

# OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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## Lesson 27: The Influence of Wicked and Righteous Leaders (1 Kings 12–14; 2 Chronicles 17; 20)

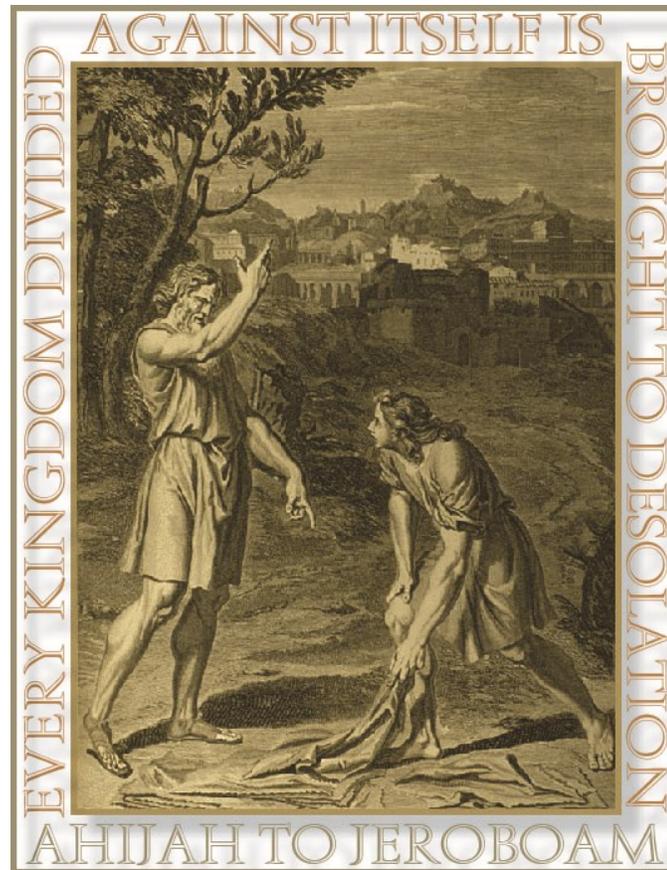
### Introduction

Toward the end of Solomon's life, the prophet Ahijah prophesied that Jeroboam, one of Solomon's 12 superintendents over taxes and labor, would take over much of the Israelite nation. To illustrate this, Ahijah seized the garment from the back of Jeroboam, tore it into 12 pieces, and gave 10 of the pieces to Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:29–32; footnote 32a points out that according to the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, two tribes, not one, would be left in the kingdom ruled by the descendants of David).

The Savior taught that

“every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation” (Matthew 12:25).

This is what happened to the kingdom of Israel after Solomon's death. This lesson is about the influence of wicked and righteous leaders on the divided kingdom of Israel.



Ahijah's prophesy to Jeroboam.  
1 Kings 11:29-33, 37,38  
Illustrated by Gerard Hoet (1648-1733)

### The kingdom of Israel is divided, primarily because of Rehoboam's harsh leadership. (1 Kings 12:1–20)

#### A GOOD LEADER: 1. GIVES SERVICE

After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king of Israel.

**1 Kings 12:3-4** - The Israelites wanted Rehoboam to make their yoke lighter.

**1 Kings 12:6-7; 2 Chronicles 10:7** - The older men's counsel to Rehoboam about ruling

successfully was that he should be a servant to the people...and then they would serve him. After refusing the counsel of the older men, Rehoboam turned to young men he had known in his youth.

**1 Kings 12:8-11** - Their advice was that Rehoboam should make the yoke heavier, not lighter.

**1 Kings 12:12-17** - The result of Rehoboam's decision to be harsh was that "Israel departed to their tents", meaning that the ten tribes separated themselves from Rehoboam's kingdom.

