

Calvary Chapel  Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

Kindergarten

Sunday Morning

Study 37

The Kingdom Divided

The Kingdom Divided

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to demonstrate the importance of surrounding yourself with godly people using the story of Israel's division.

Key Verses

1 Kings 12—Main Teaching Passage

1 Kings 11:1-13 (background)

Memory Verse - James 1:5 NIRV (May Memory Verse)

"If any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. He will give it to you."

Hook

Choose a volunteer and ask them a question they probably won't know the answer to, such as how many presidents have their been in the U.S. (46). Tell them that they can ask anyone in the class to give them the answer. After the child answers, point out whether they asked an adult or child for help. Ask if that was a good decision. In answering that question, the child had to determine who could best help answer the question. They needed to pick someone wise. In today's story, the kings we will read about also needed someone wise.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

So far, we have seen the good side of Solomon. However, in 1 Kings 11 we find out that he had a problem. Solomon married many wives, and these wives caused his heart to fall away from the Lord and serve other gods. Because of this, the Lord told him that the kingdom would be divided.

1 Kings 12 begins with the rule of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Many of the Israelites came to Rehoboam once he was king and asked if he could lighten the intense labor requirements that Solomon had put on the people. Rehoboam sent them away for three days so he could think about it. First, he asked some of his older advisors who had helped his father Solomon. They recommended making the people's burdens lighter. However, Rehoboam chose to ignore their advice and went to his younger friends. They suggested increasing the labor, and Rehoboam agreed. He told the Israelites that their burdens would be greater.

When the Israelites heard this, they began to rebel and said that they no longer wanted a son of David as king. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal. Rehoboam sent a man to oversee the labor, but the Israelites got together and stoned him. Rehoboam got angry and prepared his army, but the Lord told him not to fight. From that day forward, Israel was divided. Judah and Benjamin remained under the rule of Rehoboam and were known as Judah. The remaining tribes kept the name Israel and chose a new king to rule over them named Jeroboam.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

In today's story, we saw two steps that led to the splitting up of the two kingdoms of Israel. First, Solomon's wives led him away from the Lord, which resulted in God announcing the judgment. Then, Rehoboam listened to his friends rather than the wise elders, which caused God to enact His judgment and split Israel. Common to these two stories is the presence of negative influences who turned the two kings' hearts away from the Lord.

There are two different kinds of bad influences in this story. Solomon's wives were bad influences because they worshipped other gods. They did not believe in the same God as Solomon. Because he allowed these women to influence him, Solomon stopped serving the Lord and turned to worshipping their gods. Unbelieving friends and influences will always move believers' hearts away from the Lord. The more time you spend with them, the more likely it is that their non-Christian beliefs will rub off on you.

The problem with Rehoboam's influences is that he listened to his young friends rather than seeking older, wiser counsel. The old men had

LOOK (Continued)

years of wisdom behind them. They had experience that really could have benefitted Rehoboam. Rehoboam's friends were young and lacked that experience. The problem was not with the friends' age but with their wisdom, for some people are wise beyond their years and some older people can be foolish. However, in general, older people tend to be wiser.

As kids, it is important to make sure that the students surround themselves with godly, wise influences. If you surround yourself with godly people and have some adults in your life (parents, grandparents, Sunday School teachers) who are wise and love the Lord, they will help you to obey and follow God. On the other hand, surrounding yourself with unbelievers and taking advice from friends can be dangerous. Many times, our friends can cause us to be tempted and sin. The Bible tells us that it is important to choose carefully what kind of people we spend time with. This does not mean that we can't have unbelieving friends, but we need to make sure that we are pointing them to God, not letting them influence us in ways that displease the Lord.

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class to describe the kind of person that would be a good influence. Then have them describe a bad influence.

Pray: Thank the Lord for placing godly people in our lives. Ask Him for wisdom to surround ourselves with good influences.

Parent Question: Why is it important to have wise, godly friends?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on 1 Kings 12 by David Guzik

REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM

A. Rehoboam and the division of Israel.

1. ([1 Kings 12:1-5](#)) The elders of Israel offer Rehoboam the throne of Israel.

