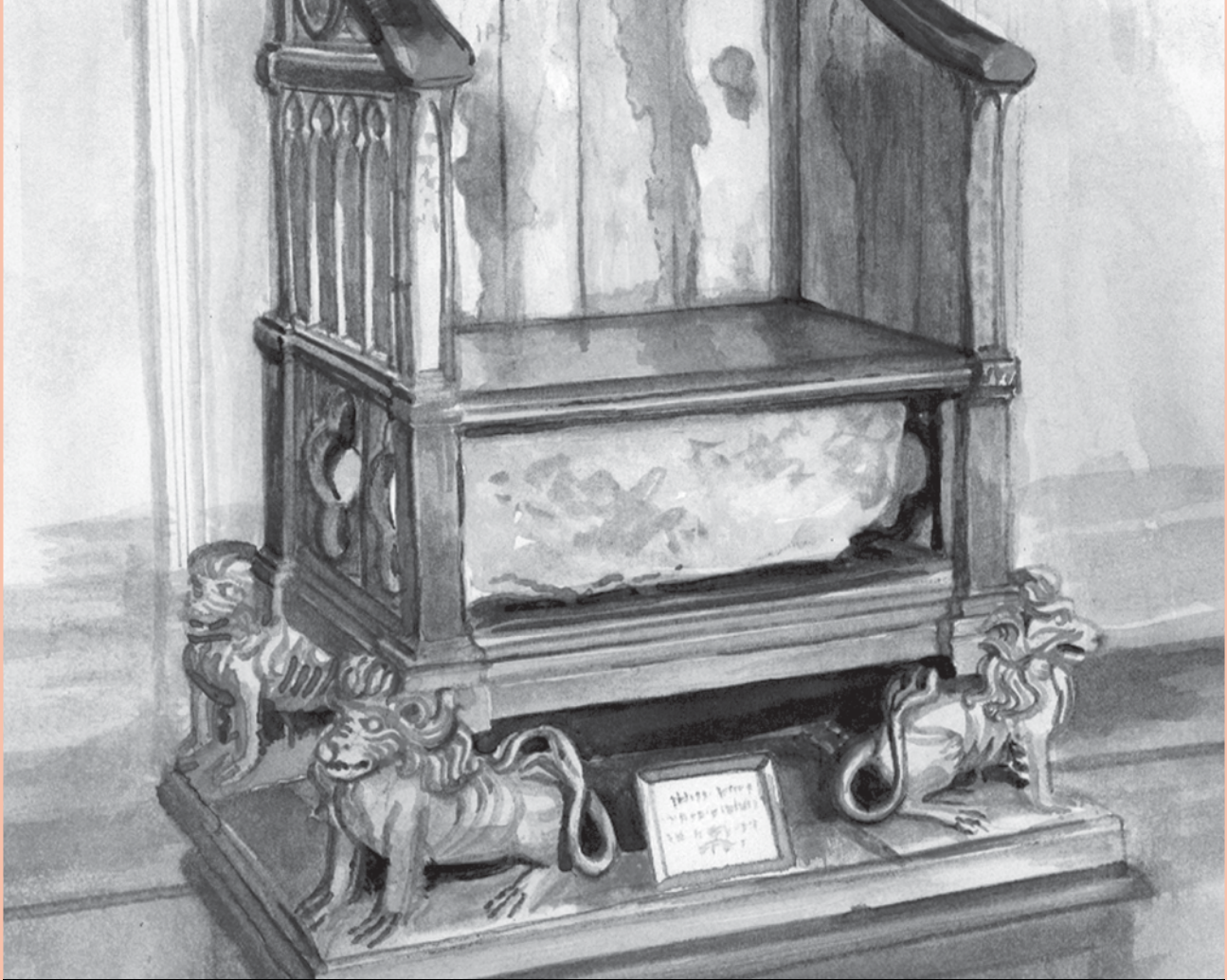
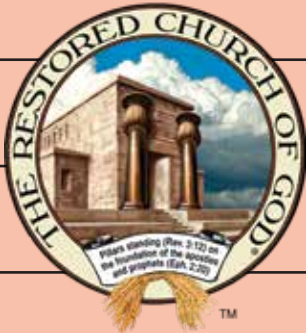


THE RESTORED CHURCH OF GOD®

# CHILDREN'S BIBLE LESSONS



Kings of Israel and Judah



## LEVEL 6 LESSON 3

# Kings of Israel and Judah

In Lesson 2, we learned of the greatness that Israel achieved under the reign of King David. God blessed Israel while David was king because he obeyed God. When David died, Solomon became king. Solomon asked God for great wisdom, which God granted. In the end, Solomon did not use his wisdom properly, as he allowed himself to be overtaken by lusts, and he married many wives, who further turned his heart from God.

