

THE BIG STORY

FROM CREATION TO CHRIST

WEEK 9

Divided & Exiled: Human failure, divine faithfulness.

DAILY READING – March 16th–20th

Mon – 1 Kings 11

Tue – 1 Kings 12

Wed – 2 Kings 17:7–23

Thu – 2 Chronicles 36:15–21

Fri – Ezekiel 36:24–28

DEVOTIONAL

Divided & Exiled: Human Failure, Divine Faithfulness

Memory Verse: “I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.” — Ezekiel 36:26

Story Thread: Israel’s exile reveals the failure of human kings and the deep need for a perfect King who can truly restore God’s people.

At one time Israel looked like a kingdom blessed beyond imagination. Under David the nation expanded, and under Solomon the kingdom reached its height. The temple stood in Jerusalem, worship was established, and it seemed like God’s kingdom on earth was beginning to flourish.

But the collapse of the kingdom did not begin with invading armies—it began in the human heart.

Scripture tells us that Solomon’s heart slowly turned away from the Lord (1 Kings 11:4). What started as personal compromise eventually led to national division. After Solomon’s death the kingdom split into two: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Instead of trusting God, the northern king Jeroboam created a counterfeit system of worship, building golden calves and new places of sacrifice. What looked religious on the surface was actually spiritual compromise.

From that point forward, the story of the kings becomes painfully repetitive. Again and again Scripture says that the kings “walked in the ways of Jeroboam.” Idolatry became normal. Compromise became tradition. Generation after generation simply followed the same path.

Yet God did not remain silent. Out of compassion He sent prophets—Elijah, Elisha, and many others—to warn His people and call them back. Again and again they pleaded for repentance. But the warnings were ignored.

Eventually the consequences arrived. The northern kingdom fell to Assyria, and later Judah fell to Babylon. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple burned, and the people were carried into exile. Israel lost their land, their king, and their sense of security. The exile revealed something deeper than political defeat—it exposed the human heart. Even with God’s law, God’s temple, and God’s promises, the people could not save themselves.

Yet exile was not the end of the story.

Even in judgment, God remained faithful to His promises. Through the prophets, He spoke of a future restoration. One day He would give His people a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26). One day a righteous King from David's line would come and establish a kingdom that would never fall.

That King is Jesus.

Where Israel's kings failed, Jesus succeeded. Where their hearts were divided, His was perfectly devoted to the Father. And through His death and resurrection, He opens the way home for people who could never save themselves.

The story of exile reminds us of two powerful truths: human failure is real, but God's faithfulness is greater. The broken kingdoms we build will always fall, but the kingdom of Christ will never collapse.

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

TALK Have you ever ignored a warning sign and wished you had listened sooner? Why do you think warnings can be hard to take seriously?

READ 2 Chronicles 36:15–16 and Ezekiel 36:26

Prayer: God, thank You for loving us enough to warn us and guide us. Help our family listen to Your voice and follow You with our whole hearts. Thank You for sending Jesus, the perfect King who leads us home. Amen.

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Week 9

A Divided Kingdom

1. **The kingdom of Israel divided after Solomon's reign.** What were some of the heart issues that led to the nation's downfall?
2. **Jeroboam created a new system of worship with golden calves and alternative shrines.** Why do you think people are sometimes tempted to reshape worship around what feels easier or more convenient?
3. **Throughout this period, God repeatedly sent prophets to warn His people.** What does this show us about God's patience and character?
4. **The exile revealed that even with God's law and temple, the people could not change their own hearts.** Why is this an important lesson about human nature?
5. **Ezekiel 36 promises that God will give His people a new heart.** How does this promise point forward to what Jesus would eventually do?
6. **The story ends with hope for a better King and a lasting kingdom.** How does knowing Jesus is that King shape the way we live today?

