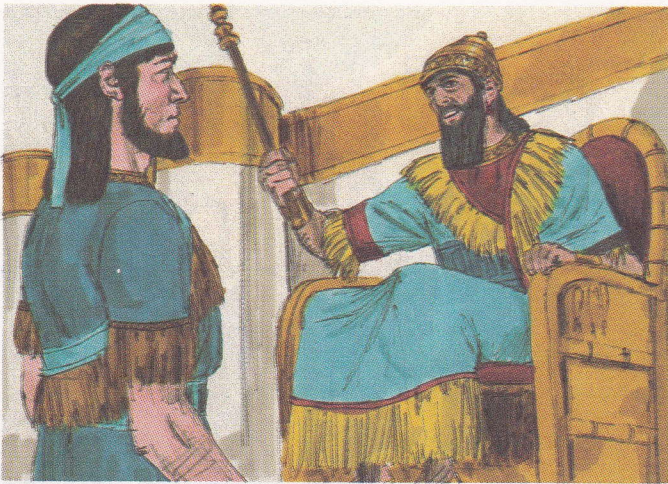
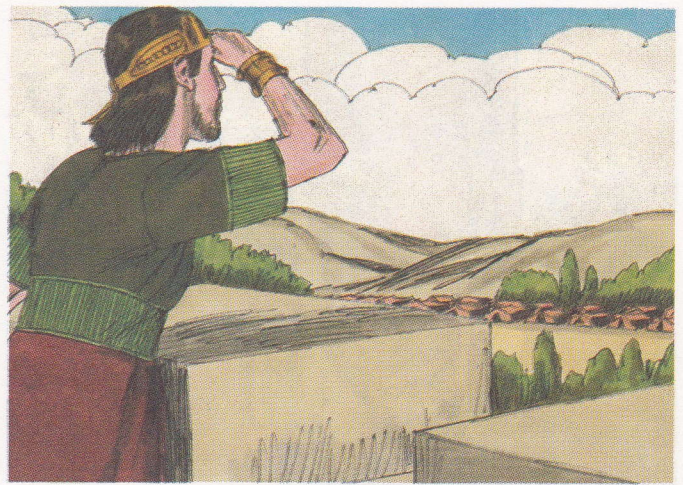


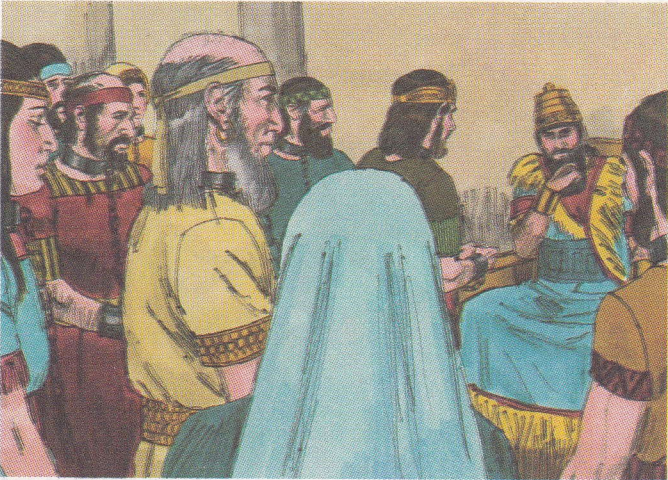
# The Fall of Jerusalem



**1** When Jehoiachin became king at the age of eighteen, the kingdom of Judah was in great danger. His father Jehoiakim had rebelled against Babylon. For a while Babylon did nothing about it.



