

1 **Eight Lessons From the Divided Kingdom**

2 **God's Original Plan**

- God's original plan for Israel was that they would be ruled over by His law (Deut 17).
- In places where there was uncertainty about how an issue should be settled, they were to defer to the judgment of the priest, Levites, and any judges that God raises up (Samson, Samuel, et al.) (Deut 17:9-13).

3 **Kings**

- However, God knew that His people would eventually clamor for a king so that they could be more like the nations around them (Deut 17:14).

4 **Kings**

- Therefore, in the law he outlines a number of requirements for the man who would be king:
 - Must be an Israelite
 - Cannot “multiply horses” unto himself
 - Cannot sell the people into slavery or make alliances with Egypt for military might
 - Cannot multiply wives or treasure to himself
 - Must write out a copy of the entire Law upon assuming the throne
 - Must then live and rule in accordance with the Law

5 **Samuel**

- The Israelites complain to Samuel and say that they are no longer willing to be ruled over by judges and that they want a king so that they can be like the surrounding nations (1 Samuel 8:1-5).
- Samuel takes this rejection personally and complains to God. God tells Samuel that they are rejecting Him, not Samuel, and that they will have their king (8:7).

6 **The Kingdom**

- God warns the Israelites that once they have a king he will take their sons for soldiers and their daughters for servants, and he will tax them and compel them to forced labor – prophecies that would all be fulfilled by the time of Solomon.
- The first two kings of the Kingdom period are Saul and David – and they each have their own successes and failures.

7 **David vs. Saul**

- David, though in many ways just as imperfect as Saul, had one key difference that garnered him favor with the Lord:
 - David pursued a personal and vibrant relationship with God, and sought to please Him because he loved Him.
- As a result of this difference, God promised that the scepter would not depart from David in his son's time, even though most of the kingdom would be taken from Solomon because of his sin.

8 **Solomon**

- Solomon goes so far as to build places of pagan worship near Jerusalem so that his pagan wives would be able to worship there.
- Solomon did not “wholly follow the Lord, as David his father had done.” (1Kings 11:6).
- Because of Solomon's sins, God raises up adversaries to oppose him.

9 **1 Kings 11:9-13**


- *“...Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant.*
- *Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.”*

10 **Jeroboam**

- The prophet Ahijah takes Jeroboam out and tears a new garment into ten pieces, and gives them to Jeroboam to symbolize that God is going to give him the northern ten tribes to rule.
- Ahijah promises Jeroboam that if Jeroboam will seek God as David did, God would make Jeroboam's house as great as the house of David.

11  **North and South**

- Over the centuries, during a period covering roughly from 930 BC to about 586 BC, the kingdoms of Israel in the north and Judah in the south are alternately enemies and allies.
- Israel is quick to fall into idolatry and experiences God's judgment soonest.
- Judah has a handful of godly kings who were like David, and is given 134 more years before their exile.

12  **North and South**

- While Israel is permanently obliterated, scattered to the edges of the earth by the Assyrians, Judah retains their identity as a people and after 70 years in Babylon they will return to their homeland.
- This portion of Scripture, from the dividing of Solomon's kingdom to the Exile, is one of the most vivid and illustrative narratives in Scripture, and is full of applications for our lives today.

13  **THE LESSONS OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM**

14  **1) The overwhelming lengths of God's mercy**

- *All the officers of the priests and the people likewise were exceedingly unfaithful, following all the abominations of the nations. And they polluted the house of the LORD that he had made holy in Jerusalem. The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no remedy. Therefore he brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans...* (2Ch 36:14-17)

15  **1) The overwhelming lengths of God's mercy**

- Right at the end of the Kingdom of Judah, when God has already pronounced judgment upon it, He is still looking for a Hezekiah, a Josiah, who will be able to turn back His hand of judgment from the land yet again.
- It is impossible to appreciate how gracious, how merciful God is in doing this unless you understand how long Judah has been due God's judgment.

