

OS

DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE



ADULTS



FALL | 2025

GOD'S WORD FOR YOU

WE NEED THE TRUE KING

The last verse in the book of Judges—a book that chronicles the downward spiral of disobedience of those who were called to be radically different as the people of God—is one of the most depressing verses in the Bible: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did whatever seemed right to him” (Judges 21:25). Is this not a fitting definition of sin? In this one verse, we see the prideful root of self-lordship, self-exaltation, and self-determination at the core of all our rebellion. We are, in our own minds, the gods of our own universe; we choose whatever is right and wrong for ourselves, and anything that imposes some authority over us other than our own autonomous minds, hearts, and desires is a constraint that must be thrown off.

As sinners, we are like the Israelites of old, convinced of our own truth, our own ideas, and our own wisdom. Our sin has blinded us to what is truly good and right, and it's precisely because of this blindness that we need a true king.

We need a king who tells us the truth, guides us with justice, and leads us in righteousness—a king who can open our eyes to these things and more. Because we are enslaved by sin, the true king must not only be our ruler but also our rescuer.

In Jesus, we find this King—the One before whom every knee will bow and whose greatness every tongue will eventually confess. In Jesus, the true King has come. He is the King of love as well as the King of power. In Jesus, and in Him alone, will we finally find all our desires for peace, security, and wholeness met.

We must then acknowledge that every other king we seek to enthrone is only a substitute for Jesus. It is far better for us to trust in Jesus, not only as our rescuer but also as our ruler, and to acknowledge that all authority has been given to Him.

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THE EDITOR

Our lives are a series of decisions and choices we make that can result in positive or negative consequences. If we try to base these decisions on our own thoughts and morality, we will soon realize that it will lead to pitfalls in life. That's why we need God, His Word, His Spirit, and His people to help us and teach us the way toward life. But even with those things, we may choose not to listen and still choose our own prideful ways.

This is as true of us as it was of God's people of old, the Israelites. Though God sent prophets to point them toward the right path, the Israelites chose their own path many times, deciding to do evil in the Lord's sight. The few that were faithful, from kings to commoners, found joy in the Lord and His Word. But those who weren't found that they made their own destructive paths. And in the end, the split kingdom of Israel and Judah both failed to be faithful to the Lord and both became captive to their enemies.

Through it all though, God's mercy and compassion still overcame. God did not destroy them completely as they deserved, but He sent prophets to let them know a day of hope was coming, a day when a Savior would come and lead and guide them and take away their sins. God would restore and refresh His people, and they would follow Him toward life everlasting.

These prophets were pointing to Jesus, the Messiah. He is the hope that we all need. He took on our sin and made atonement, which restored our relationship with the Father. He put His Spirit in us and established a new covenant that we would have life with His presence forevermore. Praise be to God!

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SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The Gospel Project for Adults aspires to point people to the gospel of Jesus Christ through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources that show how God's plan of redemption unfolds throughout all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. This curriculum provides theological yet practical studies that immerse your group in the STORY of the gospel, helping to develop a gospel CULTURE that leads to gospel MISSION.

GOSPEL STORY

Our aim is to help people understand the storyline of Scripture and to see the thread from the beginning to the end that weaves through it all—God's plan to rescue and redeem His creation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL CULTURE

Our hope is that the message of the gospel saturates our understanding of Christ, increasing our joy in Him and helping doubters become believers who become declarers of the gospel.

GOSPEL MISSION

Our desire is to encourage believers to live on mission, declaring the good news of the gospel in word and deed for God's glory and the growth of His kingdom.

3 YEAR PLAN

VOL 01: CREATION AND COVENANT

(Genesis; Job)
Fall 2024

VOL 02: LAW AND LIFE

(Exodus–Deuteronomy)
Winter 2024–25

VOL 03: LAND AND LOSS

(Joshua–1 Samuel)
Spring 2025

VOL 04: FOOLISHNESS AND WISDOM

(1 Samuel–1 Kings; Wisdom Literature)
Summer 2025

VOL 05: DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

(1 Kings–2 Chronicles; The Prophets)
Fall 2025

VOL 06: PROPHETS AND PROVISION

(The Prophets; Ezra–Esther)
Winter 2025–26

VOL 07: THE SON HAS COME

(The Gospels)
Spring 2026

VOL 08: THE SON HAS AUTHORITY

(The Gospels)
Summer 2026

VOL 09: THE SON HAS TRUTH

(The Gospels)
Fall 2026

VOL 10: THE SON HAS RISEN

(The Gospels; Acts)
Winter 2026–27

VOL 11: THE CHURCH HAS A MISSION

(Acts; The Epistles)
Spring 2027

VOL 12: THE CHURCH HAS A FUTURE

(The Epistles; Revelation)
Summer 2027

HOW TO USE THE PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

The Personal Study Guide is a vital tool in your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:

1) READ THE WORD DAILY

Begin each week by reading the Scriptures according to the Daily Readings. These Bible readings will help you mentally and spiritually prepare for the group experience each week while also building healthy Bible study habits for personal growth. The daily readings will help you understand the context of the Bible story for each week's session and fill in the gaps between sessions. The weekly psalm reading will help you think worshipfully and prayerfully about the story's place in the greater redemptive narrative of the Bible. And the timeline will give you a visual perspective so you can place the Bible story in the larger context of the Bible's storyline.

- Daily Readings
- Chronological Timeline



2) STUDY THE PERSONAL PREPARATION

The Personal Preparation section contains the Scripture passages you will examine and discuss with your Bible study group. As you read each Scripture passage, a Bible study prompt will help you highlight, underline, or jot notes to help you engage with the Scripture and to provoke discussion with your group on the following Sunday. A brief commentary with thought-provoking questions will help you dig deeper into the text and reflect on what the text teaches you about God and yourself. You have the full week to work on your personal preparation, so whether you prefer to break it up into parts or do it all in one day, the flexibility is there for your schedule.

- Scripture
- Commentary
- Questions

PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 KINGS 12:10-13

BEING A SELF-SERVING LEADER RATHER THAN A SERVANT LEADER BRINGS DIVISION.

Highlight Rehoboam's response to the people. Underline the response of the people.

10 The young men who had grown up with him told him, "This is what you should say to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us.' This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist!'"

11 Although my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips."

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had ordered. "Return to me on the third day."

13 Then the king answered the people harshly. He rejected the advice the elders had given him and spoke to them according to the young men's advice. "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips."

14 The king did not listen to the people, because this turn of events came from the LORD to carry out his word, which the LORD had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

15 When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people answered him, "What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse, so now, return to your tents, David, now! Look after your own house! So Israel went to their tents, but Rehoboam reigned over the Israelites living in the cities of Judah."

Key Concept: Division results when solutions to a problem

Rehoboam had two options: gentleness or force. Out of pride, he followed the advice of his peers and spoke harshly to the people, not listening to their burden, and this lack of consideration divided his kingdom. Being a self-serving leader rather than a servant leader brought division and rebellion against his crown.

The kind of leadership we exhibit will impact many situations in our lives. Our roles and responses in the family, workplace, neighborhood, community, and even our country can bring peace or cause division. Rehoboam should have listened to his elders and the proverbial advice of his father—"A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath" (Proverbs 15:1). We would do well to heed this humbling advice as well.

What words could Rehoboam have used to respond as a servant leader?

God's sovereign judgment as prophesied to Solomon (2 Kings 15:9-13) and Jeroboam (yr. 38-40) was fulfilled through Rehoboam's foolish actions (cp. Exodus 7:3-4, 8:15). Rehoboam didn't listen to the people but responded harshly, and this whole scenario—the people's request, the king's response, and the people's rebellion—fulfilled God's word.

The discipline against Solomon was experienced and simultaneously earned by his son. Yet there was also purpose and grace in this punishment. Through the division, idolatry and pride were shown to be counterproductive. Some wise kings learned Old lessons, while many foolish kings did not. Beyond this, the Lord showed His faithfulness and grace in keeping Rehoboam on king over the tribe of Judah because the Lord would not fail to fulfill His promise to David and to send us our Messiah King—Jesus Christ.

CHRIST CONNECTION

His son of Solomon's identity (1 Kings 11:31-33). God would lead the nation away from him as he had with Saul. Because of his promise to David, the Lord would allow one tribe of Israel to remain under the authority of Solomon's son, Rehoboam (yr. 38-40). This nation would continue with the line of David's descendants that would eventually lead to the promised King and Savior, Jesus, the King of kings.

What are some ways you need to humble yourself to bring peace instead of division?