For this reason, God decided to remove the kingdom from Solomon's line.

However, He had promised David that his lineage would remain on the throne *forever*. The way God removed the throne from Solomon, yet did not break His promise to David, is an amazing truth that many in the world do not understand.

In this lesson, we will learn some history about ancient Israel, and also come to understand

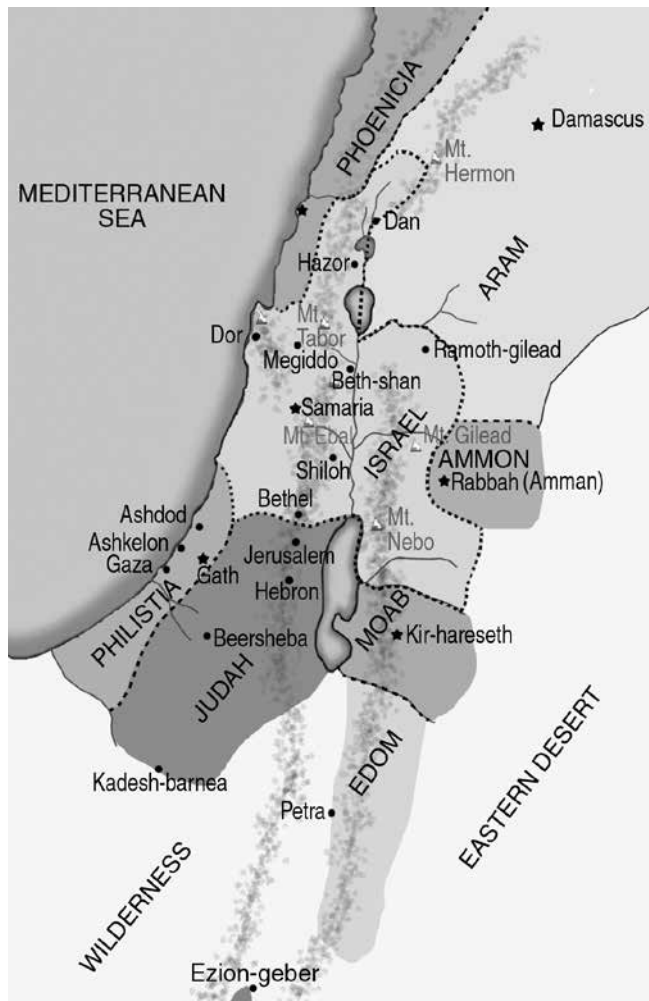
that the same throne that David sat on is currently occupied by Queen Elizabeth II, the Queen of England!

## Israel Splits Into Two Nations

While Solomon was still king, he noticed a young man named Jeroboam. Seeing Jeroboam's youth, strength and resourcefulness, Solomon decided to appoint him over the house of Joseph (I Kings 11:28).

Shortly after this appointment, Jeroboam learned through a prophet named Ahijah that he was going to become king of Israel after Solomon died!

Recall that God had decided to remove the throne of Israel from Solomon's son Rehoboam because Solomon had sinned against God. But how did God do this without breaking His promise to David that the throne of Israel would *never* leave his family?



The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah

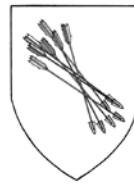
One important principle of Bible study is to realize that God cannot lie. If you ever think that the Bible shows God as a liar, then you must keep studying. The Bible actually explains that when we are studying, we cannot look in just one place, but rather must put all scriptures on a subject together in order to see the whole picture. This is why the Bible is sometimes described as a “jigsaw puzzle” of words.

In this case, we do not have to look far to understand how God kept His promise to David, yet removed the kingdom of Israel from David’s grandson Rehoboam.

Turn to I Kings 11:31-32 and fill in the blanks of the important prophecy that helps to explain where the nation of Israel is today. Jeroboam is talking with Ahijah the prophet: “And he said to Jeroboam, ‘Take for yourself \_\_\_\_\_, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ out of the hand of \_\_\_\_\_ and will give ten tribes to you (but [Solomon’s son Rehoboam] shall have \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of My servant \_\_\_\_\_, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel).””

In order to keep His promise to David, God left Rehoboam with the tribe of Judah. The rest of Israel would be ruled by a family that was not directly related to David.

