

# Open Bible Stories - The Divided Kingdom

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## Introduction

### Key Idea

The story of the divided kingdom teaches us about the consequences of sin and idolatry among leaders (people in positions of authority).

### Core Belief Verse

*""For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry." 1 Peter 4:3"*

### God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife and she bore twins, Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But, God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God sent judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people. God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil and the kingdom of Israel divided into two kingdoms.

## **The Story: The Divided Kingdom**

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18-01



King David ruled for 40 years. Then he died, and his son Solomon began to rule over Israel. God spoke to Solomon and asked him what he wanted most that God should do for him. Solomon asked that God would make him very wise. This pleased God, so he made Solomon the wisest man in the world. Solomon learned many things and was a very wise ruler. God also made him very wealthy.

18-02



In Jerusalem, Solomon built the Temple for which his father, David, had planned and gathered materials. People now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the Temple instead of at the Tent of Meeting. God came and was present in the Temple, and he lived there with his people.

18-03



But Solomon loved women from other countries. He disobeyed God by marrying many women, almost 1,000 of them! Many of these women came from foreign countries and brought their gods with them and continued to worship them. When Solomon was old, he also worshiped their gods.

18-04



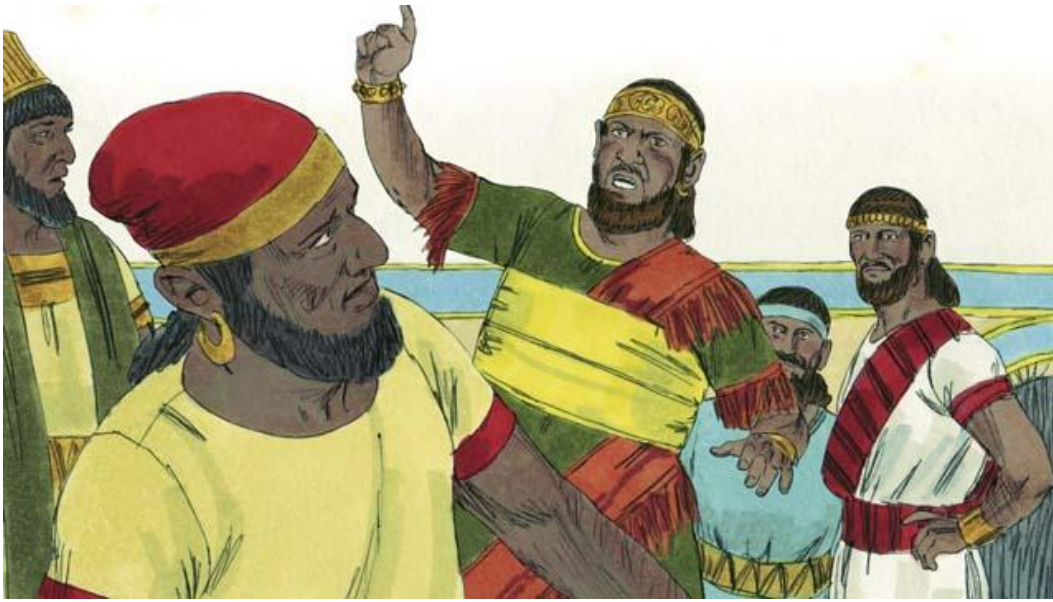
God was angry with Solomon because of this. He said that he would punish him by dividing the nation of Israel into two kingdoms. He would do this after Solomon died.

18-05



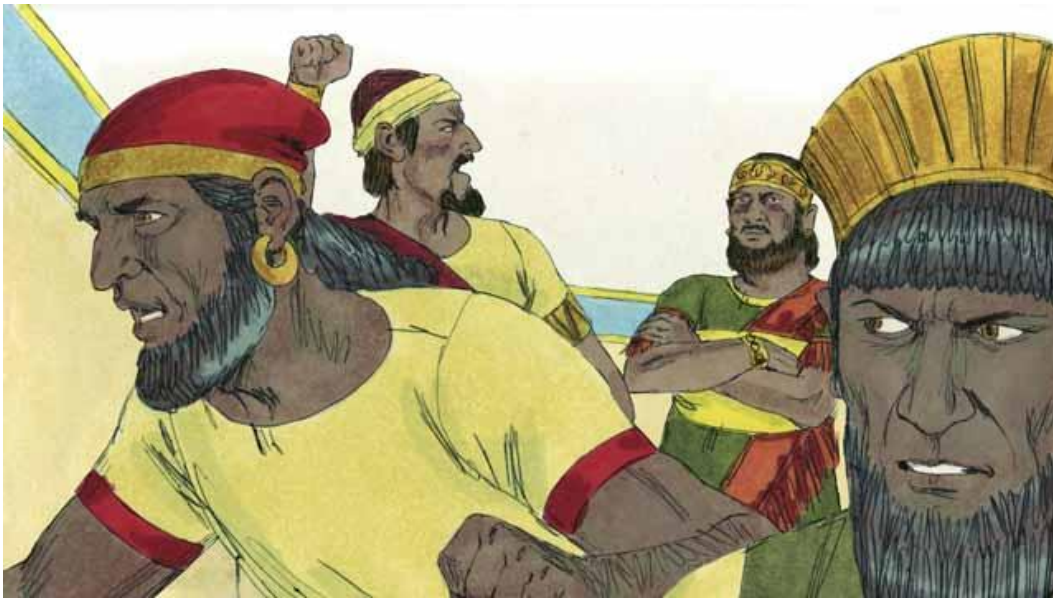
After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. All the people of the nation of Israel came together to accept him as their king. They complained to Rehoboam that Solomon had made them do a lot of hard work and pay a lot of taxes. They asked Rehoboam to make them work less.