20 Old • 12 • Genesis • 1 • A United Kingdom

21

3) PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

The Group Experience for each session includes an activity and interactive questions designed to make the most of your group experience. Depending on your leader, he or she may have you do the activity on your own before doing it together as a group, or your leader may want you to wait until group time. Either way, the personal prep you've put into the days leading up to your group time will provide a richer discussion and more thoughtful theological applications to mutually encourage each other during group time.

GROUP EXPERIENCE

FAVORING OUR OWN BELIEFS

Identify and record potential biases that existed for the people listed and how they influenced their decisions and actions.

BEHOBOAM

BEHOBOAM'S FRIENDS

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

As an adult, whose advice are you listening to, and how do you assess if it is wise advice or foolish?

22 Goal 15: Resonant & A Sacred Kingdom



- Group Activity
- Interactive Questions
- Theological Applications

4) TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

At the conclusion of your group time, consider how to apply the day's Scripture lesson by walking through the Head, Heart, and Hands application questions. Share and discuss answers to the questions for the mutual benefit of everyone in the group. Then take time in your group, and during the week after, to read and pray through the designated psalm, focusing your thoughts and words once more upon God's Word. And finally, record prayer requests and praises as you wrap up your group time. Space is provided to jot those down in your guide for prayer during the following week.

Key Concept: Diversity occurs when wisdom is ignored.

HEAD
What are some ways we can increase our exposure to gaily wisdom?

PLAYING SCRIPTURE
Read Psalm 72, remembering that God accomplishes His good and just purposes through leaders just as He did with Deborah. Pray this psalm for the leaders in your life. Note your thoughts to your faith in your government officials.

HEART
How can you develop compassion for others to serve them like Jesus would?

HANDS
How will you seek and follow wise counsel for a difficult decision in your life?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

23



- Application Questions
- Scripture-Based Prayer
- Prayer Requests

DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

By Allyson Howell

Growing up in the land of SEC football, I saw a common yard decoration. It wasn't a gnome or a flamingo but a flag that said "House Divided" with a split down the middle. On either side would be the color and logo of a preferred team and an opposing preferred team on the other. One of the most curious divisions was that of Alabama and Auburn. This is one of the most intense rivalries in all of college football. My family's allegiance was to Auburn, and my younger self couldn't fathom a family member supporting that other team! It seemed impossible to live in the same house with an Alabama fan.

Football rivalries only matter during one game when the teams play each other. A couple can wear different colors and cheer for different accomplishments, and three-and-a-half hours later, it's over. You can boast about your team's win or pout about your team's loss, but life moves on and nothing is different. This kind of division is trivial and temporary, for most families.

But imagine all but one state in America stripped from their identity as an American state and given to an enemy ruler. This kind of conflict would evoke fear and uncertainty and would affect daily life. But even this doesn't capture the true devastation

that Israel faced when the nation was divided. The split of the kingdom didn't just mean the descendants of Jacob were no longer a unified nation but that they were distanced from God. The security that came from knowing they were God's nation became fragile, whether they knew it or not. In their sin, they were divided from one another and divided from God.

DIVISION

Sin was the reason a formerly unified kingdom of Israel endured a painful and tumultuous division. Because Solomon allowed idolatry to gain a foothold in his life and Rehoboam followed in his father's foolish footsteps, the kingdom was divided.

From there on out, division was the defining reality of Israel's story. The kings of Israel and Judah were divided, often causing friction between their two nations. These rulers also led the people into idolatry, creating a division in their worship from the true God to false gods. God's people allowed the wicked practices of other nations to influence their worship and divide their hearts from full focus on the Lord. Elijah emphasized this point in 1 Kings 18:21 when he said, "How long will you waver between two opinions?"

The question showed that the hearts of the people were divided—they were not in full allegiance to God or to the other idols.

This was not simply a physical or political division, it was spiritual. Not only were the nations themselves divided, but the people were divided from God's favor as they continued to pursue idols instead of God. Division from God meant removal from the safety and security He brought. It meant exposure to attacks from other nations and exposure to God's wrath and judgment.

DEFIANCE

God's people allowed their own desires and idolatries to replace the relationship God offered to them in His covenant. Instead of recognizing God's faithfulness and great love for them, they chose to worship things made with human hands that were false gods and could not love them back.

As a response to this rebellion, God sent several prophets to call the people back to a right relationship with Him. Repeatedly the kings and people ignored these prophets. They were defiant in the face of God's chosen messengers, openly mocking their prophecies (2 Chronicles 36:16).

