

PARENTS' PAGE LESSON 17: The Kingdoms' Fall

Timeless Truth: *The Lord's plans always come through.*

Bible Basis: Jeremiah 1:4-10, 2:21-28, 5:1-2, 13:17-19; 2 Chronicles 36:11-16;
2 Kings 25:1-12; Lamentations 1:1, 2:17, 3:21-26; 5:1 and 15-21;
Ezekiel 1:1-2:7, 36:22-36

Key Verse: I say to myself, "The Lord is everything I will ever need. So I will put my hope in him" (Lamentations 3:24).

Resource: *The Story: Teen Edition, The Story for Kids/Children/Little Ones:* Chapter 17

Parent Tips:

Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table during the week. The Living Faith activity encourages your family to have fun drawing some of God's amazing creations. The Extra Mile looks at an all-star baseball player who rejected God, but then repented and found mercy.

Get the Point:

Preschool: God's people suffer because of their sin, but God still loves them. His love for me will never end.

Elementary: God's people suffer because of their sin, but God still loves them. His love for me will never end.

Middle School: God's judgment isn't pretty. But he also stands ready to give mercy to those who show remorse.

High School: God's judgment isn't pretty. But he also stands ready to give mercy to those who show remorse.

Table Talk

Preschool/Elementary

- Have you ever done something that you were told not to? What happened?
- God told the people in Judah and Israel many times to not worship idols. He sent prophets who warned them about what would happen. So the people turned from their wicked ways and worshiped God, right? Wrong! What did the people really do?
- Do you like it when your parents warn you about your behavior?
- Do you usually change your behavior before you get in trouble?
- God's people got in big trouble. Do you think that was fair?

Middle/High School

- We've all heard the saying, "Like father, like son." What are some ways that you're like your parents? (Parents share about similarities with their parents.) Be sure to talk about some positive attributes and some negative.
- In this chapter of *The Story*, it's like the kings tried to be the opposite of their parents. It was "like father, not like son." It was good king, bad king, good king. . . . Why do you think that happened?

- Are there any things you're doing to be set apart from your parents?
- Why do some people work hard at not following the positive character qualities of their parents?
- How can you work to embrace the good and reject the bad from the role models in your life?

Living Faith

God opened up the heavens and gave the prophet Ezekiel amazing visions. Gather your family around a table. Make sure to have an assortment of paper, crayons, colored pencils and other drawing utensils. Read all of Ezekiel 1 out loud. When you're finished, take some time to draw the creatures that he described. You can even draw the scene with the heavenly sapphire throne and glowing metal figure (Ezekiel 1:26-28). Have fun critiquing each other's work.

When you're finished, ask:

- Is it possible to describe heavenly creatures or heaven with words?
- Why can't words do God justice?
- What do these creatures say about the creativity of God? Can't you just picture these creatures in a movie or comic book?
- These creatures are called cherubim. God specially made them for a purpose. Think about other things that God made that might look weird but have a special purpose. What about ears? star-nosed moles?

When you've finished talking, read more about this scene in Ezekiel 10. Make any additions or changes to your illustrations that you want to. Hang the final products on the refrigerator for a week to remind your family of God's power and creativity.

Extra Mile

God's people knew the truth, but they turned their back on it and followed their own ways. But even as God judges his people, he looks to their redemption (see Ezekiel 36:22-36). God is a God of mercy and healing. For a personal, modern example of God's grace, watch *Home Run Derby King Josh Hamilton: From Addiction to Salvation* on YouTube. (Some of the video footage has been removed.)

Texas Rangers outfielder Josh Hamilton accepted Christ at 18, and shortly after he was picked No. 1 in the Major League Baseball draft. In the minor leagues, he got addicted to drugs and nearly lost everything: Money, fame, a beautiful wife. After years of drug abuse, Josh rededicated life to God, and God gave it all back. At the 2008 All Star Game, Josh hit a record-breaking 28 home runs in one round of the home run derby.

Watch Josh's story and then talk as a family about the similarities between his story and what happened to God's people.

- What was Josh's idol?
- How did God give everything back to Josh?
- What does this say about God's character?