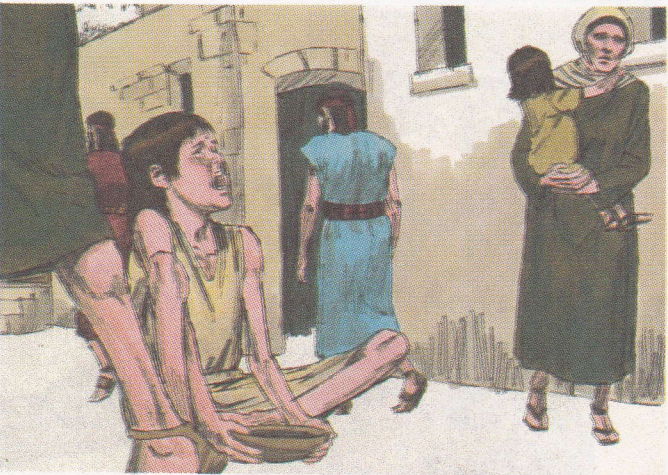
**2** But soon after Jehoiachin became king, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem. Jehoiachin had been king only three months when he had to surrender.



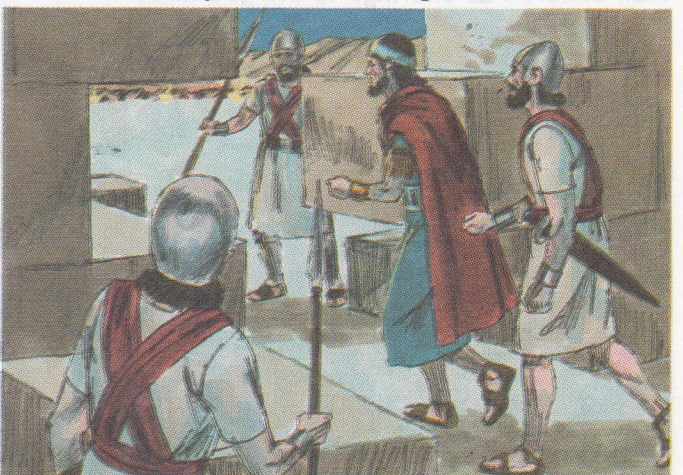
**3** Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin, his mother and wives, and many of the important men and skilled workers back to Babylon. He also carried away the treasures of the temple and palace.



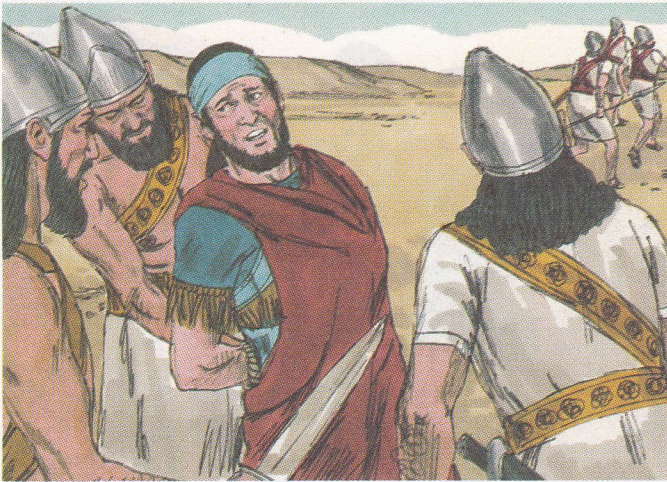
**4** Nebuchadnezzar made Zedekiah king in Jehoiachin's place. But nine years later, Zedekiah also rebelled. So the Babylonian army returned to attack the city of Jerusalem again.



**5** After two years of siege, there was nothing left in the city to eat. The people of Jerusalem were starving to death.



