LESSON 6

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
FEBRUARY 10 2024

Scripture Story: 1 Kings 11:14–43; 12:1–24; 2 Chronicles 9:29–12:16.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 6.

idol threats



Photo by Bill Wolf

keytext

"After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel with him abandoned the law of the LORD."

(2 Chronicles 12:1, NIV)

flashlight

"The twelve tribes of Israel were divided, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin composing the lower or southern kingdom of Judah, under the rulership of Rehoboam; while the ten northern tribes formed and maintained a separate government, known as the kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as their ruler. Thus was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet concerning the rending of the kingdom. 'The cause was from the Lord' " (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 91).

"But as time passed, the king put his trust in the power of position and in the strongholds he had fortified. Little by little he gave way to inherited weakness, until he threw his influence wholly on the side of idolatry" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 93).

what do you think?

Rank the following items below in order of importance to the average teenager (1 is most important, 10 is least important).

___ Good looks
___ Good grades
___ Musical abilities
___ A strong relationship with God
___ A good reputation
___ A loving family
___ Friends
___ Low stress
___ Good health
___ A Christlike character

did you know?

Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonite. Her name means "pleasant" or "sweetness," but her actions against the true God of Israel were abominable. She was one of Solomon's many wives who influenced Solomon toward idolatry. Because she was the first lady of the kingdom, Solomon erected in her honor a statue to her god, Molek.

Molek was a god to whom children were often sacrificed. The law given to Moses prohibited the Jews from sacrificing children to Molek; nevertheless, King Solomon introduced Molek into Israel. Molek's shrine was located at a site outside Jerusalem named Gehenna.

Gehenna (first mentioned in the Bible in Joshua 15:8), in Jewish eschatology, is a fiery place where the wicked are punished on judgment day. Originally it referred to a garbage dump in a deep, narrow valley right outside the walls of Jerusalem where fires were kept burning to consume the refuse and keep down the stench. It is also the location where bodies of executed criminals, or individuals denied a proper burial, would be dumped. Gehenna is sometimes translated as "hell."

INTO THE STORY

"Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you'. . . .

"Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, 'Come back to me in three days.' The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, 'My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.' "

"So all the Israelites went home. But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

"King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, who was in charge of forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day."

"When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered Judah and Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand able young men—to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam.

"But this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God: 'Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, "This is what the LORD says: Do not go up to fight against your fellow Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing." ' So they obeyed the words of the LORD and turned back from marching against Jeroboam."

"Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD's anger turned from him, and he was not totally destroyed. . . .

"King Rehoboam established himself firmly in Jerusalem and continued as king. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD."

(1 Kings 12:1–4, 12–14; 2 Chronicles 10:16–19; 11:1–4; 12:12–14, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Read all of the texts listed in Scripture Story *at the beginning of this lesson, and write down the roles played by the following people:*

Adoram _____
_____
_____
_____

Shemaiah _____
_____
_____

Hadad _____
_____

Jeroboam _____
_____

Ahijah _____
_____

Shishak _____
_____

Maachah _____
_____

What can we learn from each of these people in Rehoboam's story? With whom do you identify the most? Why?

_____
_____
_____

After reading Rehoboam's story in the Bible, make a graph of his life, indicating those times when he was strong spiritually as well as those times when he experienced great spiritual failure. What can we learn from his experience that can help to strengthen our relationship with the Lord?

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punch lines

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other" **(Matthew 6:24, NIV).**

"Why do the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them" **(Psalm 115:2–8, NIV).**

"They have provoked Me to jealousy by what is not God; they have moved Me to anger by their foolish idols. But I will provoke them to jealousy by those who are not a nation; I will move them to anger by a foolish nation" **(Deuteronomy 32:21, NKJV).**

further insight

"Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. . . . The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. . . . The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idol of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such entirely."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 44

Sabbath

Read Psalm 16:4.

In the *What Do You Think?* section, you were asked to prioritize what the average teen values the most. Are your personal values any different from what you perceive to be the values of the average teen? If so, in what way?

Review the list, then think about how we can turn any of these things into an idol. What is an idol? Consider the following definitions and then write your own.

i·dol·a·try: "Blind or excessive devotion to something" (*Online American Heritage Dictionary*).
i·dol·a·try: Can be defined as "anything that comes before God."

My definition:
i·dol·a·try: _____

_____

_____

Sunday

After reading the *Into the Story* section, give a title to each of the major portions of Scripture. Next write the primary lesson we can learn from that text.

1 Kings 12:1–4, 12–14

Title: _____
Main lesson to be learned:

_____

_____

2 Chronicles 10:16–19; 11:1–4

Title: _____
Main lesson to be learned:

_____

_____

2 Chronicles 12:12–14

Title: _____
Main lesson to be learned:

_____

_____

Monday

Read 2 Chronicles 12:1.

Memorize the *Key Text*. Connect the verse to your spiritual journey by reflecting on the following questions:

When have you felt "strong" in the Lord? What factors led to Rehoboam's collapse? In what ways are you vulnerable to these same temptations?

Rehoboam's spiritual compromise impacted "all Israel." Who might be negatively influenced in your life should you drift away from God?

Rehoboam's downfall came when he "abandoned the law of the LORD." What specific aspects of God's law do you struggle with the most? Why?

Tuesday

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Note the final paragraph in the *Flashlight* section. Rehoboam's spiritual collapse happened "little by little." Identify and then list the "little" compromises that tempt you today. How might these temptations ultimately spell a person's spiritual demise?

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_____

Wednesday

Read Matthew 6:24; Exodus 20:3, 4.

In today's reading we're reminded of the words of Jesus: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other" (Matthew 6:24, NIV). Write a modern translation of this verse, specifying what "masters" we're tempted to serve today.

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Read the verses in Exodus and think about what they are saying. Write them out.

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"Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill" (Acts 17:29, NIV).

Thursday

Read 2 Timothy 3:2–5.

How do you know when something is a high priority to you? Check the top action below that you feel best indicates what someone's most treasured value or object is:

___ Spends heaps of money on it.
___ Invests a lot of time in it.
___ Thinks of it often.
___ Talks about it often.
___ Has dreams at night about it.

Is there any difference between treasuring something (or someone) and making it an idol? Explain.

_____

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_____

Friday

Read James 1:19.

Consider the words of Ellen White in commenting on Rehoboam's influence over the Israelites on page 94 of *Prophets and Kings*. Ask yourself: What kind of influence am I on my friends and family?

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this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty in Ruins*), chapter 6.

**Royalty in Ruins* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.