



God Punishes Jeroboam

1 Kings 11:35–38; 12:1–33; 14:1–18



LESSON GOAL

Students will enjoy the blessings of obedience.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God offered to bless Jeroboam and his family if he would worship no other gods.
- Jeroboam chose not to obey God, and he worshiped false gods.
- Jeroboam made gods for Israel to worship.
- Jeroboam's disobedience had consequences for both his family and Israel.

KEY VERSE

"But you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back" (1 Kings 14:9).

APPLICATION

- Search your heart for rebellion and disobedience to God.
- Rejoice that God blesses humble obedience.
- Realize that without God's grace, you will receive only punishment.

NEXT WEEK

Elijah and the Prophets of Baal
Read 1 Kings 17:1; 18:17–46.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



4 Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

The Lord’s Promised Blessing (1 Kings 11:35–38)

Because of Solomon’s idolatry, the Lord promised to give the kingdom of Israel to one of Solomon’s servants (1 Kings 11:9–11). The prophet Ahijah came to Jeroboam, a powerful man in Solomon’s labor force (11:28), to tell him that God had chosen him to replace the son of Solomon as king over the 10 northern tribes (11:35). The Lord gave Jeroboam the opportunity to receive a wonderful blessing. If he obeyed God’s commands as King David had, then God would turn Jeroboam’s descendants into a ruling dynasty (11:38). Jeroboam’s enjoyment of this blessing was dependent on his willingness to submit to God’s Law. If Jeroboam rejected God’s commands, he would not enjoy the blessing of his descendants reigning over the 10 northern tribes.

The Lord’s Fulfilled Plan (1 Kings 12:1–24)

After Solomon’s son Rehoboam had become king over all Israel, the northern tribes called for Jeroboam to return from exile (where he had fled from Solomon) and represent the tribes before the king (1 Kings 12:1–3). Jeroboam presented the northern tribes’ complaint that they had been overworked by Solomon but promised obedience if Rehoboam would lighten their workload (12:3–4). After rejecting wise counsel and accepting the advice of his peers, Rehoboam foolishly responded that he would increase the northern tribes’ workload and would rule more severely than his father had (12:5–14). The author of Kings reveals that “the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam” (12:15). God was sovereignly working through Rehoboam’s foolish choice in order to make Jeroboam king (Prov. 21:1).

The northern tribes responded to Rehoboam’s harsh administration by rejecting him, killing his representative, and making Jeroboam king over all Israel (1 Kings 12:16–20). Not surprisingly, Rehoboam wanted to regain his kingdom. The tribe of Judah (along with the tribe of Benjamin) gathered 180,000 troops to recover control of the northern tribes. Before war erupted, a prophet of God told Rehoboam and all Israel not to fight because the dividing of the kingdoms was from the Lord (12:23–24). The Lord was ultimately the one who had given Jeroboam control over the majority of Solomon’s empire. Having seen the Lord’s power to fulfill His Word, Jeroboam should have eagerly obeyed God’s Word and trusted His ability to give his descendants a strong kingdom.

The Lord’s Rejected Commands (1 Kings 12:25–33)

Instead of simply obeying God’s commands as David had, Jeroboam relied upon his own wisdom to secure his kingdom. Jeroboam’s biggest concern was that if the

Israelites returned to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices at the temple, they might again desire to have Rehoboam as their king (12:25–27). Like Rehoboam, Jeroboam listened to foolish advice (12:28). He spurned the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3–5) and presented Israel with two calves of gold, saying, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” (1 Kings 12:28). To make worship as easy as possible, Jeroboam placed one idol in the south of Israel at Bethel and the other in the most northern city of Dan (12:29–30). In competing for the people’s religious affection, he rejected the Levites as priests and made “priests from every class” (12:31) and replaced the Feast of Tabernacles with his own feast celebrated in the eighth month of the year (12:32). Jeroboam’s religion had been “devised in his own heart” (12:33). In a foolish attempt to solidify his control, Jeroboam led the people away from God’s covenant with them at Sinai. He blatantly rejected God’s command and spurned His promised blessing.

