

Lesson 7: The Split of the Kingdom

Lesson Goals:

1. Students will appreciate the tragedy of the split in the kingdom as a precursor to destruction and explore the reasons for this split.
2. Students will consider how Shelomo's inflated sense of self described in I Kings 10:14-11:5 led to serious deficiencies in his relationships with other people, and how these both **בין אדם לחברו** and **בין אדם למקום**. Students will correlate this problem to what they studied in Lesson 4, regarding the tax and labour burden Shelomo imposed on the kingdom.
3. Students will recognize that a divine punishment or plan is not necessarily delivered by an apparent miracle, but can result from the workings of human actors in an apparently natural way.

Part 1: Hierarchy, Corvee Labour, and Working for Shelomo – remembering Lesson 4

Begin the lesson by projecting the “hierarchy” slide used in the previous lesson (slide 8 in Lesson 6, which re-appears as slide 2 in Lesson 7). Ask students if they recall any events in the previous chapters which suggest that Shelomo acted in accordance with the “king controls the people” hierarchy, rather than “God controls both people and king” hierarchy.

Students may mention that Shelomo worshipped idols, based on the statement in Melakhim Alef chapter 11 vv 5-6. This does indeed demonstrate following an “ignoring God” hierarchy (and the explanation chazal give to these verses, which appears in Rashi, does not matter for these purposes.)

But make it clear to students that the “king controls the people” hierarchy has implications not only for relationships with God but also for relationships with other humans. Show how the hierarchy involves not only ignoring God but also placing oneself above other humans.

Ask students: were there any cases in which Shelomo acted “high and mighty” and ignored that he is “one of the people”?

Students may mention the accumulation of wealth mentioned in chapter 10. Ask students where that wealth came from.

Students may say that Shelomo received tribute from the surrounding nations. That is true, but follow up by asking students how the surrounding nations came to consider Shelomo a powerful king. Were there things Shelomo did WITHIN the kingdom of Israel that caused others to see him as a powerful king? Students should mention the building of the temple and the other building projects Shelomo engaged in.

Through this series of questions, students should be directed to think about the extraction of wealth and effort from the people described in Lesson 4, which Shelomo used for building the temple and other projects. The teacher should clearly say: demanding labour from people demonstrates a sense of superiority. Students may argue that these projects were performed to benefit the people, or that building the temple was a mitzvah. In response, the teacher can ask what aspects of the temple were mitzvot. Was the gold inlay on all the wood a mitzvah? Did it benefit the people?

The teacher will then ask students to recall who paid for the temple and other building projects. Whose efforts were extracted by force? Students should look again at I Kings 5:26-28, which describes the corvée labour of the Israelites who chop down trees in Lebanon. Ask students: how do the Israelites who were sent to Lebanon view Shelomo and his building projects? What sort of hierarchy do they think Shelomo has?

Ask students: Was the burden of working for Shelomo shared equally by all the Israelites?

Recall the slide from Lesson 4, which showed the districts of the commissioners who were responsible for funding Shelomo's household. That slide appears as slide 3 in the present lesson (Lesson 7). Students should recognize that the tribe of Judah was not responsible for any of the forced labour – there was no commissioner for Judah.

Ask students to act out a discussion among three people: an Israelite returning for 2 months of very difficult work in Lebanon, a man of Judah who doesn't have to contribute to Shelomo's building projects, and a representative of Shelomo (perhaps Adoniram b. Aveda, who is mentioned in Melakhim Alef 4:6 as responsible for the forced labour, and who will figure prominently in chapter 12). After a couple of minutes of dialogue, ask the working Israelite to explain how he thinks Shelomo understands the hierarchy of king-God-people, and draw it on the board. Include a distinction between the tribe of Judah and the rest of the Israelites.

At the end of the skit, ask students: Do you think the working Israelites will accept Shelomo's new hierarchy?

Part 2: The Divine Plan in Melakhim Alef chapter 11, verses 11-13.

