

The Divided Kingdom, Prophets, & Return

- To understand and avoid the sins that led to the division of the nation of Israel.
- To gain an overview of the history, kings, and prophets of Israel and Judah.
- To rejoice in God's faithfulness to protect and restore His people.

	Key Text	Date
The Kingdom Divides	1 Kings 11-14	Sunday, February 26
The Traits of Judah & Israel	1 Kings 15-16, 21	Wednesday, March 1
The Work of Elijah & Elisha	1 Kings 17-22, 2 Kings 1-7	Sunday, March 5
The Fall of Israel	2 Kings 8-17	Wednesday, March 8
The Fall of Judah	2 Kings 18-25	Sunday, March 12
The Prophets	Select Readings	Wednesday, March 15
The Coming Kingdom	Daniel	Sunday, March 19
The Prophets	Select Readings	Sunday, March 26
Rebuilding The Temple	Ezra	Wednesday, March 29
Rebuilding Jerusalem	Nehemiah	Sunday, April 2
Protecting God's People	Esther	Wednesday, April 5
Messianic Prophecies	Isaiah 53	Sunday, April 9
Review		Wednesday, April 12

Lesson One – 1 Kings 11-14

The history of God's people in the Old Testament is found in 5 Sets of books:

- 1 & 2 Samuel: The Formation of the Kingdom of Israel
- 1 & 2 Kings: The Explanation of The Division
- 1 & 2 Chronicles: The Salvation of the Remnant
- Ezra, Nehemiah, & Esther: The Captivity & Restoration
- Isaiah – Malachi: God's Prophetic Message to His People

This section of Bible History teaches an unforgettable lesson:

Disobeying God Leads To Slavery!

In these books we read of the sad downfall of Israel in slavery to Assyria, and Judah in slavery to Babylon. These events demonstrate the spiritual reality that when we disobey God, we become a slave to SIN!

- 1.) According to 1 Kings 11:28-39
 - a. Who was Jeroboam?
 - b. Why were the twelve tribes in the Kingdom of Israel divided?
 - c. How many tribes would make up the Northern Kingdom?
 - d. How many tribes would make up the Southern Kingdom?
- 2.) Rehoboam and Jeroboam both fail to follow God.
 - a. Describe the bad choices Rehoboam makes: (1 Kings 12:4-15)
 - b. Describe the bad choices Jeroboam makes: (1 Kings 12:25-29)
- 3.) Jeroboam broke many of God's commands about HOW to offer worship. What evil changes do you see in 1 Kings 12:30-33 and 1 Kings 13:33-34?

Lesson Two – 1 Kings 15-16, 21

Over time, 19 different kings ruled in the northern kingdom of Israel, and every one of them did evil in the sight of the Lord. In the southern kingdom of Judah there were 20 kings, and sadly the majority of these kings were also evil. The only righteous kings in Judah were:

- Asa (1 Kings 15:11-14)
- Jehosaphat (1 Kings 22:42-43) *Joash fell from good to bad.
- Uzziah or Azariah (2 Chronicles 26:3-4) *Amaziah fell from good to bad.
- Jotham (2 Kings 15:32-34)
- Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1-6)
- Josiah (2 Kings 22:1-2)

In this lesson we will read about the good king, Asa, in Judah as well as the evil king, Ahab, in Israel. Both of these kings are a good example of the type of leaders who ruled during the divided kingdom.

- 1.) According to 1 Kings 15:10, how many years did Asa reign over Judah?
 - a.
- 2.) According to 1 Kings 15:11-14,
 - a. What good reforms did Asa make?
 - b. What evil practices did Asa fail to correct?
- 3.) According to 1 Kings 16:29-31, how great was the wickedness of king Ahab in Israel?
- 4.) In 1 Kings 21 what sinful attitudes and actions does Ahab demonstrate while pursuing Naboth's vineyard?
- 5.) Based on Ahab's example in 1 Kings 21:27-29, how should we act when told about our sin?