18-06



But Rehoboam answered them in a very foolish way. He said, "You say that my father, Solomon, made you work hard. But I will make you work harder than he did, and I will make you suffer worse than he did."

18-07



When the people heard him say this, most of them rebelled against him. Ten tribes left him; only two tribes remained with him. These two tribes called themselves the kingdom of Judah.

18-08



The other ten tribes made a man named Jeroboam to be their king. These tribes were in the northern part of the land. They called themselves the kingdom of Israel.

18-09



Jeroboam rebelled against God and caused the people to sin. He built two idols for his people to worship. They no longer went to Jerusalem in the kingdom of Judah to worship God at the Temple.

18-10



The kingdoms of Judah and Israel became enemies and often fought against each other.

18-11



In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were evil. Many of these kings were killed by other Israelites who wanted to become king in their place.

18-12



All of the kings and most of the people of the kingdom of Israel worshiped idols. When they did this, they often slept with prostitutes and sometimes even sacrificed children to the idols.

18-13



The kings of Judah were descendants of David. Some of these kings were good men who ruled justly and worshiped God. But most of Judah's kings were evil. They ruled badly, and they worshiped idols. Some of these kings even sacrificed their children to false gods. Most of the people of Judah also rebelled against God and worshiped other gods.

*A Bible story from: 1 Kings 1-6; 11-12*

## Put on the New Man - Becoming a Community of Transformed Members

- **Key Idea:** experiencing transformation as a Christian community
- **Key Passage:** Colossians 3:1-11
- **Main Session:** OBS 18 (The Divided Kingdom)

### Recite the Core Belief Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

*11 Therefore Yahweh said to Solomon, "Because you have done this and have not kept the covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant." 1 Kings 11:11*

OR

*For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry. 1 Peter 4:3*

### Name the Temptations (5 minutes)

It is not easy to be a Christian. There are many temptations that Christians face. When Christians sin, it brings ruin to personal lives and community life. Think about the ways of the world that are temptations to Christians.

Some of the temptations that Christians face are...

### Read the Passage (5 minutes)

When believers place their faith in Jesus, Jesus commands them to reject sinful ways of living. God joins Christians together into a community of faith. Read the passage below to understand the way that God wants Christian community to live.

*1 If then God has raised you with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Think about the things above, not about the things on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ appears, who is your life, then you will also appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death,*

*then, the members that are on earth - sexual immorality, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. 6 It is for these things that the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience. 7 It is in these things that you also once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you must get rid of all these things - wrath, anger, evil intentions, insults, and obscene speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have taken off the old man with its practices, 10 and you have put on the new man that is being made new in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. 11 This is where there is no Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman, but Christ is all, and is in all. Colossians 3:1-11*

**Explore the Idea** (10-15 minutes)

Christians reject their old ways of living. God gives Christians the power to experience change. After reading the passage above, use the following questions to help your community discuss biblical teaching on personal life transformation.

1. How does this passage describe the way that Christians can experience change and transformation in their lives?
2. What does a Christian community look like that has experienced this change/transformation?
3. How would you describe the maturity of your community in light of this passage?
4. What next steps does God want you to take to apply these principles to your community life?
5. Why is it important for your community to practice these principles of personal transformation?

**Share Your Story** (10 minutes)

Think about the various principles of change discussed in the passage above. Identify 1-2 principles that you want to apply to your life. Then, identify 1-2 principles that you think are important for your community.

God is calling me to focus on the following principles...

I think that our community would mature by focusing on the following principles...

**Pray to God** (5 minutes)

Pray for your community to experience God's transformation and change. Use the language of the above biblical passage to pray that God would cause this change in your community.

**Sing a Song** (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song that praises God for his great work of transformation. Sing this song together and celebrate God's work of change in your lives.

## **Movement 1: Understand the Story**

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*Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.*

### **Observation Questions**

18-01

Who ruled Israel after David died?

