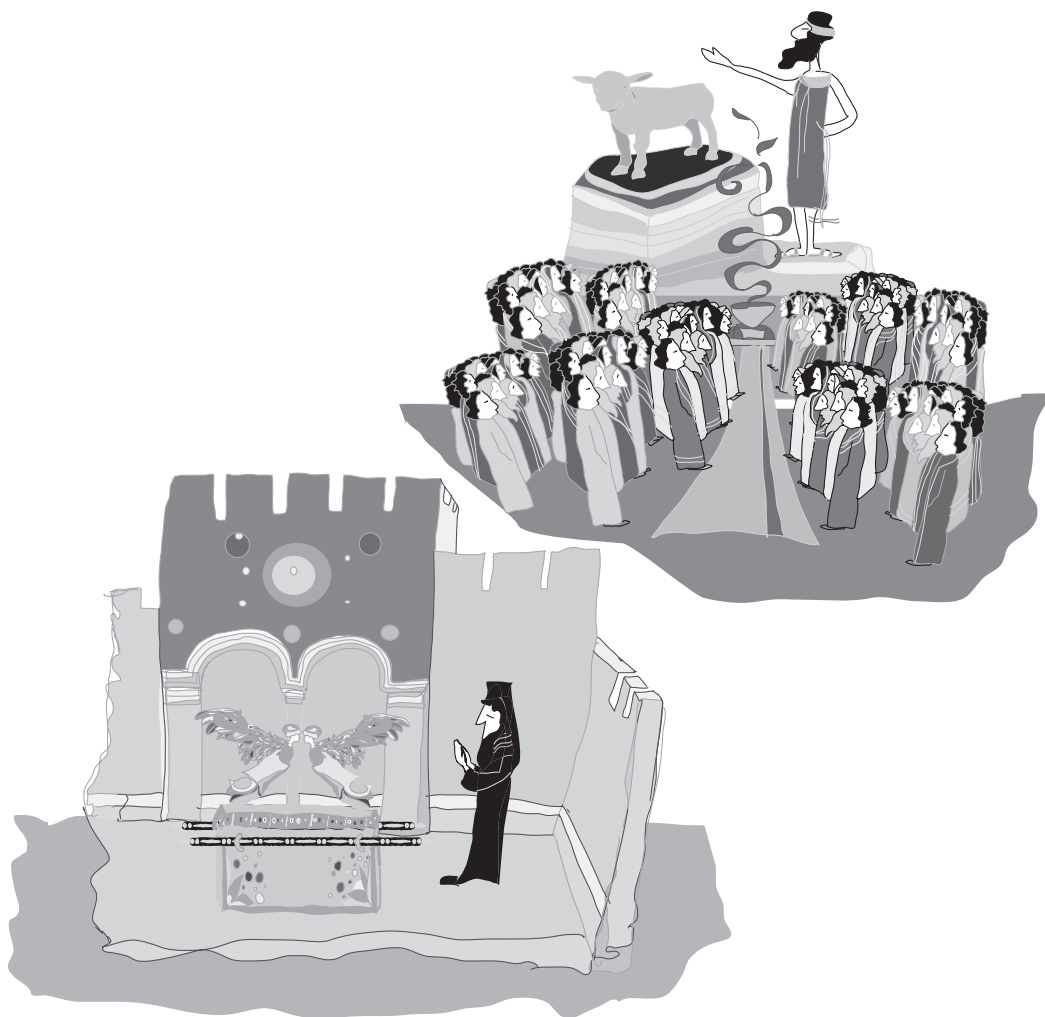


LESSON 61

The Kingdom Is Divided

1 KINGS 11–12



BIBLE TRUTH

A DIVIDED HEART LEADS TO A DIVIDED LIFE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read 1 Kings 11:1–13 from the Scriptures or read story 61, “The Kingdom Is Divided,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **10 MIN**
Ahijah’s Cloak
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ two yards of fabric (cloak)
 - ✓ eight-inch square of red felt
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **10 MIN**
A Divided Heart
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ glass jar
 - ✓ seven hundred colored stones (use multicolored decorative river rocks that can be purchased at a garden center or a craft supply store)
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
Seven Hundred Wives
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
Marrying Unbelievers
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Solomon loves the world—King David had many sons, but God chose Solomon to be king after David. God made Solomon the wisest man who had ever lived. God even gave Solomon the honor of building a magnificent temple for him.

