

Lesson 27- The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders

1 Kings 12 – 17; 2 Chronicles 10 - 12

Purpose: To encourage us to use our blessings wisely and to enter the temple worthily.

My lessons take a different path than the Gospel Doctrine lesson manual. The lesson outline looks closer at the doctrinal topics included in the lesson purpose and scripture block. The lessons are designed to challenge mature, active Latter-Day Saints who have a solid Gospel foundation and are looking for insights into the scriptures that will broaden their faith and understanding.

If you are interested in downloading the Powerpoint file, links to source material or reading posts about improving Gospel Doctrine class preparation, delivery and engagement, you can join my Facebook Group and have full access to the content posted there. The link is <https://www.facebook.com/groups/188904648521022/>

Last Week's Lesson Challenge

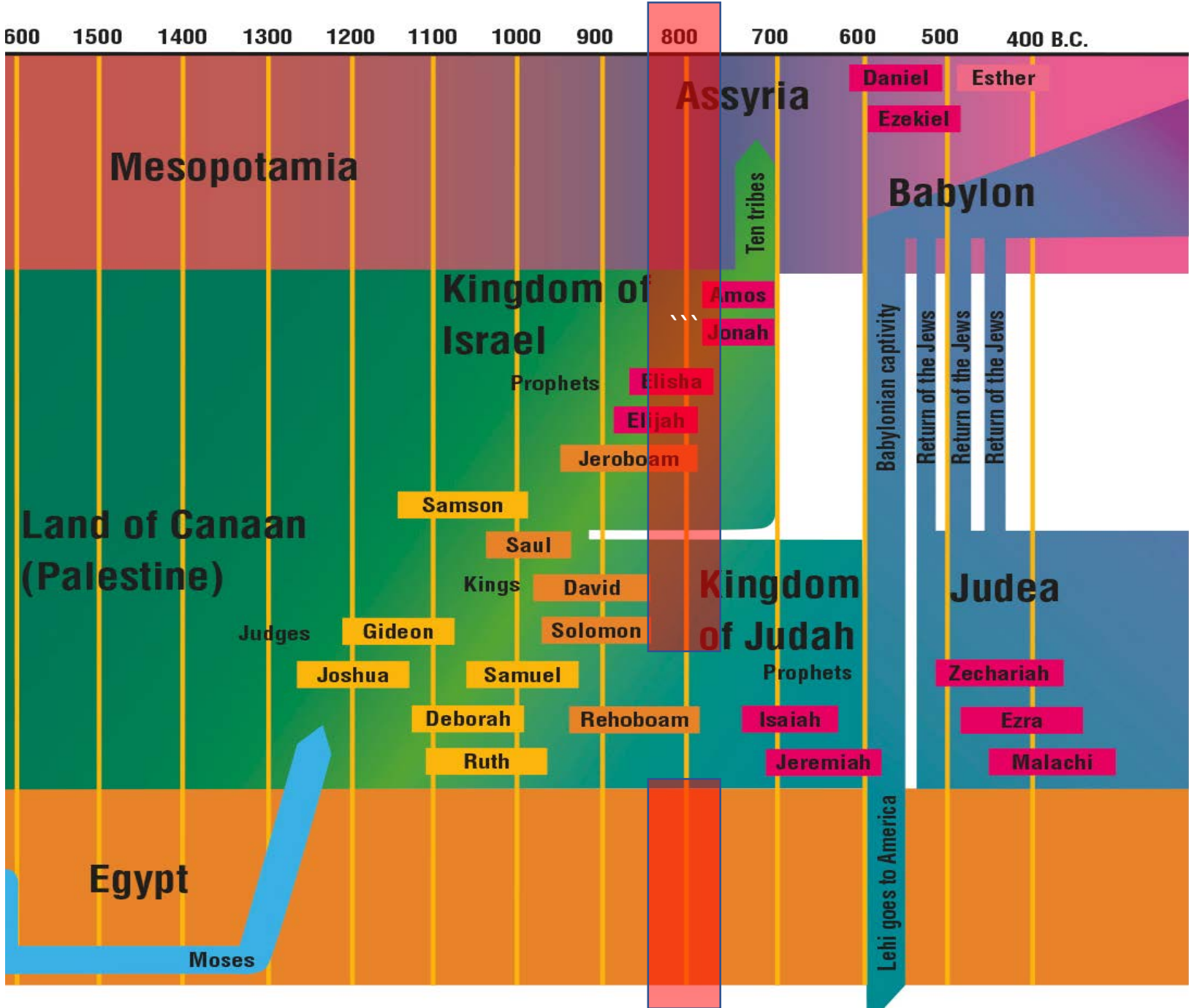
Solomon was a great king who pleased Jehovah for many years. He built Jehovah's Temple and led Israel in righteousness for most of his 40 year reign.

However, later in life, Solomon turned to material things, the accolades of others and the idols of his foreign wives and forgot his blessings from Jehovah. Within a year of his death, Israel would be divided into two nations.

Our weekly challenge was to count our many blessings that the Lord bestows upon us and strive to always be worthy of his blessings.