The Lord’s Future Punishment (1 Kings 14:1–18)

When Jeroboam’s son Abijah became sick (1 Kings 14:1), he left his self-devised religion and turned to Ahijah, the prophet of the Lord who had told Jeroboam he would be king. Unwilling to let the people know he was going to the Lord for help, Jeroboam sent his disguised wife with a small gift (not one befitting a king) to find out what would happen to his son (14:1–4). The blind Ahijah was told by the Lord that the wife of Jeroboam was coming and that she was pretending to be another woman (14:4–5). By sending his wife in disguise, perhaps Jeroboam was trying to escape being confronted about his sin.

Ahijah’s message from the Lord dealt with more than the health of Jeroboam’s son. The Lord’s judgment on Jeroboam was severe because of how great a blessing he had been given by God (1 Kings 14:7–8). Not only had Jeroboam not obeyed God’s commands as David had, but also his wickedness was even greater than Solomon’s (14:8–9). Because Jeroboam had cast God “behind his back” (14:9), his house was going to be destroyed; instead of a dynasty, there would be only death for Jeroboam’s male descendants (14:10–11). The judgment would begin with Jeroboam’s sick son Abijah. As soon as Jeroboam’s wife returned, the child would die (14:12). Of all Jeroboam’s descendants, his son Abijah would be the only one who would die honorably (“come to the grave”), “because in him there [was] found something good toward the LORD God of Israel” (14:13). Within a generation, the Lord would raise another line to rule over Israel (14:14; 15:25–32).

Jeroboam’s family members were not the only ones who would suffer for his sin. Ahijah announced a fearful judgment upon Israel “because they [had] made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger” (1 Kings 14:15). Not only had Jeroboam sinned, but Israel also willingly followed him into idolatry (14:16). In judgment, the Lord would “strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water” (14:15). Ahijah prophesied: “He [the Lord] will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River” (14:15). In Deuteronomy 29:25–28, Moses had warned the people that if they rejected the Lord’s covenant, they would go into exile. Jeroboam’s wicked leadership eventually led to Israel’s forced exile from the Promised Land (2 Kings 17).

As soon as Jeroboam’s wife crossed “the threshold of the house, the child died” (1 Kings 14:17). “The word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet” had been accomplished (14:18). With the fulfillment of this first judgment, Jeroboam could be certain that the rest of Ahijah’s prophecy would also come true: the destruction of his descendants, the taking away of his dynasty, and the eventual exile of Israel.

Conclusion

Jeroboam's passing from promised blessing to future judgment is a strong warning for both the lost and the saved. The lost person is called by Christ to experience the blessing of submitting to His lordship, having his sins forgiven, and living a life blessed with the knowledge of God's sanctifying power and lasting love. But if the lost man forsakes God's promised blessing and remains his own god, he will suffer the most miserable life and eternity. The believer, too, can also be warned by Jeroboam's rejection of God's blessing. Although the believer's eternal blessings will not be taken away, he will more fully glorify God by obediently submitting to God's will and loving Him with all his heart. The submitting believer is promised abundant love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23).

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

What did God say would happen if the children of Israel married people from other nations?

God said that their hearts would be turned away from Him.

How do we know that Solomon loved his wives more than he loved God?

Solomon wanted to please his wives so much that he was willing to turn away from God and worship false gods.

What did the Lord say because of what Solomon had done?

The Lord became angry with Solomon.

What did the Lord do because of Solomon's terrible disobedience?

The kingdom would be taken from Solomon's family and given to his servant.



The Divided Kingdom

Materials: construction paper, markers, egg carton, glue, 12 plastic eggs (optional)

Directions: Before class, cut an egg carton into two parts so that one side has 10 egg cups and the other has two. Glue or tape a name tag reading "Israel" across the entire length of the carton, cutting the name tag so that it is divided where the carton is divided. When the two parts of the egg carton are put together, the carton will read "Israel." (You could also write the name of each tribe of Israel on a plastic egg and place the eggs inside the carton.) On the bottom of the carton, place two name tags, one reading "Israel" (for the 10-section side) and the other reading "Judah" (for the two-section side). Show the students the "divided kingdom" before the lesson, and explain that Israel had been one kingdom but was split in



two after King Solomon died. King Jeroboam ruled the 10 northern tribes (Israel), and King Rehoboam ruled the two southern tribes (Judah). Israel was not a strong nation after it divided, and both kingdoms were disobedient to God. Let the students put the egg carton together and pull it apart.