Nevertheless, Solomon does the exact thing God had warned his kings not to do (“[the king] shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold” [Deuteronomy 17:17]). As the years go by, Solomon takes wives from among the pagan peoples of Canaan, and Solomon’s disobedience brings the exact result God had warned him against. Eventually, these foreign women lead Solomon’s heart away from the Lord. Solomon turns away from the Lord and begins serving false gods.

God disciplines Solomon in mercy—At the end of Solomon’s reign when he is worshiping false gods, the Lord raises up against him one enemy after another. Although God is angry with Solomon, he also loves him. God brings enemies against Solomon to help him understand that he has disobeyed God.

Sometimes God does the same thing with us. He allows difficulties and challenges to come against us so that we will examine our hearts to see if we are living lives of love and obedience to God.

Rehoboam’s foolish pride—Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, becomes king when Solomon dies. Hearing that Solomon is dead, Jeroboam, Solomon’s enemy, comes back to Israel because he wants to be king.

The people of Israel ask Rehoboam to rule more kindly than his father Solomon did. The elder wise men encourage Rehoboam to hear the people and treat them kindly. But when the new king turns to his younger friends to see what they would say, the inexperienced counselors recommend he treat the people harshly, worse than his father. As a result, ten tribes of Israel break away from Rehoboam and Jerusalem and make Jeroboam their king just as the prophet Ahijah said they would (1 Kings 11:34–36). God’s people then live divided: the kingdom of Judah in the north and the kingdom of Israel in the south.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Ashtoreth

Ashtoreth was the Sidonian goddess of love. It tells us in the Bible that Solomon went after the goddess Ashtoreth as a result of taking hundreds of foreign wives (1 Kings 11:5). Not only did Solomon have many wives, but because he worshiped this goddess of love, we see into the wickedness of his heart. Solomon abandons the Lord along with his command, seeking instead a god who would validate his practice of taking hundreds of foreign women as his wives.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read 1 Kings 11:13.

Even though God judged Solomon for worshiping false gods, there was hope in God's punishment. God gave Solomon good news mixed with the bad news. The bad news was that God was taking the kingdom away from Solomon, but the good news was that he promised not to do it until Solomon's son was king. And even then God promised not to take all of Israel away, but to allow Solomon's son to be king over one tribe.

God did this for the sake of David and for the sake of Jerusalem. You see, God had promised David that he would have a son on the throne forever. So even though Solomon disobeyed God, he remained on the throne so God could keep his promise to David.

Jesus, one of Solomon's far-off grandchildren, is the ultimate way God kept that promise. By saving the tribe of Judah (the tribe Jesus came from) and allowing Solomon to remain on the throne, God kept his promise to David and opened the way for the good news of the gospel to come to us all.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Kings 11:1–13 from the Scriptures or read story 61, “The Kingdom Is Divided,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

Ahijah’s Cloak

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two yards of fabric (cloak)
- ✓ eight-inch square of red felt

Before class cut off a ten-inch strip from the two yards of fabric. Then cut out an eight-inch cross from the red felt and hot glue it to the ten-inch fabric piece. (The fabric with the cross will represent the one tribe God preserved for Solomon’s son Rehoboam.)

Cut short slits around the perimeter of the larger piece of fabric to make it easy to tear. (This will represent the cloak and once torn, the tribes the Lord tore away from Rehoboam.)

Finally, before class fold up the narrow piece with the cross to hide it from the children. At the end of the story you will reveal the reason God saved one tribe (the tribe of Judah) by showing the class the cross.

Start the class by talking about how in spite of his great wisdom, Solomon made the mistake of thinking that his wisdom was the greatest. He forgot that God’s wisdom was greater. God had given the kings of Israel, including Solomon, a few simple instructions that can be found in Deuteronomy 17:16–20. Read this passage to the class and explain that a king of Israel was not to accumulate horses, wives, and riches. Make a point of emphasizing that God had instructed the king to read this law every day.

Solomon did not follow God’s wisdom. Read 2 Chronicles 1:14–15, which tells us that he accumulated twelve thousand horses and made silver and gold as plentiful as the stones. Also read 1 Kings 11:1–4 where it mentions that Solomon had seven hundred wives.

