

SUMMARY

The exile was a very sad time for the kingdom of Judah and the Israelites as a whole. It was sad because they had sinned against God by committing idolatry. For many years God had sent many prophets to warn the people of sin and idolatry. But these warnings were ignored. They continued to sin and commit idolatry. The people had a knowledge of God but they decided to ignore Him and worshipped false gods. So God punished them and kicked them out of the land.

But God's punishment was only a way to bring his people back to him. It was not the final act because God is faithful, He remembers the promises He made to Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses and King David. There is hope amongst the despair and pain.

TALK NOTES

1. "A picture tells a thousand words"

2. What the Exile teaches us



BIBLE STUDY STUDY 8 — THE EXILE

THE STORY SO FAR

So far in the story of the Old Testament, we've read about God's relationship with humans. If this is your first time with us you might find it strange to read the Bible because many names, places and events are not familiar to you. To bring you up to date with the story so far, your group leaders will summarise what we have looked at in our series. Briefly summarise the following: Creation, Sin, Exodus, Kings, Priests, Prophets (in relation to God's relationship with humans).

We continue our study of the OT overview by looking at another sad event in Israel's history. The Exile* is not to be confused with the "Exodus". The Exodus is about God's rescue, whereas the Exile is about God's punishment. You also need to know that by the time the Exile occurred, the nation of Israel had already split into the North and the South. The North had been taken over by the Assyrians for many hundreds of years. (You can read about this in 2 Kings 17.). The major books in the Bible during the Exile are Jeremiah, Daniel and Ezekiel.

* *Exile*: Living in a place that you do not regard as your home.

DISCUSS

What are your feelings about coming to Australia to study?

- a) Feeling lonely and bored. I wish there was more things to do than just study.
- b) Really happy and excited. Glad to be away from home and enjoying the independence and the opportunity to study.
- c) Feel like I don't belong here. Aussies are so strange. Everything is so different and I miss home very much.
- d) Don't feel anything. It doesn't really matter where I am ... I just don't want to study.

In your opinion, which of the answers above best describe what it feels like to be in exile?

READ 2 KINGS 24:8-25:30 (HOW THE EXILE HAPPENED).

Are there any new words or ideas that need explaining?

Who was responsible for the fall of Judah? Match the people with the appropriate action. (24:18-20)

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| the King of Judah | was angry and punished |
| God | used as an instrument of God |
| King Nebuchadnezzar | did evil and committed sin |

Who was in control of the whole situation?

- a) The King of Judah
- b) God
- c) King Nebuchadnezzar

How extensive was the destruction of Judah? What was destroyed and taken? (25:4-11)

How does God use the enemies of Judah to carry out his punishment?

How does it make you feel about God's judgment?

- a) God's judgement is too severe.
- b) God's judgement is not severe enough.
- c) God should be more patient and forgiving.
- d) God is doing the right thing, the people deserved it.
- e) I don't understand why God sometimes forgives and other times punishes.
- f) I don't understand why God uses his enemies to punish his own people. Shouldn't it be the other way around? ie God uses his people to punish his enemies?
- g) Others?

DURING THE EXILE

According to Jeremiah 44:1-6 the people were sent into exile because of idolatry.

According to the Bible, what is idolatry?

Why is idolatry so bad? (If you need help refer to Romans 1:18-25.)

RELEVANCE

Even though the Israelites knew a lot about God, they did not behave as if they really knew God, and worshipped other idols. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?

Do you think you know God or do you think know about God? Explain your answer.

Which is better: for you to know God or for God to know you?