Lesson Three – 1 Kings 17-22, 2 Kings 1-7

While many kings rose and fell during the divided kingdom, the prophets of God were a bright light of faith, courage, and truth. 1 & 2 Kings record the lives of the prophets Elijah and Elisha to teach us how to trust in God's power and serve God faithfully despite our surroundings.

- 1.) Elijah's life and work teach us to trust in the awesome POWER of God.
 - a. In 1 Kings 17:1-16 we learn that God has power over _____.
 - b. In 1 Kings 18:17-40 we learn that God has power over _____.
 - c. In 1 Kings 19:3,15-18 we learn that God has power over _____.
 - d. In 1 Kings 20:13-21 we learn that God has power over _____.

- 2.) According to 1 Kings 18:25-29, what did the prophets of Baal do in hopes that their false god would answer their requests?

- 3.) According to 1 Kings 18:36-40 how did the LORD God answer Elijah?

- 4.) According to 2 Kings 2:1-14 how was Elijah taken into heaven?

- 5.) Elisha's life and work teach us to love and serve God with all our heart.
 - a. In 2 Kings 3:3 what sins did Jehoram cling to?

 - b. In 2 Kings 3:11-12 what was Elisha's reputation?

 - c. In 2 Kings 4:1-7, what special blessing does Elisha offer to the widow?

 - d. In 2 Kings 5:1-14, what command does Elisha give to Naaman to be made clean and whole?

- 6.) Based on the example of the Lepers in 2 Kings 7:1-16, when we have "good news" that will save others, what must we do?

Lesson Four – 2 Kings 8-17

The last days of the nation of Israel were sad times. Israel's kings were evil and weak. Some only ruled for a single month! (2 Kings 15:13.) While Israel grew weaker, Assyria grew stronger. Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria, came in 2 Kings 15:20 and demanded tribute money. Israel helplessly paid but was still attacked (vs 29). Then in 2 Kings 17:3 Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, came and conquered the rest of the nation.

Overview:

Israel was taken into captivity by the A_____.

Judah was taken into captivity by the B_____.

The decree for the remnant to return to Jerusalem was issued by C_____.

The decree to finish building the temple in Jerusalem was issued by D_____.

1.) Jehu was called by God to destroy two groups of evil people...

a. According to 2 Kings 9:1-10, the first group was:_____.

b. According to 2 Kings 10:18-36, the second group was: _____.

2.) After Jehu, what important job did Jehoash accomplish? (2 Kings 12:1-16)

3.) Before he died, Elisha told Joash, the king of Israel, to strike the ground with his arrows.

a. How many times did Joash strike the ground? (2 Kings 13:14-21)

b. How many times did Joash defeat the king of Aram? (2 Kings 13:22-25)

4.) 2 Kings 15 lists the kings of Israel as they begin to lose their power to Assyria.

a. 2 Kings 15:1 King of Israel Jeroboam II King of Judah _____

b. 2 Kings 15:8 King of Israel _____ King of Judah Azariah

c. 2 Kings 15:13 King of Israel _____ King of Judah Uzziah

d. 2 Kings 15:17 King of Israel _____ King of Judah Azariah

5.) 2 Kings 17 tells us why God allowed Assyria to defeat and destroy Israel.

a. Israel had "feared other _____." (vs 7)

b. Israel had "walked in the _____ of the nations" (vs 8)

c. Israel had "burned incense on the _____" (vs 11)

d. Israel had "walked in the sins of _____" (vs 22)

Lesson Five – 2 Kings 18-25

Judah was not taken away into captivity by Assyria because they were more faithful to God than Israel. Good kings (such as Hezekiah and Josiah) believed in God and ruled with faith like their predecessor, David. However, the reforms of these good kings were not enough to keep the people loyal to the LORD. Eventually, even Judah became very wicked. Therefore, God sent the Babylonians to conquer the nation, deport the people, and destroy the temple.

