

© Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study [www.intothyword.org](http://www.intothyword.org)

## **The Divided Kingdom (Rehoboam)**

*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 the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the LORD, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite. 1 Kings 12:13-15*

### **1 Kings 11-16; Key verses: 1 Kings 12:1-20**

#### **Key personalities: Solomon, Rehoboam, Nathan, and Jeroboam**

Timeline: about 930-586 BC. During the time of the early Israelites, the areas were ruled by Israel during David and Solomon followed by the fall. Now, the Egyptians, Phoenicians, Dorians and the Assyrians were rising, the Iron Age is at hand, and bronze is still in the majority of weapons and farming tools. Hinduism's main writings--the Vedic texts--are being formed, China becomes more unified and develops organized armies, while massive earthquakes destroy cities in the Mediterranean.

The people wanted a king. And, so they had. They had a man who was mediocre, at best, and terrible in the end—King Saul; they had the strong, handsome, and imposing great King David, and they had the potentially great Kingdom of Solomon. As with so many things of man, the dynasty was fractured by pride, friction, and farce; the great Kingdom is divided. Solomon's son, Rehoboam--with his great pride and lack of knowledge or wisdom possessed by his father and grandfather—lost 10 the twelve tribes. Judah and Benjamin remain in the south and the remainder continue on in the North. The south becomes "Judah" and continues on with 19 kings from nine dynasties with reigns that ranged from very brief rules to long, stable ones from 931 BC through 722 BC. The Assyrians invade and occupy the Northern land for years as none of the kings really truly loved or served the Lord or carried out His Law or obedience to God. The North becomes Ephraim and, then, Iserial. Judah has a little better time with good kings mixed in with the wicked ones, yet God used them to show His love and grace and sends the Savior though them. Since the South also lost sight of who they are, what they are about, and most importantly Who God is and called them to be, they would fall. God allows their disobedience, sends them prophets and priests to guide and the kingdoms survive. However, it got too bad. Both kingdoms strayed off God's path into apostasy, devastating God's heart and ruining the lives of countless people. At the tipping point, God intercedes with the Exile of the South to "reboot" them.

Solomon made a trade—his wisdom and true love for God in exchange for unbridled lust, a harem of 1,000+ women, riches, and false gods. His officials began to rebel. Solomon was warned through God's Word and Law; the prophets came in person to deliver messages with warnings of the fallout caused by bad decisions. No repentance, no change. Jeroboam causes the most damage and still Solomon's madness continued. Solomon set the stage for his son, Rehoboam, to further this fool's folly in a colossal way.

**Key Happenings:** The Glory fades, yet God is faithful!

Isreal was a nation set aside to and for God--for His people to model His love and precepts, and the place for worship and model of rightful living to the entire world. God allowed them to take

over the promised land and thrive so that every nation on earth would come to see what David built, know the wisdom of Solomon, the wonders of the Temple, realize that God is the Author, Creator, and Grantor of all. The rest of the earth was in chaos, worshipping pagan gods, worthless idols, and living lives of heinous actions. However, there was hope—an absolute true path—for real effectual faith to know and follow. There is a One True God who cares, who is involved. God is not petty; He is not worthless, and His Power is not based on whims or culture. Unfortunately, the people were blessed and they threw it all away to sin, just as many people have done over the millennia and today.

The 12 tribes and the Levites all come to a division—one stays to the South and the others are fragmented and become the Divided Kingdom. This is the story how pride is the curse of the arrogant. This is the story of neglect—neglect in discipline and moral instruction—and the resulting megalomaniac pride of a son who was neglected by his father in favor of lust and control and removing God from their lives. With such lust and pridefulness comes the fall; it is inevitable. Israel is as fragmented and broken as God's heart must have been to see all this unfold. This sets up a time for the rule of multiple kings who vary in their rule between arrogance and evil and those who seek to bring the people back to the Lord.

**Rehoboam.** He was the son of Solomon and ruled from 931-909 BC. He received trusted advice from the elders to lighten the yoke and end the slavery, but he rejected it and trusted the foolishness of his young friends to make things harsher for the people. A true king is to serve the people and rule justly, not lord over autonomously. The king was accountable to God and the law, not themselves. His extreme pride and unwillingness to listen to wise advice and seek out foolishness is the theme of many young people throughout time. Youth needs aged wisdom, and aged wisdom needs the vigor of youth. That is how we are made to work with each other. Rehoboam furthers escalates his sin by making a golden calf idol like Aaron, and pagan shrines; however, Aaron repented. Rehoboam does not repent. Thus, he becomes more arrogant and evil and leads the people back into idolatry and creates a nation of sin for over two hundred years (1 Kings 12:1-20; 25-33)

**Jeroboam.** He ruled from 931-913 BC, not a son of Solomon, even though the names are similar. He was a trusted official who betrays Solomon and flees to Egypt and comes back in the chaos to take over the Northern Kingdom, including Jerusalem. Solomon enslaved some of his own people and selected Jeroboam to oversee this because of his capability. Jeroboam causes an insurrection and a divided kingdom and sets up the house of Omri--a rival capital--at Samaria, and this is God's doing (1 Kings 11:26-28).