Get Inside Judah Game

Lay two hula hoops on the floor. Break the class into two teams. Name one Israel and the other Judah. Because Rehoboam and Jeroboam listened to poor advice, God allowed Israel to be broken into two regions. One was called Israel and the other Judah. The object of the game is to get as many team members into the team's "country" (hoop) without touching anything outside the hoop. The students will only have each other to keep their balance. The country with the most students wins.



Broken Israel

Show the students a pencil and explain how it is used and the strength of it being one piece. It can last longer and has better use. Then break the pencil and ask the students whether it still is as strong as it was when it was whole. Why not? Remind them of the two kingdoms from today's story. The Israelites weren't as strong once they started worshipping idols instead of the one true God.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

The Lord had promised to give the kingdom of Israel to one of Solomon's servants because Solomon had turned away from God and worshiped idols. The servant to whom God chose to give the kingdom was named Jeroboam. Jeroboam knew that God had chosen him to be the king because a prophet named Ahijah had told him that the Lord would bless him with 10 of the tribes of Israel. God promised Jeroboam that if he obeyed Him, He would make Jeroboam's son and grandsons rulers of Israel as well. Jeroboam's enjoyment of this blessing was dependent on his willingness to submit to God's Law. If Jeroboam rejected God's commands, he would not enjoy the blessing of his descendants reigning over the 10 northern tribes.

After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became the king over all Israel. But many of the Israelites were unhappy. They needed someone who could go to the king for them and tell him why they were unhappy. They decided that Jeroboam was the best man to do this. He had been living in Egypt, hiding from King Solomon, because Solomon knew that he was going to try to take over the kingdom. But Solomon was dead now, so Jeroboam came home. He became a leader of 10 of the tribes of Israel who were unhappy with King Rehoboam. Jeroboam went to

King Rehoboam and told him that the Israelites were unhappy because they were being overworked, but he promised that if Rehoboam would lighten their workload, they would be obedient to him. King Rehoboam responded foolishly and told the Israelites that he was going to increase their workload and treat them even worse. First Kings 12:15 says, "The king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam." Even though Rehoboam was being foolish, God was working through him and setting up Jeroboam to become the new king.

The 10 tribes decided to rebel against King Rehoboam and his harsh treatment of them. They rejected Rehoboam as their king and made Jeroboam their new king. Of course, Rehoboam wanted to regain control of them. He was still the king over two of the tribes, Judah and Benjamin. He gathered an army from these two tribes and prepared to go to war with the 10 northern tribes and Jeroboam. But before the war began, a prophet of God came to Rehoboam and told him not to go to war because it was due to God's doing that they were divided. He told Rehoboam that He had given the 10 tribes to Jeroboam. Jeroboam should have seen that God was taking care of his people and trusted Him.

But Jeroboam did not trust and obey God. He relied on his own wisdom, which turned out to be foolishness, to make sure he had a strong kingdom. The Israelites in his kingdom wanted to go back to Jerusalem to make sacrifices at the temple. But Jerusalem was under the control of Rehoboam, so Jeroboam did not want his subjects going back there. They might decide that they would rather have Rehoboam as their king again. So Jeroboam told the Israelites that they couldn't make sacrifices to God at Jerusalem, but instead he would give them two golden calves to worship. He said, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" He also said that the Levites were no longer the priests, and he made people from all the tribes his own priests. He canceled the Feast of Tabernacles and made up a new feast. What Jeroboam did was make up his own religion where he was in charge and the one true God was nowhere to be found. Jeroboam foolishly tried to make sure he was in control of his people by leading them away from God. He blatantly rejected God's command and gave up the blessing that God wanted to give him.