16  **2) The terrible price of idolatry**

- This is one of the most heavily-reoccurring themes in the Kings/Chronicles narrative.
- Idolatry costs Jeroboam and Ahab their thrones and their heirs.
- Manasseh's idolatry sets Judah on an inexorable course toward ruin.
- Left unchecked, idolatry will ruin our lives, steal our children, and destroy our legacies.

17  **3) The awful end of disobedience**










- Jeroboam – Whole family destroyed in a brutal civil war within just a generation of taking the throne.
- Jezebel – Thrown from a tower and eaten by dogs.
- Ahab – Shot to death with arrows, his blood lapped up by dogs.
- Uzziah – Cursed to end his days as a dead man walking.

18  **4) The fervent power of the sold-out life**

- Perhaps no biblical character better exemplifies the word "fervent" than Elijah the Tishbite.
- Elijah and his successor Elisha lived lives that were completely sold-out for God. He was more important to them than:
 - Fame
 - Comfort
 - Money

19  **4) The fervent power of the sold-out life**


- Elijah and Elisha accomplished great things for God in their lifetimes.
- In more recent memory, the legacy of King Josiah was that of the most righteous king that

- Judah had ever seen.
- One of the things that distinguished each of these men is that their devotion was always demonstrated by their actions.
- 20  **5) The blessed hope that God is working**
- One of the most amazing things in the history of the Divided Kingdom is that no matter how dark things get, there is always an undercurrent, a throbbing pulse, reminding us that God is still at work.
- 21  **5) The blessed hope that God is working**
- When Ahab and Jezebel were bending the knee to Baal:
 - God was raising up an Elijah
 - When Elijah was despairing in the wilderness:
 - God had still kept for Himself in Israel seven thousand which had not bowed a knee to Baal.
 - And when things were their darkest and Judah was in exile:
 - God was already preparing a Cyrus
- 22  **5) The blessed hope that God is working**
- *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and also put it in writing: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the LORD his God be with him. Let him go up.'" (2Ch 36:22-23)*
- 23  **5) The blessed hope that God is working**
- It is often easy to look at our current economic or political situation and become discouraged or lose hope because it seems like things cannot possibly get worse than they are.
 - We can take comfort in the fact that even and especially in the worst of times, God is working and He is preserving a remnant of His people.
- 24  **6) The vital importance of your legacy**
- If "worship" is the central theme of the Kings/Chronicles narrative, I would say that "legacy" is a close second.
 - Kings/Chronicles demonstrates for us very clearly that the things you do, the decisions you make, and the God – or gods – you worship will have lasting effects and consequences on those who will come after you.
- 25  **7) The sovereign power of our covenant God**
- God made a covenant with Abraham, with Israel, with David.
 - Through the Kings/Chronicles narrative, He keeps his covenants flawlessly, and we get to see all of the blessings and the curses of the Law come to full fruition.
 - The movements of nations, the actions of kings, and the dispositions of battle are all tools in the hands of a God who has an agenda which is mercifully bigger than us.
- 26  **7) The sovereign power of our covenant God**
- The good news is that God has made a covenant with us, too – the New Covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ.
 - It is a covenant between God the Father and God the Son. It is inviolable, it cannot be broken or revoked.
- 27  **7) The sovereign power of our covenant God**
- As partakers of this New Covenant, we know this:
 - *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. (Rom 8:28)*
- 28  **8) The utter smallness of man's designs**
- If God's plans and wisdom are high and infinite and inviolable, man's plans and wisdom are small and petty and shaky at best.
 - *Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves,*

and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us." He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, "As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." (Psa 2:1-6)

29  **8) The utter smallness of man's designs**

- We can remove God's name from every document, official and civil –
- We can deny Jerusalem and God's ultimate plan for His people –
- We can seek to throw off the bonds of Christian morality and do our own thing and live our own way and "be our own person."

30  **8) The utter smallness of man's designs**

- But when all is said and done, Jesus Christ is the King of Kings Triumphant.
- He is the Conquering Savior. The Mighty God. The Everlasting Father. The Prince of Peace.
- *Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. **Blessed are all who take refuge in him.** (Psa 2:10-12)*