Begin this part of the lesson by asking students to work be-havruta for 5 minutes and read Melakhim Alef 11:11-13, and consider why "one tribe" is different. This is a good activity in which to pair students of different levels of ability since the textual work is limited. Students should answer the following questions in their havruta session (worksheet):

- א. לפי פס' י, איזו פעולה יעשה ה' לממלכה? _____
- ב. אלו מלים בפס' י מסבירות את הסיבה לפעולה? העתק אותן: _____
- ג. צייר הירארכיה המראה את המשמעות הרעיונית של "שמתת בריתי" ושל "לא שמרת בריתי": _____

- ד. מתי יקרע ה' את הממלכה? (פס' יא)
ה. לפי פס' יב, על מה ימשיכו בני שלמה למלוך?
ו. איזה שבט היה שונה בימי ממלכת שלמה? מה הקשר בין השבט הזה לבין השבט המוזכר בפס' יב?

In reviewing this worksheet, the teacher should ensure that students understand the 3 main points of these verses (slide 4):

- א. שלמה לא שמר את הברית, ולכן
ב. ה' יקרע את הממלכה מיד בנו
ג. מלבד: שבט אחד

The teacher should then ask students to recall in the first part of the lesson how a particular tribe was different than all the others in Shelomo's kingdom. Ask students which tribe this was and why it was different. Students should realize that the tribe of Judah did not contribute to the building projects. Then, ask students why this might be the tribe mentioned in 11:13. Remind students of the skit performed in the first part of the lesson. Students should appreciate that the tribe of Judah had no reason to want to leave Shelomo's kingdom – they were not suffering from the labour burden.

The teacher should then ask students, using slide 5: Who split the kingdom into two parts? Students will probably answer that God split the kingdom -- He promised to punish Shelomo for abandoning his covenant. But ask students whether Shelomo was also guilty of splitting the kingdom. Did his actions directly cause the split? Who caused the attitudes in the skit performed at the beginning of the lesson?

The teacher can introduce the concept שלמה בחר שבה אדם רוצה ללכת, בה מוליכים אותו – Shelomo chose to privilege the people of Judah and act “high and mighty” towards those of Israel, and God punished Shelomo by allowing the people of Judah to leave. We will revert to this idea later in the lesson.

Part 3: Yarov'am ben Nevat – I Kings 11, verses 26-43

Who will be the king over the “10 tribes” – the part of Israel that Shelomo's sons will not rule over? Ask this question and refer to the map of the tribes in slide 6, noting that the largest tribes in the north are Ephraim and Menashe, both of Yosef, and that the tribe of Judah is in the south – it is the tribe that remains in Shelomo's sons' rule. (Students will point out that $10+1=11$, and ask where is the 12th tribe? The simple answer is that Levi is the 12th tribe and doesn't have any specific land. This requires counting Ephraim and Menashe as one tribe. Since the books of Navi rarely do this, the more correct answer is that Shim'on is the 12th tribe, and is co-joined to Judah, as the narrative at the beginning of Sefer Shofetim implies.)

Frontally teach Melakhim Alef chapter 11 verses 26-28. Ask students for Yarov'am's good qualities (v. 28). Students should recognize that Yarov'am was in charge of the forced labour (סבל) of the northern tribes (בית יוסף). Students should be asked what complaints Yarov'am might have heard while serving in this role.

Then, teach v. 27, and explain what להרים יד means – to revolt or fight against. Ask students what was the issue on which Yarov'am fought Shelomo. The verse says בנה את המילוא, סגר את פרץ עיר דוד אביו. This refers to a building project in Jerusalem in which Shelomo closed some breach (פרץ) in a wall. Why is this a bad thing? Using slide 7, teach Rashi, and ask students to compare the larger ideas that emerge from comparing David's actions to Shelomo's. David is one of the people, concerned about their accommodation on festivals, while Shelomo is concerned about his foreign wives. (The source of Rashi is in BT Sanhedrin 101b.)

Then, teach the scene described in verses 29-39, ideally by acting it out. Focus on vv. 29-37. At the conclusion of the skit, ask students again: Who split the kingdom into two parts? Is this a divine punishment or the direct result of Shelomo's actions? Students should appreciate that this is not an either/or question.