And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.” So he said to them, “Depart *for* three days, then come back to me.” And the people departed.

a. **Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king:** This was a logical continuation of the Davidic dynasty. Solomon succeeded David, and now **Rehoboam**, the son of Solomon, was assumed to be the next king.

i. Rehoboam was the only son of Solomon that we know by name. Solomon had 1,000 wives and concubines, yet we read of *one son* he had to bear up his name, and he was a fool. This demonstrates that sin is a bad way of building up a family.

ii. “It is difficult to believe that he had no other sons; yet it is a fact that Rehoboam is the only one mentioned ([1 Chronicles 3:10](#)).” (Knapp)

iii. **Shechem** was a city with a rich history. Abraham worshipped there ([Genesis 12:6](#)). Jacob built an altar and purchased land there ([Genesis 33:18-20](#)). Joseph was buried there ([Joshua 24:32](#)). It was also the geographical center of the northern tribes. All in all, it showed that Rehoboam was in a position of weakness, having to meet the ten northern tribes on *their* territory, instead of demanding that representatives come to Jerusalem.

b. **When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it:** Jeroboam was mentioned previously in [1 Kings 11:26-40](#). God told him through a prophet that he would rule over a portion of a divided Israel. Naturally, Jeroboam was interested in Solomon’s successor. He was specifically part of the group of elders that addressed Rehoboam.

c. **Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father:** Solomon was a great king, but he *took* a lot from the people. The people of Israel wanted relief from the heavy taxation and forced service of Solomon’s reign, and they offered allegiance to Rehoboam if he agreed to this.

i. God warned Israel about this in [1 Samuel 8:10-19](#), when through Samuel He spoke of what a king would *take* from Israel. After the warning, the people still wanted a king, and now they knew what it was like to be ruled by a *taking* king.

ii. Sadly, the elders of Israel made no *spiritual* demand or request on Rehoboam. Seemingly, the gross idolatry and apostasy of Solomon didn’t bother them at all.

2. ([1 Kings 12:6-7](#)) The counsel from Rehoboam’s older advisors.

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, “How do you advise *me* to answer these people?” And they spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”

a. **Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived:** Wisely, Rehoboam asked the counsel of these older, experienced men. They seemed to advise Solomon well, so it was fitting that Rehoboam asked for their advice.

b. **If you will be a servant to these people today... then they will be your servants forever:** The elders knew that Rehoboam was not Solomon, and could not expect the same from the people that Solomon did. Rehoboam had to relate to the people based on who *he* was, not on who his father was. If he showed kindness and a servant’s heart to the people, they would love and serve him forever. This was good advice.

3. [\(1 Kings 12:8-11\)](#) The counsel from Rehoboam’s younger advisors.

But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, “What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us’?” Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us’ — thus you shall say to them: ‘My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father’s waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!’”

a. **But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men:** Before Rehoboam ever consulted with the younger men, **he rejected the advice** of the elders.

i. This is a common phenomenon today — what some call *advice shopping*. The idea is that you keep asking different people for advice until you find someone who will tell you what you want to hear. This is an unwise and ungodly way to get counsel. It is better to have a few trusted counselors you will listen to even when they tell you what you don’t want to hear.

b. **And consulted the young men who had grown up with him:** These men were much more likely to tell Rehoboam what he already thought. By turning to those likely to think just as he did, it shows that Rehoboam only asked for advice for the sake of appearances

i. Their unwise advice shows the wisdom of seeking counsel from those *outside* our immediate situation and context. Sometimes an outsider can see things more clearly than those who share our same experiences.

c. **And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke:** The younger men offered the opposite advice to the elders. They suggested an adversarial approach, one that would make Rehoboam more feared than Solomon was.

i. Solomon asked a lot of Israel, in both taxes and service. Yet we don’t have the impression that Israel followed Solomon out of fear, but out of a sense of shared vision and purpose. They believed in what Solomon wanted to do, and were willing to sacrifice to accomplish it. Rehoboam did not appeal to any sense of shared vision and purpose — he simply wanted the people to follow his orders out of the fear of a tyrant.

ii. “With a dozen rash words, Rehoboam, the bungling dictator, opened the door for four hundred years of strife, weakness, and, eventually, the destruction of the entire nation.” (Dilday)

4. [\(1 Kings 12:12-15\)](#) Rehoboam answers Jeroboam and the elders of Israel harshly.