- 1.) What made Hezekiah such a good king? (2 Kings 18:1-7)
- 2.) Sennacherib, king of Assyria, tried to discourage Judah from trusting in God by sending an army commander named Rabshakeh to threaten the people of Jerusalem. In 2 Kings 18:29-36, why does Rabshakeh say not to trust in the LORD? How do the people answer him? (vs 36)
- 3.) What prophet does God send to encourage Hezekiah to not lose faith in the Lord? 2 Kings 19:6
- 4.) God saved Hezekiah from Assyria and from a terrible illness. What was the sign of God's promise to extend Hezekiah's life? (2 Kings 20:5-11)
- 5.) According to 2 Kings 21:1-9 who became king after Hezekiah?
 - a. Was this king good or evil?
- 6.) In 2 Kings 22 and 23 we read about the last good king of Judah.
 - a. How old was Josiah when he became king? (vs 1)
 - b. What job did Josiah give to Hilkiah? (vs 3-5)
 - c. What great treasure did Hilkiah find? (vs 8-13)
 - d. What did Josiah get rid of in 2 Kings 23:5, 7, 11, 15?
- 7.) When the people returned to their sins, who did God send to destroy Judah? (2 Kings 25:1-12)

Lesson Six – Prophets Related to Assyria

For approximately two centuries, Assyria (often represented by Nineveh, its capital) was the major power in the Near East. It maintained a perpetual expansionist policy and was notably cruel in its conquests and control of subject people. God used Assyria as His rod to punish His people for their sins (Is. 10:5). Six prophets delivered messages relating to Assyria. At the same time, four of them looked beyond their own times to the times of the Messiah. Read the texts to see the message they delivered.

The Prophet	Sins of Israel	Assyria	Messiah
Jonah (780 B.C.)		Destruction predicted – Repentance Avoided it. Why would Jonah not want Nineveh spared?	
Amos (760 B.C.)	Injustice (2:6-8) Idolatry (3:14; 4:4) Self-indulgence (6:1-6)	Captivity predicated without designating Assyrians (4:1-3)	Amos 9:11-12, quoted in Acts 15:16-18
Hosea (750 B.C.)	Idolatry (symbolized by unfaithfulness of Hosea’s wife (Chap. 1-2, 5:4, 8:4-6, 13:2)	Assyrians will carry away the Israelites and their idols (Hos. 10:5-8)	God would forgive and accept Gentiles as well. (Hosea 2:19-23)
Micah 735 B.C. (a Judean)	Dishonesty, deceit, idolatry, bribery, treachery (6:9—7:6)	Captivity predicated without designating Assyrians (1:6-7)	Birthplace (5:2) Establishment of His kingdom (4:1-5)

The Northern Kingdom (Israel) was carried away by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.

Assyria remained a threat to Judah and they actually captured all but Jerusalem.

(Prophet in Judah)	morality (Is 1:2-15)	of King Hezekiah (Isaiah 36-37) Assyria recovered	Death, Resurrection. (Chapter 53)
Nahum 640 B.C.	Sins of Nineveh (Assyria) Brutality, Violence, Cruelty	Nahum graphically describes the defeat of Nineveh and the end of Assyrian power	

Jerusalem escaped the Assyrian army by God’s intervention. Hezekiah, who was king when the Assyrian army was destroyed, was a good king. His son Manasseh, however, was the worst king in the history of Judah. In spite of the efforts of good king Josiah, the nation never recovered from the evil introduced by Manasseh.

The Rod God Would Use to Punish Judah -- Babylon

Isaiah predicted the captivity of Israel by the Assyrians (Is.7:8-9; 8:4). But he also predicted the captivity of Judah by the **Babylonians** (Is. 39:5-7). There was one major difference, however: Isaiah predicted a release of the captives to return and rebuild Jerusalem (Is. 44:28). God was fulfilling His promise to David that his royal line would continue forever.