Shortly after this, Solomon died. When Rehoboam took the throne, the



**Manasseh**



**Ephraim**



**Asher**

**Gad**



**Dan**

**Issachar**



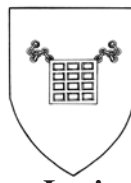
**Naphtali**



**Reuben**



**Simeon**



**Levi**



**Zebulun**

people of Israel demanded that he lower the high taxes that Solomon had imposed. Israel chose a spokesperson to talk to Rehoboam on their behalf. This person was Jeroboam! He approached Rehoboam and told him that if he would lower the taxes, all the people of Israel would gladly serve him.

Rehoboam told him to leave for three days, and he would consider what he said. After he left, Rehoboam asked for advice from some of the older men that had served with his father Solomon. These elders advised Rehoboam to lower the taxes so that he would be on good terms with the people of Israel. However, Rehoboam wanted to seek further advice. He went to his friends that he had grown up with, and asked them what he should do. They advised him to use his new powers as king to raise the taxes even higher!

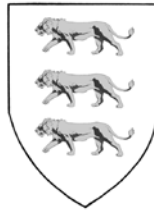
Perhaps you have come across a situation like Rehoboam. If you have to make an important decision, you may go to your parents and ask them for advice. However, you may also be like Rehoboam and decide to ask your friends what to do. What Rehoboam did not realize is that the elders that he asked had much more experience than he did. They had lived in Israel for many years, and worked with Solomon when he was king. They understood how the people would react to an increase in taxes, and what was the best thing to do, in order to ensure that Israel would remain united. However,

Rehoboam rejected this advice and followed the advice of his friends.

Ten of the tribes of Israel rejected Rehoboam as their king and declared Jeroboam as their new king! The tribes of Judah and Benjamin kept Rehoboam as king. (Though this new nation included Judah, Benjamin and many of the Levites, it is commonly referred to as the House of Judah.)

### Israel Forgets Their God

It did not take long for Jeroboam to forget that it was God who had made him king of Israel. He became concerned that when people started to worship God, they would remember all the good times Israel had under King David and desire to return to David's grandson, Rehoboam. Jeroboam had a plan to make sure this would not happen. He decided to make two golden calves, and he told Israel that these were the gods that brought



