

Lesson 89

Israel Is Divided

God divided the nation of Israel as punishment for Solomon's disobedience.

Studying God's Word

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Introduction

Before class on a table up front, set up dominoes in a pyramid shape with each one set on its side so that when you tip over the one at the top of the pyramid, the other dominoes will fall.

Prepare the dominoes pyramid for the object lesson before class begins.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lessons 87–88 Theme Posters. When Solomon first became king, he asked for wisdom. God blessed Solomon with wisdom to rule the people of Israel well. Solomon built the temple and worshipped God. He taught the people and wrote many proverbs.

The book of Proverbs tells us that seeking for wisdom is like searching for hidden treasure; it takes time and effort. But wisdom will help us stay close to God and keep away from sins that can hurt us and affect those around us.

What are some of the things we can learn about in Proverbs that help us please God in our everyday lives? Allow answers. Friendships, listening to parents, our speech, laziness, gossip, etc.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. We're going to begin today by looking back about 120 years before Solomon became king. Samuel was the judge at that time.

Does anyone remember what the people asked for instead of another judge? A king.

Right. They asked for a human king. And even though God was already their king, he gave them what they asked for. But he knew that any man who was crowned king would still have a sinful heart. God warned the people that the kings must always obey him. Fast forward to King Saul and King David. They both sinned and were punished. The decisions these kings made affected not only them personally but also their families and the people they ruled.

What about Solomon? Let's find out how he did as the wisest king to ever live.

Solomon's Disobedience

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. First, let's turn to the book of Deuteronomy so we can see what God said to the people about their kings and the commands they should follow.

Deuteronomy 17:16–17

We'll read Deuteronomy 17:16–17 where God lists some things the king should not do. Assign readers.

Slide #5

Slide #6

There were certain things God clearly said he did NOT want the kings to acquire, or collect, for themselves. What were those things? Look for the word "acquire" to find the answers. Many horses; many wives; excessive silver and gold.

Why would it be wrong for a king to have many horses? Allow discussion.

Horses back then were mostly used for battle. The more horses a king had, the stronger his army would be. And soon, the king could start relying on his army to take care of his problems rather than depending on God. Plus, God didn't want his people going back to Egypt to trade for horses.

God explained why he gave the command to not take many wives in verse 17. What could happen to the king's heart? It could turn away.

What do you think that means? Turn away from what? Allow discussion.

God knew that kings often took wives from other countries in order to keep peace with them. Of course, God's design for marriage has always been one man and one woman for life. So, taking many wives was disobedience to God's plan. Also, the wives from other countries would bring their false gods with them, which would make it very easy for the king to start worshipping his wives' false gods. God wanted the kings of Israel to worship only him. And he wanted them to have only one wife.

What does it mean that the king should not acquire excessive silver and gold? Allow discussion.

Pass out the Class Notes.

This means that the kings should not collect lots of riches, like gold and silver for themselves. God knew that kings could get so carried away with getting rich that their wealth would become an idol. That means they would love their riches more than they loved God.

Slide #7

Look at your Class Notes. You will choose words from the word bank to fill in the blanks. How will you fill in A, B, and C for #1? Choose a reader. A. Horses, B. Wives, and C. Wealth. Have students complete #1.

God gave instructions for the kings to obey him and learn his commandments. God wanted the kings to depend on him for their success instead of relying on their own ideas, their wealth, or big armies with lots of horses.

That's our answer for #2 on your Class Notes. Who will read that? Depend. Have students complete #2.

So, this was what God told the kings to be careful not to do. But the Bible tells us that Solomon collected huge amounts of silver and gold. He also traded with Egypt for many horses and chariots. He broke two commands. Note: While it is true that God blessed Solomon with riches, Solomon did eventually amass wealth and horses for himself, which was in violation of God's commands.

1 Kings 11:1–4

What about the other command not to take many wives? Let's find out if Solomon obeyed that one.