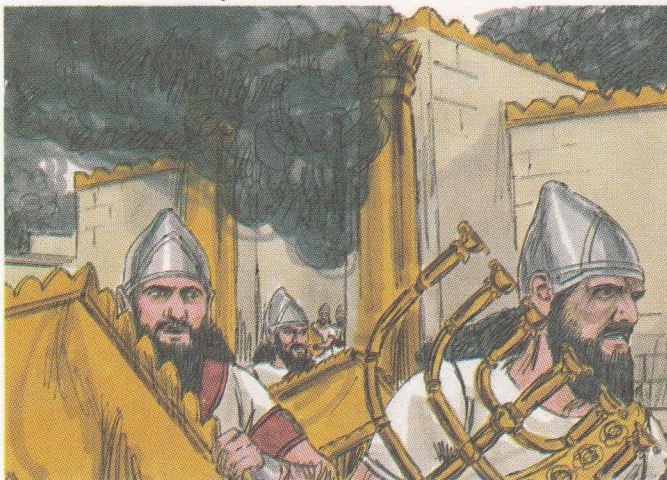
**6** Finally the Babylonians were able to break holes in the walls of the city. That night Zedekiah and many of his soldiers escaped from the city and slipped through the enemy lines in the darkness.



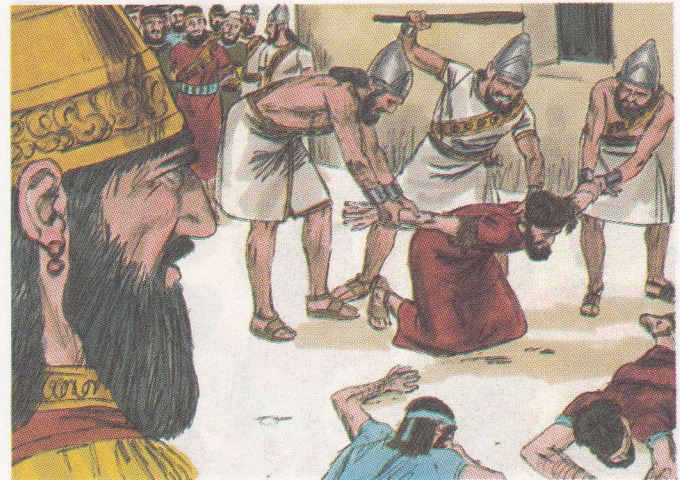
**7** But they were discovered as they raced toward the Jordan valley. The Babylonians captured King Zedekiah near Jericho. All his soldiers deserted him and ran away.



**8** The cruel Babylonians made Zedekiah watch as they put his sons to death. Then they put out Zedekiah's eyes and led him off to Babylon in chains, a prisoner.



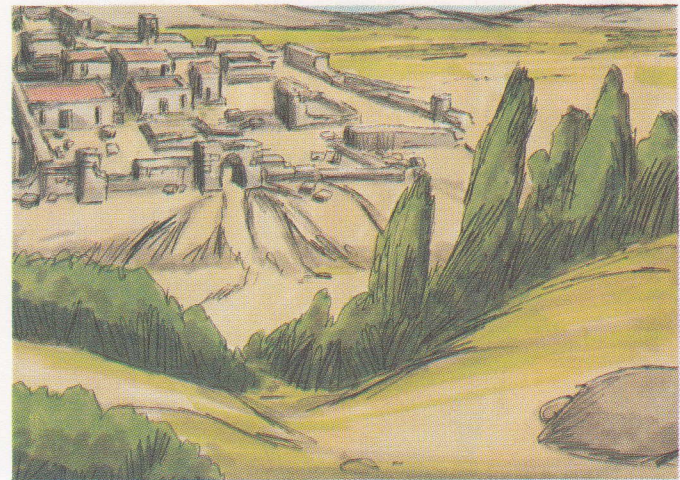
**9** Next the Babylonians entered the city. They burned down the Temple of the Lord and carried off all the objects made of gold, silver, or bronze. They burned the palace and many fine houses.



**10** The Babylonian general took the most important priests and officials of the court and commanders of the army to Nebuchadnezzar's camp. There the Babylonians beat them to death.



**11** The people of Jerusalem who were still alive were made captives and taken to Babylon. Only the poorest people were left behind to work in the fields and vineyards.



**12** Jerusalem and the Temple of the Lord lay in ruins. The people of Judah were taken into exile. The warnings of the prophets had come true. The Lord had punished his people for their sins.