Would anyone wish to share their thoughts during the past week on the challenge?

The Division of Israel and the Reign of the Early Kings



Kings Vs. Chronicles

- The books of Chronicles "overlaps" the books of Kings in many places.
- One thing that almost everyone agrees on is that the two books were written at different times by different people.
 - According to Jewish tradition, Ezra wrote Chronicles and Jeremiah wrote Kings.
 - Kings was written before the Babylonian captivity (i.e., before 586 B.C.)
 - Chronicles was written afterwards (i.e., before ca. 516 B.C.).
- Both Kings and Chronicles are inspired books written by prophets of God, but their purposes are slightly different.
 - Kings is more clearly a comprehensive divine history of the two kingdoms, summing up that history at its conclusion.
 - Chronicles is more of a selective and synoptic picture of the history of Israel, summing things up as a prelude to the future at the time of the reestablishment of the Jewish state.

The Kingdom of Israel at the Time of Solomon's Death

Solomon allowed his love for material things and his great accomplishments as a builder to wean him from his early devotion to the Lord. True, he achieved great fame while the temple was being built, and his dedication of the house of the Lord was one of his most spiritual moments; but later, when the Queen of Sheba and other foreign visitors paid their respects, they said little about Solomon's righteousness or wisdom. Rather, they expressed amazement and awe at his tremendous achievements in building. Solomon appears to have grown hungry for the plaudits of men. He decided to construct even grander structures. **To do so, he enforced heavy taxation upon his people—so heavy that he eventually forced his people into poverty.** Samuel's warnings about what would occur if Israel were governed by a king were fulfilled in every particular. **Mismanagement of the nation's wealth left united Israel tottering.**



1 Kings 11:26-33

26 ¶ And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king.

27 And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.

28 And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.

29 And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:

30 And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces:

31 And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:

32 (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)

33 Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father.

After Solomon had directly disobeyed the Lord by going after the gods of his heathen wives, the Lord told him that the kingdom would be taken from him and given to one of his servants (see 1 Kings 11:11). The servant was Jeroboam, whom Solomon had given authority over Ephraim and Manasseh (see v. 28). Jeroboam was told by the prophet Ahijah that he would rule over ten of the tribes of Israel. The tribe of Judah, however, was to continue under the reign of David's line so that the promise that the Messiah would come through the lineage of David and from the tribe of Judah would be fulfilled (see Genesis 49:10). The kingdom of Judah would include half the small tribe of Benjamin, the Levites, and the strangers that were in Judah's territory. At first, only part of Levi was with Judah, but after Jeroboam turned to idolatry, many more deserted to Judah. Eventually a good share of the tribe of Levi was in the south.

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-kings-malachi/chapter-1?lang=eng>

1 Kings 11:34-40

34 Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:

35 But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes.

36 And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there.

37 And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel.

38 And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.

39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.

40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

1 Kings 11:36.

Promise Given to David

This verse reiterates the promise made by the Lord to David that his kingdom would never become extinct while the earth should stand. The promise is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, a descendant of David.

Jeroboam, an Ephraimite who had been a military leader in the army of Israel during Solomon's reign, was rewarded for his accomplishments with a building project in the city of David. He was made an administrator over all the house of Joseph, that is, over the territorial districts of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, two of the most powerful tribes in Israel. Later, Ahijah, a prophet of that day, revealed to Jeroboam that he, Jeroboam, would become the ruler of the northern ten tribes.

Solomon, fearful of Jeroboam, sought his life. Jeroboam fled to Egypt, where he lived in exile until after Solomon's death. The people of the north called Jeroboam out of Egypt to lead their confrontation with Rehoboam, Solomon's son.

As part of this rebellion, the northern people seceded from Judah and made Jeroboam their king. They became known as the kingdom of Israel, or the Northern Kingdom. This kingdom was often referred to as Ephraim, particularly by the prophets, because the tribe of Ephraim was a dominant power from the days of Joshua to the time of Jeroboam.

The capital of the Northern Kingdom was established first in Shechem and later in Samaria, both of which cities were located in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim.

1 Kings 12:1-5

1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king.

2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;)

3 That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying,

4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

5 And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.

“Rehoboam went to Shechem, because all Israel had come thither to make him king. ‘All Israel,’ according to what follows, was the ten tribes beside Judah and Benjamin. The right of making king the prince whom God has chosen, i.e. of anointing him and doing homage to him ... , was an old traditional right in Israel, and the tribes had exercised it not only in the case of Saul and David, but in that of Solomon also. The ten tribes of Israel made use of this right on Rehoboam’s ascent of the throne. On the choice of Sicheim as the place for doing homage, ‘they sought an opportunity for transferring the government to Jeroboam, and therefore were unwilling to come to Jerusalem, but came to Sicheim, which belonged to Ephraim, whilst Jeroboam was an Ephraimite.’ If there could be any further doubt on the matter, it would be removed by the fact that they had sent for Jeroboam the son of Nebat to come from Egypt, whither he had fled from Solomon, and attend this meeting, and that Jeroboam took the lead in the meeting, and no doubt suggested to those assembled the demand which they should lay before Rehoboam.”

