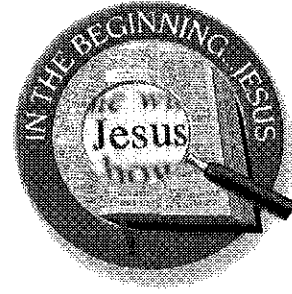


In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 26

The Rise and Decline of the Kingdom under Solomon

Themes:

- Through kings David and Solomon, God made Israel into a great nation.
- God brought strife into David's family because of his sin.
- God instructed Solomon to build a special place of worship, the temple, in Jerusalem.
- Solomon turned away from the one true God.
- God divided the kingdom of Israel.
- God is faithful to all His promises.

Scripture:

Portions of 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 2 Chronicles

Memory Verse:

John 1:8 (and review verses 1-7)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - CROWN and RED HEART (both from previous lesson).
 - PICTURE SIGNS 1-11—Tape each sign to the side of one of the boxes mentioned below. If your boxes are of varying sizes, tape PICTURE SIGN 1 to the largest box, PICTURE SIGN 2 to the next largest, etc. These boxes will now be referred to as BLOCKS 1-11.
 - DAVID'S FAMILY.
 - GOD'S PLAN (from previous lessons).
 - GOD—MAN visual (from previous lessons).
 - JESUS IS THE KEY (from previous lessons).
 - Bible Clue Card #28.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue card).
- 11 stackable boxes—These could be a combination of small cereal boxes, shoe boxes, or something similar. Facial tissue boxes also work well. These will be used to create the BLOCKS 1-11 mentioned above.
- Gift bag with paper pieces (from previous lesson).
- Piece of fabric at least 1 yard x 1 yard (36" x 36") in size—Use a pencil or

pen to write the following somewhere on the fabric: 1 Kings 11:13. Write this in very small, light-colored letters so the children can see it only by examining the cloth carefully. Then place this cloth on the table that you will use for stacking the above-mentioned BLOCKS 1-11 into a tower.

Lesson

Hold up **RED HEART**. What did it represent? [God chose David to be king—a man after His own heart.] Place **BLOCK 1** on the table (**KING DAVID**) and then quickly stack the **BLOCKS 2-6** in order (on the cloth on the table) while making the following brief comments:

Place **BLOCK 2 (SWORD AND SHIELD)** on top of **BLOCK 1**: *God was with King David. He made David a great warrior. God led him into battle and Israel defeated enemy after enemy. Under King David Israel became a strong and mighty nation.*

Place **BLOCK 3 (JERUSALEM)** on **BLOCK 2**: *King David took the city of Jerusalem from his enemies and made it the capital city of Israel. Now the great nation of Israel had a strong and fortified capital city.*

Place **BLOCK 4 (ARK)** on **BLOCK 3**: *What is this? The Ark of the Covenant. Why is it so special? [Possible responses: it goes in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle; it is a sign of God's presence with His people; etc.] After David made Jerusalem the capital city, he had the Ark brought to Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem would be the place of worship for the Israelites. Israel was a great nation because the one true God was with it—dwelling in its midst.*

Place **BLOCK 5 (REST)** on top of **BLOCK 4**: *Then the Bible says God gave David rest from all his enemies. Israel had become so great that the other nations could no longer oppose them. But there was something even better to come.*

Remind the children that a new clue was revealed in the previous lesson. What was it?

Place **BLOCK 6 (DAVID'S EVERLASTING THRONE)** on top of **BLOCK 5**: *What promise did God make to David about his throne? [It would be established and last forever.] Had God made this promise to any other king from any other land? No. No other king in any other nation had been given such a great promise! How do you think David felt about this? [Allow children to respond.] The Bible tells us how David felt.*

Have the children turn to **2 Samuel 7:18, 22, 26**:

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, "Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me thus far?"

"Therefore You are great, O LORD God. For there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

"And Your name will be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,' and the house of Your servant David will be established before You."

What kind of attitude is David expressing in this verse? Does this sound like a king who is proud? Does King David sound like a man trying to make a great name for himself? Who is David boasting about in these verses? When the other nations see the greatness of Israel, whose name should they praise?

Point out that David understood that the greatness of Israel had nothing to do with his own greatness. The greatness of Israel and David had everything to do with God making a great name for Himself.

It seemed as if almost all of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had now come true. God's people were living in God's land, under the rule of God's great king, whose throne would last forever. Could anything possibly go wrong?

