

=THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 14
II Chronicles

Objects to have:

A new Bible book sign: II CHRONICLES
Other Kings of Israel

Connected paper dolls
Chalk and chalkboard
Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

(Review the names of the books of the Bible studied thus far. Draw on the chalkboard a simple outline of the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea—of the northern coast of Egypt and the western coast of Israel. Review with the children the move of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land. Point out the land of Canaan, draw the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. Tell them that this all became the land of Israel. It was one country ruled by one king at a time: either King Saul or King David or King Solomon.)

(Hold up your connected paper dolls.) Let us pretend that all of these paper dolls stand for the millions of Israelites, all living in the land of Israel. See how the dolls are connected? They are just like one big, happy family. They are not divided. They are all together. They all wanted to live in the country that God had given them. They all wanted to see the enemy driven from the country which God had given them. They all wanted to have homes in which to live. They all wanted to plant their crops and harvest their food.

Sometimes they had to divide up, however. (Cut the dolls apart at two places, forming three groups.) They had to divide in order to fight the enemy in different places. Some soldiers would go one place, some soldiers would go to another. The rest of the soldiers would go to another place. Even though they divided, they were all agreeing. It was one country fighting in different places for each other.

Let's think of some times when people divide up. (You could let the children help you think of some times.) Sometimes boys and girls divide up so that they can play some games. They have one team and another team. The two teams play against each other, in baseball maybe. Sometimes people have to divide in order to go look for something that is lost; some of the group might go one way and some another way to look for something that has been lost. When people come to our church to Sunday school, do they all come to the same room? No, they divide, and go to different rooms. These are all good kinds of division. When the people divided in the land of Israel to fight the enemies, that was a good kind of division, too. They were dividing to help each other and to work together.

In our Bible book for today, we read about people dividing. When I have finished the story, you tell me if you think it was a good dividing or a bad dividing. Listen very carefully.

Telling the story:

King David had died, then Solomon became king; remember? After many years King Solomon got very old and died. King Solomon had many sons. One of his sons would become the new king. One of Solomon's boys, Rehoboam, became the new king after Solomon died.

We shall see if Rehoboam was a good king. Some men came to Rehoboam. Jeroboam was the leader of these men. Jeroboam said to Rehoboam, “Rehoboam, are you going to be mean to the people of Israel? Sometimes Solomon, your father, was mean to us. He made us pay too much money in taxes. If we could not pay, he told some men to whip us with whips and he had us put in jail. Are you going to be mean like Solomon?” Rehoboam thought about this. He thought about how he should rule the country of Israel.

Rehoboam said, “Jeroboam, you, and all the people with you, come to see me in three days. I will tell you my answer.” Jeroboam and all the men who were with him left.

Rehoboam called some older men to come to a meeting with him. Rehoboam said, “Men, you are old; you worked with my father, King Solomon. How do you think that I should rule the country of Israel? Should the taxes be as high as my father had them be? Should I be hard on the people?”

“King Rehoboam,” said these old men who were wise, “you should be kind to the people. Do not be hard on them, and do not be mean to them. Always do what God wants you to do.” King Rehoboam did not like the advice the old men gave him! He told them to leave the meeting.

Then King Rehoboam called another meeting. He asked some young men who grew up with him to come to a meeting with him. “Friends,” said King Rehoboam, “you are my age. Should I be kind to the people of Israel, or should I be as hard on them as my father, King Solomon, was?”

The young men said, “You should be even harder on the people of Israel than your father was. Make them pay more taxes. Whip them harder if they don’t pay. Make them serve you.”

Then it was time for Jeroboam to go to see Rehoboam. King Rehoboam told Jeroboam, “You people will have to serve harder, and I will be meaner toward you.”

Jeroboam and the people with him did not like what they heard. They decided that they did not want to be ruled by King Rehoboam. They left Jerusalem. (Put a group of the paper dolls in the northern part of Israel on your map. Put another group of paper dolls in the south.)

So it was that this country of Israel became divided. God’s people became divided! It was not one country any longer; it became two countries. The part up here was called Israel. The part down here was called Judah. (Point as you are saying this.) There was the Northern Kingdom (point to Israel) and there was the Southern Kingdom (point to Judah). What was the Northern Kingdom called? Yes—Israel. What was the Southern Kingdom called? Yes—Judah. (Point while saying the preceding.)

Then it was that Rehoboam wanted to go to war against Jeroboam. He started to lead his army against the people in the north. God spoke to Rehoboam. “Stop, Rehoboam,” said God, “do not go to war against your brother. Until now the country of Israel has been one country. The people living in the country have all been like brothers and sisters to each other. They have been like one big family. Do not fight against them.”

Rehoboam listened to God, but he did not listen long. Soon Rehoboam forgot all about God and what God wanted him to do. Then it was that Rehoboam started to fight against Jeroboam—the people of Judah fighting against Israel! A terrible division had come to the country of Israel.

The book of II Chronicles (point to your new sign) tells us about that division. From then on, while there were kings, there were two countries, and one king ruled in one part of the country while another king ruled in another part of the country. Children, remember our question—does this sound like a good division or a bad division? It was very definitely a bad division. The division happened because one king—King Rehoboam—decided not to be kind to the people of the country. Another man in the country decided to lead part of the people against the king. That was Jeroboam. So Jeroboam became the king of the group that went to the north, and Rehoboam’s army fought Jeroboam’s army.

Do you know that sometimes boys and girls fight against each other? That's true. Sometimes one girl or one boy may say, "I do not like you." They begin to fight. Sometimes one boy or one girl will point at someone else and start to talk against that person. Other people then get on the side of one or the other. That is bad division. We should not talk mean about each other nor should we fight each other just to get our way.

King Rehoboam and King Jeroboam caused a bad division in the country of Israel. How sad!

This is what we should decide to do: Let's decide that a good time to divide would be to divide up work that needs to be done. When we play games, that's a time to divide—to divide into teams. We could divide for something else: We could go in different directions to tell people about Jesus. We could tell friends and neighbors about Sunday school at our church, and tell them about Jesus who loves them. That would be a good dividing.

Let's ask Jesus to help us always to be kind to each other, working together, playing together because we love each other—remembering that Jesus loves us all.

HERE'S A SAD BIBLE VERSE, BUT WE NEED TO REMEMBER IT: II Chronicles 12:1, "And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him."