Habbakkuk (612) saw the wickedness of Judah and called on God to punish it. God surprised him by saying He would send the Chaldeans (**Babylonians**) to punish them. Habakkuk could not understand this because the Chaldeans were more wicked than Judah. But he accepted God’s Justice and wrote the significant words quoted in the New Testament: “The just shall live by faith.” (Habakkuk 2:4)

Lesson Seven – The Prophet Daniel

God worked through prophets everywhere His people were scattered. The prophet Daniel recorded the events of his life and very special prophecies. His prophecies reveal what would happen to the Jewish people leading up to the arrival of Jesus Christ. In chapter 7-12 Daniel used a writing style called Apocalyptic Language. Although it may seem strange to us, this is a writing style that describes major events with many figurative symbols. Both the stories of Daniel and the prophecies of Daniel teach us to trust in God with all our heart, because He is in control of the rise and fall of all nations.

- 1.) According to Daniel 1:8, what important decision did Daniel make?

- 2.) God gave king Nebuchadnezzar a special dream about 4 world empires. According to Daniel 2:44-45, what would God do during the time period of the 4th world empire?

- 3.) In Daniel 3:16-27 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego determine not to worship the king's idol. What good qualities of these men can we imitate?

- 4.) According to Daniel 6:6-10 what law did Daniel break that led to him being put into the lion's den? What is the reason given in Daniel 6:16-23 for God taking care of Daniel?

- 5.) Daniel was given a vision of 4 strange beasts but we don't have to guess why God was telling Daniel about them. According to Daniel 7:17, what do these 4 beasts represent?

- 6.) Daniel 7:13-14 prophesies about Jesus. In verse 14, what would be given to Jesus?

Lesson Eight – Prophets Related to Babylon/Persia

As noted in Lesson six, two prophets predicted before the event that Babylon would conquer Judah and carry the people away into captivity in Babylon.

I. Prophets Foretelling Babylonian Captivity

- a. **Isaiah**, about 700 BC, foretold that all King Hezekiah's treasures would be carried away to Babylon. Long before the man was born, Isaiah also prophesied that a king by the name of **Cyrus** would conquer Babylon and issue a decree that Jews could return and rebuild their temple. (44:21-28).
- b. **Habakkuk**, prophesied just six years before the first Babylonian attack that the Chaldeans (Babylonians) would be God's rod punish Judah for their sins (Habakkuk 1:5-11).

II. Prophets During the Captivity. There were three Babylonian attacks on Jerusalem and three waves of captives taken to Babylon:

- a. **Daniel** was taken away in the first deportation (**605 B.C.**) and given prominence in the government in Babylon. He was God's messenger to remind the captors that God was in control (Ch. 1-6). After Babylon fell to the Persians under **Cyrus**, Daniel remained prominent in government under **Darius**.
- b. **Ezekiel** was taken away in the second wave (**597 B.C.**) and was God's messenger to the captives.
 1. His vision by the River Chebar (Chap. 1) assured them that God was in Babylon also.
 2. A vision of the idolatry back in Jerusalem (Chap. 8-9) and God's departing from the temple (Chap. 10) prepared the Jews to know that God was not defeated when it was destroyed.
- c. **Jeremiah** remained in Jerusalem throughout the long period of Babylonian domination, urging the Jews to cooperate with Babylon. He was God's messenger to those remaining in Jerusalem.
 1. He warned them not to think the Temple's existence in Jerusalem would save it (7:1-15).
 2. He wrote a letter to the captives, telling them to settle comfortably in Babylon because it would be 70 years before they would be allowed to return to Jerusalem (29:4-14).
 3. When Jerusalem fell, (**586 BC**) he was given the option to go to Babylon or remain in the land. He chose to remain and was eventually carried by Jews to Egypt against his will.

III. Prophets After Return from Captivity

In 536, as Isaiah had predicted, **Cyrus** King of Persia, who had defeated Babylon, made a decree that the Jews could return to Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 36:22-23). There were three groups that returned: First, led by Zerubbabel in 538 B.C. (Ezra 1-6), the second, led by Ezra in 458. (Ezra 7-10) and the third, led by Nehemiah in 445 B.C. (Book of Nehemiah).

