



9

The Kingdom Is Divided

Key Theme

- God demands obedience and trust.

Key Passages

- Deuteronomy 17:14–17; 1 Kings 11:1–13, 11:41–43, 12:1–20

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe why God became angry with Solomon.
- Explain how the kingdom was divided.



Lesson Overview



Come On In

page 4

Write on the board, “Who would be the perfect king?”
 Students will place paper strips at Deuteronomy 17, and 1 Kings 11 and 12.
 Students will practice the memory verse.



Studying God's Word

page 4

Solomon disobeyed God when he amassed riches, gold, and silver—wealth he used for his own pleasure. He also married many wives from foreign countries who brought their gods and practices with them. Solomon turned away from God to worship the false gods of his wives. God judged his sin by tearing Israel from him. During the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, Israel was split. From this point on, the Israelites would be divided and ruled over by different kings.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Study the Prepare to Share section. | <input type="checkbox"/> Print one Class Notes Answer Key |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read through Deuteronomy 17 and 1 Kings 11–12. | <input type="checkbox"/> Print one Divided Kingdom Map |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go Before the Throne. | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Guides |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils |



Activity: Object Lessons

page 6

Students will answer questions from 1 Kings 11:26–40.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student Guides | <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils |
|---|----------------------------------|



Prepare to Share

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the lesson key passages along with this background.

God warned them it would happen. Before the Israelites even came into the Promised Land, God commanded that the future king should not gather wives and horses for himself or amass great wealth (Deuteronomy 17:14–17). When the people cried out for a king, God warned them through Samuel that a king would abuse them, making their sons and daughters his servants and taking their land and its produce (1 Samuel 8:9–18). God had been their king, but now they would be ruled by a descendant of Adam—a man with a sinful heart.

Although Solomon's reign started off well, he eventually fell into sin. He disobeyed God and did all the things God had warned that the king should not do. Solomon had many horses imported from Egypt and Keveh (or Kue) to fortify his armies (1 Kings 10:28). He gathered massive amounts of gold into his treasury, counting silver as a common metal (1 Kings 10:16–23). He married many women from all of the lands surrounding his kingdom as a way to secure alliances. He loved many women from foreign nations with whom God had prohibited the Israelites to intermarry. In fact, he had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:1–3). Solomon's sinful heart led him to violate God's clear commands, and the result was just as God had said—Solomon turned to worshipping the gods of his wives (1 Kings 11:4). Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord. Sadly, this phrase would become a common refrain regarding the kings of Israel.

As a result of his polygamous relationships and idolatrous sin, God appeared to Solomon to deliver a message of judgment. Because of Solomon's sins against God, the kingdom would be torn away from him (1 Kings 11:9–11). And yet, even in this punishment, God demonstrated His mercy and His faithful-

ness. For the sake of God's promise to David, God would wait until after Solomon's death. Solomon's son would be the one from whom the kingdom would be taken, yet one tribe would remain under his rule for David's sake (1 Kings 11:12–13).

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam took his place on the throne (1 Kings 11:41–43). What happened next sounds like the storyline of a suspense-filled drama. Jeroboam, a servant of Solomon who had fled to Egypt to escape Solomon, returned. Ahijah, a prophet from Shiloh, had told Jeroboam that the kingdom would be divided and that 10 tribes would be given to him (Jeroboam) and only one tribe would remain with Rehoboam (Solomon's son) (1 Kings 11:34–36). Jeroboam returned to Israel to serve as the advocate and spokesperson for the people before Rehoboam. The people requested that Rehoboam lighten the burdensome service his father, Solomon, had put on them (1 Kings 12:1–5).

King Rehoboam sought counsel. He received differing opinions, and his answer revealed just how dark his heart was. He announced that he would not lighten the load but would add to their burdens and oppress them even more wickedly than Solomon had (1 Kings 12:5–11).

The people would have served a just leader, but they rebelled against Rehoboam because of the severity of his answer. We see a vivid picture of God's sovereignty in the affairs of men as we read that "the king did not listen to the people for the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat" (1 Kings 12:15).

This was God's plan. God was the one who orchestrated all of these events. God used Rehoboam's foolish actions to cause the people to rebel against his kingdom. God used the sinful heart of man to bring about His purpose in the world. And how reassuring to us in a world that is tossed to and fro by many different

political leaders that our God controls the hearts of the kings. He holds those hearts in His hands—and He turns them wherever He wishes (Proverbs 21:1). What a relief to know that God is in the heavens, and He is doing whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3), and whatever He pleases is right (Genesis 18:25).

