Read Chapters 18 and 19 and take BRIEF theme notes.

The over-arching theme of chapter 18 is that the nation again fell into sectional dispute over slavery and states’ rights.

1. The main question facing the nation was, “Will new lands won from Mexico have slaves or be free?”
2. The answer to the question was hammered out in the Compromise of 1850. It said California was to be free, popular sovereignty (the people decide) for the rest of the lands.
3. A tougher fugitive slave law was a major concession to the South, but it wasn’t enforced. This angered the Southerners.
4. The North—South rift was widened with the Kansas-Nebraska Act. It repealed the Missouri Compromise which had kept the peace for a generation. In it’s place, popular sovereignty opened the Great Plains to potential slavery. Whereas the slave-land issue had been settled, now it was a big question mark.

The over-arching theme of chapter 19 is that compromise had prevailed earlier over the slavery issue, but this time, it failed.

1. Uncle Tom’s Cabin drove a wedge between the Northerner and Southerner. The South cried foul saying it gave a view of slavery that was too harsh and unrealistic, but it cemented each section’s feelings on the issue.
2. Kansas became the battleground over slavery. Since slavery there was to be decided by popular vote, each side passionately fought for their position. Bloodshed resulted.
3. The Supreme Court’s Dred Scott decision was huge. It said that Congress or a legislature cannot outlaw slavery in the territories. Effectively then, all new lands were possible slave lands.
4. A financial panic in 1857 added to the chaos and uncertainty.
5. Abe Lincoln arrived on the scene. Although he lost to Stephen Douglas for Illinois Senate, he made a name for himself there.
6. In 1860, Abe Lincoln won a very sectional race for president over 3 other candidates. The South had promised to leave the union if Abe won. He won, and the South indeed seceded.