**Judah**



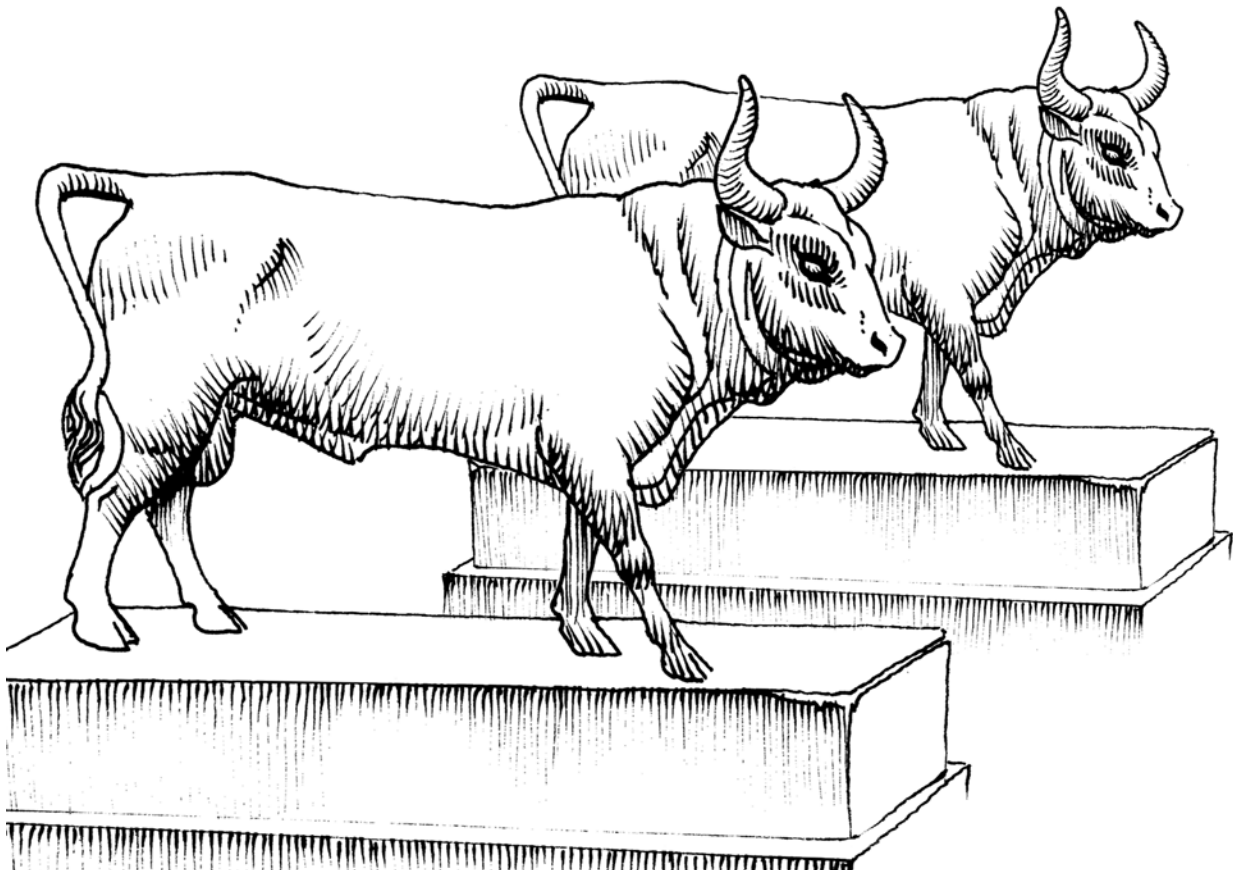
**Benjamin**

them out of Egypt, and that they should worship them. He also made a feast, much like the Feast of Tabernacles, except it was one month later. This way the people would slowly forget the true God that they worshipped under King David's rule, and would not desire to be part of that kingdom again.

Turn to I Kings 12:30, and fill in the word that God uses to describe Israel's actions: \_\_\_\_\_. Do you know what this means? I John 3:4 (of the King James Version) says, "sin is the transgression

of the law." Did you know this? This is very important to understand. If you break the laws of your country, then you have committed what is called a crime. When you break one of God's laws, then you have committed what is called sin!

Your Bible Memory from Lesson 2 was to remember the Ten Commandments (laws) that God had given to Israel at Mount Sinai when



Moses was leading Israel. Can you name one of the Ten Commandments that Jeroboam broke?

Jeroboam was not the only king of Israel to turn to idolatry. Jeroboam's son, Nadab, also committed evil acts as king. So did the next king, Baasha. The years went by and Israel continued to be reigned by kings who did not obey God.

Forty years after King Jeroboam died, Ahab became king of Israel. To understand what type of king Ahab was, turn to I Kings 16:30 and fill in the blanks: "Now \_\_\_\_\_ the son of Omri did \_\_\_\_\_ in the sight of the LORD, \_\_\_\_\_ than all who were \_\_\_\_\_."

According to the Bible, Ahab was the worst king that Israel had ever seen. What made Ahab such a terrible king? Ahab married a woman who was deep into idolatry. Her name was Jezebel. Ahab and Jezebel worshipped a false god named Baal.

### Israel Punished for Sin

One day, God decided to use a prophet named Elijah to deliver a message to Ahab. Elijah went to Ahab and told him that Israel would not have any rain for a long time.

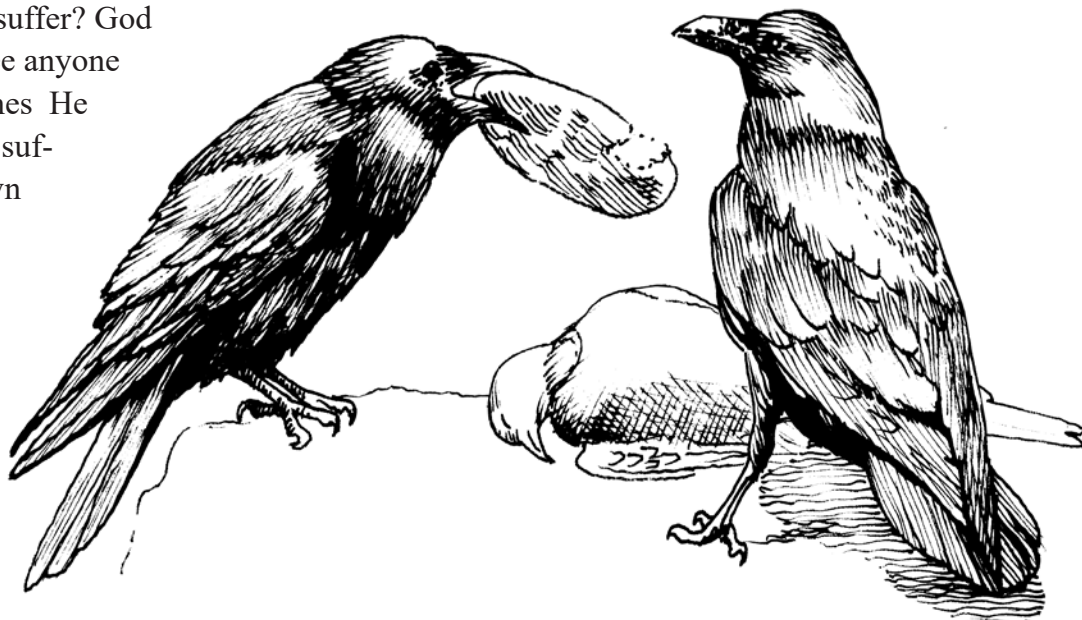
Why do you think God would cause a drought to come upon Israel? Was it because He *wanted* to see the Israelites suffer? God does not *desire* to see anyone suffer, but sometimes He must cause them to suffer for their own good. Israel had sinned. They had fallen deep into idolatry, and had forgotten the true God who had chosen Israel to be a special people and an example to all

