A Kingdom Divided Against Itself
1 Kings 11-14

Overview
King Solomon is an enigma – a person who is puzzling and often difficult to understand. On the one hand, he is remembered for his uncanny wisdom, his excellence at nation building, and his success in expanding the area of his kingdom. On the other hand, he is remembered for his blatant lustfulness, his self-inflicted internal conflict, and his tendency to be self-concerned. In the end, he is most remembered by the legacy he left to his kingdom. At the end of his life, Solomon was overwhelmed by his sins, so that God tried him and found him wanting. Likewise, when Solomon's life ended, he left no legacy of good behind him, and his kingdom was overwhelmed by the sin Solomon invited.

I Kings chapter 12 records the tragic legacy of Solomon's reign. If Solomon was wise, his heir was a foolish young man: hot headed, ill tempered to be ruler. His foolish mistakes at the very beginning of his reign caused a civil war and a division of the kingdom which would not be healed for over 500 years. Furthermore, Solomon's syncretism introduced through his harem of wives and concubines led to full blown idolatry in the Northern (Samaria) Kingdom. That idolatry would not be healed until Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob, almost 1000 years later.

Solomon was a man divided against himself. He built a kingdom divided against itself. We would do well to remember the words of Jesus Christ from St. Matthew 12:25, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.”

Which brings us to our point. This lesson is not a morality tale about Solomon's poor legacy. This is a lesson in the devastation which befalls everyone, individuals and nations, who embraces sin. And it is a clarion call to seek the greater good, which can only be found in pursuing the hope of God's promises. Just as we might wish that Israel had hoped in the fulfillment of God's Covenant with David, and therefore had refused to follow men or idols, so we might be encouraged to hope in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, refusing to turn away from the kingdom He is building.

Essential Elements

This section, with green colored headings, presents the elements of the lesson which are essential. Students must be presented these concepts.

Theme
Judgment begins in the house of God.

Scripture Readings
Read 1 Kings 11-14
Memory Verses

2 Samuel 7:5&16 ESV

Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: ... your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’

Supporting Material

This section, with brown colored headings, presents material which may or may not be used. It is intended to offer ideas and support for the teachers and leaders.

Promise and Deliverance by S.G. De Graaf
Read Vol. II chapters 26-27

Helpful Questions to ask and concerns to address:

1. What did Solomon do to damage his relationship with God? 1 Kings 11:1-6
2. What did his son, Rehoboam, do to anger the people of Israel? 1 Kings 12:13-14, 16
3. When Israel divided into two kingdoms, how many of the twelve tribes went with the Northern Kingdom and what was that Kingdom called? 10 Tribes joined the northern kingdom which was called Israel.
4. How many tribes went with the southern kingdom and what was its name? 2 Tribes (Benjamin and Judah) joined the southern kingdom which was called Judah.
5. Who was king in the north? Was he a descendant of David? Jeroboam, who was not a descendant of David.
6. Who was king in the south? Was he a descendant of David? Rehoboam, who was Solomon’s son and grandson of David.
7. When Jeroboam established his northern kingdom, the people there could not go to the Temple of God since it was in the southern kingdom. What did he do to provide for the spiritual needs of his people? Why was this wrong? He built golden calves for the people to worship instead of God and he set them up in two rival temples in the north. This was wrong because it was idolatry, which God had forbidden. The people should have recognized this from the time of Moses and Aaron, but they went along with it.
8. Was God pleased with Jeroboam and the Kingdom of Israel? No. See 1 Kings 14:15-16