From this point forward, the Israelites would be divided and ruled over by different kings. Only the tribe of Judah remained under the authority of the line of David, and its capital was Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:20). The Southern Kingdom—consisting of one tribe—is usually referred to as Judah throughout the rest of the Old Testament. The Northern Kingdom—consisting of the remaining 10 tribes—became known as Israel. The tribe of Benjamin had divided land (and loyalties). And since the Levites did not acquire tribal land but resided in the Levitical cities, both kingdoms contained descendants from the tribe of Levi as well. The only hope to heal this division would be to bring about true healing and forgiveness through the Lion of Judah—the King of kings who came to sit on the throne of David as the perfect ruler.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

Polygamy was not uncommon at the time of Solomon. Indeed, it was a sign of wealth and status. Solomon would have taken many of his wives as symbols of treaties with other nations or tribes, but this was against God's commands to him. Solomon had written in the book of Proverbs about avoiding the sexual temptations of women, but he fell into a sinful pattern and was led to worship the gods that his wives served. He built places of worship for Ashtoreth, the fertility goddess of the Canaanites; Molech, the Ammonite god who received child sacrifice; and Chemosh, the Moabite god who also received child sacrifice. It is

clear that Solomon engaged not only in marital polygamy but also in spiritual polygamy.

On top of those sins, Solomon had taken much of his wealth from the people. His son Rehoboam compounded that sin by seeking to oppress the people even more. From that point forward, there was constant strife between the North and the South. As we move forward through these lessons, we will get a brief overview of some of the troubles in each of the kingdoms. Most of the third quarter lessons will look at the kings and prophets of Judah and Israel, demonstrating the good, the bad, and the really ugly things that happened. Through all of these events, though, we can trust that God is in control and that He was working all of these events together in a way that would ultimately lead to the coming of the perfect king—King Jesus.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



BEFORE THE THRONE

Precious Father, teach me. Solomon started so well when he asked you for wisdom. Yet, he sinned. Maybe it started with a small compromise and then snowballed. Guard me from doing the same thing. Help me to regularly evaluate the state of my heart. Reveal quickly even the smallest wicked way in me, that I would put a stop to it before I have compromised everything. Bless my students this week. Prepare them even now for the truths they will receive in this lesson. Help us all to be honest before you as we contemplate every area of our lives that we might hold as an idol before you. Give us a renewed sense of love and awe for you as we remember your sovereignty and justice.

► **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

Write on the board, “Who would be the perfect king?”

Students will place paper strips at Deuteronomy 17, 1 Kings 11 and 12.

Students will practice the memory verse by unscrambling the words on the activity sheet and then reciting the verse to each other or to the class.

This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided an activity sheet on the Resource DVD-ROM for you to use. Students should unscramble the letters of the missing words and then recite the verse to you or another student. Each week the verse will get harder to unscramble. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.



Review

As we have been studying through the Bible, we have covered roughly half of the history of the earth. We started off all of these lessons in the book of Genesis and introduced the Seven C’s of History.

? Can anyone recall those seven events we used to frame all of history? *Creation, Corruption, Catastrophe, Confusion, Christ, Cross, and Consummation. Refer to the Seven C’s of History timeline if you have one in the classroom.*

In terms of timing, we are at 1000 BC in our studies, or 3000 AM (*anno mundi*; year of

the world). Solomon finished and dedicated the temple in 1005 BC and reigned over Israel 40 years, just as his father had.

? After the period of the judges, who were the first three kings of Israel? *Saul, David, and Solomon.*

Today, we are going to look at the end of Solomon’s reign and a major shift in the history of Israel.



► Write on the board, “Who would be the perfect king?”

Studying God’s Word

READ THE WORD

Let’s read 1 Kings 11:1–13 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

Now, look back through the text, and answer questions 1–4 in your Student Guide. *Allow students time to answer the questions, then review the answers using the Class Notes Answer Key.*

? Why are there quotation marks around part of verse 2? *This is a quote from another Old Testament passage.*

1 Kings 11:1–13

? **How can we find out where this quote came from?** *Most Bibles will have a footnote that points to the passage referenced. In this case, Exodus 34:16 and Deuteronomy 7:3–4 and 17:14–17 are in mind.*

Let's look at Deuteronomy 17:14–17 to understand more about what is happening in this passage about Solomon. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Look back through the text, and answer questions 5–11 in your Student Guide. *Allow students time to answer the questions, then review the answers using the Class Notes Answer Key.*

► Careful study of Scripture should include understanding the context of quoted material.

