

General Church Education



# The Kingdom Is Divided

1 Kings 11:1-13, 26-36, 41-43; 12:1-26

## Lesson 7

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 6: The Lord Is Our Prophet

For ages 11-12 years

## The Kingdom Is Divided

1 Kings 11:1-13, 26-36, 41-43; 12:1-26

### Teacher Background

At the end of Solomon's reign Israel was divided into two kingdoms—Israel and Judah. This marked a greater distance between the people of Israel and the Lord. Kings were spokespersons for the Lord in the way that first the patriarchs, judges and then priests had been. However, Saul, David, and Solomon did not remain true to that purpose. Eventually, they all chose to follow their own desires. Therefore, Israel could not be ruled by David's descendants, and was divided. Since Israel could not worship in Jerusalem, Jeroboam set up new places of worship in spite of the Lord's command against this. As people worshiped in different places, and practiced idolatry, the Lord became more and more removed from the Israel.

Adolescents can begin to understand how destructive such worship was to Israel. Jerusalem represents genuine worship. To help them see how important it is to “worship in Jerusalem,” discuss the attitudes people might bring to worship. With encouragement, adolescents can enter into worship with a willingness to participate and to learn. It is also important for them to see that true worship means to live a good life. The relationship between external worship and internal worship lies in what a person does, not what they know.

### Focus Points

- Solomon turns away from the Lord.
- Solomon dies and Israel becomes two kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south.
- Rehoboam becomes king over Judah; Jeroboam is made king over Israel.

### Readings from the Writings

“The reason why ‘Jerusalem’ means the church as to doctrine, is that there and at no other place in the land of Canaan were the temple and altar, the offering of sacrifices, and therefore the Divine worship.... [A]n additional reason is that the Lord was present in Jerusalem, and taught in its temple, and afterwards glorified His Human there.” *Doctrine of the Lord* 64

“[I]n heaven there are two kingdoms, one of which is called the celestial kingdom, and the other of which is called the spiritual kingdom.... In the latter Divine truth reigns, and in the former Divine good. And because the representative of the celestial kingdom began to perish when they asked for a king, therefore in order that a representative of the Lord's kingdom in the heavens might still be continued, the tribe of Judah was separated from the Israelites, and by the kingdom of Judah was represented the celestial kingdom of the Lord, and by the kingdom of Israel His spiritual kingdom.” *Arcana Coelestia* 8770.3

## Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers the following activity choices:

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“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.” (1 Kings 12:24)

### Projects and Activities (see back of lesson for answers)

The Kingdom Is Divided Crossword

Complete a crossword about dividing the kingdom.

The Two Kingdoms

Compare a map of Israel showing where the tribes lived with a map showing the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

### Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

A Chart of the Kings of Israel and Judah

As you learn about the kings of Israel and Judah, complete a chart. Think about whether the king is good or evil as you fill in the spaces. Available at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-chart-of-the-kings-of-israel-and-judah-1-kings-2-kings.pdf>

Solomon Acrostic

Use the letters of King Solomon’s name to write an acrostic poem about him. See: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-solomon-acrostic-1-kings-3-10.pdf>

A Review of King Solomon’s Life

Sequence events that occurred during King Solomon’s life. Online at: <https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-a-review-of-king-solomons-life-1-samuel-11-1-kings-11.pdf>

# The Kingdom Is Divided

1 Kings 11:1-13, 26-36, 41-43; 12:1-26

## Vocabulary

**zeal**—love that flares up

**civil war**—when people living in the same country fight each other

### Solomon Turns Away from the Lord

For many years, Solomon followed the Lord. But then he chose to marry women from foreign lands. For example, he married Pharaoh's daughter and women from nations the Lord had said not to marry. The Lord warned that if Israel married people who had different gods it might be turned from worshipping Him and worship other gods. However, Solomon ignored these warnings. He took hundreds of wives and concubines. Then, he turned away from Jehovah.

"His heart was not loyal to the Lord his God." (1 Kings 11:4)

Solomon even built altars to other gods and set up places where his wives could worship them.

The Old Testament says the Lord was angry. The Heavenly Doctrine tells us that this anger was actually a special feeling called zeal. It is a feeling people experience when something they love is in danger. The Lord knew that Israel might not worship Him again. His zeal came from deep sadness because He knew that worshiping false gods would not make Israel happy. He told Solomon that after his death the kingdom would be divided. The Word teaches that the Lord waited to divide the kingdom for the sake of his father, David, and for the sake of Jerusalem.

The Word tells us that sometimes an apparently bad leader can benefit their country. Surely the



Lord knew that Solomon would be the best leader at that time. However, the peace that had previously existed was ending. People no longer liked what Solomon was doing and started to rebel.