God punished Jeroboam for his sin. Jeroboam's son became very sick, and Jeroboam was very concerned for his future. But he did not bow to the false gods and idols he had created to help save his son because he knew that they had no power. He turned to the true God. He went to the prophet Ahijah, the one who had told him that God had chosen him to be the king. Jeroboam did not want the Israelites to know that he was going to the Lord for help, so he sent his wife out in a disguise to find Ahijah and ask him about the future of their sick son. She found Ahijah, and he did indeed have a message for her, but it was about more than just her son. He told her that her son would die as soon as she returned home. He also said that the house of Jeroboam was going to be destroyed; there would not be a kingdom for Jeroboam and his descendants. God's judgment on Jeroboam was harsh, but God had greatly blessed him by giving him the kingdom, and he had turned away from God and worshiped idols.

God had more punishments to give out as well. Jeroboam and his family were not the only ones who would suffer. The Israelites had willingly followed Jeroboam into idolatry, and because of their sin, Ahijah announced judgment upon Israel. He said, "[The Lord] will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River." They had been warned that this would happen. Moses had once told the Israelites that if they rejected the Lord's covenant, they would go into exile. That meant that they would have to leave the

Promised Land and be scattered and live among all the pagan nations that had been their enemies.

As soon as Jeroboam's wife returned home, their son died, just as Ahijah had prophesied. Jeroboam knew that this was only the beginning of all of the punishment to come because of his wickedness.

Jeroboam went from having God's great blessing to being under God's great judgment because of his sin. This is a warning to both people who are saved and people who are not saved. It warns people who are not saved that those who do not obey God will come under His judgment, but if they obey God and give their lives to Him, they can live under His blessing. It is also a warning to people who have already given their lives to God and are saved. It warns them that although nothing can take away the blessing of heaven in the future, God's blessings while we are here on earth can be taken away if we do not live in obedience to Him. God promises blessing to those who obey Him, glorify Him, and love Him with all their heart. He promises that He will bless them with abundant love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.



Lesson Questions

Whom did God make the king of the northern tribes of Israel?

The prophet Ahijah came to Jeroboam, who was a powerful man in Solomon's labor force, to tell him that God had chosen him to replace the son of Solomon as king over the 10 northern tribes.

What was Jeroboam instructed to do as leader of the 10 northern tribes?

Obey God's commands.

What did God promise if Jeroboam was obedient?

Jeroboam's family would reign as a dynasty over Israel.

Did Jeroboam obey God's instructions and Law?

No; instead of obeying God's commands, Jeroboam relied upon his own wisdom to rule the kingdom. He presented Israel with two calves of gold and said to them, "Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" (1 Kings 12:28).

What was the consequence for Jeroboam's disobedience?

His son became sick.

What other consequences would there be for Jeroboam's disobedience and Israel's worshiping idols?

Moses had warned the people in Deuteronomy 29:25–28 that if they rejected the Lord's covenant, they would go into exile. God kept His promise. Jeroboam's wicked leadership eventually led to Israel's forced exile from the Promised Land (2 Kings 17).

Presentation Ideas

A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.





Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



A Heavier Yoke

Instruct two student volunteers to hold out their arms, palms up, and place four heavy books in each student's arms. Read the suggestion Jeroboam and the assembly of Israel, including the elders, gave to Rehoboam in verses 1–7. Take two books away from the first student to illustrate how Rehoboam could have chosen to lighten the burden on Israel. Read verses 8–17, and place the two books you removed from the first student onto the stack carried by the second student. Ask this student how he feels carrying a much heavier load. Then add two more books (total of eight books) to increase the weight further. You may choose to prolong this demonstration during the entire lesson to see how long the student with the "heavier yoke" can manage to carry the increased burden in comparison to the student now holding only two books. In addition, after reading verse 10, ask all students to hold up their pinkies and compare it to the sizes of their waists. This will give them a visual image of how much Rehoboam desired to increase the burden on the people of Israel.



Uprooted Plant

Bring to class a potted plant, and place it in front of the class during the lesson. As 1 Kings 14:15–16 is read, discuss God's uprooting of Israel from the good land. To illustrate this, pull the plant out of its pot by its roots. (Using a plant with an established root base works best.) Later, talk about what happens to a plant when it is uprooted.