nations. Israel had forgotten the power of the true God who had brought their nation out of Egyptian slavery and into the Promised Land. So God had no choice but to cause Israel to suffer. He knew that if He once again showed Israel that He has the power to do all things, then maybe they would follow and obey Him.

### God Provides for Elijah

After delivering his message to Ahab, God told Elijah to hide so that he would be safe. He hid near a river, where God said He would provide for his needs. Many would be concerned about how they would get food if they had to spend all their time hiding. However, God told Elijah that He would provide all the food he would need. Elijah trusted God, and in the morning, ravens appeared with meat and bread in their mouths. They came to where Elijah was hiding, set the food on the ground, and flew away! It is amazing how a raven could obey God's command to bring food to someone without eating it on the way!

Eventually, the river dried up, and God told Elijah to go to a city called Zarephath and look for a widow when he got there. Elijah carefully traveled to the city (without being seen), and when he arrived, there was a woman gathering



sticks. Elijah was sure that this must be the widow that God was talking about. He approached her and asked her for a cup of water. As she went to get water, Elijah also asked for bread. The woman responded that she would not be able to give him bread. She explained that because of the famine, she only had enough flour to make one last serving of bread for her and her son. Elijah explained to her that it was God's will that she would not run out of flour. In fact, God would perform a miracle—if she made some bread, there would continue to be enough flour to make enough bread for her, her son, and Elijah until the famine ended. The woman believed Elijah, and after she made the bread, there was more flour in the flour jar!

### **The Famine Ends**

The famine in Israel had become very severe. God decided that it was time to end the famine. But first, He wanted to show Israel who the true God was. He told Elijah to go and find Ahab, and tell him to gather all the people of Israel at Mount Carmel. He also told Ahab to make sure that the prophets of Baal were there. Elijah came to the Mount where all the people of Israel and all the prophets of Baal had assembled. He told them that they must decide once and for all who was the true God. He proposed that the prophets of Baal put a bull on an altar, and Elijah would do the same. The God that would light the altar on fire must be the only true, living God.

So the prophets of Baal cut up their bull, put it on the altar, and called to Baal to set it on fire. But nothing happened. The prophets continued to call to Baal all morning. To make his point very clear, Elijah told them that perhaps Baal was sleeping, or away on a trip, and this is why he couldn't hear them. For this reason, the prophets spent all afternoon calling even louder to Baal. Still, nothing happened.

When evening came, Elijah prepared his bull. He also dug a trench around the altar. And he had water poured on the altar until it was soaked and the trench was filled with water. This way, the people would know that he did not somehow trick them into thinking it was God who would light the altar, since no human being could light it when it was drenched with water.

Elijah then prayed a short prayer to God asking Him to light the fire. Immediately, the whole altar was consumed with flames! The people fell to the ground and acknowledged that God is the true God. However, the prophets of Baal did not. Therefore, God put them to death so that they would not cause the people of Israel to follow after Baal anymore. As for Ahab and Jezebel, they did not believe either. In fact, Jezebel was so upset that she ordered Elijah to be killed. Not only did God protect Elijah, but because of Jezebel's wickedness, God caused her to be killed, and her body was eaten by dogs.