### The Division of the Kingdom

Solomon's servant Jeroboam was among the rebels. Solomon had seen Jeroboam's work and appointed him over the laborers in the house of Joseph. However, one day when Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah met him on the road.

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Ahijah took Jeroboam's garment and tore it into twelve pieces. He gave Jeroboam ten pieces and then told him that they stood for ten of the tribes of Judah over which he would be king. This left only two tribes for Solomon's son. The Lord's final words for Jeroboam were,

"So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart's desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, 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. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever." (1 Kings 11:37-39)

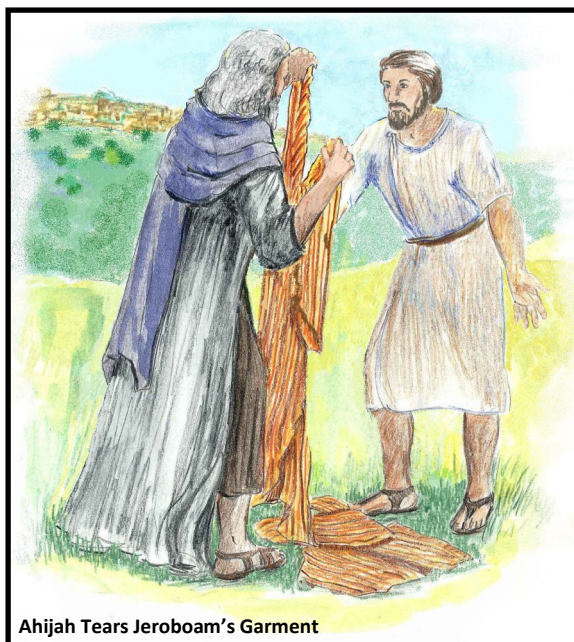
The Lord was establishing a covenant with Jeroboam—if he followed the Lord, all would be well with him. His descendants would continue to rule over Israel, and the descendants of David would be afflicted, but "not forever."

### Solomon Dies and Rehoboam Becomes King

Solomon heard what the Lord said to Jeroboam and wanted to kill him, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt. Solomon reigned until his death. Then his son Rehoboam became king. When Jeroboam learned that Solomon's had died, he returned to Israel and asked to see Rehoboam. Although Jeroboam had been promised the throne, he did not declare himself king. Instead he and the elders of Israel asked Rehoboam to lighten the heavy burden of the people.

"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." (1 Kings 12:4)

Remember, Israel had been a nation for almost five hundred years. It had become large and powerful under the kings. Solomon had erected magnificent buildings and new cities. He had also increased trade with other countries as far away as India, Ethiopia, Spain and even Britain.



Ahijah Tears Jeroboam's Garment

While Israel was more prosperous, it was costly to maintain the buildings, support the armies, and fund the king's lifestyle. If people refused to pay their taxes or had no money, they were punished or imprisoned. You can imagine how overwhelmed they may have felt.

### Rehoboam Decides

Rehoboam listened to Jeroboam's request and asked for three days to decide. He took advice from the old men who said,

"If you will be a servant to this people this day, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever." (1 Kings 12:7)

Unfortunately, Rehoboam did not like the advice of the old men. He listened to his young friends instead. They told him to increase the burden on the people. So, Rehoboam showed no interest in helping the people who had done so much to build his father's kingdom.

### **Jeroboam Is Made King over Israel**

When the people understood that Rehoboam was not going to help them, they cried out saying,

“What portion 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!” (1 Kings 12:16)

The people were saying that they would no longer serve Rehoboam. He could take care of his kingdom without their support. They were rebelling! So, they sent for Jeroboam and made him king over Israel.

### **Two Kingdoms—Israel and Judah**

As the Lord had told Jeroboam, not all of the tribes would follow him. Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to the house of David. Rehoboam called these tribes together to fight Jeroboam. In order to prevent a civil war the Lord told Shemaiah, a prophet, to tell Rehoboam:

“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.”” (1 Kings 12:24)

Although Rehoboam did not fear the people of Israel and would have made war against them, he did fear the Lord. He returned to Jerusalem to rule Judah.

Jeroboam made Shechem his capital city and lived there as king of Israel. He set up idols in Dan and Bethel. He told the people they could worship there instead of at the temple in Jerusalem as the Lord had commanded. To make matters worse, he set up shrines in high places and installed priests not only from Levi, but from every tribe. He even declared a feast day like those in Jerusalem and sacrificed on the altars in Bethel and Dan.

### **Worshipping in Jerusalem**

The Lord still wants us to worship in “Jerusalem”. This does not literally mean we should go to Jerusalem. Originally, worshipping in other places meant turning away from the Lord. When we “worship” in Jerusalem, we truly want to know about the Lord and to learn how to live according to His truths because we love Him. It takes time to do this, but we can begin by worshipping with a wish to learn why people worship the Lord. We can really listen to the message and ask questions if we do not understand or disagree. Most importantly, we can try to make good decisions and help others when we are asked to or when we see a need. The Lord tells us that we worship Him every time we try to live a good life.