Display the gift bag from the previous lesson. Have the children recall what pieces were found in the bag that were put together in the previous lesson (**CROWN** and **HEART**). Point out that there are more pieces in the bag that also have something to do with King David. Take out the black pieces and construct the **DARKENED HEART**. What might this be a clue to?

King David fought and conquered many enemies, but there was one enemy he could not conquer—his own sinful heart. Not long after God had made His promise of an everlasting throne, David took another man's wife for his own and had that man killed. Is this a big deal? Had David broken God's covenant? Which commandment(s) could God point to as proof of this? [You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.] Will David's sin affect the greatness of Israel? Will it change God's promise of an everlasting throne?

Display DAVID'S FAMILY. Tell the children that the visual is a clue for what happened next. What does the visual hint at? [Allow the children to respond.] Quickly explain that David repented of his sin, and God forgave him. He would stay on the

throne and still be a great king over Israel, but there would be consequences for his sin. The sword on the picture represents fighting—even murder. It is a sword that is aimed at David's own family. Because of his sin, there would now be fighting and even murder among the members of David's family—his own children. And until the day David died, there was hatred and fighting in his family.

Will God still keep His promise to David about having an everlasting throne? Would it be okay for God to go back on His word after what David had done? What happened after David died?

Have the children turn to **1 Kings 2:10, 12**:

Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. So Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, and his kingdom was firmly established.

Place **BLOCK 7 (KING SOLOMON)**: After King David died, God made one of David's offspring—a son—king over Israel. So far, so good—God is keeping His promise. Maybe everything will be okay. Would Israel now continue to become even greater?

Divide the class into two groups (e.g., boys and girls) and assign each group to do one of the following: Turn to **1 Kings 4:20** or **1 Kings 4:29** and look at the passage. What did God give to Israel and Solomon in each passage? [1 Kings 4:20=happiness. 1 Kings 4:29=wisdom.]

Place **BLOCKS 8** and **9** on the tower (**HAPPINESS, WISDOM**). Add **BLOCK 10 (RICHES)** and comment: *Not only had God given Solomon great wisdom to rule Israel, He also gave Solomon great wealth—more wealth than any other king had.*

Read **1 Kings 10:23-24**:

Thus King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And the whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind.

What did the people of the earth now want to do? Would this make Israel an even greater nation compared to any other?

Display GOD'S PLAN. What portion of the visual seems like it has now been completed? [The final part: SO THAT all the families of the earth will be blessed.] Point out that the "tower" we are building has become higher and higher as God has made Israel into a greater and greater nation. Will our tower get higher still? Can anything better happen?

Display Bible Clue Card #28 and choose a child to insert it behind the red paper on the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual to reveal:

*Scripture: 2 Chronicles 6:18-21
Clue under Window # 3*

Have the children turn to **2 Chronicles 6:18-21**:

But will God indeed dwell with man on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house that I have built! Yet have regard to the prayer of Your servant and to his plea, O LORD my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that Your servant prays before You, that Your eyes may be open day and night toward this house, the place where You have promised to set Your name, that You may listen to the prayer that Your servant offers toward this place. And listen to the pleas of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, forgive.

What is this special "house" and "place"?

Choose a child to open Window #3 to reveal: **GOD'S TEMPLE**. Explain that God had commanded Solomon to build a beautiful temple in Jerusalem. It was to be made of stone and decorated with gold and other beautiful and precious things. It would replace the tent-like tabernacle. It had two rooms: the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. The Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Most Holy Place.

Would having a stone temple in Jerusalem be better than having a tent-like tabernacle? In what way? Why was it important for Israel to have a moveable place of worship before? What was God showing to Israel by now having a stone temple?

Place **BLOCK 11 (GOD'S TEMPLE)** on top of **BLOCK 10**. Point out that once the temple was completed, Israel had a special service to dedicate the temple. After King Solomon finished praying, God's glory came down and filled the temple and the people bowed down and worshiped God.

Have the children pretend for a moment that all of the **BLOCKS** of the tower are made of stone, and the table on which it was built represents God. Would this tower hold firm? Would it be strong? Would it last forever? Could anything destroy it?

Read **1 Kings 11:4, 6a**:

For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God,

as was the heart of David his father. So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father had done.

Does this sound familiar? Can you predict what will happen next?

Quickly and forcefully pull the cloth out from underneath the tower so the tower falls and the **BLOCKS** fall to the floor. Explain that God was very angry with Solomon. He had broken God's covenant by worshiping other gods. On the **GOD—MAN** visual, tear the **COVENANT ARROW** (the one with the **TEN COMMANDMENTS**) in half, from bottom to top. Explain that because of Solomon's sin, God said that the nation of Israel would be divided in two. Remove **THE GREAT NATION OF ISRAEL** from the **GOD—MAN** visual and tear it in half. Let both pieces fall to the floor.