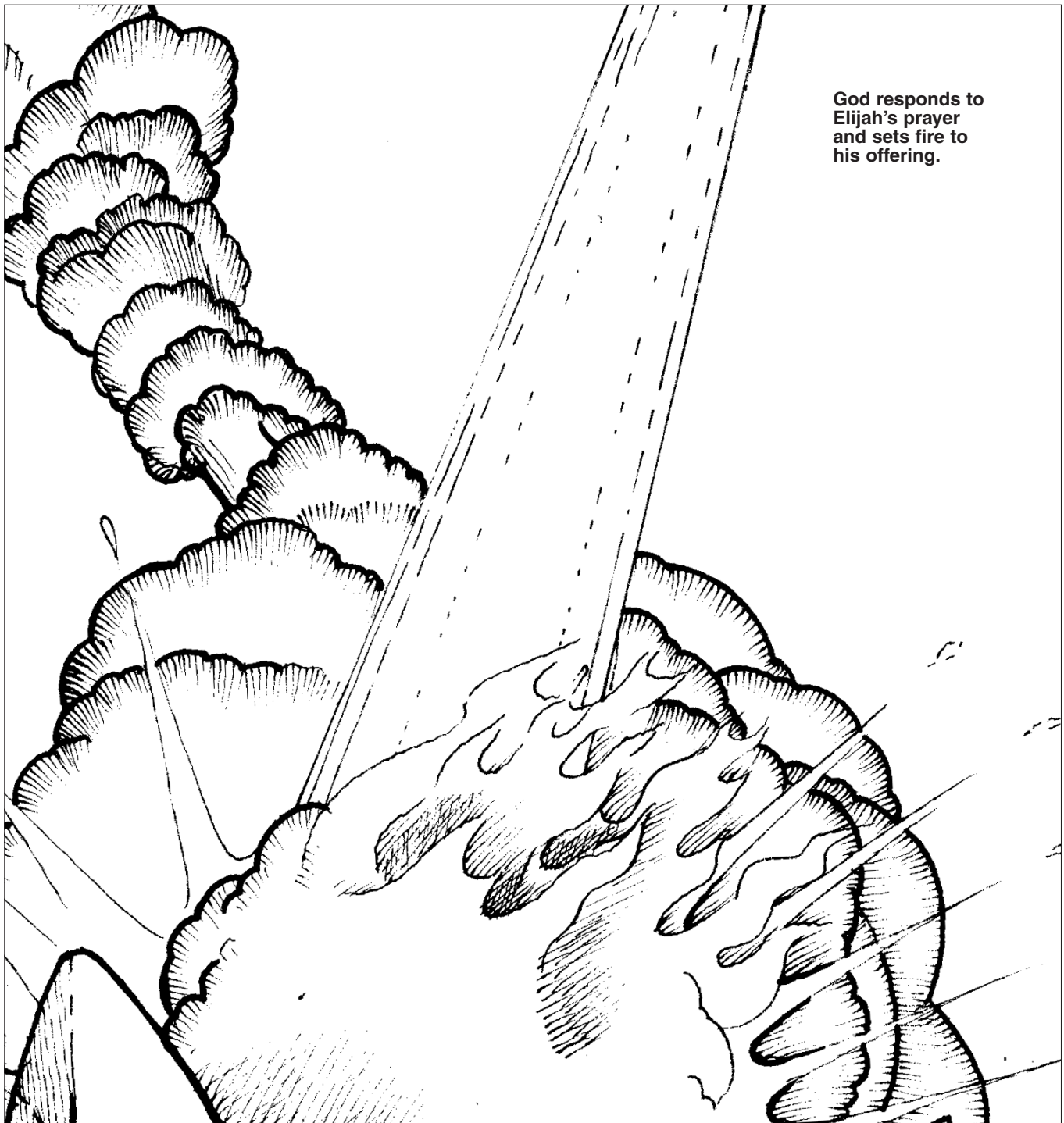
### **An Important Lesson About Healing**

After King Ahab died, his son Ahaziah ruled over Israel. One day, Ahaziah fell through a railing on the upper level of his house, resulting in a great injury.

Ahaziah wanted to know if he would be healed. But instead of praying to the true God, Ahaziah asked the pagan god of medicine—Baalzebub—if he would recover. This upset God, because Ahaziah didn't trust Him to heal him.

God is perfectly willing to heal us when we are sick if we trust that He will, and if we are striving with our whole heart to obey God. Ahaziah wasn't doing either of these things. So God sent Elijah to inform Ahaziah that he would die, because he asked Baalzebub instead of God.

Later in this lesson, we will learn of one of the kings of Judah who did trust in God to be healed, and we will see what God did.



God responds to  
Elijah's prayer  
and sets fire to  
his offering.

### **Israel Goes Into Captivity**

Many years went by and Israel had many kings. All the kings of Israel were wicked and did not obey God. God decided that Israel must endure a harsh punishment because of their disobedience. God was going to send Israel into captivity again!

It had been many generations since Israel's slavery in Egypt, and they were once again going to lose their freedom to the Assyrians.

