The Kingdom Divided

Unit 3: God's Way of Leading

LAST WEEK

Ruth's faith and loyalty are passed down to her great-grandson, the most famous, and faithful, king of Israel: David (2 Samuel 5:1-5; 6:1-5; Psalm 150).

THIS WEEK

A selfish decision by King Rehoboam, David's grandson, leads the ten northern tribes of Israelites to leave the united kingdom and form their own kingdom (1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-29).

Story Summary

When Rehoboam becomes king of Israel, he refuses to serve his people. The older advisors urge him to be a servant leader, to listen to the people, and to speak good words. Instead, he listens to his young friends who tell him to make the people's load heavier. Because of this, the kingdom of Israel splits into two kingdoms: Israel to the north and Judah to the south. This split leads the kingdom into further idolatry, including the worship of golden calves, the very thing that displeased God in the first place.

Practice: Worship

Worship is focused on God alone. One way to worship God is to remove substitutes for God from our lives. We might call these idols. What has priority in your life? What comes between you and God? Put aside everything else and spend time worshipping and listening to God without any distractions.

The Point

We lead best when we listen to and serve others.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

Divided Kingdom

In today's story, the kingdom of Israel splits in two: Israel becomes the northern kingdom and Judah becomes the southern kingdom. The two kingdoms remain split until both are eventually conquered. The line of kings of the northern kingdom of Israel lead the people away from God by building temples for other gods. This leads to the northern kingdom being conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BCE. Judah lasted 135 years longer than Israel, but it was conquered by Babylonia. The period that follows is known as the Babylonian exile.

NEXT WEEK

King Ahab has the people worship Baal. He is confronted by Elijah and a powerful display of the power of the one true God (1 Kings 18:[17-19] 20-39).

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1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-29

Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

Note: *This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!*

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday—Read 1 Kings 12:1-17, 25-29

The kingdom of Israel divides into two kingdoms.

- What has caused or might cause a group of your friends to split up?
- When have you found yourself serving without a focus on God?

Monday—Read 1 Kings 16:29-33

King Ahab provokes God's anger.

- What have others asked you to do that you knew would not glorify God?
- Why was worshipping Baal so wrong?

Tuesday—Read 1 Kings 17:1-7

Elijah announces a drought.

- Do you think the drought was a way of bringing people back to God?
- How has God provided for you when things around you were tough?

Wednesday—Read 1 Kings 17:8-16

Elijah and a widow help each other.

- When have you experienced a coincidence and later realized it was actually God's work in your life?
- When have you been asked to do something that did not make sense at the time?

Thursday—Read 1 Kings 17:17-24

The widow's son is brought back to life.

- What are your thoughts on miracle stories like this one?
- Why did the woman immediately think her son's illness was because of her sin?

Friday—Read 1 Kings 18:1-6

The good man Obadiah protects the prophets.

- How does revering God influence the way you respond to the needs of others?
- Who can you support or encourage today?

Saturday—Read 1 Kings 18:7-16

Elijah and Obadiah meet.

- Why was Obadiah so afraid to do as Elijah requested?
- What do you think is going to happen when Elijah speaks to Ahab?

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