The first group built an altar and laid the foundations of a temple soon after returning, but opposition discouraged them and they discontinued construction. God raised up prophets (Ezra 5:1-2) to encourage them to resume building, to reprove their sins, and to assure them of God's faithfulness to His promises.

- a. **Haggai** shamed the people for building their own homes while God's temple was not built (1:1-8).
- b. **Zechariah** rebuked the people for their sins but promised God's future blessings.
- c. **Malachi** came a little later, soon after Nehemiah, reproving the priests, but promising the coming of Christ's forerunner who would appear 400 years later. He was the last writer of the Old Testament.

Some Things to Remember: During the Captivity

1. What prophet was in the government of the captors?
2. What prophet was with the captives?
3. What prophet remained in Jerusalem?

Lesson Nine – The Book of Ezra

The book of Ezra tells the story of the Jewish people returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of the Lord.

- 1.) Who issued a proclamation that the Jews could return to Jerusalem? (Ezra 1:1-4)
 - a. His name was: _____
 - b. He was the ruler of what empire? _____

- 2.) In Ezra 2:64-70, how many people and animals left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem?
 - a. The people (vs. 64) _____
 - b. The servants (vs. 65) _____
 - c. The singers (vs. 65) _____

- 3.) In Ezra 3:8 who are the two men of God who lead the people in rebuilding the temple?
 - a. _____ the son of Shealtiel.
 - b. _____ the son of Jozadak

- 4.) In Ezra 4:13, enemies say that if the building continues then the Jews will do what?

- 5.) In Ezra 5:1 what two prophets encourage Zerubbabel and Jeshua to finish building the temple?

- 6.) Fill in the blanks: "For Ezra had set his heart to _____ the law of the Lord and to _____ it, and to _____ His statutes and ordinances in Israel."
Ezra 7:10

- 7.) When Ezra traveled to Jerusalem, what did he pray for? (Ezra 8:21-23)

- 8.) When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem, he learned that many people had broken God's laws about marriage and he was heartbroken (Ezra 9:2-4). Ezra prayed to God, and helped the people correct this sin by taking what step? (Ezra 10:3-5,44)

Lesson Ten – The Book of Nehemiah

Nehemiah is the wonderful leader God used to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and to help the people re-dedicate themselves to obeying the commands of God. The book of Nehemiah records the difficulties and successes of the Jews while rebuilding the walls of the city. In this book, we see the power of God to help us complete projects that please and honor Him.

- 1.) When Nehemiah learned about the sad conditions in Jerusalem, how did he respond?
(Nehemiah 1:4)

- 2.) King Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah what he wanted, what was the first thing Nehemiah did?
(Nehemiah 2:4)

- 3.) In Nehemiah 2:17-18, what did the people say after Nehemiah encouraged them to repair the walls of Jerusalem?

- 4.) When the workers built the walls up to half of their height, their enemies threatened to attack them to put a stop to this project. Who did Nehemiah encourage the workers to remember?
(Nehemiah 4:14)

- 5.) Great leaders don't just ask other people to work, they also lead with a good heart. What great qualities of Nehemiah do you see in chapter 5:16-19?

- 6.) How long did it take for the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls? (Nehemiah 6:15)

- 7.) What important job did Ezra and Nehemiah work together to do? (Nehemiah 8:5-12)

- 8.) Nehemiah didn't just rebuild the walls. He helped the people obey God's commands. What good actions did he encourage the people to take in...
 - a. Nehemiah 13:10-14 _____
 - b. Nehemiah 13:15-22 _____

Lesson Eleven – The Book of Esther

The book of Esther shows God's ability to care for His people by His loving but unseen involvement. God uses a faithful, beautiful, and brave young woman to protect the Jews from attack and to provide victory over their enemies. No matter who we are or where we are God is watching over those who love and serve Him.

