Survey of God's Program with Israel

I Kings 12 to II Kings 16:20 — the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Courses of Punishment

A 6-Lesson Study by Keith Blades | Enjoy the Bible Ministries®

Study Overview & Lesson Summaries

About This Series

This 6-lesson study is the sixth part of Keith Blades' Survey of God's Program with Israel. It covers the 2nd, 3rd and 4th courses of punishment of Leviticus 26: the 2nd course comes upon the nation in I Kings 12, and the 4th runs from II Kings 10:32 to the end of chapter 16. Keith opens in I Kings 11, which describes the demise of the interlude of mercy and grace and the arrival of the 2nd course: Solomon passes his apostasy on to the nation, the Lord's anger appears again, and the Lord declares that the kingdom will be rent. The 2nd course has two aspects — breaking the pride of Israel's power, carried out in the rending of the kingdom in I Kings 12, and judgment on the weather, which Elijah is raised up to bring. With the 3rd course Leviticus 26 begins to speak of God walking contrary to Israel; God takes Elijah out of the land and brings Elisha in to institute it. The 4th course brings a sword that avenges the quarrel of God's covenant, and in II Kings 10:32 "the LORD began to cut Israel short" — yet by grace God forestalls the 5th course and still gives Israel an opportunity to change their mind. Throughout, Keith traces the record that the kings of both kingdoms did evil in God's sight and provoked the Lord to anger, an expression that points back to the contract in Leviticus 26.

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Lesson Summaries

L1

The Demise of the Interlude of Mercy and Grace *I Kings 11:1–13; Solomon's Apostasy and the Mount of Corruption*

"But king Solomon" — A Violation of the Law Contract (I Kings 11:1–2)

- Verse 1 begins with "But," an adversative conjunction: what follows is adverse to what has just been said
- Solomon is the one who puts the nation in the position of deserving the 2nd course of punishment; the apostasy is initiated by the king himself
- Verse 2 is a referential quotation of what the law contract repeated before Israel crossed the Jordan; if the contract is violated, curses are deserved rather than blessings

No Anger of the Lord — Until Now

- From I Samuel 16 to I Kings 11 there are no statements describing violations of the law contract, and no expression that the Lord was angry with them
- In verses 9–11 God responds to the violation with what the contract called for: the course of punishment

From Personal to National Apostasy (I Kings 11:3–8)

- Verses 3–6 focus on the effect on Solomon personally; verses 7–8 show him passing that abomination and apostasy on to the nation
- The idol gods are called abominations because the law contract described them that way from God's perspective
- The high place on the hill before Jerusalem — later named the Mount of Olives — was designed to draw the people's eyes away from the house of the Lord; God calls it the Mount of Corruption
- Solomon's personal demise and corruption led to the demise and corruption of the nation

"I will surely rend the kingdom from thee" (I Kings 11:9–13)

- In verse 11 the Lord declares to Solomon that the 2nd course is coming — part of what comprises it, not the total thing
- It was not brought while Solomon lived; it commences in chapter 12, when Solomon dies and his son takes over
- In each course God provides a means: the judges in the 1st course, the prophet Elijah in the 2nd, the prophet Elisha in the 3rd, and in the 4th a king, Josiah — but Israel goes negative toward all the means provided

L2

Rending the Kingdom: Breaking the Pride of Power *I Kings 9 and 11; Leviticus 26:18–20; Psalm 68; Ezekiel 30*

Where the Study Stands

- The 2nd course actually starts in I Kings 12; its coming is described in I Kings 11, and its details are given in Leviticus 26:18–20
- A new course does not replace the previous one; it is added on top of it

The Lord's Second Appearing to Solomon (I Kings 9)

- The Lord referred Solomon to what the courses of punishment in Leviticus 26 called for and how they would be resumed
- Cutting Israel off out of the land is what the 5th course calls for — not in Solomon's day, but down the line

The Courses Resume (I Kings 11:14–25)

- Stirring up adversaries and border problems were the things of the 1st course; Israel began to experience it again in the latter part of Solomon's reign, and the 2nd course was added in Rehoboam's day

Two Aspects of the 2nd Course (Leviticus 26:18–20)

- The courses of punishment are chastisements designed to get Israel back on track
- First, "I will break the pride of your power"; second, the weather judgments that Elijah is raised up to institute

Rending Is Breaking

- Rending the kingdom literally involves a breaking up of the governmental power established in Israel — tearing it into two sections
- The pride of their power refers to Israel's governmental stature; under Solomon they had the greatest governmental power on earth at that time
- When God said it at Mount Sinai, Israel had no idea what the pride of their power was, because they had none yet
- The same power concept appears in Psalm 68, and the exact expression in Ezekiel 30, where it is used of Egypt

L3 The Arrival of the Second Course of Punishment *Leviticus 26 as a Map; I Kings 12; the Southern and Northern Kingdoms*