Explain to the class that God was angry with Solomon and told him that he would tear away the kingdom from his son, leaving only one tribe for the sake of King David and Jerusalem. The other tribes would be given to one of Solomon’s servants (1 Kings 11:9 ff).

Then pick up the cloak (the two-yard fabric remnant) and wrap it around yourself like a shawl. Grasp the extra piece with the cross on it in your right hand to hide it from the children. Explain to the class how God sent the prophet Ahijah to Jereboam to let him know that God was going to give him the kingdom. Explain the details of the encounter (1 Kings 11:26–32). While you are explaining how Ahijah tore his cloak into pieces, tear the material at the cut you made and throw it to the floor along with the piece that hides the cross.

Tell the class that God spared the tribe of Judah for the sake of David who he promised would always have an heir on the throne. At that point, pick up the folded piece with the hidden cross and hold it up high for the class to see. Tell them that God spared Judah for the sake of Jerusalem. Then tell them that there would be another king who would come to Jerusalem from the tribe of Judah. (At this point allow the material to unfold to reveal the red cross.) His name would be Jesus. God’s plan for salvation was bigger than Solomon’s sin.

Take time to talk about how sparing Judah made way for the gospel.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

A Divided Heart

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ glass jar
- ✓ seven hundred colored stones (use multicolored decorative river rocks that can be purchased at a garden center or a craft supply store)

This is to demonstrate the shallow nature of Solomon’s love for God and his wives.

Walk around the classroom showing the jar to the children. Spark their curiosity about the rocks by asking them if they think the rocks are attractive. Ask them if they have rock collections at home, and then ask if any of them are interested in having one of the rocks.

Ask for three volunteers. Have them come to the front of the class. Pour a handful of rocks on a table and ask the first volunteer to pick out one rock they like best. Pour about a quarter of the rocks onto the table, and ask the second volunteer to pick out the ten rocks that they like best. Finally, pour the remainder of the rocks on the table and ask the final volunteer to pick out the seven hundred rocks they like best. Hurry them along and stop them once they have picked out about fifty.

The object here is to help the children see that although you could take care in picking out one wife or husband, when you divide your attention over seven hundred wives, you cannot possibly care for them. You might ask the third volunteer to put seven hundred rocks in his or her pockets.

When you tell them that Solomon had seven hundred wives, it will not be hard for the children to see that this is not wise.

Also, take time to explain that these wives did not love the Lord, nor did they serve the Lord. Instead they led Solomon astray, and he worshiped other gods.

Then ask the class the following questions:

■ **Did Solomon love his wives?**

(No, Solomon could boast about seven hundred wives but he could not love seven hundred wives. God directs us to love one spouse for our whole life.)

■ **Could Solomon love other gods and still love the Lord?**

(No, the other gods were false. The Lord is the only true God. To worship false gods is to disrespect the true God who demands all our worship.)

■ **How is Solomon's love for God and his love for his wives the same?**

(Solomon didn't really love either his wives or God. Solomon's love was divided.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Seven Hundred Wives

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of Solomon and then seven hundred wives' faces around him. (They will, of course, not have enough room on the page, which can help you to emphasize just how foolish Solomon was in his choices.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Marrying Unbelievers

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Compare God's command not to marry unbelievers in 2 Corinthians 6:14 with God's command to the men of Israel not to take foreign women as their wives (Deuteronomy 7:1-5).

Ask, "If you marry an unbeliever, when do you think your conflicting beliefs would affect you most?" (The contrast would be evident in many areas like prayer, church attendance, child rearing, etc.)

List responses on the board and emphasize how foolish it is to marry an unbeliever in light of all the challenges listed. Perhaps the greatest answer that the children might miss is that marrying an unbeliever might actually cause you to stop following God in order to be more like your spouse.

Continue by asking the following questions:

- How did Solomon's wives lead him to forsake God?
(Have the children read 1 Kings 11:1–8.)

- How was God's mercy evident to Solomon in light of the judgment prophesied in Deuteronomy 7:1–5?
(God could have destroyed Solomon quickly, but he did not.)

- Why didn't God destroy Solomon?
(God was looking ahead to Christ, who would provide the sacrifice required to redeem and forgive Israel. God, for the sake of his promised redemption, spared a remnant of Israel.)