However, God could not keep Israel in captivity forever. Recall that God had promised Abraham that Israel would become a great nation. At the time that Israel went into captivity, this had not yet happened. Before becoming a great

nation, they would have to endure 2,520 years of punishment! We will learn later in the lesson when this punishment eventually ended.

### **The Kings of Judah**

Recall that after Solomon died, Israel split into two separate kingdoms. One was still called Israel, and the other Judah. So far, we have looked at some of the kings of Israel. Now we are going to learn about some of the kings of Judah.

God promised David that his lineage would remain on the throne forever. So unlike the rest of Israel, where the throne moved to different families, the kingdom of Judah *must* remain in David's family. This is why Rehoboam was the first king. His son Abijam ruled for three years after Rehoboam. Just like Rehoboam, Abijam also made bad decisions as king.

After Abijam died, his son Asa became king over Judah, and he remained king for 41 years. I Kings 15:11-12 says, "Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David. And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made."

Asa heard of the example of his great-great-grandfather David. He knew that David obeyed God with his whole heart, and that because of this, many good things happened. He was able to look beyond the bad examples of those who were closer to him, and recognize the blessings that come from obeying God. Because Asa had obeyed God, and told all in Judah to obey God, God was pleased with Judah, and He protected them when they required it.

One day, an army of one million Ethiopians attacked Judah. Judah's army was half this size, and Asa knew that he would have to trust in God to help them. Notice Asa's attitude when he asked for God's protection. Turn to II Chronicles

14:11 and fill in the blanks of the last sentence in this verse: "O \_\_\_\_\_, You are our God; do not let men \_\_\_\_\_ against \_\_\_\_\_!"

Asa's attitude was not that God should protect Judah simply because Judah deserved to be protected. Asa knew that if Judah did not succeed against the Ethiopians, then it wouldn't be just Judah that they prevailed against, but that it would ultimately be God. He knew God would not let this happen, and so he was sure that God would protect Judah despite their smaller army. This is exactly what God did—the Ethiopians were defeated.

Despite Asa's trust in God, he was not perfect. At one point, when Baasha was king of Israel, there was a war between Israel and Judah. Instead of trusting in God to deliver Judah, Asa hired the Syrians to help them in the war. After the war, God sent a messenger to tell Asa that since he didn't rely on God to prevail against Israel that Judah would now see more wars. God did this so that all in Judah would clearly understand why it is so important to always trust and obey God.

### **Another Lesson in Healing**

Near the end of his life, Asa became sick with a disease in his feet. Just as with King Ahaziah of Israel, Asa did not seek God to heal him. Instead, he relied only on physicians to heal him (without asking God for any help). Just as with Ahaziah, God would have healed Asa according to His promise to heal all diseases.

### **God Heals Those Who Ask**

About 200 years later, a descendant of Asa by the name of Hezekiah became king of Judah. In II Kings 20, we learn that after ruling for a number of years, Hezekiah became sick and was close to dying. In verse 3, we read Hezekiah's prayer to God:



added 15 more years to Hezekiah's life.

Why did God decide to heal Hezekiah? When Hezekiah first became king, he removed all the pagan idols that his father had brought into Judah when he was king. He held a nationwide fast to help all the people of Judah remember and draw closer to God.

Hezekiah then wanted all the people of Judah to keep the Passover, as it had been many years since they had observed it. Passover is kept on the night of the 14th day of the first month of God's calendar. Not all of Judah was prepared to keep it at this time, so Hezekiah decided to keep the Passover one month later. God looked at Hezekiah's intent, and even though he was keeping the wrong day, this was still acceptable to God since Hezekiah's motive was to worship and obey God. It is important to realize that after this first year, God would expect Judah to keep Passover on the correct night.

Hezekiah was special in God's eyes. Despite his father's bad example and the evil things he did when he ruled Judah, Hezekiah found the strength to do what was

"Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what was good in Your sight." God heard Hezekiah's prayer. He saw that Hezekiah had sought after Him with an earnest heart, and strove to live God's way of life. Even though God had just told Hezekiah in verse 1 that he was going to die, God changed His mind and

right, even though it seemed there was no one around him who was doing the same. You may find yourself in a situation like Hezekiah's. Perhaps you may be at school and some of your classmates are doing something that you know is wrong. It may be easier to go along with what they are doing. But, if you find the strength to do what is right, God will reward you for this! If you

do this throughout your life, then just like Hezekiah, you too will be very special to God.

### A Very Young King

Perhaps you think that it is hard to always do what is right. Or maybe you think that it is not as important since you are still young. However, can you imagine being very young, even younger than you are now, and being king of Judah? This is exactly what happened to Hezekiah's great-grandson, Josiah. Amon, who was Josiah's father, was an evil king. He did not follow God, and there was so much lawlessness in Judah when he was king that his own servants killed him in his house. Amon's early death meant that Josiah became king of Judah when he was only eight years old!