Slide #8

Slide #9

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to 1 Kings 11:1–4. Follow along as I read. Read the passage.

Did Solomon obey God's command about marriage? No. Look in verse 1. Who did King Solomon love? Many foreign women.

These women were from foreign countries. But God had told his people NOT to marry women from these countries. Yet Solomon disobeyed God.

How many wives did Solomon have? Verse 3. 700 wives! The wives of Solomon did not believe in the true God. What happened to Solomon because of his foreign wives? Look in verse 4 for the answer. His heart turned away after other gods. He was not true to the Lord.

Solomon disobeyed God's commands. Solomon's heart was changed by the women he married. He was not true to the Lord. He began worshipping the false gods his wives worshipped. This was not good.

God's Punishment

What does God think about anyone who disobeys him? Allow discussion. Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. God does not like disobedience. He is holy and demands complete obedience. Which attribute means God must punish sin? Just.

1 Kings 11:11–13

God was angry with Solomon for breaking his commandments. Let's read what God said to Solomon in 1 Kings 11:11–13. Assign readers.

Slide #10

Slide #11

In verse 11, what was the Lord going to tear away from Solomon because of his disobedience? His kingdom.

Who would God give the kingdom to? One of Solomon's servants.

When did God say he would do this? Look in verse 12. Not in the days of Solomon but in the reign of his son.

Even while punishing Solomon, God showed mercy by saying the judgment would come later. Why did God say he would not tear the kingdom away during Solomon's days? For the sake of whom? For the sake of David, Solomon's father.

In verse 13, God promised to still give something to Solomon's son. What was it? One tribe.

God said that the kingdom would go to one of Solomon's servants. But for David's sake, because he made a promise to David, he would give one tribe for Solomon's son to rule over.

There is an important principle here about obedience and disobedience.

Did Solomon's sin affect only him? No.

Who else would it affect? His son; his kingdom/people.

Solomon's son would have to face the consequences of his father's sin. But on the flip side, because of David's obedience and faithfulness, God showed mercy to Solomon. We must remember that our sin can hurt ourselves and others, but our obedience to God can bring blessing to us and to others.

Have dominoes ready. See Introduction section for instructions.

Let's use dominoes to show how our sin affects others. You see, when the king chose to disobey God and worship false gods (pick up the domino at the tip of the pyramid to represent the king then set it back down), the people followed what the king did (tip over the "king" domino at the peak of the pyramid and watch the other dominoes fall). What started out as Solomon's personal sin became a sin throughout his nation, which is why God gave so many commands for the kings of Israel to obey. He knew the people would follow their leaders.

Slide #12

Look at #3 on your Class Notes. What did God do because of Solomon's sin? Punished. Have students complete #3.

Solomon disobeyed God in many ways, even though he knew better.

And #4? How would God punish Solomon for this disobedience? Servant. Have students complete #4.

Israel's Division

King Solomon reigned over Israel for 40 years before he died, then Solomon's son Rehoboam took over the throne. When Rehoboam became king, the people hoped things would be different. Solomon had been hard on the people, forcing them to work for him. So the people sent one of Solomon's servants, named Jeroboam, to ask the new king if he would be kinder and treat them better than his father, Solomon, had.

Who thinks King Rehoboam would be kind? Show of hands.

How many think King Rehoboam would not be kind? Show of hands.

Let's find out how he answered their question.

1 Kings 12:13–15

Slide #13

Slide #14

Who will read 1 Kings 12:13–15? Assign readers.

How did Rehoboam answer the people? That's in verse 13. Harshly. Rehoboam said he would add to their yoke and discipline them with scorpions. Yikes! Does that sound like he was going to be nicer to the people? No!

No, not at all. Rehoboam showed an unkind heart toward the people. He said he'd make them work harder and punish them worse than his father had.

Who brought about all of these things that happened? Look in verse 15. The Lord.

That's right. As always, the Lord was in charge of everything that happened.