Foolish Advice

Discuss with the students the difference between wise and foolish advice. Explain the meaning of the word discernment and give some practical ways for the students to have discernment when making decisions in their lives. Explain that Solomon asked for discernment, but later in life he didn't use it to make wise decisions. Use Scripture as the basis for discernment.

Praise and Worship

Change My Heart, Oh God

Create in Me a Clean Heart

Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord

Micah 6:8

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Trust and Obey



Jeroboam's Sin

The kingdom was divided

(Clasp hands, fingers interlocked; break hands apart.)

For Solomon had sinned.

(Hold hands at top of head to indicate crown; drop head in shame.)

Now God told Jeroboam

(Cup hands around mouth.)

The crown would go to him.
(Pretend to remove crown and hold it out.)

Ten tribes would be his portion,
(Hold up ten fingers.)

A kingdom in the north.
(Point upward.)

And if he chose obedience,
(Place hand over heart; nod head.)

A blessing would come forth.
(Holds hands to chest, fists closed, then out in front, palms up.)

But wicked Jeroboam
(Make "evil" face.)

Preferred to reign in sin,
(Cross arms over chest and shake head "no.")

And for his evil actions,
(Make "evil" face and rub hands together.)

The Lord would punish him.
(Place one hand on hip; shake finger of other hand.)

This story is a warning:
(Holds hands like an open book; hold up one finger.)

If wickedness you choose,
(Point at students in sweeping motion.)

God's punishment will follow,
(Point up.)

And blessing you will lose.
(Clench fists; quickly open hands, palms up.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



It's Raining Blessings of Salvation

Materials: flexible straws, foam bowls, copies of the "Blessings of Salvation" craft page on blue paper, scissors, string cut to various lengths (six pieces per student), hole puncher, black markers, crayons

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page. The students should cut out the raindrops and punch a hole in the top center of each one. Give each student a foam bowl and a straw. Show the students how to bend the flexible end of the straw to resemble an umbrella handle. They should hold the bowl upside down and poke a hole through the center with the straight end of the straw. Instruct them to punch six evenly spaced holes around the bowl's rim and then use the string to tie the raindrops on. They should use a black marker to write "It's raining blessings of salvation!" and the key verse on the rim of the bowl. They also can decorate the bowls to make them look more like umbrellas. Use this mobile to review the blessings of salvation that believers experience when they are obedient.



"Israel's Divided Kingdom"

Materials: copies of "Israel's Divided Kingdom" craft page, crayons, 12 tents (small triangles cut from construction paper)

Directions: Pass out copies of the craft page. Allow the students to color their maps, using green for land and blue for water. While the students color, discuss with them what happened to Israel and how the kingdom was divided. Ask them how many tribes were in the northern kingdom and how many were in the southern. Help the students glue tents to the appropriate areas of the map to represent the number of tribes in each.



Who Listened to Foolish Advice?

Materials: copies of the "Who Listened to Foolish Advice?" craft pages, crayons, tape, scissors

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft pages. Instruct the students to begin by coloring in the large letters on the first page. Explain that these letters stand for people's names. The big J stands for Jeroboam and the large R stands for Rehoboam. Briefly explain or review who the two kings were and what they are known for. Ask the students which king listened to foolish advice and which listened to wise advice. Instruct the students to color and cut out the ears on the second craft page. They can tape them to the top of the first page so that they hang down over each side.