Just like Asa and Hezekiah, Josiah didn't have a good example to follow. Nevertheless, he knew what was right. He went against all those who were older than him and who were close to his father, and he found the strength to obey God.

Josiah knew that all of Judah needed to remember the covenant that they made with God. So Josiah gathered all the men of Judah to the temple that was in Jerusalem, and he read the entire Book of the Covenant, which was a book that contained all of God's law. At this time, Josiah ordered all the pagan idols throughout Judah to be destroyed. Although Josiah did this when he was a bit older, God still recognized the great courage that it took to do this at a young age.

Josiah was the last righteous king that Judah would see. The remaining four kings were evil in God's eyes. This caused the nation of Judah to go further and further into sin. Eventually, just as God had done with Israel, He decided that Judah must be punished for their sin. He allowed King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon to overtake them.

### Recalling God's Promise to David

God had promised David that this throne would be established *forever* and that David's descendants would *always* sit on it. We will spend the rest of the lesson learning what happened to this throne, and the amazing truth of how God will keep His promise to David.

Do you remember the promise that God made to Abraham over 1,000 years earlier in Genesis 12? Verses 2 to 3 show that this promise had two parts: (1) God will make Abraham a great nation, and (2) all families of the Earth shall be blessed. So this promise contained both a physical aspect (a great nation) and a spiritual aspect (access to eternal life through Jesus Christ).

God later established each one of these promises—one in each of the two nations of Israel and Judah, which we have just spent the first part of the lesson learning about.

The promise of a great nation was carried through the *birthright*, which always refers to material inheritance. I Chronicles 5:2 says that the birthright was given to Joseph (the father of Ephraim and Manasseh.) Recall that when Israel split, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh did not go with Judah, but were the leading tribes of Israel.

The spiritual promise of eternal life was carried through Judah's kingly line, starting with David, and eventually ending with Jesus Christ when He sits on David's throne in His Kingdom. This promise is known as the *scepter*. Genesis 49:10 promised that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah."

### Test Your Memory:

1) What were the two promises God made to Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) How is the first (physical) promise passed from generation to generation? (Hint: It is a *right* that you are given at *birth*.) \_\_\_\_\_

3) Which nation possesses this? (Israel or Judah) \_\_\_\_\_

4) How is the second (spiritual) promise passed from generation to generation? \_\_\_\_\_

5) Which nation possesses this? (Israel or Judah) \_\_\_\_\_

Now that we have this understanding, we are going to look at both of the promises made to Abraham to understand how they were fulfilled.

### The Promise of a Great Nation

We now understand that the promise of a great nation was to be passed down through the birthright, which was possessed by Ephraim and Manasseh (two of the 12 tribes of Israel). However, God did not immediately make Israel into a great nation. As mentioned, in punishment for the national sins they committed, Israel had to

wait 2,520 years before receiving the birthright blessings. This punishment ended 200 years ago, in the early 1800s.

During those 2,520 years, the tribes of Israel lost their identity, and are no longer known to the world as Israelite tribes. However, if we are diligent enough in our Bible study, and by studying world history, we can understand where these tribes are today.

Most importantly, we can know where the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are—since they are the tribes that possess the birthright. By studying many biblical prophecies, we can learn that the tribe of Ephraim is the British Commonwealth (including countries such as Canada and Australia), and the tribe of Manasseh is the United States of America! It is no coincidence that the nations coming from these tribes today are the wealthiest nations in the world. God promised that it would be this way!

We have covered many specific details in this lesson. You should routinely come back to this (and other) lessons, as well as your Bible to help you grow in deeper understanding of the exciting truths that you have just learned. The activity on the back cover will help to summarize what you have learned in this lesson.



## **BIBLE MEMORY:** Exodus 19:4-6

### **MATCHING**

**Directions:** Match the name on the left to the description on the right.

Solomon	Eaten by dogs because of her wickedness.
David	Judah's last righteous king; became king at age of eight.
Hezekiah	God promised his throne would last forever.
Rehoboam	David's grandson.
Jeroboam	The nation that holds Abraham's birthright promises.
Manasseh	The tribe that is now the United States of America.
Jezebel	The tribe that carried the scepter promise.
Asa	A king that had many wives.
Josiah	A king that asked to be healed; God added 15 years to his life.
Judah	Asked Rehoboam not to raise the taxes. Later became king of Israel.
Israel	Was king of Judah when one million Ethiopians attacked Judah.