- 1.) Identify the major people in the life of Esther...
 - a. The cousin who raised Esther as his daughter: _____ Esther 2:5-7
 - b. The king who Esther married: _____ Esther 2:16-17
 - c. The evil and arrogant ruler who hated the Jews: _____ Esther 3:1-2
- 2.) In Esther 3:8-11, what does Haman ask for permission to do?
- 3.) Esther could ask her husband, the king, to protect the Jews from Haman's evil plan, but what risk would she have to take? (Esther 4:7-11)
- 4.) Mordecai told queen Esther, "...And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for _____." Esther 4:14
- 5.) When Esther courageously entered the king's inner court, how did he respond? (Esther 5:1-8)
- 6.) Haman wanted even more than killing all of the Jews. He especially wanted to punish Mordecai. What advice does Haman's wife, Zeresh, give him? (Esther 5:14)
- 7.) When Haman's evil plan is told to the king, what happens to Haman? (Esther 7:7-10)

Lesson Twelve – Messianic Prophecies

Even during the Divided Kingdom, when evil and idolatry spread across the land, God spoke of a coming King, the Messiah, which means “anointed one.” The Messiah would establish a kingdom of righteousness and God’s people longed for this great King. Each Old Testament prophet tells us a little bit of information that looks ahead to Jesus. One very special chapter about the Messiah is Isaiah 53. Please read it and answer the following questions.

How was the appearance of the Messiah described? (vs. 2)

True or False: The coming king would experience a rich and luxurious life of comfort. (vs 3)

Whose griefs and sorrows would the Messiah bear? (vs 4)

What injuries did Isaiah foretell the Messiah would suffer? (vs 5)

During which part of His trial, did Jesus remain silent? How did the men judging him respond to His silence? (Mt 26:59-68, Mt 27:11-14, Luke 23:8-12, John 19:8-12, 1 Peter 2:23)

Where was Jesus executed and buried? (vs. 8-9, Matt. 27:57-60)

What would the suffering of the Messiah accomplish? (vs. 10-11)

Other Messianic Prophecies:

What great king would the Messiah be descended from? (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

How did Zechariah describe the coming king? (Zechariah 9:9)

What amount did Zechariah prophesy would be paid for Jesus’ betrayal? (Zechariah 11:13-14)

Lesson Thirteen – Review Match the major people and facts of the Divided Kingdom, Prophets, & Return

Rehoboam	Jeroboam	King Asa	King Ahab	Naboth	King Hezekiah	King Josiah
Elijah	Elisha	Isaiah	Daniel	Ezekiel	Jeremiah	Ezra
Nehemiah	Esther	Jonah	Haggai	Micah	Nahum	Malachi
Assyria	Babylon	Cyrus	Darius			

I sat up golden calves at Dan & Bethel.

I prayed to God on Mt. Carmel.

I became queen and helped save my people from Haaman.

The Northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by this nation.

The Southern Kingdom of Judah was conquered by this nation.

I trusted in God to deliver us from Shallmanezar.

I became king at only 8 years old.

I was a king in Judah who was "wholly devoted to the Lord" but I did not remove the high places.

I was a greedy and evil king of Israel, married to Jezebel.

Jezebel gave orders to have me stoned to death to steal my family's vineyard.

I did not consult with God in how to lead His people, but instead took the advice of my peers to be mean.

I prophesied the destruction of Ninevah.

I preached a message of repentance to Ninevah after trying to run from God.

I issued a royal decree to rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem.

I issued a royal decree to finish building God's temple in Jerusalem.

I told the remnant it was time to rebuild God's house.

I was taken to Babylon. God blessed me to interpret dreams and to see visions of future kingdoms.

I was a priest who led captives to return to Jerusalem and to put away unlawful spouses.

I was given a prophetic vision of God's glory leaving the temple before it was destroyed.

I was governor of Jerusalem and led the people to rebuild the city walls and gates.

I urged Judah to submit to Babylon because this judgment was from the Lord.

I prophesied that God's king (Jesus) would be born in Bethlehem.

I prophesied that God would send a prophet like Elijah to prepare the people's hearts for His kingdom and judgment.

I prophesied during the life of Hezekiah, and I spoke often about the coming Messiah.

After Elijah was taken up to heaven, I raised the Shunammite's son from the dead.