**Ahijah.** A prophet of God tells Jeroboam the kingdom will be torn and one of the tribes will be given to him because of Solomon's disobedience and his sons' extreme arrogance, and for the sake of David, the one tribe, Judah, will remain for the Messiah, Christ to be from (1 Kings 11:29-42).

**Shemaiah's prophecy.** Rehoboam was seeking to do further evil and instigates a civil war due to pride and fight his brothers--further dividing the kingdom. Shemaiah warned him, "Do not fight your brothers" a message directly from God. God allowed this to happen for a reason and so they stopped and went home (1 Kings 12:21-24).

As the kingdom was split and furthered on by Jeroboam's betrayal, all of rivalries between the tribes went from seething to full conflict and civil war. Northern Israel was close to Phoenician cultures and on the major trade hubs and were influenced by them. The South, with Judah was more isolated--like the heartland of America—with rural, agricultural and some mountainous regions (1 Kings 12:1-24).

Jeroboam is called out by a prophet of God and challenged to repent and that he will lead (1 Kings 13).

God shows His anger as well as His sovereignty and control and points to His righteous earthly representatives. God has the right to be angry for sin; this is an expression of His righteousness. This also is foreshadowing Christ.

Sin produces its own consequences. If you sleep around, you may get a disease; if you drive fast, you may get a ticket. If you try to destroy someone who is innocent, his or her innocence will be found out and you will be the one who is ruined. We are to seek His protection as we also seek to be wise and not sin. We fail when we do nothing or act in sin. When we do the things of God, we enjoy contentment; when we do not, we will be discouraged and depressed (Psalm 5).

Why such the turmoil after one king dies and another is crowned? In the Old Testament period when a new king was crowned, the kingdom was at its weakest and the king had to build his trust of the people. Hence, it was also the time most revolts and invasions took place. The kings would rage against God and themselves--a prelude to the whims of our will and the battle of our sanctification and our sinful nature. Through it all, Jesus Christ is the Messiah and the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords! The battles in this Psalm are like the ones that rage in our hearts.

In 1 Samuel 5, the Philistines won a battle against Israel and took the ark of God and offered it to their god, Dagon. This did not go so well. God struck them all with tumors that many linguists say were hemorrhoids. Why? They knew not to worship false gods; what could be more humiliating, uncomfortable, belittling, and painful to a great number of people than hemorrhoids with no treatment? Apparently, not much. The Philistines heeded this warning, received this great rebuke, and gladly returned the Ark.

To be willing and able to guard against pride and confess sin will renew your mind and prepare you to be more effective in relationships, as you have given yourself to God, mind and body. David was willing to do this; Saul and Rehoboam were not. Just think what Christ has done for you! Know the incredible amount of forgiveness you have received, and your response to what He has done! It should be gratitude that leads you to desire to purge yourself of sin. When we do as we see fit, all we bring on ourselves is strife and confusion that lead to endless hurt. When we have purged the sin, and continue to do so as an ongoing venture, we will have no desire to copy the evil ways of the world. Rather, we will desire to be further transformed and renewed by God. We are new in Christ Jesus, Our Lord, and we are infused by the Spirit, so that all we think and all we do is pointed in His direction and call. Because of this renewal, we will know what He desires for us, what is best, what is pleasing and perfect.

**Key Takeaway:** Having it all is not any kind of guarantee of success or prosperity; rather, to love and honor God is the only way to a fulfilling, purposeful life that glorifies God and leave one as content as possible in a sin-infused world until we are called to our ultimate Home. And, remember: Even with the sin and lack of focus on God, the lust of pride and the passion to disobey in mega ways, God is still there as a loving Father, faithfully and disciplining. He honors His promise to David; the nation is not destroyed, the people continue, and life goes on. It just was not as prosperous and effectual as they had it with trust and obedience. Just as God deals with us today, He wants our loyalty, and He will allow corrections to come our way until we get His Way. Kindness is the hallmark of a great king--to serve the people and be accountable. This is the proof in text to authenticity that is a result of God working in us. Grace means an undeserving act of kindness. Compassion is exercising that kindness!

**The foreshadow of Jesus Christ?** This section of Scripture showcases our desperate need for a Savior and how far we can sin and rationalize it. Yet, God is faithful!

## Questions to Ponder

1. How do you act when you are confronted and in the wrong?
2. What did you think of the object lesson Ahijah gave Jeroboam? What was the cause and motivation for the Divided Kingdom?
3. Why did Jeroboam listen to the prophecy and Rehoboam not when he was confronted?
4. Why do you think God allowed the kingdom to be divided?
5. Why did God chose an idolater, Jeroboam, to lead the Northern Kingdom?
6. Why did Solomon perpetuate Eli, Samuel and David's sin and not discipline or disciple Rehoboam? (Keep in mind he was the wisest man who ever lived!)
7. How easy it is to fall to Pride and lose it all? Have you seen this in your life? How have you seen this in others?
8. How does God's loving faithfulness as a Father shine through in these passages? How does this give you hope in times of despair an confusion?
9. What can we learn about God's faithfulness in these passages? How can this help you trust God, even when you mess up?
10. What should have Rehoboam done? What can we learn from his mistakes to be more humble and trust God?
11. What would have happened if Rehoboam held a deep conviction to God and His Truth as His grandfather and father did?
12. What can you do to guard against pride and confess sin? How will this help you renew your mind and prepare you to be more effective in relationships and leadership?