David died after 40 years as king of Israel. His son, Solomon, was Israel's next king.

What did Solomon ask God to do for him?

Solomon asked God to make him very wise.

What did God think of Solomon's request?

God was pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom. God made him the wisest man in the world. God also made him very wealthy.

18-02

How did David prepare for the building of the Temple?

David planned and gathered materials for the building of the Temple.

What was the purpose of the Temple that Solomon built?

The Temple was a place for the people to worship God and offer sacrifices. God was present with his people in the Temple.

18-03

What serious sins did Solomon commit?

Solomon loved women from other countries. Solomon married many foreign women and worshiped their gods in his old age.

18-04

What did God think of Solomon marrying foreign wives and worshipping their false gods?

God was very angry with Solomon for this sin.

How did God punish Solomon's sins?

God said he would divide the nation of Israel into two kingdoms after Solomon's death.

18-05

Who became king after Solomon?

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became king of Israel after Solomon.

What complaint did the people have against Solomon?

The Israelites complained that Solomon made them do a lot of hard work and pay a lot of taxes. They asked Rehoboam to make them work less.

18-06

What foolish answer did Rehoboam give to the people?

I will make you work harder and punish you more than my father, Solomon, did.

18-07

How did many Israelites respond when they heard Rehoboam's answer?

Many people rebelled against Rehoboam. Ten tribes of Israel left him and only two remained.

What was the name of the kingdom founded by the two southern tribes who remained with Rehoboam?

It was named the kingdom of Judah.

18-08

How many of the tribes rebelled against Rehoboam and formed the northern kingdom?

Ten tribes joined the kingdom of Israel. They were in the northern part of the land.

18-09

What did Jeroboam do to keep his people from going to Judah to worship at the Temple?

Jeroboam rebelled against God. Jeroboam built and placed two idols in the kingdom of Israel for his people to worship.

What effect did Jeroboam's sin have on the Israelites?

The Israelites no longer went to Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple.

*18-10*

How did the two kingdoms of Israelites relate to each other?

The kingdoms of Judah and Israel became enemies and fought against each other.

*18-11*

How many of the kings of Israel were faithful to God?

None of them were faithful.

How did many of the kings of Israel die?

Many of the kings of Israel were killed by other Israelites who wanted to become king.

*18-12*

What was wrong with the worship of many Israelites?

All the kings and most of the people in the kingdom of Israel worshiped idols.

What were some of the evil practices that were often included in the worship of idols?

They took part in sexual immorality and child sacrifice.

*18-13*

Who was the ancestor of the kings of Judah?

King David was their ancestor.

Were any kings of Judah faithful to God?

Yes, some were faithful, but most were evil. Most of the kings ruled badly and worshiped idols. Some kings sacrificed their children to false gods.

How well did the people of Judah follow God?

Most of the people of Judah rebelled against God and worshiped other gods.

## **Movement 2: Theological Questions**

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### **What Does This Story Teach Us?**

1. What is God's kingdom like? What do the good/positive things of Solomon's rule teach us about God's kingdom?
2. How can leaders misuse their authority to disobey God and lead others into sin? What can we learn about the wrong use of authority from the negative examples of the kings of Israel and Judah?
3. What are the effects of leaders practicing evil and rebelling against God's ways? How does the story of the divided kingdom caution/warn us about the effects/consequences of leaders not following God's ways?
4. How does false worship (i.e., worshiping idols) lead to other sins? In what ways does this story teach us about the way idolatry tempts people to other sins?

## **Movement 3: Live It Out**

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### **Personal Implications & Applications From The Story**

*Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.*

1. If you could ask God for anything (like Solomon), what would you ask him for? What does this tell about your spiritual condition?
2. How has false worship led you into other sins?
3. How have you misused authority in your life? How have you been mistreated by those who have authority?
4. Think about this week. Where does "The Divided Kingdom" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of the divided kingdom teaches us about the consequences of sin and idolatry among leaders (people in positions of authority).

## **Movement 4: Retell the Story**

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*Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.*

1. Can someone retell "The Divided Kingdom" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.

3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

### **Church Ministry**

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

**Ministry Preparation:** Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. What setting, audience, or approach would you use? Record your ideas below.

**Ministry Implementation:** Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching or lead a discussion. Record your ministry plan below.

**Ministry Reflection:** Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. What went well? What would you do differently? Reflect on your experience below.

### **Movement 5: Share It**

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*Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.*

1. Who is one specific person you will share "The Divided Kingdom" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

Report-back next meeting: Who did you share with, and what happened?

### **Mission Engagement**

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

**Witness Preparation:** Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. What context, relationship, or opportunity will you use? Record your ideas below.

**Witness Implementation:** Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a natural conversation or teaching. Record your plan below.

**Witness Reflection:** Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. What did they respond to? What questions did they ask? Reflect on your experience below.