Time Past, Not the Present Dispensation of Grace

- Keith reminds the class that "we today" live in the dispensation of Gentile grace, with God's program with the nation Israel temporarily in abeyance; Leviticus 26 and I Kings do not describe what is going on in this present dispensation

Leviticus 26: A Map of Israel's History

- From verse 14 on, Leviticus 26 outlines Israel's history; the historical books, from Joshua on, record its literal fulfillment
- Keith's outline: verses 14–17 the 1st course; 18–20 the 2nd; 21–22 the 3rd; 23–26 the 4th; verse 27 begins the 5th
- The law is a performance contract Israel willingly entered; the curses come in courses designed to chastise them

The 5th Course in View

- In the 5th course God takes Israel out of the land; it has five installments, outlining His dealings with Israel up to the time of Jacob's trouble
- All the prophets from Isaiah on were raised up in connection with the 5th course

Breaking the Pride of Their Power (I Kings 12)

- I Kings 11 announces the rending of the kingdom; the first 24 verses of I Kings 12 give its historical arrival
- Rending the kingdom is not a 1st-course aspect but a 2nd-course issue

The Southern and Northern Kingdoms

- Rehoboam's kingdom, with Benjamin cleaving to Judah, is the southern kingdom — Judah, the house of Judah; the rest is the northern kingdom, often called the house of Israel
- The northern kingdom receives the 3rd course before the southern kingdom, because of the depth of apostasy established there, starting with Jeroboam
- Elisha is raised up to function under the 3rd course of punishment and to introduce the 4th
- Through I Kings 12–22 the kings of both kingdoms did evil in God's sight and provoked the Lord to anger — an expression that points back to the contract in Leviticus 26

L4

A Running Survey of the Second Course *I Kings 13–22: Jeroboam to Ahab; Elijah and Malachi 4*

Under the 2nd Course

- From I Kings 12 through the rest of I Kings, Israel is under the 2nd course; under any course the action is designed to be remedial
- Eight kings reign in the northern kingdom during the 2nd course, and the northern kingdom runs ahead of the southern in its degradation

Jeroboam Starts the Ball Rolling

- Jeroboam established idolatry to keep his people from going down to the southern kingdom and keeping their allegiance with David
- Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam understood that the 2nd course was being brought upon the nation, and neither responded positively
- In recording the northern kings, God keeps referring back to what Jeroboam started

Ahab and Elijah

- Ahab does more to provoke God to anger than all the kings of Israel before him
- That provocation brings in the rest of the 2nd course — judgment on their weather and the famines — and Elijah is raised up to bring it to pass, as God's spokesman in the remedial sense
- To sell yourself to work wickedness means turning yourself over 100% to outright rebellion against God
- Because Ahab humbled himself on this one thing at the end, the 3rd course is not brought in his day; his son's negative response brings it

Malachi 4: Elijah's Role Yet to Come

- Elijah comes up again in the 5th course — not when it begins, but in its last installment
- The 3rd installment of the 5th course was about 400 years of God saying nothing to Israel; the 5th installment involves the day of the Lord's wrath
- Elijah will focus on God's Jehovahness, just as in Joshua's day

L5

Ushering In the Third Course of Punishment *II Kings 1:1 – 10:31; Elijah Removed, Elisha Brought In; Walking Contrary*

Three Courses in II Kings

- From II Kings 1 to chapter 25 Israel goes through the 3rd, 4th and 5th courses; the 3rd runs to 10:31, and the 4th is brought in from 10:32

The Straw That Broke the Camel's Back (I Kings 21)

- Ahab is the acme of Israel's negative response under the 2nd course; he had the opportunity to hearken and be reformed, and has not
- "I will not bring the evil in his days" refers to the intensified judgment of the 3rd course, which comes in his son's days instead

"*Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel?" (II Kings 1)

- A sharp, stinging rebuke to Ahaziah: things were so dismal that God was not even known in Israel
- Elijah's name literally means "my God is Jehovah"; through the apostasy, Israel's God was Baal
- According to the law contract, fire from heaven is always a sign of Jehovah — consuming the sacrifice in His good pleasure, the rebellious in His displeasure

Walking Contrary (Leviticus 26)

- With the 3rd course the terminology shifts to Israel walking contrary to God and God walking contrary to Israel — language not found under the 1st or 2nd course
- God starts walking contrary in the 3rd course, intensifies it in the 4th, and walks contrary in fury only in the 5th

God Backs Out with Elijah, Comes In with Elisha (II Kings 2)

- Elijah is taken from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho and across the Jordan — the exact opposite of Israel's entry under Joshua; God symbolizes His own backing out of the land
- He re-enters with Elisha, not to walk with them as in Joshua's day, but to begin to walk contrary to them
- The she bears at Bethel: the 3rd course says God will send wild beasts to rob them of their children, and those who mocked Elisha became its first recipients
- Jehu is the last king under the 3rd course; he did not take heed to walk in the law of the Lord, the only thing that would stay the course

