

OT Survey Class 8 The Divided Kingdom

Introduction – This is part eight of a 12 part lesson on the survey of the Old Testament. Today we are going to be discussing the Divided Kingdom. Last week we looked at the beginning of the monarchy with Saul as first King then God's choice to place David on the throne. This week we're going to look at what split the one kingdom into two – Israel to the North and Judah to the South.

Before we do, I want to take a minute to give credit to the entire New Hampshire Teaching Team. There are 11 of us total.

- Steve and Laura Smith from Portsmouth
- John and Anne Eule
- John Tejada
- Dave Lelesi
- John and Karen Oates
- Tom Roy
- Wendy Lecat
- (me) Shawn Sommerkamp

Dave and I have been doing the presenting here in front of the church but we don't do the research and material preparation for each class. This has been divvied up among the group. I wanted to take a minute to recognize the folks who developed the material so far other than me and Dave:

- OT Introduction Class 1: Steve Smith
- Exodus: John Eule
- Poetry: Tom Roy
- United Kingdom from last week: Anne Eule
- Divided Kingdom this week: Wendy Lecat

Each of these folks have put in many hours of digging and research and careful analysis then presented their material to the NHTT. The NHTT then made recommendations on edits and Dave and I presented it. So, when you have the chance, give them a big hug. They are using their talents to serve God! Amen.

The Divided Kingdom

This lesson basically takes place in the OT books of Kings and Chronicles. To understand how the kingdom divided, we have to start with Solomon.

Solomon was the second son of David and Bathsheba and succeeded David as the next king of the united nation of Israel. This was approximately 961BC.

He got off to a really strong start as king. Anyone care to guess why?

He humbled himself before God and asked for wisdom to govern the people. He could have asked God for anything but he asked for wisdom. This made God very happy:

1 Kings 3:10-12,14

¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.- ¹⁴ And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."

Now, let's jump down to:

1 Kings 4:29

²⁹ God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. ³⁰ Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. ³² He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. ³³ He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. ³⁴ Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

God granted Solomon's request for wisdom and this marked the beginning of a glorious blessed time in Israel's history.

1 Kings 4:20-21, 25

²⁰ The people of Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand on the seashore; they ate, they drank and they were happy. ²¹ And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. These countries brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life. ²⁵ During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree.

So, you see, life was good, very good, for the people.

This is significant when we consider their recent history. Remember:

1. They were led out of captivity by Moses (Exodus)
2. They botched their first chance to enter the promised land because of fear/faithlessness
3. That generation was made to wander in the desert for 40 years (Numbers)
4. When that generation was all gone, Moses took them to the edge of the Promised Land to the Jordan, where he reminded the new generation of God's actions and all his laws (Deuteronomy)
5. Moses dies and their new leader, Joshua, take them into Canaan, the promised land, and as one nation they conquer all the peoples with detestable and godless practices (Joshua)
6. By the middle of the book of Joshua, they were dividing up the land, a piece for each of the 12 tribes, who were then instructed to drive out the remaining detestable inhabitants (Joshua)
7. They didn't do it...instead they did what? Made peace treaties with them (Judges)
8. They started doing the detestable things their new friends were doing so God raised up Judges to bring them back from the brink (Judges)
9. The last judge was Samuel and then they demanded a king like everyone else had. Out popped Saul (The Book of Samuel)

Peace was in the land. The wars were over. The new king was wiser than any king that ever lived. The timing was just right to build the holy temple for God.

1 Kings 5:4-5

⁴ But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster. ⁵ I intend, therefore, to build a temple for the Name of the LORD my God, as the LORD told my father David, when he said, 'Your son whom I will put on the throne in your place will build the temple for my Name.'

And that's what Solomon did. He built God a beautiful temple of stone, cedar, pine, olive wood and gold.

1 Kings 9:1-9

¹ When Solomon had finished building the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, ² the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³ The LORD said to him: "I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there. ⁴ "As for you, if you walk before me in integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all I command and observe my decrees and laws, ⁵ I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever, as I promised David your father when I said, 'You shall never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' ⁶ "But if you or your sons turn away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you and go off to serve other gods and worship them, ⁷ then I will cut off Israel from the land I have given them and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my Name. Israel will then become a byword and an object of ridicule among all peoples. ⁸ And though this temple is now imposing, all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff and say, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?' ⁹ People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought all this disaster on them.' "

Once again God reminds Solomon to follow all His commands, decrees and laws.

Obedience - God promises to establish Solomon's royal throne over Israel forever
Disobedience - God would cut off Israel from the land and reject the temple

Pretty simple, Solomon can make one of two choices: Obey or Disobey

Q: Which choice do you think Solomon makes?

A: Lets look further into God's word to find out:

We're going to jump between Deuteronomy (Law of Moses) and the story of Solomon in 1Kings three times to compare God's law with Solomon's life. Let's start with:

Deuteronomy 17:16

¹⁶ The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."

1 Kings 10:26,28a

²⁶ Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses, which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ²⁸ Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt.

Strike One

Deuteronomy 17:17a

¹⁷ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.

1 Kings 11:1-3

¹ King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter—Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ² They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

Strike Two

Deuteronomy 17:17b

He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

1 Kings 10:14-15,22

¹⁴ The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents, ¹⁵ not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the land. ²² The king had a fleet of trading ships at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

Strike Three

Q: How did this happen? How did the wisest man on the face of the earth fall into this?