Deuteronomy 17:14–17

Discover the Truth

Three hundred fifty years before the Israelites had even asked for a king, God had warned them about the oppression they would face under a king. That same warning was reiterated by Samuel when the Israelites sought to have a king.

Saul, David, and Solomon had all been charged by God to walk in His statutes and keep His commands so that their kingdoms would prosper. Solomon started off so well. He sought God and wisdom from God to rule, but he failed. What else would we expect from one of Adam's descendants? We all fail. We all sin. None of us follows God as He desires or perfectly obeys God's commands.

If we think we would have done better than Solomon, we are probably deceiving ourselves and not recognizing how many ways we seek our own idols to worship. We may not have 1,000 wives, but we, too, often allow our hearts to be turned away to seek our own pleasures and worship idols just as Solomon did.



READ THE WORD

Solomon's reign ended as recorded in 1 Kings 11:41–43. *Read the passage aloud.*

Solomon's son Rehoboam was the next king, but his rule was cut short. Let's read 1 Kings 12:1–20 to learn about what happened. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

1 Kings 11:41–43

1 Kings 12:1–20

EXAMINE THE WORD

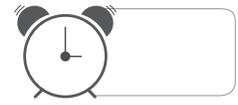
Observe the Text

Look back through the text, and answer questions 12–21 in your Student Guide. *Allow students time to answer the questions, then review the answers using the Class Notes Answer Key.*

Discover the Truth

Rehoboam acted just as Solomon had and just as God had warned. The desire to seize more power and wealth for himself took control of him. He chose to reject God's commands and to mistreat the people put under his care. As a result of his disobedience, Rehoboam faced a significant

consequence—he lost the majority of his kingdom and introduced a major division in the nation of Israel. From this point on, the Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, was at war with the Southern Kingdom, known as Judah. Rehoboam’s foolishness had dire consequences for all of those under his authority and for future generations—whether they liked it or not. As was true with his father, Rehoboam was not a perfect king.



Object Lessons

MATERIALS

- Student Guides
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Let’s answer the question we asked a minute ago. If you didn’t notice, we skipped over a big chunk of the text in chapter 11. I would like you to read over 1 Kings 11:26–40—the part we skipped earlier—to answer the question: Why was it necessary for Rehoboam to act harshly toward the Israelites?

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

The students will be answering the questions below from the text. Spend as much time as you think necessary answering these specific points, but make sure the focus is on how God’s intent was accomplished through Rehoboam’s actions.

1. **Who was Jeroboam?** *He was a servant of Solomon.*
2. **Who was Ahijah?** *He was a prophet.*
3. **What object did Ahijah use to prophesy about the future?** *He tore a garment into 12 pieces, giving 10 pieces to Jeroboam.*
4. **Why was it torn into 12 pieces?** *To represent the 12 Tribes of Israel who inherited the Promised Land.*
5. **What is important about Jerusalem?** *God chose it as a special place.*

6. **Why did Jeroboam go to Egypt?** *Solomon wanted to kill him, so he fled to Egypt for refuge.*

7. **In light of all that we have studied today, why did Rehoboam have to respond harshly to the Israelites?** *God had already ordained that the kingdom, apart from one tribe, would be taken from Solomon’s son (1 Kings 11:11–13). He had affirmed this with the prophecy delivered to Jeroboam through Ahijah (1 Kings 11:29–39) and then confirmed it in 1 Kings 12:15 where we read that the events were from the Lord.*

Here we have one of the most complex of the divine mysteries revealed to us in Scripture. God is sovereign over His creation—humans being part of that creation—and directs the events of history as He sees fit. At the same time, Rehoboam acted within his own sinful nature and he was accountable for his foolishness that brought about what God had intended.

There is a tension in Scripture between the responsibility of man for his actions and the sovereign direction of God over the affairs of man. Knowing the wise and omniscient character of God, we must trust Him to run the universe as He sees fit. We must agree with Psalm 115:3 and affirm that “our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.” And His actions are in line with His character—holy, wise, and good.





Applying God's Word

WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

Saul failed. David failed. Solomon failed. Rehoboam failed. See the pattern? None of them perfectly obeyed God. None of them were perfect kings. None of us would be perfect rulers.

The results of Solomon and Rehoboam's failure to obey God were dramatic. The kingdom of Israel would be permanently split into Israel in the North and Judah in the South. David's line would rule over Judah until its destruction, and various lines of kings would rule in Israel until its destruction. All of the hardship found in the rest of the accounts of Israel and Judah spun off of this series of sinful actions from the kings.

