

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 tip of the pyramid, the other dominoes will fall.

Prepare the dominoes pyramid up front before class begins. You'll use this as an object lesson later.

We have talked about King Saul, King David, and now David's son, King Solomon. The decisions these kings made affected not only them personally but also their families and the people they ruled. We'll see an illustration of this with the dominoes later in the lesson.

What are some things we've learned about King Solomon from the Bible? Allow answers. Wisest man. Built the temple. Wrote Proverbs.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lessons 87–88 Theme Posters. God blessed Solomon with wisdom to rule the people of Israel well. He built the temple, a permanent house of worship for God, and he wrote wise sayings called proverbs to teach his sons and the people. Seeking for wisdom is like searching for hidden treasure; it takes time and effort. But the benefits include avoiding sins that can hurt us and those around us.

What were some of the practical things we can learn from Proverbs? What topics are covered? Allow answers.

Proverbs teaches about being a good friend, listening to our parents, watching what we say, working hard, being humble, and much more.

Solomon also wrote two other books of the Bible. Does anyone know what they are? Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. The Song of Solomon is a true-life, dramatic love song. It shows the love God intended between a husband and wife in marriage. Ecclesiastes gives Solomon's experience of searching for meaning in pleasure, wisdom, folly, and work throughout his life. In the end, he concluded that man should enjoy life but not sin because God will judge.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. A little more than 120 years before King Solomon's reign, the people had demanded a man for a king. This was during the time of Samuel the judge. And even though God was their king, God gave them what they asked for. But he knew that any king who was a mere man would have a sinful heart. He warned the people

that the kings still must obey him. We are going to talk about that today, and we'll fill in the Class Notes as we go through the lesson.

Pass out the Class Notes.

Solomon's Disobedience

Let's go to the book of Deuteronomy so we can see what God said to the people about their kings.

Deuteronomy 17:15–17

Slide #5

Slide #6

Slide #7

Let's read Deuteronomy 17:15–17. Assign readers.

In verse 15, what did God tell the Israelites about choosing a king? He would choose their king. Their king must be an Israelite, not a foreigner. There were certain things God made clear he did NOT want the kings to acquire, or collect, for themselves. What did God say kings must not acquire in verses 16–17? Many horses and wives; excessive silver and gold.

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

What do you think that means? Allow discussion.

God knew that kings often took wives from other nations in order to keep peace or make alliances. 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. It would be very easy for the king to start worshipping his wives' false gods. This would break the first commandment from God to have no other gods before him. God had higher standards in mind for the kings of Israel. He wanted them 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.

This means that the kings should not collect lots of riches, gold, and silver for their own selfish pleasure. God knew that kings could get so carried away with getting rich that their wealth could become an idol, meaning that they loved their riches more than they loved God. God was warning them not to do that.

To review, what are the things kings were commanded not to acquire? Horses, wives, silver, and gold.

Slide #8

Let's start the Class Notes. What word from the word bank completes #1? Wealth. Have students complete #1.

Before any kings were put in place, God gave instructions for the kings to obey him and learn his commandments. Remember, God wanted to be their King. God knew that the kings would be tempted to collect horses, to marry many women, and to seek gold and silver. God wanted the kings to depend on him for their success rather than their wealth.

How will you complete #2 on your Class Notes? Depend. Have students complete #2.

So, this was what God told the kings he wanted them to do. Did King Solomon do these things? His kingdom started off well. He built the temple, asked God for wisdom, and ruled the people well. But Solomon was a man—and all men are sinners. Solomon was no exception.

1 Kings 11:1–4

Slide #9

Slide #10

Turn to 1 Kings 11:1–4. Follow along as I read. Read the passage.

Did Solomon obey God? No.

How many women did King Solomon love? 1 Kings 11:1. Many foreign women.

Where were these women from? 1 Kings 11:2. From the nations God said not to have wives from.

The women were from foreign countries. These were the very foreign women God told Solomon NOT to marry. Yet Solomon disobeyed God and did what he wanted to do.