Coloring Pages

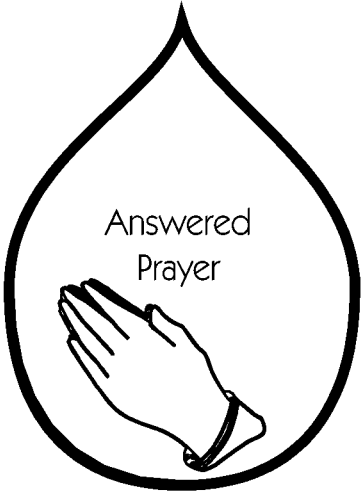
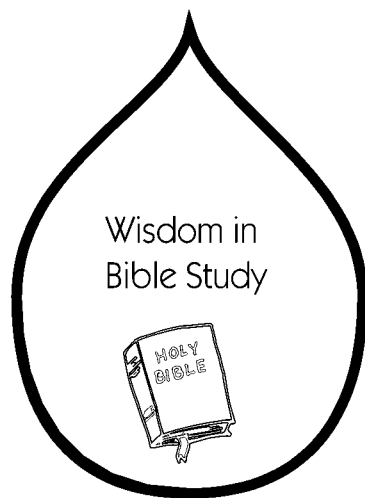
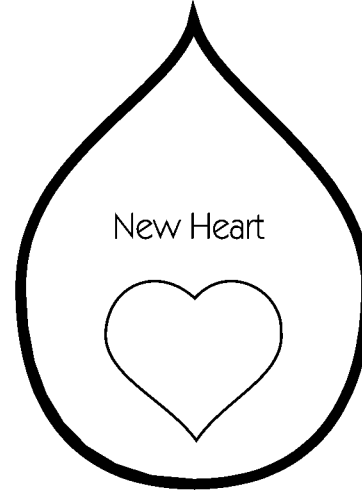
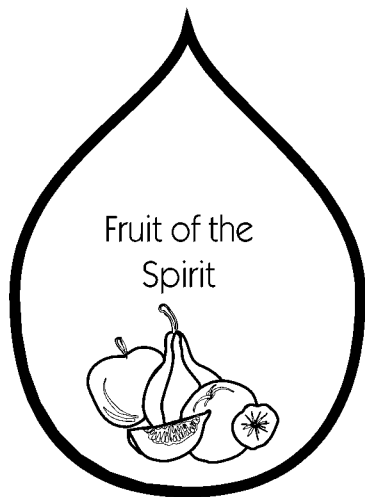
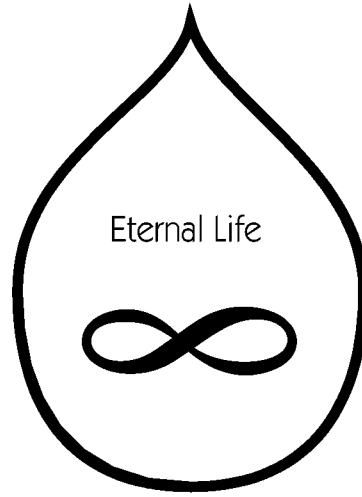
Give each student copies of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