Even one of God's own prophets, Jonah, acted in defiance against God and initially refused to share the message he was given (see Jonah 1–4). No one was blameless in the constant rebellion and dismissal of God's warnings. The people refused to listen, and yet, God demonstrated His continued love for the people in His patience and longsuffering.

Still, judgment was inevitable, and both Israel and Judah eventually were exiled from their homeland. Even in this, however, the story wasn't over.

While the prophets were warning of judgment and destruction to come, they were also pointing to a promise. In Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 37, we hear of God's promise to turn division and defiance into restoration and renewal. We also know that God's ultimate promise of salvation would come through a descendant from Judah in the line of David—One who sees all the ways we are defiant and divided and takes the punishment for those sins upon Himself. Jesus would bring about the new kingdom, and He would be the perfect ruler, never leading the people to idolatry but only ever leading them to the throne room of grace.

God remains faithful. He will call His people back to Himself, and He offers forgiveness and relationship through Jesus Christ.

Allyson Howell is the Communications Director for a non-profit organization. She holds an MDiv from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Allyson has served in churches through women's ministry, worship ministry, and is a writer and editor of many topics. She is married to Randy.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 13

DIVISIONS



1 KINGS



MEMORY VERSE

“Then Elijah approached all the people and said,
‘How long will you waver between two opinions?
If the LORD is God, follow him. But if Baal, follow
him.’ But the people didn’t answer him a word.

—1 Kings 18:21



A DIVIDED KINGDOM

CORE PASSAGE: 1 KINGS 12:1-8,10-17

CONTEXT

Solomon had been made the wisest man on earth by God, and his reign as king brought prosperity to Israel and glory to God as people came from all over to hear Solomon's godly wisdom. But Solomon married foreign wives who worshiped other gods that he eventually worshiped as well (1 Kings 11:4-8). Because of this evil, God told Solomon that He would tear the kingdom from him during his son Rehoboam's reign, leaving only one tribe for his son's rule. At his coronation, Rehoboam was presented with a choice of what kind of king he would be. His unwise decision fulfilled the Lord's judgment.

KEY CONCEPT

Division occurs when wisdom is ignored.

As you examine 1 Kings 12:1-8,10-17:

- Note the differences between Rehoboam's advisors and the advice they gave to their king.
- Recognize that God's sovereign will as prophesied to Solomon was being fulfilled through Rehoboam's actions.



TIMELINE

Solomon Becomes King and God Gives Him Wisdom (1 Kings 1–3)

Solomon Builds the Temple and His Palace (1 Kings 5–9)

Solomon Marries Foreign Women, Turns to Idolatry, and Is Disciplined by the Lord (1 Kings 11)

Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam Lead Their Nations in Idolatry (1 Kings 12–14)

SESSION STUDY: Rehoboam Accepts Foolish Advice; the Kingdom Is Divided (1 Kings 12)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 1: 1 Kings 11:1–13 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4: 1 Kings 12:20–24 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2: 1 Kings 11:14–43 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5: 2 Chronicles 9:29–11:4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3: 1 Kings 12:1–19 | <input type="checkbox"/> Day 6: Psalm 72 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 KINGS 12:1-8

REJECTING THE ADVICE OF GODLY ELDERS LEADS TO RUIN.

Highlight the key words of the elders' advice given to Rehoboam.

Underline the choice Rehoboam made.

1 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. **2** When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard about it, he stayed in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon's presence. Jeroboam stayed in Egypt. **3** But they summoned him, and Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam: **4** "Your father made our yoke harsh. You, therefore, lighten your father's harsh service and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." **5** Rehoboam replied, "Go away for three days and then return to me." So the people left. **6** Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon when he was alive, asking, "How do you advise me to respond to this people?" **7** They replied, "Today if you will be a servant to this people and serve them, and if you respond to them by speaking kind words to them, they will be your servants forever." **8** But he rejected the advice of the elders who had advised him and consulted with the young men who had grown up with him and attended him.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

CHRISTIANS AND THE SOCIAL ORDER: All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.



Solomon had been a mighty king and brought prosperity to Israel, but his many building projects took their toll on the people. Israelites were conscripted to work up to a month at a time, followed by two months off, over the course of seven years to build the temple and another thirteen years for Solomon's palace, plus other constructions, cities, and places for his resources (1 Kings 5:13-18; 9:15-19).

