were children. They knew and understood the law. God told them in Exodus 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before Me." God will not share our affection with any other god!

If the Israelites would follow God's commandments, He had promised to richly bless them; but if they followed the false gods of the nations around them, they were clearly warned that they would lose the blessings and become cursed. It was clearly the people's choice. Do good and be blessed or do evil and be cursed.

The Israelites were carried into captivity for one reason only—"they had sinned against the Lord." Despite God's demonstrated faithfulness time and time again—His goodness, deliverance, and provisions—they turned away from the One who had brought them out of slavery in Egypt.

They began worshipping the false gods of the nations around them and followed the sinful practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. Even when they did the right things outwardly, secretly they built places of worship and altars to the false gods and worshiped them.

2 KINGS 17:13

Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, "Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets."

God warned the people repeatedly through His prophets to turn from their sins and to follow His commands. God is faithful to warn us not to continue in sin.

Can you think of ways that the Lord has warned us, today, concerning sin? The Lord has given us the Bible. We read the words—the warnings—of the same prophets that spoke to the people in the Old Testament. God has given us His Holy Spirit. His Spirit convicts us of sin and guides us into all truth. God has given us the church—pastors and teachers. They call us and challenge us to live a life that is completely dedicated to God. Because God loves us, He is careful to warn us. May we be careful to listen to Him. **We should be faithful to our faithful God.**

2 KINGS 17:14-17

Nevertheless they would not hear, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.

And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them.

So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, made for themselves a molded image and two calves, made a wooden image and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.

And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger.

The people had become stubborn and hard hearted. They refused to listen to the prophets of God. They rejected God and His ways.

Although God had warned them against doing what the nations were doing, they bowed down to worthless idols, worshiped the sun and stars, practiced palm reading and witchcraft, and even sacrificed their children on altars to the false gods.

2 KINGS 17:18-23

Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.

Also Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made.

And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His sight.

For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin.

For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them,

until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.

God was angry with Israel because they had forsaken Him, followed other gods, and practiced terrible sins. God removed His blessing and removed the people from His presence. He allowed Assyria to capture the entire nation. They lost their homes, their possessions, their land, and even their heritage. How sad are the consequences of sin!

2 KINGS 17:24

Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities.

The king of Assyria brought people from other nations into Samaria and gave them the homes, possessions, and lands of the Israelites. They took over Samaria and moved into the Israelite homes. The land became their land.

The wonderful promises given to the people of Israel—promises that they would possess their own land and dwelling places—were lost because of their sin. We, too, if we choose the path of sin and disobedience, can miss out on the blessings that God desires to give us. **We should be faithful to our faithful God.**

Here Today, Gone Tomorrow!

When the Israelites were taken into captivity, they had to leave everything behind and begin a new life. This would not have been necessary had they only repented from their sin. This activity will help you to understand what it may have been like to be uprooted and moved to a new place.

When you get to this section (verse 24), stop the class and tell everyone that they have to move out of their places. They must leave their lesson papers, friends, and seat. Mix them up and have them sit in new places. They cannot sit with their friends! Have them finish the sheets at their new spot.

Use this to discuss with the children how they felt when they had to move, to leave work undone and to finish work started by someone else? How did they feel when they could not sit next to friends? How do they suppose the Israelites felt when they were forced to move? What can be learned from the Israelites experience?

2 KINGS 17:25-28

And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.

So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land."

Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land."

Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

The new nations who moved into Israel did not worship God, so He sent lions against them. It was reported to the king that this was happening because they did not know what God required. The king ordered a priest of Israel to come in and teach the new nations how to worship the Lord God.

2 KINGS 17:29-31

However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put them in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in the cities where they dwelt.

The men of Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima,

and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim.

The new nations brought their false gods with them. In the worship of their false gods, they practiced much evil—they even sacrificed their children to false gods.

2 KINGS 17:32-34

So they feared the LORD, and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places.

They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods; according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.

To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel,

They worshiped the Lord, but they also worshiped their gods according to the customs of their previous countries. Here we see a paradox. For one cannot worship the Lord and serve his own gods. It was only an outward form of worship. Jesus said no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). Their worship was not true!

2 KINGS 17:35-40

with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: "You shall not fear other gods, nor bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them;

"but the LORD, who brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm, Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice.

"And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods.

"And the covenant that I have made with you, you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods.

"But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies."

However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals.

When God made the covenant with Israel, He told them not to worship, serve, or sacrifice to other gods. Only the Lord God who loved them and who brought them out of Egypt had the power to deliver them from their enemies. He is all-powerful. There is no other God. Only the Lord God is worthy of true worship.

The children of Israel were told to be careful to keep the law and commandments of God. They were warned to remember the agreement and be true to God. If they did He would bless them and take care of them—He would deliver them from the hand of all their enemies.

God had clearly warned His beloved people. He had set before them the path of blessing; yet they chose the path of destruction. They worshipped and served the worthless idols of the nations around them and brought upon themselves God's judgment.

Today, we will experience many temptations to do what the world around us is doing. We want to belong and to be accepted by our friends and others. The gods of this world—pleasure, power, wealth, intellect—are idols. We cannot follow both the ways of the world and the ways of God. We must be careful not to be caught up in sins that will pull us away from God and what we have been taught in His Word, the Bible.

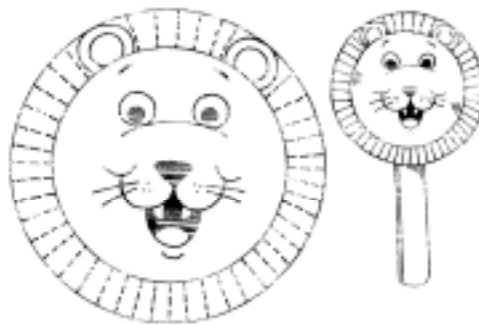
God desired the very best for Israel. God desires the very best for us! We need to make the right choice—to follow God and serve Him only! **We should be faithful to our faithful God.**

Lion Mask

You will need as many paper plates as the number of children in your class, markers or crayons, scissors, and glue.

Draw a lion's face on the paper plate as shown in the picture below. Allow the children to color with crayons or markers. Use the outer edge of the paper plate as the lion's mane. After coloring the lion cut slits along the outside edge on the perforations. This will make the mane stand out more.

Next, cut out the eyes and glue a tongue depressor to the bottom of the lion on the back of the plate. Use this mask to reinforce the theme of the lesson. When we remain faithful to the Lord, great blessing will follow.



PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow the Lord and serve Him only. Ask the Lord to help them to be diligent and not allow their hearts to drift towards the things of this world. May the Lord always keep us focused on Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.