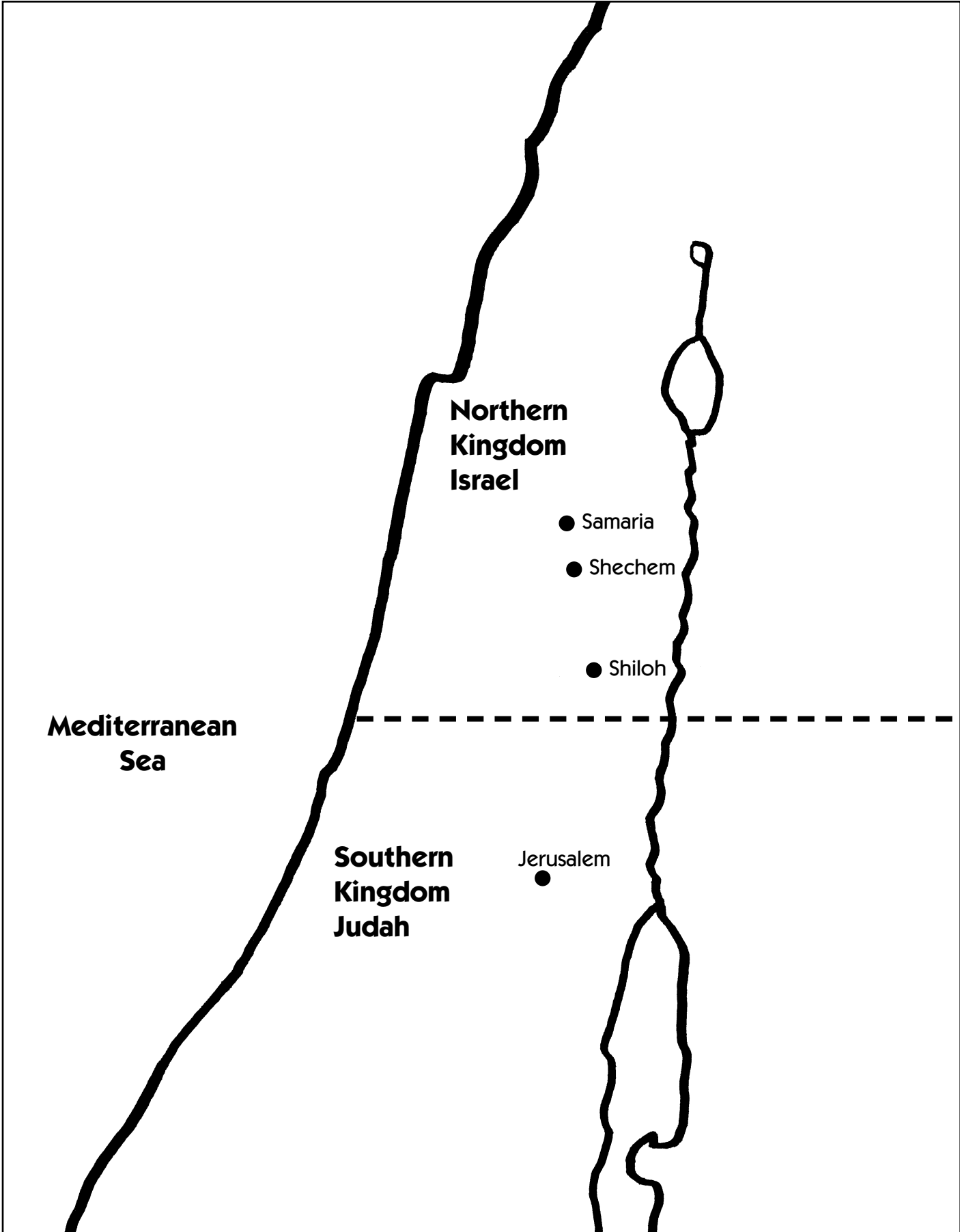
MEMORY VERSE

"Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation" (Psalm 25:4-5).