How many wives did Solomon have? 1 Kings 11:3. 700 wives!

The wives of Solomon did not believe in the true God. What happened to Solomon because of his foreign wives? 1 Kings 11:4. His heart turned away after other gods. He was not true to the Lord.

Solomon had disobeyed God's commands. Remember, God gave instructions that the king must NOT marry many wives. And now Solomon's heart was changed by the women he married. He was not faithful or loyal to the Lord. He was worshipping the same false gods his wives worshipped.

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 demands obedience and trust. Which attribute means God must punish sin? Just.

God was angry with Solomon for breaking his commandments. Solomon had been given many blessings from God—wisdom and wealth, and yet he chose to follow his wives in worshipping false gods.

1 Kings 11:11–13

Slide #11Slide #12

Let's read what God said to Solomon in 1 Kings 11:11–13. Assign readers.

What was the Lord going to do to Solomon because of his disobedience? He was going to tear the kingdom away from him and give it to his servant.

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

Even in his punishment of Solomon, God showed mercy by saying he would delay judgment. Why did God say he would not tear the kingdom away during Solomon's days? 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, he would give one tribe for his son to rule over. God was keeping his promise to David.

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 now bear the consequences of his father's sin. But the reverse is true with David. Because of David's obedience and faithfulness, God showed mercy to Solomon. We must remember that our sin can hurt others, but our obedience to God can bring blessing to us and those around us.

Move to the dominoes pyramid you set up before class. 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 kings did (tip over the "king" domino at the peak of the pyramid and watch the other dominoes fall). What was an individual sin became a national sin, which is why God gave so many commands for the kings of Israel to follow. He knew the people would follow their leaders.

Slide #13

Look at #3 on your Class Notes. What sin did Solomon commit? Disobedience. Have students complete #3.

Solomon disobeyed God in many ways. He knew better. He had started out so well—building the temple, asking for wisdom, and worshipping God. This is very sad to see the wisest man make such foolish decisions.

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

So what next? Well, because God is holy and just and because Solomon sinned, God punished him by tearing the kingdom away. We'll see how God worked that out next!

Israel's Division

King Solomon reigned over all Israel for 40 years before he died. Remember, God had said that the kingdom would go to Solomon's servant. But first, Solomon's son Rehoboam did take over the kingdom. When Rehoboam took the throne, the people were hopeful that this new king would treat them better than Solomon had treated them. Solomon had been hard on the people, forcing them to work for him. They were hoping his son Rehoboam would not be like Solomon was. The people sent Solomon's servant Jeroboam to talk to the king.

Jeroboam went to King Rehoboam—Solomon's son—to ask if he would be kinder to the people than his father Solomon had been. Let's read King Rehoboam's response to Jeroboam and the people.

1 Kings 12:13–15

Slide #14

Slide #15

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

How did Rehoboam answer the people? Harshly.

Whose counsel did Rehoboam take when he gave his answer? The old men or the young men? The young men.

Rehoboam chose to ignore the wise counsel of the old men who advised his father. They had told him to speak kindly to the people. Instead, Rehoboam listened to the young men, the friends that he grew up with.

What was Rehoboam saying when he said he'd add to their yoke and discipline them with scorpions? Was he going to be nicer to the people? Allow discussion.

Rehoboam showed an unkind heart toward the people. He said he'd make them work harder and punish them worse than his father had. He didn't listen to the people or show compassion.

Who was in charge of all of these events? The Lord.

Slide #16

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

And what was the name of Solomon's son for #6? Rehoboam. Have students complete #6.

And for #7, we read that who was in charge, controlling everything that was happening? God. Have students complete #7.

God was in control. Remember, he had told Solomon that one day the kingdom would be torn from his hands and his servant would rule. Now King Rehoboam refused to do what the people asked, and the people got upset.

1 Kings 12:20–21

Slide #17

Slide #18

Jump down to 1 Kings 12:20–21. Let's read that. Assign readers.