1 Kings 11:4

⁴ As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

God gave him the commands as clear as can be. Unlike us, Solomon was given the commands directly by God when God appeared to him, twice. Like Solomon, we also have no excuse because we have the word of God made more certain. Solomon forgot about God's word. He neglected it:

Deuteronomy 17:18-20

¹⁸ When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. ¹⁹ It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees ²⁰ and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

He is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law – the men have been hearing Mike Villars urging us to journal and write down what we are learning and seeing in God's word. Why? So what happens to Solomon doesn't happen to us.

Q: What do you think it means there in Deuteronomy when it says, "...and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left"?

A: Our nature is to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.

Remember Jesus' parable of the **Pharisee and the Tax Collector**:

Luke 18:9-14

⁹To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: ¹⁰"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' ¹³"But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' ¹⁴"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Solomon let his own desires and pleasures distract him from remembering God's word. It really is that simple. We can say it was the wives per se but that was more of a symptom of something much bigger. He lost his humility and he exalted himself. He thought he was better than others and didn't need to read the Bible daily, go to midweek service, be involved in the prayer and fasting chain etc. He craved worldly things and didn't cling to God's word.

That's the progression of sin you read about in James 1:15.

James 1:13-15

¹³When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Q: Do you have God's word with you, reading it daily so that you have it written on the scroll that is in your mind and on your heart? Are the temptations always creeping at your door trying to take you over?

Solomon's failure to stay faithful to God's word first divides his own heart, yes...but much more in that it ultimately divides his kingdom.

When we drift from God's word we not only hurt ourselves but our entire kingdom as well. It's unavoidable.

1 Kings 11:9-13

⁹ The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹ So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. ¹² Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Q: What does God mean by, "for the sake of Jerusalem for which I have chosen?"

A: It's a reference to the tribe of Judah, where the throne of David was. This would become the headquarters for the Southern two tribes of Judah (Benjamin and Judah) and ultimately where he would fulfill his promise first to Adam then to Abraham to being the deliverer, the redeemer, Jesus Christ.

God raises up adversaries against Solomon, the strongest of which is Jeroboam, Solomon's official. God sends a prophet to Jeroboam, Ahijah. When they meet, Ahijah takes his cloak and rips it into 12 pieces.

1 Kings 11:31-33

³¹ Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. ³² But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. ³³ I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molech the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my statutes and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

This is the exact point when the kingdom starts splitting into two. God tells him he is giving ten tribes to him to rule but would leave one tribe in Solomon's hands.

One thing that stands out to me here is the reference to "they". The people joined the king in turning away from the one true God.

Q: How important is it for us to have Godly leadership?

A: Very important! Amen. However, it is each individual's obedience to God that counts ultimately.

Back to Jeroboam

1 Kings 11:37-40

³⁷ However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. ³⁸ If you do whatever I command you and walk in my ways and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. ³⁹ I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.' "

Jeroboam was given the same instructions given Solomon. Obey and the kingdom will be blessed.

Solomon, shortly thereafter, dies. This is when a power play begins. His son, Rehoboam, assumes the throne in place of his father but he does so in the Northern territory headquarters of Shechem. (Please refer to the handout for this lesson to see the map).

When Jeroboam hears that Solomon has died, he returns from Egypt where he fled from Solomon. Jeroboam along with the whole assembly of Israel, go to Rehoboam, son of Solomon, the new king to ask that he lighten the harsh labor and heavy yoke Solomon put on the ten tribes of Israel.

Rehoboam seemingly does the right thing. He goes and get advice from the elders. The elders give him the advice to lighten the load and thus win over the ten tribe's loyalty forever. Rehoboam then does a stupid thing. He goes to his buddies, those with no experience and youthful and ask their advice. The young friends tell him to increase the harsh treatment.

Q: So, who's advice does he listen to?

A: His friends.

Rehoboam gives Jeroboam the answer and when all the people of Israel see how Rehoboam refused to listen to them, they denounced their association with Solomon's kingdom...Jerusalem.

Rehoboam tries to enforce his harsher labor policy and the people stone to death his enforcer. Rehoboam then flees south back to Judah's headquarters in Jerusalem. This is where he then becomes king over Judah and Benjamin. Jeroboam remained king over the remaining ten tribes headquartered to the North in Shechem.

How does Jeroboam lead his kingdom?

1 Kings 12:26-32

²⁶ Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. ²⁷ If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam." ²⁸ After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt." ²⁹ One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ³⁰ And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there. ³¹ Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. ³² He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar.

And so, just like Solomon, Jeroboam had turn his back on God and His great promises.

Let's see how Rehoboam is doing

1 Kings 14:22-24

²² Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done. ²³ They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ²⁴ There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

Are we like this also? Although we profess to be god's people, do we live lives that look no different than the world's?

Kings is made up of individual stories about 2 nations and their kings. The choices the kings of Israel and Judah to either follow Yahweh or to worship idols. It determined how history would view them (good or bad) and also how it would affect the lives of their countrymen for years to come.

It is an exciting epic story full of conspiracies, idolatry, love, hatred & murder. Many bad kings and a few good. A powerful and mighty God who warns against disobedience and allows His people to suffer the grave consequences of unfaithfulness.

Look at the handout of the Divided Kingdom...the chart of the Kings and the Prophets of each kingdom.