When the Israelites came to the new king Rehoboam's coronation, they brought with them Jeroboam, who had once served Solomon as chief over the forced labor from his tribe but who had also rebelled against Solomon (11:26-28). No doubt the people believed Jeroboam was someone who could champion their cause with the young king. But behind the scenes some years earlier, the prophet Ahijah had told Jeroboam that he was chosen by God to be the instrument of judgment against Solomon and his lineage for the once-wise king's idolatry (vv. 29-40).

Jeroboam and the Israelites presented their case to the king: If Rehoboam would reduce the hard labor Solomon had placed on the people, then they would serve the new king (12:4). Service to the king was an expectation of the people (1 Samuel 8), but the level of requirement could be misused and abused. Israel's kings were supposed to shepherd and serve for the good of their people, but sin and foolishness have derailed many from such goals.

How can believers faithfully fulfill their responsibilities to lead and to serve?

Rehoboam asked for three days to respond to the people's request. He sought advice from his father's advisors, who said he should be a kind servant leader. Following their wisdom would earn a good standing with his people, as kindness tends to do. But Rehoboam rejected their sage advice and instead would follow the unwise counsel of his peers.

Why is listening to wisdom and experience so important?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

1 KINGS 12:10-17

BEING A SELF-SERVING LEADER RATHER THAN A SERVANT LEADER BRINGS DIVISION.

Highlight Rehoboam's response to the people. Underline the response of the people.

10 The young men who had grown up with him told him, "This is what you should say to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you, make it lighter on us!' This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! **11** Although my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips.'" **12** So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had ordered: "Return to me on the third day." **13** Then the king answered the people harshly. He rejected the advice the elders had given him **14** and spoke to them according to the young men's advice: "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with barbed whips." **15** The king did not listen to the people, because this turn of events came from the LORD to carry out his word, which the LORD had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat. **16** When all Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, the people answered him: What portion do we have in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Israel, return to your tents; David, now look after your own house! So Israel went to their tents, **17** but Rehoboam reigned over the Israelites living in the cities of Judah.

Key Concept: Division occurs when wisdom is ignored.

Rehoboam had two options: gentleness or force. Out of pride, he followed the advice of his peers and spoke harshly to the people, not listening to their burdens, and this lack of consideration divided his kingdom. Being a self-serving leader rather than a servant leader brought division and rebellion against his crown.

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What words could Rehoboam have used to respond as a servant leader?

God’s sovereign judgment as prophesied to Solomon (1 Kings 11:9-13) and Jeroboam (vv. 26-40) was fulfilled through Rehoboam’s foolish actions (cf. Exodus 7:3-4; 8:15). Rehoboam didn’t listen to the people but responded harshly, and this whole scenario—the people’s request, the king’s response, and the people’s rebellion—fulfilled God’s word.

The discipline against Solomon was experienced and simultaneously earned by his son. Yet there was also purpose and grace in this punishment. Through the division, idolatry and pride were shown to be counterproductive. Some wise kings learned this lesson, while many foolish kings did not. Beyond this, the Lord showed His faithfulness and grace in keeping Rehoboam as king over the tribe of Judah because the Lord would not fail to fulfill His promise to David and to send us our Messiah-King—Jesus Christ.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Because of Solomon’s idolatry (1 Kings 11:11-13), God would tear the nation away from him as He had with Saul. Because of His promise to David, the Lord would allow one tribe of Israel to remain under the authority of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam (vv. 34-37). This nation would continue with the line of David’s descendants that would eventually lead to the promised King and Savior, Jesus, the King of kings.

What are some ways you need to humble yourself to bring peace instead of division?



FAVORING OUR OWN BELIEFS

Identify and record potential biases that existed for the people listed and how they influenced their decisions and actions.

REHOBOAM

REHOBOAM'S FRIENDS

THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

As an adult, whose advice are you listening to, and how do you assess if it is wise advice or foolish?



Key Concept: Division occurs when wisdom is ignored.



HEAD

What are some ways we can increase our exposure to godly wisdom?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 72, remembering that God accomplishes His good and just purposes through leaders just as He did with Rehoboam. Pray this psalm for the leaders in your life, from your teachers to your boss to your government officials.



HEART

How can you develop compassion for others to serve them like Jesus would?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will you seek and follow wise counsel for a difficult decision in your life?

