

Week 23: The Division of the Kingdom

A Sabbath Family Bible Study

Introduction

After Solomon's reign of glory came a great fall. His divided heart led to a divided nation. When his son Rehoboam ascended the throne, pride and harshness replaced humility and wisdom. The people's cries for mercy were met with arrogance, and the ten northern tribes rebelled, forming their own kingdom under Jeroboam. What was once the united nation of Israel fractured into two kingdoms, Judah and Israel, because of disobedience and pride. This study reminds us that division always begins in the heart long before it appears in the nation, family, or church.

Scripture Reading: Selected Passages (KJV)

1 Kings 11:9–13; 1 Kings 12:1–17; 1 Kings 12:26–30

(With commentary throughout)

1 Kings 11:9–13 - God Warns Solomon

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice,

10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded.

11 Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.

12 Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son.

13 Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen.

Commentary:

The fracture of Israel began in Solomon's heart. Though outwardly prosperous, he secretly entertained idolatry. God's patience was great, yet His justice sure. Disobedience always carries generational consequences, what one man compromises, his children inherit fro generations.

1 Kings 12:1–17 - Rehoboam's Folly

1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

6 And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Commentary:

Rehoboam's pride sealed the nation's fate. He rejected the wisdom of elders for the flattery of youth. Leadership without humility brings destruction. Those who cannot serve should never rule. The division was not political, it was spiritual, born from rebellion against God's order.

1 Kings 12:26–30 - Jeroboam's Sin

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:

27 If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan.

Commentary:

To secure his power, Jeroboam built a counterfeit religion. Fear of losing control led him to idolatry. Many leaders since have done the same, replacing obedience with convenience, truth

with comfort, and worship with entertainment. Division deepens when truth is abandoned for security.

Discussion Questions for All Ages

Young Children:

- Why was God unhappy with Solomon?
- What mistake did Rehoboam make when he became king?
- Why does obeying God bring peace and unity?

Older Children & Teens:

- How did pride cause both Solomon and Rehoboam to fail?
- Why do you think Jeroboam created golden calves for the people?
- What are ways that pride and disobedience can divide friends, families, or churches today?

Adults:

- What lessons about leadership and humility can be learned from Rehoboam's fall?
 - How does fear of losing control lead to spiritual compromise?
 - How can your household guard against the seeds of division in speech, pride, or worship?
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Psalm Reading

Psalm 133:1–3 (KJV)

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

*3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion:
for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.*

Commentary:

Unity is both beautiful and holy, it flows from obedience and humility. Division is not inevitable; it is preventable when God's people walk in repentance, gratitude, and reverence.

 **Hymn: Blest Be the Tie That Binds**

By John Fawcett (1782)

1.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

2.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

3.

We share each other's woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

4.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

 **Family Application Points**

1. Guard the Heart: Division begins within. Keep your heart humble and obedient to God's Word.

2. Listen to Wise Counsel: Pride rejects advice. Teach your family to seek godly wisdom before acting.

3. Choose Servant Leadership: True authority serves others. Let fathers and mothers lead in humility.

4. Worship Rightly: Beware of convenience religion. Teach your home that true worship always costs something.

5. Pursue Unity: Strive for peace and forgiveness in the home. God commands a blessing where unity dwells.

A Sabbath Feast Prayer

“Father in Heaven, You are the God of order and peace. We thank You for this Sabbath and for the fellowship of our family. May our hearts be united in love and truth. Deliver us from pride and selfishness, and make our home a place where Your Spirit brings harmony and joy. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Closing Prayer

“Lord, teach us the lessons of Solomon, Rehoboam, and Jeroboam. Keep us from pride, fear, and compromise. Let our hearts remain steadfast and our worship pure. Unite our family in obedience and humility, and let Your Word be the center of all we do. May we never build our own altars of convenience but remain faithful to You alone. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.”