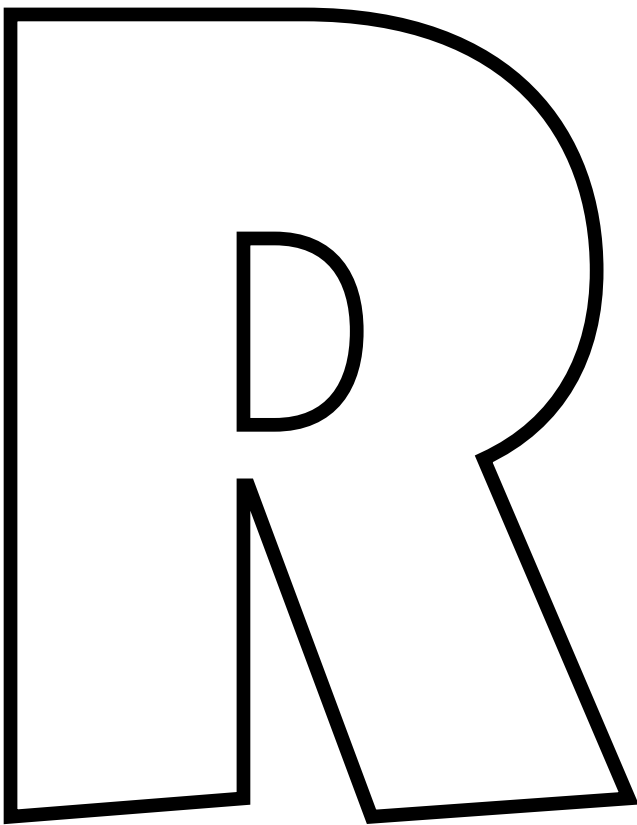
Blessings of Salvation



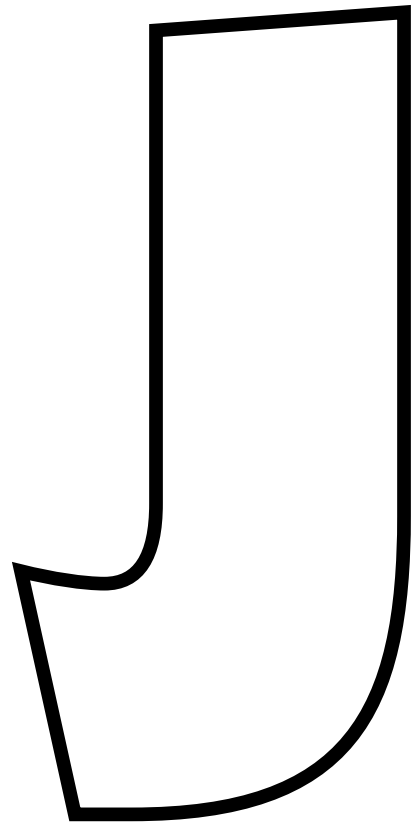
Israel's Divided Kingdom



Who Listened to Foolish Advice?

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Name: Rehoboam
King of southern tribes
Increased work

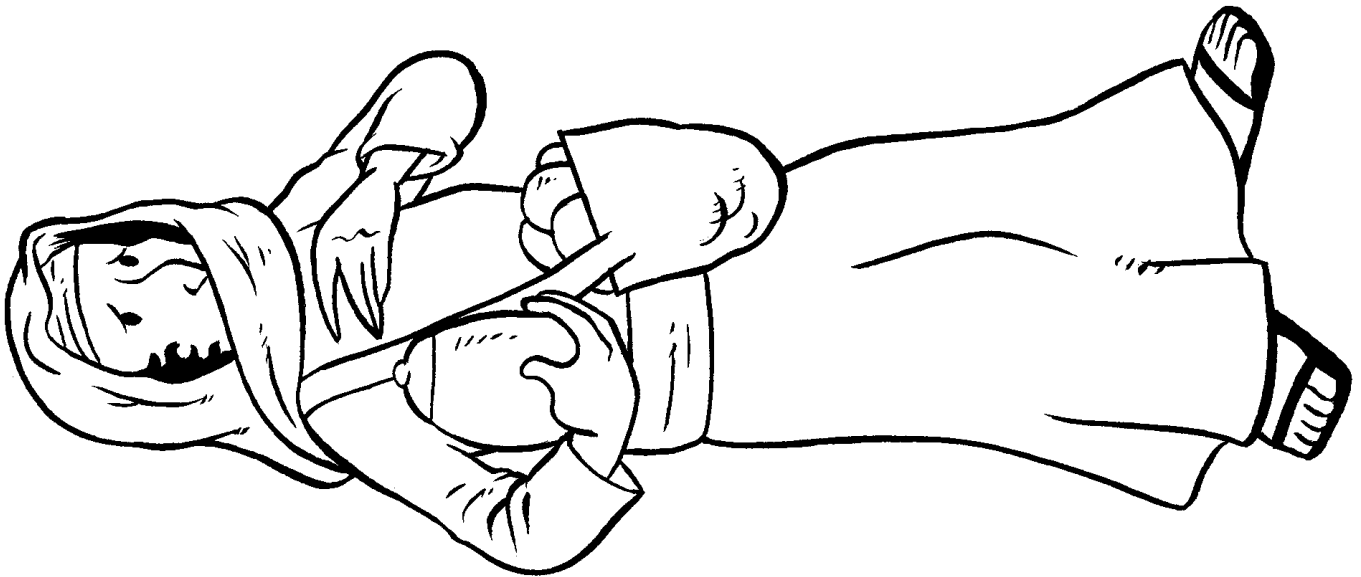
A large, hollow outline of the uppercase letter 'J' in a bold, sans-serif font, suitable for coloring or tracing.

Name: Jeroboam
King of northern tribes
Made false idols

Who Listened to Foolish Advice?









**“[King Jeroboam] made two calves of gold, and said to the people,
‘...Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!’
(1 Kings 12:28).**



Ahijah the prophet told Jeroboam's wife that Jeroboam's son Abijah would die (1 Kings 14:6-16).

