

## Lesson X.

## THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH

September 3, 1905

2 Chronicles 36: 11-21. Commit to memory vs. 19-21.

GOLDEN TEXT—Be sure your sin will find you out.—Numbers 32: 33.

11 Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and <sup>1</sup>reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

12 And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God; <sup>2</sup>and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the Lord.

13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.

14 Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, <sup>3</sup>transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and <sup>4</sup>polluted the house of the Lord which he had hallowed in Jerusalem.

15 And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up <sup>5</sup>betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and <sup>6</sup>misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

Revised Version—<sup>1</sup>he; <sup>2</sup>he humbled not; <sup>3</sup>the; <sup>4</sup>chiefs; <sup>5</sup>trespassed very greatly; <sup>6</sup>they; <sup>7</sup>early; <sup>8</sup>scoffed at; <sup>9</sup>Chaldeans; <sup>10</sup>old man or ancient; he; <sup>11</sup>they were.

17 Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, <sup>10</sup>old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

18 And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.

19 And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; <sup>11</sup>where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia:

21 To fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.

## THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—587 B.C.; Jerusalem.

Connection—After a siege lasting a year and a half, Jerusalem was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, and its king and people were carried away captive to Babylon.

I. THE WICKED NATION. — 11, 12. Zede-

kiah; son of good King Josiah, his mother's name being Hamutal, 2 Kgs. 24: 18. One and twenty. A young man and a king—what splendid opportunities he had, and how sadly he misused them! Reigned eleven years; the last of Judah's twenty kings. In his reign the wickedness of the nation came to a head, and must be punished. Did . . . evil in the sight of the Lord. Zedekiah did not mean to be wicked, but he was too weak to stand out against the evil influence of his counsellors (see Jer. 38: 4). In this world of temptation to be weak is likely to end in being wicked. Humbled not himself before Jeremiah. The prophet had advised the king to submit to the Chaldeans, but the king had not wisdom enough, or faith enough in God, to see that this was the best course. From the mouth of the Lord. It was this that gave authority to the prophet's words. He had received them from God.

13, 14. He also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar; who had placed him on the throne, v. 10. Who had made him swear by God. This refers to the oath of allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar taken by Zedekiah, probably when he became king. Stif-

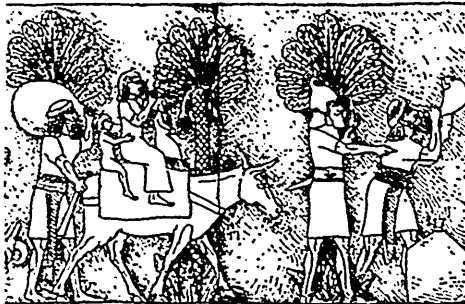
tened his neck; like an obstinate ox refusing to obey his master. Hardened his heart; becoming daily more set in his evil ways. Moreover, etc. The priests, who ought to have been leaders in the pure worship of God, and the people, were as bad as the king. Polluted the house of the Lord. (See

Ezek. 8: 10, 11, 14, 16.)

II. THE DESPISED WARNINGS. — 15, 16. The Lord God of their fathers. Surely all His past goodness should have made His people willing to listen to Him. Sent . . . messengers; His prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Rising up betimes and sending; like a man getting up early to begin some task he has set his heart on. God is eager to save His

people. Because he had compassion. His heart was full of pity when he saw the evils the people were bringing on themselves by their sin. But they mocked the messengers. See Jer. 26: 20-23; 37: 15, 16; 38: 4. Misused his prophets; Mocked them in word, besides doing them bodily harm. Till there was no remedy. Like a disease allowed to go unchecked, the people had gone so far in sin, that nothing could now save them from punishment. (Compare Jer. 25: 3-10; 35: 12-15.)

III. THE DESERVED PUNISHMENT. — 17, 18. The king of the Chaldeans (Rev. Ver.); Nebuchadnezzar. The Chaldeans were a people who lived south of Babylon by the sea; but Nebuchadnezzar's father had conquered Babylon and added it to his dominions. Hence the same people were



A Company of Prisoners