

...DIVIDED WE FALL

In 1792, the Commonwealth of Kentucky adopted its state motto from an increasingly popular phrase, “*United we stand, divided we fall.*” Unfortunately for the nation of Israel, these words couldn’t be truer.

Last Week, we witnessed Israel’s “Golden Age” captured in the moment that God promised King David an heir with an eternal throne. That promise, called the “Davidic Covenant,” wasn’t fully fulfilled by David’s son, Solomon, who succeeded him on the throne. It certainly wasn’t fulfilled by Solomon’s son, Rehoboam.

Solomon did many great things in his life—he was, after all, the wisest man to ever live (1 Kings 3:12). However, he also did many things that evidenced a half-heart for God. When his son, Rehoboam took over, he evidenced no heart for God.

RHYME REVIEW

1	CREATIONS GLORY NOW UNDONE
2	FLOOD OUT THE WORLD, START FRESH WITH YOU
3	NEW LANGUAGE BRINGS DISUNITY
4	THE SOD, THE SEED, AND BLESS SOME MORE
5	WALK THROUGH RED SEA AND STAY ALIVE
6	POSSESS THE LAND, BUT DO NOT MIX
7	IN SIN, ENSLAVED, THEN LOOK TO HEAVEN
8	WE WANT A KING AND WILL NOT WAIT
9	OBEYING GOD AND DOIN’ FINE
10	THE KINGDOM SPLIT, TWO AND TEN

1 KINGS 12:16–20

¹⁶ And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, “What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.” So Israel went to their tents. ¹⁷ But Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah. ¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was taskmaster over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehoboam hurried to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. ²⁰ And when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Many Christians know people from the Bible like Moses, David, Jesus, etc. Our hope as we *Run Through the Bible* is that you not only *know* these people, but you understand *where they fit* into the biblical story. No period creates more confusion than the Divided Kingdom. For one thing, there’s a lot of overlapping people. Second, many people don’t realize there’s two kingdoms. Scan the QR-code for more.



DISCUSSION

What differences can you describe between the best leaders you’ve had and the worst?

1. How did the people respond to Rehoboam, and what did they do? (16)

2. How did Rehoboam try to regain control, and how did that work out? (18–19)

3. Who ended up as king over the ten tribes? (20)

4. In what ways does sin divide?

5. In what ways does the Gospel bring unity?

6. What does it look like to pursue gospel unity in your own life verses standing apart for truth?

The balance between unity and standing for truth can be difficult—and costly. If you need help dealing with a specific situation, don’t wait. Talk to your coach today!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION



ATHLETE STUDY

STUDY NOTES

DOWNSTREAM CONSEQUENCES

A quiet forest dweller faithfully worked high above his village in the Alps. Many years earlier, the town council hired him to clear debris from the pools of water feeding the beautiful spring flowing through their town. Reliably, he removed the leaves and branches, and wiped away the silt from the fresh flow of water. Eventually, the village attracted vacationers who enjoyed the graceful swans floating on crystal clear water, naturally-irrigated farmlands, and picturesque restaurant views. One evening, the council reviewed their budget and one man noticed the obscure keeper's salary and asked, "Why do we keep paying this man every year?" Unanimously, they terminated the man's services.

For weeks, nothing changed. By early autumn, trees began shedding their leaves. Snapped branches fell into the pools, hindering the rushing flow of water. One afternoon, someone noticed a light yellowish-brown tint in the spring. Soon, the water became darker. Then, a slimy film covered sections along the banks, emitting a foul odor. Mill wheels moved slower, some finally grinding to a halt. Swans and tourists left before disease and sickness impacted the village.

Realizing their gross error in judgment, the council hired back the keeper. Within a few weeks, the river began to clear up.

Under King David and King Solomon, the Kingdom of Israel—while never perfect—followed the Lord and, as *Deuteronomy* foretold, their obedience brought blessing. However, what followed were years of national spiritual neglect and disobedience eventually leading to God's judgment.

This Week, we pick up the story after Solomon's death. During his reign, King Solomon achieved many great construction projects, including the Temple. But workers were tired. 1 Kings 12 opens as the workers came to Rehoboam to ask for a reduction in labor. Rehoboam rejected Solomon's counselors and instead followed the advice of the younger men—imposing much harsher labor and taxation upon the people.

GODLY JUDGMENT REQUIRES HOPE

Because of his foolishness, ***when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David."*** In other words, 10 of 12 tribes of Israel just declared their independence—rejecting the line of King David.

The 10 tribes, from here on known as the northern kingdom of "***Israel***," ***went to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah.*** The southern kingdom of Judah (named after David's tribe), also included the tribe of Benjamin (where the city of Jerusalem is located).

Like many prideful monarchs, Rehoboam didn't take this offense lightly and tried to regain control by force. ***King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was taskmaster over the forced labor*** to get these tribes back in line, but they weren't having it. They ***stoned him to death with stones.***

At this shocking twist of events, ***King Rehoboam hurried to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.***

#10, THE KINGDOM SPLIT NOW, TWO AND TEN

I know what you're thinking, "What about the Davidic Covenant? Did God not know this would happen?" Quite the opposite. God had seen the nation's sin in Solomon's later years. God raised up an industrious young man in charge of forced labor for Solomon and made a promise much like Abraham, "***If you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you***" (1 Kings 11:38). Because of his faithful love for David, God promised to afflict this on "David's house," but not forever.

Having fled because Solomon tried to kill him, this young man returned, ***and when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only.*** ("Only" is being used as a figure of speech, Benjamin was there too.)

God's people continued for centuries under this new "Divided Kingdom." Unfortunately, Jeroboam did *nothing* that God desired and *immediately* led the northern kingdom of Israel into idolatry. The southern kingdom of Judah had some good kings that led national revivals occasionally. Both nations would be judged for their wickedness, Israel sooner because they never repented, Judah later because they had their moments.

Although we're never called to sacrifice truth, God's heart is for his people to be unified. Satan divides, the gospel unites. "United we stand, divided we fall." It's not just a motto—it's true—as we shall see next Week.