What did the people do when the servant Jeroboam came back? They made him king over Israel.

Wow! What about Solomon's son, King Rehoboam? What tribe followed him as their king? Tribe of Judah.

Only one tribe, Judah, stayed loyal to the house of David and kept Rehoboam as their king. This is exactly what God said to Solomon. For the sake of David, God would let Solomon's son remain king over one tribe, but the other 10 tribes followed Jeroboam. The people from the tribes of Benjamin and Levi were spread out in the land, so some served King Rehoboam and some served King Jeroboam.

Where did King Rehoboam end up? In which city? In Jerusalem.

What was King Rehoboam doing in Jerusalem? Gathering men to fight against Israel so he could get his kingdom back from Jeroboam.

1 Kings 12:24

Slide #19

Yes, he was planning to take the rest of his kingdom back from the new King Jeroboam. But would that work? Go to 1 Kings 12:24. Someone read that. Assign a reader.

Was Rehoboam's attempt to take back Israel successful? No!
Who stopped him? The Lord.

The Lord stopped him. The Lord said he was in control and that all the people should return home. The men of Judah with Rehoboam were not to fight against the other tribes and Jeroboam. And the people obeyed the word of the Lord.

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 entire situation. Just like God had announced, the kingdom was torn from Solomon. Solomon's servant would take the throne. Jeroboam was the new king of the northern kingdom. God allowed Solomon's son Rehoboam to rule over a small section of the kingdom, Judah—in the south. And the Bible told us that all of these events were in the hands of the Lord. God's plan was being completed.

Slide #20Slide #21

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God divided the kingdom of Israel into two nations. Write that in the blank for #8 on your Class Notes. Two. Have students complete #8.

What is the answer for #9 on the Class Notes? Choose a reader. Israel. Have students complete #9.
Who will read #10 and give the answer for the name of the southern kingdom? Choose a reader. Judah. Have students complete #10.

Application

King Solomon started off well as king when he asked God for wisdom. But he disobeyed God's commands for kings. He collected horses, gathered gold and silver, and took many foreign wives. Solomon did not stay true to the God of Israel. Sadly, he turned to idolatry. This is why God had to punish his sin. He told Solomon that the kingdom would be taken away from his son, and that's what happened.

Slide #22

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. The kingdom was divided between King Rehoboam (Solomon's son) in the south and King Jeroboam (Solomon's servant) in the north. The judgment of the Lord had come to pass.

Refer to circle 24 on the Exodus to Malachi Timeline 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. Solomon's sin divided the nation. The tribes of Israel now followed different kings and would have conflict.

God demands our obedience, and he will not tolerate his people worshipping anything other than him. He calls us to love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Although we don't worship carved idols or have 700 wives or husbands today, we turn away from God in other ways. What do we read? What do we watch on TV? What do we do when no one is looking? How do we treat 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? It 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 return to being obedient.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Limited License to Reproduce

A limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable, nonsublicensable license is hereby granted to a single local church or organization to print copies of the PDF materials in the Teacher Digital Resources if 1) you are the original purchaser; 2) you are using the copies for noncommercial purposes (such as for teaching in class) exclusively within your single local church or organization (multi-campus churches, and national/regional denominations are not covered under this license); and 3) you follow the instructions provided in the curriculum pertaining to the printable materials.

This license is for the specific purchaser of the product and does not include affiliated groups or organizations, or other churches or groups in the same denomination as the purchaser, not identified as the actual purchaser. There is no limit to the number of printed copies for use within the single local church or organization which is the actual purchaser. None of the material in this curriculum may be reproduced for any commercial promotion, advertising, or sale of a product or service, or to share with any other persons, churches, groups, or organizations.

The media (audio/video) portions are copyrighted and duplication is prohibited. This license is for materials in the Teacher Digital Resources only and does NOT include reproduction rights for pre-printed teacher books, student guides, student take home sheets, or posters, except on an emergency basis when purchased quantities are not sufficient for a given week.

Bible Version

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.