## Activity Overview

### Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

“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.” (1 Kings 12:24)

### Projects and Activities (for answers, see back of lesson)

Choose one or two.

The Kingdom Is Divided Crossword

Complete a crossword about dividing the kingdom of Israel into the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

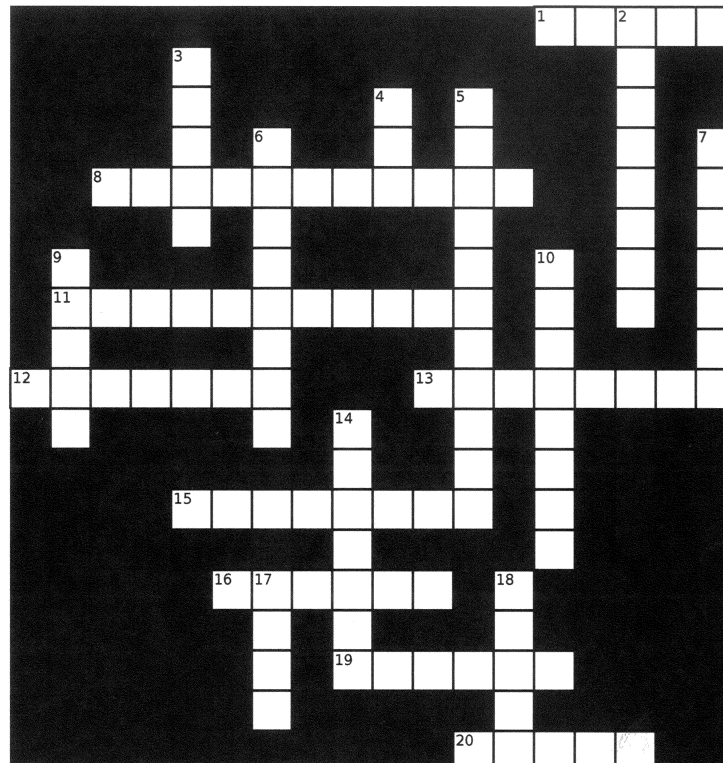
The Two Kingdoms

Compare a map of Israel that shows where the tribes lived with a map showing the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel.



# The Kingdom Is Divided Crossword (1 Kings 11:1-13, 26-36, 41-43; 12:1-26)

Across	Down
1. How many years did Solomon reign in Jerusalem?	2. When the people of Israel knew that Solomon's son would not lighten their burden, what did they do?
8. What kind of emotion did the Lord feel when the king of Israel turned away from Him?	3. Which tribe continued to follow the house of David?
11. Chemosh and Molech are called an _____.	4. How many tribes were going to follow Jeroboam?
13. Who was marrying many wives from foreign nations?	5. The kingdom of Israel was to be taken from David's _____.
15. What did Solomon's son say he would chastise the people with?	6. The Lord reestablished the _____ with Jeroboam.
16. Who did Solomon's son first consult about lightening the burden of the Israelites?	7. Which city did Jeroboam set up as his capital?
19. How many tribes of Israel were there before the kingdom was divided?	9. Jeroboam was a mighty man of what?
20. What did Jeroboam set up in the cities of Dan and Bethel?	10. Who was the son of Solomon who became king of Judah?
	14. Ahijah tore his _____.
	17. What tribe of Israel were the priests meant to come from?
	18. The Lord would not take the kingdom away from Solomon while he lived for the sake of whom?





## Judah and Israel: The Two Kingdoms

1. Look at the map of the divided kingdom in the lower right. For the two categories below, circle which nation, Israel or Judah, you would like to live in. Explain the reasons for your choice. (If the maps do not give you enough information, look at maps in the back of your Bible or on the internet.)
  - Topography (useable water, farmable land, access to the Mediterranean etc.)  
Circle your choice then give reasons: **Israel or Judah**
  - Religion (place of worship)  
Circle your choice then give reasons: **Israel or Judah**
2. Look at both maps and list which tribal areas were located in each of the two kingdoms.
3. Which tribal areas were, at least partially, inhabited by other nations shortly after Israel was divided into two kingdoms?

The Twelve Tribes of Israel



The Kingdoms of Judah and Israel



# Answers

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### Crossword—Across

1.forty; 8. zealousness; 11. abomination; 13. Solomon; 15. scorpion; 16. elders; 19. twelve; 20 altar

### Crossword—Down

2. departed; 3. Judah; 4. ten; 5. descendants; 6. covenant; 7. Shechem; 9. valor; 10. Rehoboam; 14. garment; 17. Levi; 18. David.