<https://www.lds.org/manual/old-testament-student-manual-kings-malachi/enrichment-a?lang=eng>

1 Kings 12:6-11

6 ¶ And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

One scholar noted that “Solomon’s kingdom barely outlived him. At his death his son and heir, Rehoboam, sought to ascend the throne of Israel and Judah. There was no difficulty in the south. The elders of Judah were no doubt pleased to anoint another native son to continue the rule which had favored Judah in so many ways. In the north, in Israel, it was a different story altogether. Before there was to be an acclamation of any son of Solomon, there must be some plain talk about certain policies of state which the men of the northern hills and valleys thought discriminatory if not unbearable. Forced labor gangs for royal building projects simply must not continue. Heavy and inequitable taxation favoring Judah would have to be modified. The new king would either have to find other ways to carry out his personal and imperial ambitions or else temper his desires. In any case, the northern tribes were clearly unwilling to bear the brunt of the monarchical burden. Underlying these real grievances was the reviving strength of the tribal elders. Solomon had not completely destroyed their power after all.” (Harry Thomas Frank, *Discovering the Biblical World*, p. 99.)

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Is It Folly to Reject the Counsel of the Aged?

6 ¶ And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

The episode recorded in these verses demonstrates the value of age when wise counsel is needed. Because of their experience, older people are generally wiser than younger people. But because of their great energy and ability to adapt, youth can be very effective leaders. **It is often best to allow the wisdom of the aged to guide the energy of youth.**

The reference to scorpions (see 1 Kings 12:14) seems to be an allusion to scourges or whips made of several thongs of leather which had metal barbs embedded in the ends (see William Smith, A Dictionary of the Bible, s.v. “scorpion”). Rehoboam was simply announcing that he would deal even more sternly with the tribes of Israel than Solomon had.

1 Kings 12:12-20

12 ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

[1 Kings 12:16](#). What Does the Phrase “What Portion Have We in David? ... See to Thine Own House, David” Mean?

16 ¶ So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

Those assembled made it clear that they no longer considered themselves to be part of the house of David (Judah). They rebelled against the dominion of Rehoboam and moved to establish their own kingdom. “To your tents” is an idiom meaning “Let’s go home!” (D. Guthrie and J. A. Motyer, eds., *The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, p. 337). The northern tribes withdrew their allegiance from Rehoboam and the house of David and said in essence, “David, you take care of your own house. We will no longer be associated nor have an inheritance with you” (see Adam Clarke, *The Holy Bible ... with a Commentary and Critical Notes*, 2:436).

The lesson up to now, has been largely historical, a recount of the difficulties that the 10 Northern Tribes had faced under King Solomon's rule that they no longer were going to suffer under King Rehoboam's rule.

What spiritual lessons can be gained from this historical review?

The Rule of Earthly Kings and the Rule of Jehovah

- The Prophet Samuel cautioned Israel that if they chose an earthly king over Jehovah as their king and guardian, they would sorely suffer, which they did under Saul, David and especially Solomon.
- We are obligated to be loyal to the leaders of our nations whether they be hereditary monarchs or elected presidents.
- When our earthly leaders do not follow Jehovah, but follow other gods or follow the power of strong men, we are again obligated to be loyal, but not forsake our loyalty to Jehovah and his commandments.
- Historically, many have found this a difficult way to have to live out their lives.
- We must trust in Jehovah, pray for the righteous rule of earthly leaders and wait for Jehovah, in His own time, to change the hearts of earthly leaders back to righteous leadership principles.

Trust in the Love Jehovah Has for Us

- We must always have trust in the love that Jehovah has for us.
- Ultimately, whatever difficulties we may face in this life, Jehovah has an eternal plan for humankind in general, and us, individually in particular.
- Many people, including Latter-day Saints, live in the world today under an earthly rule that does not follow Jehovah's commandments.
- We must always remember, regardless of the circumstances around us, that Jehovah loves us and will do all possible, short of taking away humankind's free agency, to show us His love.
- We must always have trust in the love that Jehovah has for us.

Spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ Throughout the World

- As more of Heavenly Father's earthly children are taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ and live by his commandments, earthly governments will become more like Jehovah's kingdom in heaven.
- We must support the efforts of the Church, its leadership and its members to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world.
 - Participate as missionaries when and where we can.
 - Financially support the missionary program through paying tithes and other donations.
 - Live our lives through in Gospel principles to shine Jehovah's light so bright that it can be seen not only in our neighborhoods, but across the Earth.

1 Kings 13-17 show us the up and down, righteous and evil, rule that the kings who follow Rehoboam and Jeroboam place on the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The following lessons will look at Jehovah's prophets – Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah and others --, and what they do on Jehovah's behalf to direct the Kings to be righteous.

This Week's Lesson Challenge

We need to trust in Jesus Christ, His Gospel and His Church as we live our daily lives. We can't fully depend upon earthly leaders to lead in righteousness.

Consider this week, the differences you see between the rule of today's earthly leaders and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Further consider what you can do on a daily basis to promote Gospel principles in your neighborhood, region and country.