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me the third day.” Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips,

but I will chastise you with scourges!" So 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.

a. **So the king did not listen to the people:** In this case, Rehoboam clearly should have listened to the people. This is not to say that a leader should always lead by popular vote, but a leader needs the wisdom to know when what the people want is actually best for them.

i. Rehoboam was a fool. Ironically, his father Solomon worried about losing all he worked for under a foolish successor: *Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity* ([Ecclesiastes 2:18-19](#)).

b. **For the turn of events was from the LORD:** God managed this whole series of events, but He did not *make* Rehoboam take this unwise and sinful action. God simply left Rehoboam alone and allowed him to make the critical errors his sinful heart *wanted* to make.

i. "Notice also, dear friends, that God is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon's sin and Rehoboam's folly; yet God was in it: "This thing is from me, saith the Lord." God had nothing to do with the sin or the folly, but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, God was in it all." (Spurgeon)

5. ([1 Kings 12:16-19](#)) Rehoboam is rejected as king over the ten northern tribes.

Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?

We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, O Israel!

Now, see to your own house, O David!"

So Israel departed to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

a. **What share have we in David:** Rehoboam's foolishness made Israel reject not only Rehoboam, but also the entire dynasty of David. They rejected the descendants of Israel's greatest king.

b. **King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones:** Apparently, Rehoboam did not take the rebellions seriously until this happened. When his chief tax collector was murdered, he knew that the ten tribes were serious about their rebellion.

i. Adoram was the wrong man for Rehoboam to send. He was famous for his harsh policy of forced labor ([1 Kings 4:6](#) and [5:14](#)). Rehoboam probably sent Adoram because he wanted to make good on his promise to punish those who opposed him. His tough-guy policy didn't work.

c. **So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day:** From this point on in the history of Israel, the name "Israel" referred to the ten northern tribes and the name "Judah" referred to the southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah.

i. There was a long-standing tension between the ten northern tribes and the combined group of Judah and Benjamin. There were two earlier rebellions along this line of potential division in the days after Absalom's rebellion ([2 Samuel 19:40-43](#)), which developed into the rebellion of Sheba ([2 Samuel 20:1-2](#)).

ii. "Rehoboam ought to have been thankful that God's love to David had left him even two tribes." (Knapp)

6. ([1 Kings 12:20-24](#)) Rehoboam attempts to re-unify the nation by force.

Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, “Thus says the LORD: “You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.”” Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

a. **When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king:** Thus, the prophecy of Ahijah in [1 Kings 11:29-39](#) was fulfilled. At the time the prophecy was made, it seemed unlikely — but God’s word through His prophet was fulfilled.

i. This King Jeroboam is sometimes called Jeroboam I to distinguish him from a later king of Israel also named Jeroboam, usually known as Jeroboam II ([2 Kings 14:23-29](#)).

b. **To fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam:** Rehoboam intended to make war against the seceding tribes of Israel, but God spoke through a prophet and stopped him. To his credit — or perhaps due to a lack of courage — Rehoboam listened to God’s word through **Shemaiah the man of God**.

i. “Here is one Shemaiah, — some of you never heard of him before, perhaps you will never hear of him again; he appears once in this history, and then he vanishes; he comes, and he goes, — only fancy this one man constraining to peace a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, warriors ready to fight against the house of Israel, by giving to them in very plain, unpolished words, the simple command of God... Why have we not such power? Peradventure, brethren, we do not always speak in the name of the Lord, or speak God’s Word as God’s Word. If we are simply tellers out of our own thoughts, why should men mind us?” (Spurgeon)

B. Jeroboam’s idolatry.

1. ([1 Kings 12:25](#)) Jeroboam’s new capital — Shechem.

Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel.

a. **Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim:** Jeroboam needed a capital city because Jerusalem was in the territory of Judah and Benjamin. The city of **Shechem** became the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.

b. **He went out from there and built Penuel:** It seems that Jeroboam’s reign began with energy and opportunity. He had a significant promise from God through the prophet Ahijah: that *if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you* ([1 Kings 11:38](#)).