Slide #15

Look at #5 on your Class Notes. What was the name of Solomon's servant who spoke for the people? Jeroboam. Have students complete #5.

Who was the harsh son of Solomon on the throne for #6? Rehoboam. Have students complete #6.

God was in control. Remember, he told Solomon that one day the kingdom would be torn from his hands and given to his servant to rule. Now King Rehoboam refused to do what the people asked, and the people got very upset. It wasn't long before they made Jeroboam, Solomon's servant, king over Israel.

Wow! Out of the 12 tribes of Israel, only one—the tribe of Judah—kept Rehoboam as their king. This is exactly what God had said to Solomon. For the sake of David, God would let Solomon's son be king over one tribe. King Rehoboam ended up in the city of Jerusalem where he gathered men to fight against Jeroboam and the other tribes of Israel, hoping to get the whole kingdom back.

1 Kings 12:24

Slide #16

Rehoboam was making plans to take the rest of his kingdom back from the new king, Jeroboam. He had 180,000 warriors ready to fight. But what did God say about all this? Go to 1 Kings 12:24. Someone read that. Assign a reader.

What did the Lord tell Rehoboam and his army? You shall not fight your relatives, the people of Israel.

The Lord stopped Rehoboam. God said he was in control and that all the people should go home. They were not supposed to fight against the other

tribes of Israel. And the people obeyed.

Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Which attribute of God does this verse remind you of? This attribute tells us that God is in control of everything! Sovereign.

God was certainly showing his sovereign control over this whole situation. The kingdom was torn from Solomon's son just like God had said it would be, and Solomon's servant took the throne. Jeroboam was the new king over 10 tribes of Israel. But God allowed Solomon's son Rehoboam to rule over the tribe of Judah. Everything God said would happen was happening because of God's sovereign control. Note: You may want to add that the tribes of Benjamin and Levi were spread out in the land, with some serving each king.

Slide #17

Slide #18

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Now this can get a little confusing, so listen carefully. God divided the nation of Israel into two kingdoms. One kingdom was in the north and one was in the south.

Look at your Class Notes. In #7, how many kingdoms were there now? Two. Have students complete #7.

And #8. The northern kingdom had 10 tribes. The new king was Jeroboam, Solomon's servant. What did they call their kingdom? Israel. Have students complete #8.

For #9, the southern kingdom was smaller. Solomon's son Rehoboam was the king of that nation in the south. What was it called? Judah. Have students complete #9.

Application

King Solomon started off well as king when he asked God for wisdom. But he was a sinful man just like all people. He disobeyed God's commands for kings by collecting many horses, gathering gold and silver, and taking many wives who brought false gods with them. Solomon did not stay true to the God of Israel. Sadly, he turned to idolatry by worshipping the false gods his wives worshipped.

Slide #19

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God became angry with Solomon and had to punish his sin and disobedience. He told Solomon that the kingdom would be taken away from his son. And that's what happened when the kingdom was divided between King Rehoboam (Solomon's son) in the south and King Jeroboam (Solomon's servant) in the north.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Point out circle 24 where the single line splits into two at the divided kingdom. This is the point in Israel's history that we've been talking about today. Because of Solomon's sin, the whole nation of Israel was affected—and divided. The tribes of Israel now followed different kings and would have conflicts.

God demands our obedience because he is the only true God. He calls us to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Although we don't worship carved idol statues or have 700 wives or husbands today, there are other ways we might turn away from God. What kinds of video games do we play? What do we watch on TV? What do we do when no one is looking? How do we treat our parents, brothers and sisters, teachers, and friends?

Are we living so that others see that we love God above everything else—and we want to obey him and honor him with every part of our lives? Remember, whether we obey or disobey can affect others for good or bad. This is worth thinking and praying about. Then if God shows us an area of sin, we should be quick to ask forgiveness, turn from it, and be obedient.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Print the lesson Review Questions.

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