**1 Kings 12:7** - The results would have been different if Rehoboam had followed the counsel of the older men to serve the people and treat

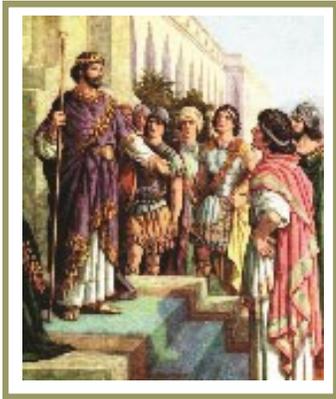
### Lesson Highlights

- The kingdom of Israel is divided, primarily because of Rehoboam's harsh leadership.
- Jeroboam and Rehoboam lead their kingdoms into idolatry.
- Jehoshaphat leads the kingdom of Judah to follow the Lord and His prophets.

A study of this lesson will help encourage us to develop good leadership qualities so we can influence others to live righteously.

### Next Week

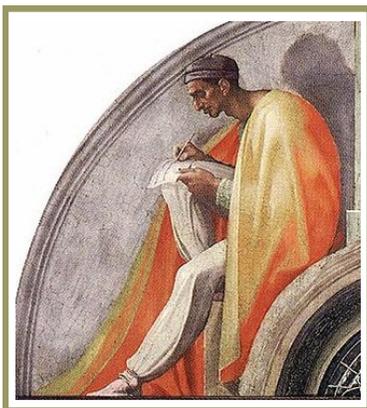
#28 "After the Fire a Still Small Voice" (1 Kings 17–19)



Rehoboam Speaks to Young Men



Jeroboam Offering Sacrifice to the Golden Calf  
Jean-Honoré Fragonard, 1752



Jehoshaphat  
Michelangelo, Sistine Chapel Ceiling  
1511-12

them with respect, but he failed to follow good advice. Jeroboam had been one of Solomon's 12 superintendents over taxes and labor.

**1 Kings 11:29-31** - Toward the end of Solomon's reign,

the prophet Ahijah had prophesied that Jeroboam would become king over many of the tribes of Israel.

**1 Kings 12:20** - This prophecy was fulfilled when the tribes of Judah and Benja-

min stayed with Rehoboam in the Southern Kingdom, or kingdom of Judah. The other ten tribes followed Jeroboam in the Northern Kingdom, or kingdom of Israel.

## Jeroboam and Rehoboam lead their kingdoms into idolatry. (1 Kings 12:25-33; 13:33-34; 14:14-16, 21-24)

### A GOOD LEADER:

1. GIVES SERVICE
2. TRUSTS & OBEYS THE LORD

**1 Kings 11:38** - Through the prophet Ahijah, the Lord promised Jeroboam that he would be given a "sure house" (a secure kingdom) if he would walk in the Lord's ways.

**1 Kings 12:25-34** -

Jeroboam forfeited the blessings of that promise by forsaking God and creating idols. Jeroboam built the golden calves and high places and ordained false priests because he was afraid that if his people went to Jerusalem to worship, they might go back to Rehoboam. In an effort to control his people and retain their loyalty, he made golden calves in Bethel and Dan, two cities in the Northern Kingdom, and invited his people to worship in those cities. In doing this, he allowed his fear of defeat to override his trust in the Lord's promises. Note: A wise leader trusts the Lord and does not base decisions on fear or personal judgment.

**1 Kings 12:9-16** - The kingdom of Israel was divided

largely because Rehoboam chose to follow the unwise counsel of his peers.

In teaching us how we can resist the temptation to follow unwise advice from our friends, **Elder Malcolm S. Jeppsen** said: "*Many of you ... will be, at some time or another, approached by one or more of your 'friends' who will entice you to do something you know you should not do. ... 'No one will ever know,' the so-called friends will tell you. 'Besides, what difference will it make?' ... You don't have to reject your friends who are on the wrong path; you don't even have to give them up necessarily. You can be their caring friend, ready to help them when they are ready to be helped. You can talk to them and lift them and bear your testimony to them. Lead them by example. 'But don't ever be led into displeasing your Father in Heaven by your friends who might ask that as a condition of being your friend, you must choose between their way and the Lord's way. 'If that happens, choose the Lord's way and look for new friends'*" (Ensign, May 1990, 45).

**1 Kings 14:14-16** - When his son became sick, Jeroboam sought the help of the prophet Ahijah. But Ahijah prophesied that Jeroboam's house (family) and kingdom would be cut off and scattered.