But there was hope! There was a king who would come from David's line who would sit in perfect judgment and perfectly obey the will of God the Father. King Jesus was coming to sit on the throne of David, but there was another 1,000 years to go before His first coming. Even now, we are waiting for the return of the King to finally reign in justice and righteousness, but a discussion of that will have to wait for a later lesson.

As we continue to move forward, we will be looking at a complex history that involves a Northern and Southern kingdom. As you can see on this History of Israel poster, this split happened in 975 BC. The events recorded in Scripture are a mix of things happening in the North and the South, so we will try to sort them out a bit in Quarter 3 of our lessons.

As you can see on this map, Israel in the North was ruled by Jeroboam and consisted of 10 tribes: Asher, Naphtali, Zebulun, Issachar, Manasseh, Gad, Ephraim, Dan, Reuben, and Simeon. Rehoboam ruled the tribe of Judah and Benjamin in the South.

Note: It appears that some of the tribe of Simeon, though originally allotted land within the borders of Judah, had migrated north and become aligned with Israel (see Genesis 49:5–7 and 2 Chronicles 15:9), while others became assimilated into Judah (1 Chronicles 4:24–33). Benjamin was split between the two kingdoms, but is usually listed along with Judah as part of the Southern Kingdom (e.g., 1 Kings 12:21; 2 Chronicles 15:2).

If you are wondering where the tribe of the Levites went, they did not have a specific land, but were scattered about and served in Jerusalem.

As we keep moving through the Scriptures, we will continue to see how God was involved at every twist and turn and how all of these events are leading us to a climax as King Jesus comes into the world.

➤ Refer to the History of Israel poster to show the split in the kingdom at 975 BC.

➤ Refer to the Divided Kingdom Map from the Resource DVD-ROM.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

- ? **How do the actions of Solomon and Rehoboam expose their sin of unbelief?** *Rather than trusting what God had revealed to them as truth, they followed their own paths and lived their lives as if they did not believe what God had said or what He had promised to them. This is the root of all sin in our lives—not believing and obeying what God has said.*
- ? **Solomon was warned that having wives from other nations would be a snare that would lead him to worship false gods—idols. What are some of the things in your life (or in our society) that you know are forbidden, but you keep toying with in unbelief, thinking that they will bring pleasure rather than destruction?** *Our lives and society are filled with dangerous things that we tend to flirt with. If a movie only has a little bit of violence or language or nudity or whatever, we tend to justify watching it. If going to the mall with friends leads to gossip or will present many opportunities to lust, we go anyway. Discuss other answers such as sports, Hollywood, pleasure, wealth, etc.*
- ? **Many people often claim that it is unfair that we should suffer for something Adam did. Knowing that Rehoboam's bad decision brought about war and division among the Israelites for centuries to come, how can we draw an analogy to help people understand the universal effects of sin that came through Adam to all his descendants?** *Whether we like it or not, we face the consequences of decisions made by those in authority over us. Whether from parents, governors, or presidents, poor decisions will always lead to negative consequences. That is the nature of sin—it never impacts a single person, but has a ripple effect. Sin has consequences, and we are experiencing the consequences of Adam, who was the head of our race. This can be connected to the gospel. We can switch allegiances and be placed under the headship of Christ and receive forgiveness because of what He has done on the Cross. Just as Adam's sin has been imputed to us, so Christ's righteousness can be imputed to us when we repent and trust in Him.*

? When we compare the kings and rulers of men to King Jesus, we can easily recognize how far short these earthly kings fall. Why do we, as people, tend to put so much trust in what a new king (president/governor/senator/council member) can do to change the future? *While God has placed governments in authority over men, we must not put our hope in a man to save us from our circumstances. All leaders will be sinful and fall short of God's standard. While we can seek to have a just government, we should ultimately be looking for hope in Christ alone. He will return one day to bring about the restoration of all things from the curse of sin.*

? How does knowing that King Jesus is coming back to fully establish His kingdom give you hope for the future? *In light of all of the troubles brought about from the conflict among and within governments, and knowing that earthly kings will always fall short, we can look forward to the blessed appearing of Christ (2 Timothy 4:1–8; Titus 2:11–14). The hope of His coming and the consummation of all things should give us great hope for a future free of sin and the curse.*



MEMORY VERSE

1 Chronicles 29:10–11 Therefore David blessed the Lord before all the assembly; and David said: “Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all.”



GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for giving us hope in the midst of a corrupt world.
- Praise God for the hope of the appearing of King Jesus.
- Ask God for wisdom in sharing the hope found in Christ as King of kings.