L6

The Lord Began to Cut Israel Short *The 4th Course of Punishment: Leviticus 26:23–26; II Kings 10:32 – 16:20*

Walking Contrary Intensifies

- The 3rd, 4th and 5th courses use the terminology of walking contrary; it begins with the 3rd, intensifies into the 4th, and reaches its zenith in the 5th, where God does it in fury
- Elijah, the 2nd-course prophet, is backed out of Israel in the reverse order to which he came in; Elisha immediately performs the first sign of the 3rd course

The 4th Course: "avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant"

- Because Israel was not reformed under the 3rd course, the 4th was

necessitated; the courses add on top of one another

- The 4th course entails a sword that avenges the quarrel of God's covenant — the law contract, which Israel has quarreled against by negative response
- Keith says "he was turned to be their enemy" (Isaiah 63:10) is what the contrary walk is all about

The Sword: Invasion of the Land

- Under the 4th course the Gentiles actually invade the land and take possession of it; Israel loses territory
- Those in villages and tents are killed in the open if they cannot reach their walled cities; within the cities pestilence reduces them in number

"In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short" (II Kings 10:32)

- Jehu destroyed some things connected with Baal worship but did not return Israel to the law contract — the only thing that could forestall the 4th course
- God had allowed raids and temporary sieges, but never before allowed Israel to be cut short — losing territory and numbers permanently; Hazael began permanently taking territory

Grace Forestalls the 5th Course

- In II Kings 13:23 God was gracious: Israel did not merit it; He simply operates on the basis of grace
- He forestalls the 5th course and gives them an opportunity to change their mind
- The 4th course runs from II Kings 10:32 to the end of chapter 16; the 5th begins in chapter 17, coming on the northern kingdom first

Key Doctrinal Distinctions

Time Past vs. the Present Dispensation of Grace

Keith reminds the class that "we today" live in the dispensation of Gentile grace, with God's program with the nation Israel temporarily in abeyance; Leviticus 26 and I Kings do not describe what is going on in this present dispensation. The dispensation of grace is a parenthesis that interrupts God's program with Israel, and it was a mystery back then. Israel is not suffering the effects of the course of punishment in this dispensation of grace, but as far as God's program and purpose with Israel is concerned, she is still in the 5th course; once this dispensation of grace is over, that program will resume.

Remedial, Not Retributive

The courses of punishment are not retributive anger on God's part; they are chastisements designed to get Israel back on track, and under any course the action is designed to be remedial.

Courses Are Added, Not Replaced

A new course does not replace the previous one; it is added on top of it, so every course is an intensification upon the ones already in existence.

Announcement vs. History: I Kings 11 and I Kings 12

I Kings 11 announces the rending of the kingdom, and I Kings 12 gives the historical details; the course of punishment is re-instituted in Solomon's day, but the 2nd course does not begin until Rehoboam.

Walking With Israel vs. Walking Contrary

Under Joshua God walked with Israel and for them, contrary to their enemies; with the 3rd course He prepares to walk contrary to Israel and function as their enemy, coming in with Elisha to walk contrary to them.

The 4th Course vs. the 5th Course

The 4th course calls for Israel to start losing territory and be reduced in number; the 5th calls for them to lose possession of the land and be taken out of it.

Key Scripture References

Leviticus 26:14–17	The 1st course of punishment
Leviticus 26:18–20	The 2nd course: breaking the pride of their power; weather judgments
Leviticus 26:21–22	The 3rd course: wild beasts robbing them of their children; walking contrary begins
Leviticus 26:23–26	The 4th course: a sword that avenges the quarrel of God's covenant
Leviticus 26:27 ff.	The 5th course: taken out of the land; walking contrary in fury
I Kings 9	The Lord's second appearing to Solomon; the threat of being cut off out of the land
I Kings 11:1–8	Solomon's apostasy, personal and then national
I Kings 11:9–13	The Lord's anger; the kingdom to be rent in the days of Solomon's son
I Kings 11:14–25	Adversaries stirred up — the 1st course resumed in Solomon's day
I Kings 12:1–24	The historical arrival of the rending of the kingdom — the 2nd course begins
I Kings 17	Elijah stops the heavens: heaven as iron, earth as brass
I Kings 21	Ahab sold himself to work wickedness; the evil deferred to his son's days
II Kings 1	"*Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel?"; fire from heaven

II Kings 2	Elijah taken out by the reverse of Joshua's route; Elisha and the she bears
II Kings 10:32	"the LORD began to cut Israel short" — the 4th course begins
II Kings 13:23	God was gracious; He would not yet cast them from His presence
II Kings 17	The 5th course comes on the northern kingdom first
II Kings 23:13	God calls Solomon's high place the Mount of Corruption
Deuteronomy 32	The song of Moses — Israel's history and the contrary walk
Psalm 68; Ezekiel 30	The power concept; "the pride of her power" used of Egypt
Isaiah 63:10	"he was turned to be their enemy" — the contrary walk
Malachi 4	Elijah's role in the last installment of the 5th course