**1 Kings 14:21-24** - Like Jeroboam, Rehoboam also disobeyed God by leading people into idolatry. The wicked leadership of these two kings had long-lasting results. Both kingdoms were scattered or carried away captive many years later (Israel by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonians) because they continued in their wicked traditions.

Although one wicked leader can have a profound effect on so many people, we need not mirror the acts of wicked leaders as the people of Israel and Judah did. God has given us agency, and we can use that power to choose good, even if leaders choose evil (Helaman 14:30-31).

## Jehoshaphat leads the kingdom of Judah to follow the Lord and His prophets. (2 Chronicles 17:1-10; 20:1-30)

### A GOOD LEADER:

1. GIVES SERVICE
2. TRUSTS & OBEYS THE LORD
3. HAS FAITH IN GOD
4. TEACHES FROM THE SCRIPTURES
5. FOLLOWS THE PROPHETS

Three generations after Rehoboam, his great-grandson Jehoshaphat reigned over the kingdom of Judah.

**2 Chronicles 17:3-4, 6** - Jehoshaphat demonstrated his personal righteousness by

obeying the Lord because the Lord was first in Jehoshaphat's heart.

**2 Chronicles 17:6** (cited above) - Jehoshaphat "took away the high places and groves out of Judah".

The following definitions explain the false worship instigated by Jeroboam and Rehoboam.

**1 Kings 12:31** - High places: altars that were built on hilltops. When the people fell into idolatry, they desecrated these altars and used them for idol worship.

**1 Kings 14:15** -

Groves: places of pagan worship where people sometimes engaged in immoral behavior.

**2 Chronicles 20:12-13** - The people learned that God would accept them if they would repent and flow him in righteousness. Note that “all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.” There’s a lesson here—that we might worship God with greater devotion if we remove some things from our homes and our personal lives to get our lives in order.

**2 Chronicles 17:9** - Jehoshaphat sent Levites throughout the kingdom to teach the people from “the book of the law of the Lord”.

Being taught from the scriptures affected the people of Judah just as personal and family scripture study helps us. Scripture study in the

home influences our families and the Church as a whole as taught by **President Ezra Taft Benson**: *“Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow”*(The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 44).

**2 Chronicles 20** records a period of terrible anxiety for the people of Judah, as three nations had declared war on them. The outcome seemed bleak for King Jehoshaphat and his people, who were greatly outnumbered.

**2 Chronicles 20:3-13** – Jehoshaphat and the people fasted and prayed to ask the Lord for help.

**2 Chronicles 20:14-17** - The Lord’s answer to this supplication came through the prophet Jahaziel. They were told that the Lord would fight their battle.

**2 Chronicles 20:20** - Jehoshaphat gave his people counsel too have faith in God and believe his prophets.

As Latter-day Saints, we are outnumbered today just as the people of Judah were anciently, but Jehoshaphat’s counsel applies to us today.

Remembering the prophet Jahaziel’s assurance that the battle was God’s, Jehoshaphat appointed singers to praise the Lord rather than fight. When they began to sing, the Lord protected them by causing their attackers to war among themselves and destroy one another (2 Chronicles 20:21-24).

We will be protected when we remember and obey the words of the living prophet.

**2 Chronicles 20:3-4** - In contrast to Jeroboam and Rehoboam, who led their people into idolatry, Jehoshaphat influenced the people of Judah to humble themselves before the Lord.

**And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.**

**—2 Chronicles 20:20**

### Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- Why are we more likely to be influenced positively by a leader who is kind and who serves us? How can we apply this counsel at home? at church? at school? at work?
- How can one corrupt or wicked leader have such a profound effect on so many people?
- How has personal and family scripture study helped you? How does scripture study in the home influence our families and the Church as a whole?

## Conclusion

Leaders have power to guide people to wickedness or righteousness. Our responsibility is to lead in our Church callings, in our communities, at work, and at home. We need to be good leaders by giving service, trusting and obeying the Lord, having faith in him, teaching from the scriptures, and following the prophets.