Was that the end of Israel?

Display a current map of the Middle East and point to the country of Israel. Explain that, according to the map, there is still a nation called Israel. However, if you were to travel there, you would not find the temple. It's gone. And all the furniture from inside the temple is gone, even the Ark of the Covenant. And you would not see one of David's offspring seated on a throne.

Choose a child to find the block showing **DAVID'S EVERLASTING THRONE**. What happened to the promise of God? Explain that the answer to this question is hidden on the cloth that was under the tower. When the children go to their application time, you will give them the cloth to carefully examine so they can find the answer.

Application

- ❑ **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 26 in their workbooks and write today's clue in the notebook section. Then, have them look at the tower on their workbook page, representing God's blessing on Israel through King David and King Solomon. Have the children follow the directions for completing the tower. Who had done all of this for Israel? Who should receive all the praise for Israel's greatness? Read and discuss **1 Chronicles 29:10-12**. Then read the portion of King Solomon's prayer from **1 Kings 8:23-25** and compare it to what happened to Solomon's heart in **1 Kings 11:4, 6**. Have them write their answers in the box on their workbook page.
- ❑ Have the children examine the cloth to find the following clue: **1 Kings 11:11-13**. When they have found the clue, have them turn to the text. Will God keep the promise He made to David? What one tribe of Israel do you think God is talking about? (Hint: What tribe did God say that the scepter would not depart from? Judah.) Read **Psalms 33:10-12**. What does this tell

us about God's plans and His promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the nation of Israel?

- Remind the children that, as of today, there is no temple in the country of Israel. There is no throne or king to see. Leaders from all over the world do not go there to seek wisdom like they did a long time ago. Israel is not the greatest or most powerful nation on earth anymore. What happened? Does God *really* keep all of His promises? Ask the children if they can think of any events or verses in the New Testament that might answer these questions. At this point, follow up on the children's responses (for example, correct a wrong response and encourage and support correct responses) but don't go into a lengthy discussion.
- Point out that King Solomon is best known for his wisdom. What is wisdom? One definition is knowing what is right and then doing it, or, using your knowledge and abilities in a way pleasing to God. Give some concrete examples of this. How did Solomon become so wise? Read or summarize **1 Kings 3:7-12**. Is this kind of wisdom only for kings or great leaders? Read and discuss **James 1:5-6**. Once a person is wise, does he automatically do the wise thing in every situation? Did Solomon stay wise throughout his life? What happened? Read **1 Kings 11:1-2**. Recall the illustration of the marshmallows and garlic. Did Solomon know this was not right? Did he have any excuse for what he did? Read verses **9-10**. Are you always wise? What do you think is the wisest thing a person could do?
- Read **2 Chronicles 6:18-20**. Remind the children that "house" is another word for temple. What does verse 18 mean? What does this tell us about the temple Solomon built? What does this verse tell us about God? Can He be limited by a building? Is He like people, only able to be in one place at one time? What does verse 20 tell us about God? [He is available to His people day and night. He never sleeps, etc.] Point out that the following verses from this chapter describe all kinds of situations in which the people need to cry out to God for help. In each of these situations, Solomon directs the people to the temple: *Go to the temple for help, go to the temple, go to the temple...* However, there is no longer a temple in Israel. Where are God's people supposed to go for help?
- Read **Psalms 27:4** and **Psalms 84:10**. Can these verses still be true without a temple in Jerusalem? How? Is there a way a person can come into God's presence and worship Him? [If the children respond that the church (the physical building) has replaced the temple, ask them if that means a person must be inside the church building in order to be near God.] **Note:** in a future lesson we will discuss Jesus as the living temple of God and the church (believers in Jesus) as temples—being able to continually draw near to God at any time and in any place, through Jesus.

- Point out that although at one time Solomon was the wisest man on earth, in the end he became very foolish. How did this happen? Read **Proverbs 4:23** (most likely Solomon's own words!). What does "vigilance" mean? This verse is telling a person that you must keep (or guard) your heart from sin very carefully. How does a person go about doing this? Has God given Christians any "tools" to do this? [His Word, the Holy Spirit, the example of Jesus, prayer, good parents, teachers, other Christians, etc.] Use an example of how Scripture memorized and utilized can help you to guard your heart (e.g., **Ephesians 4:32**, **Proverbs 3:5**).

Send Home

- Parent Resource Page
- Review Sheet for John 1:1-8