2. ([1 Kings 12:26-29](#)) Jeroboam makes a religion to serve the state.

And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.” Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

a. **If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this**

people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam: The fact of the divided kingdom did not mean that the northern tribes were exempt from their covenant obligations. They were under the Law of Moses as much as the southern tribes, but Jeroboam feared the *political* implications of yearly trips down to the capital city of the southern kingdom of Judah.

b. **They will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah:** Jeroboam seems to forget or ignore the promise God made to him through the prophet Ahijah recorded in [1 Kings 11](#). Jeroboam could best secure his throne by radical obedience to God, not by leading the ten northern tribes into idolatry.

c. **Therefore the king asked advice:** There was no point in asking advice for this evil purpose. Jeroboam wanted advice on how to do a bad thing in the best way.

i. Jeroboam was even more foolish than it first appears. “It literally says, “Therefore the king took counsel of *himself*” (Dilday). “The phrase discovers the fountain of his error, that he did not consult with God, who had given him the kingdom; as in all reason, and justice, and gratitude he should have done” (Poole).

d. **It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt:** Jeroboam appealed to their natural desire for *convenience*. Men will usually take the easy way out when they can; therefore, it was thought to be good if an idol in Bethel or Dan could replace the trip all the way to Jerusalem.

i. Jeroboam became an example of a political leader who shapes religion for his own purpose. The issue of *true* religion was unimportant to Jeroboam; he was interested in *useful* religion.

ii. **Here are your gods, O Israel:** Jeroboam repeated the same words of Aaron about 500 years before his time ([Exodus 32:4](#)).

iii. It is possible — perhaps even likely — that Jeroboam intended the gold calves to represent the God of Israel. This wasn't the introduction of a *new* god, but a perversion of the proper worship of the true God. “Men are willing to worship God if they are allowed to have a ritual and symbols which they have themselves devised” (Spurgeon).

3. ([1 Kings 12:30-33](#)) The establishment of Jeroboam's religion.

Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

a. **Now this thing became a sin:** It was a sin when Jeroboam suggested it, but it was *more* of a sin when the people followed it. The people were so attracted to the religion of Jeroboam that they went **as far as Dan** (at the far north of Israel) to worship at the shrine of the golden calf there.

b. **He made shrines on the high places:** Jeroboam made more places of worship than the main centers at Bethel and Dan. These **high places** were even more convenient for the people.

c. **Made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi:** Jeroboam rejected the commandments of God regarding the priesthood of Israel, and established a priesthood of his own liking.

i. The legitimate priests and Levites who lived in the northern ten tribes did not like this. They, along with others who *set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel*, moved from the northern kingdom of Israel to the southern kingdom of Judah during this period ([2 Chronicles 11:13-16](#)). Spiritually speaking, Israel was struck twice — by the ungodly religion of Jeroboam and by the departure of the godly and faithful. There were few godly people left in the northern kingdom.

ii. “He felt he could afford to let priests and worshippers whose standards were higher abandon their possessions and go south to Judah (cf. [2 Chronicles 11:13ff.](#).)” (Payne)

iii. “Viewed even as a stroke of policy, this ejection of the Lord’s priests and Levites was a blunder. They went over in a body, almost, to Jeroboam’s rival, and thereby ‘strengthened the kingdom of Judah.’” (Knapp)

d. **In the month which he had devised in his own heart:** This is a good summary of Jeroboam’s religion — it was **devised in his own heart**. Jeroboam is an example of those who create their own religion according to their own taste.

i. For the most part, the world embraces the religion of Jeroboam. Not necessarily his particular expression of golden calves and high places, but a religion created according to taste. In the book *Habits of the Heart*, Robert Bellah and his colleagues interviewed a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they described as representing many Americans’ experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life she said, “I believe in God. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is ‘Sheilaism.’ Just my own little voice.” This “pick-and-choose-as-I-go-along-according-to-my-inner-voice” approach is the modern version of Jeroboam’s religion — and in opposition to the *revealed* religion of the Bible.

ii. Therefore, it was natural that Jeroboam served as his own priest (**and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense**). “Jeroboam probably performed the functions of high priest himself, that he might in his own person condense the civil and ecclesiastical power” (Clarke).