

## LESSON 17: THE EXILE

### Instruction for Faith Educators

For Basic Level / Age 7	:	Cover points 1 to 6
For Intermediate Level / Age 10	:	Cover points 1 to 10
For Advanced Level / Age 13	:	Cover points 1 to 15

### Revision from previous lesson:

In the previous lesson, we learned that the kingdom of Israel was in turmoil because of the influence of their human kings. Some of the kings were good, while others were evil and corrupt and worshipped idols. In this lesson, we learn that God eventually allowed foreign powers to invade and conquer Israel because of their refusal to repent from their sins. This whole period of being ruled by oppressive empires, which lasted for more than 700 years, was called the period of exile.

### Current lesson:

1. After the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they were dissatisfied and asked God for an earthly king, so God gave them King Saul. King Saul disobeyed God and was replaced by King David. King David was a good king, but he committed sins of adultery and murder. The next king was King Solomon. He was a wise king. However, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. His wives brought idols into Israel and worshipped them. King Solomon's son, King Rehoboam, was a proud king. Instead of listening to the people, he burdened them by increasing the taxes that they were forced to pay him.
2. The people of Israel were not happy and rebelled against King Rehoboam, so the Kingdom of Israel was split into two. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel (ten tribes) and the Southern Kingdom called Judah (two tribes, i.e. Judah and Benjamin). Immorality and the worship of idols spread from the Northern Kingdom to the Southern Kingdom.
3. The people continued to sin against God by worshipping the pagan idol Moloch (or Baal), which was an idol of a wooden calf covered with gold and had an oven on its chest where children would be rolled into the flaming fire. King Ahaz of Judah sacrificed his son in this manner. Society had also become very immoral by now. Poor people were oppressed through unjust taxes, judges were bribed in their open courts, and businessmen cheated their customers by using scales that did not reflect the true weight of what they were selling.
4. God sent prophets to warn the people. The prophets of Israel were chosen by God to give a very clear message to His people. The role of a prophet was to deliver God's call of repentance and conversion to the people of their day. The prophets warned the people that if they did not give up their pagan worship and their social injustice, God would destroy their country. The prophet Amos called it "the day of the Lord".
5. Because Israel did not repent, the nation fell into the hands of five different foreign powers, one after another (the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the



Romans). One after another, Israel was ruled by oppressive empires from this point forward. This was known as the period of exile (meaning “banished”), which lasted for over 700 years.

6. The prophets that God sent to Israel throughout the period of exile continually pleaded with the people of Israel to repent from their sins by turning back to the worship of the one true God. They also promised the people that God would one day send a Saviour to save them from their sins.
7. The entire story of the exile is basically that God used foreign kings to mete out punishment upon Israel for violating their covenant with Him. Although the nation of Israel in exile had fallen into sin continually and were stubbornly refusing to repent, God did not give up on them because He loved them deeply. Despite their hard-heartedness, there were indeed faithful people who were waiting for God to raise up a Son of David and restore the Davidic Kingdom in Israel. The devout and the righteous looked to all the prophecies that had been delivered during the time of the Exile, awaiting the consolation of Israel – the coming of the new son of David, the resurrection of his fallen Kingdom.
8. God desires friendship with us. Being friends with God means loving him and worshipping Him only. It also means knowing Him and living in accordance with His will. When we live in ways that go against God’s will, we are injuring our friendship with Him, or worse still, breaking our friendship all together.
9. This is why as friends of God, we must be careful about the way we live our lives. When we allow sin to have a free hand over us and to control choices that we make, it seriously affects our friendship with God.
10. The main problem with Israel was sin. They compromised their friendship with God and their own moral life. In the same way, if we take our relationship with God lightly and do not make it a point to live a good moral life, we tend to fall into sin.
11. Sin is progressive, i.e. it gets bigger and bigger when we do not stop it. If we allow it to take its place in our lives, it takes us further than we want to go, and it will cost us more than we are willing to pay. What began as a little sin that slightly injures our friendship with God eventually grows into something that breaks our relationship with Him.
12. There are venial sins that are “less serious” sins, which arise out of weakness even if we still love God. Venial sins do injure our relationship with God but do not turn us away from Him (CCC 1855).
13. There are also mortal sins that involve the severance of our relationship with God. Mortal sins arise from hardness of heart (CCC 1864). They destroy the love that we have in our hearts and turn us away from God by willfully preferring something else to God (CCC 1855). Mortal sins can be healed only by God’s mercy and a conversion of heart that we experience through the sacrament of reconciliation (CCC 1856).

14. Venial sins, when habitually committed and condoned, eventually lead to mortal sins (CCC 1863).
15. How can we know when we have committed a mortal sin?
- A) We have committed a serious wrong – breaking the Ten Commandments (CCC 1858);
  - B) We are fully aware that what we are doing is wrong (CCC 1859);
  - C) We choose to willfully commit the wrong (CCC 1859).



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