

The Kingdom Divided

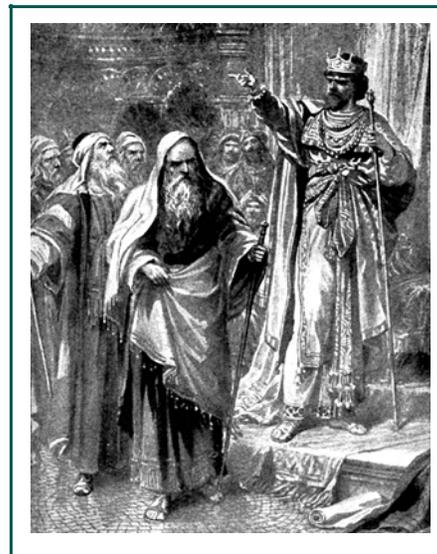
1 Kings 12-14

Have you ever heard anyone say he is 'older and wiser' than he was before? Why do you suppose you get wiser with age? Today's lesson shows what can happen if you disregard the advice of older and wiser people.

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have given me many people in my life to guide me. Please help me to listen and act on the good advice of those older and wiser who have studied Your Word. Give me the attitude to listen and study Your lesson today and then apply it to my life. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



The Story - 1 Kings 12-14 (excerpts)

Rehoboam went to Shechem to be made king. So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was still in Egypt), that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and we will serve you."

So he said to them, "Depart for three days, then come back to me." And the people departed.

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived.

And they spoke to him, saying, "If you will speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him.

Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! Now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you

with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!'"

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day. Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men.

Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, they departed to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the cities of Judah.

Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.



But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD.

Then Jeroboam built Shechem and dwelt there. Also he built Peniel.

Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."

Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods!" And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin.

And behold, a man of God went from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. Then he cried out against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be burned on you.'" And he gave a sign the same day, saying, "This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out."

So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Arrest him!" Then his hand withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar.

Then the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me." So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before.

Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."

But the man of God said to the king, "It was

commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.'" So he went another way.

Now an old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel. And their father said to them, "Saddle the donkey for me." So he rode on it, and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

And he said, "I am."

Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread."

And he said, "I cannot return with you. For I have been told by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.'"

He said to him, "I too am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (He was lying to him.) So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'"

So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him. When he was gone, a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey and lion stood by the corpse. Men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard it, he said, "It is the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion."

Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion

standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him.

So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. For the saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and the cities of Samaria, will surely come to pass."

After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam.

At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. Go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah.

But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. (For he had been warned by God.) Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back;

"Therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies

in the field; for the LORD has spoken!"

"Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

"Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam. For the LORD will strike Israel, He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."

Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD.

The period that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place.

Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem.

Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images.

It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything.

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Abijam his son reigned in his place.

Outer Aim - God's kingdom of Israel is divided.

What the Story Tells Us - Fill in the blanks with words from the word box. Some of the words will be used more than once. (see the number behind the word)

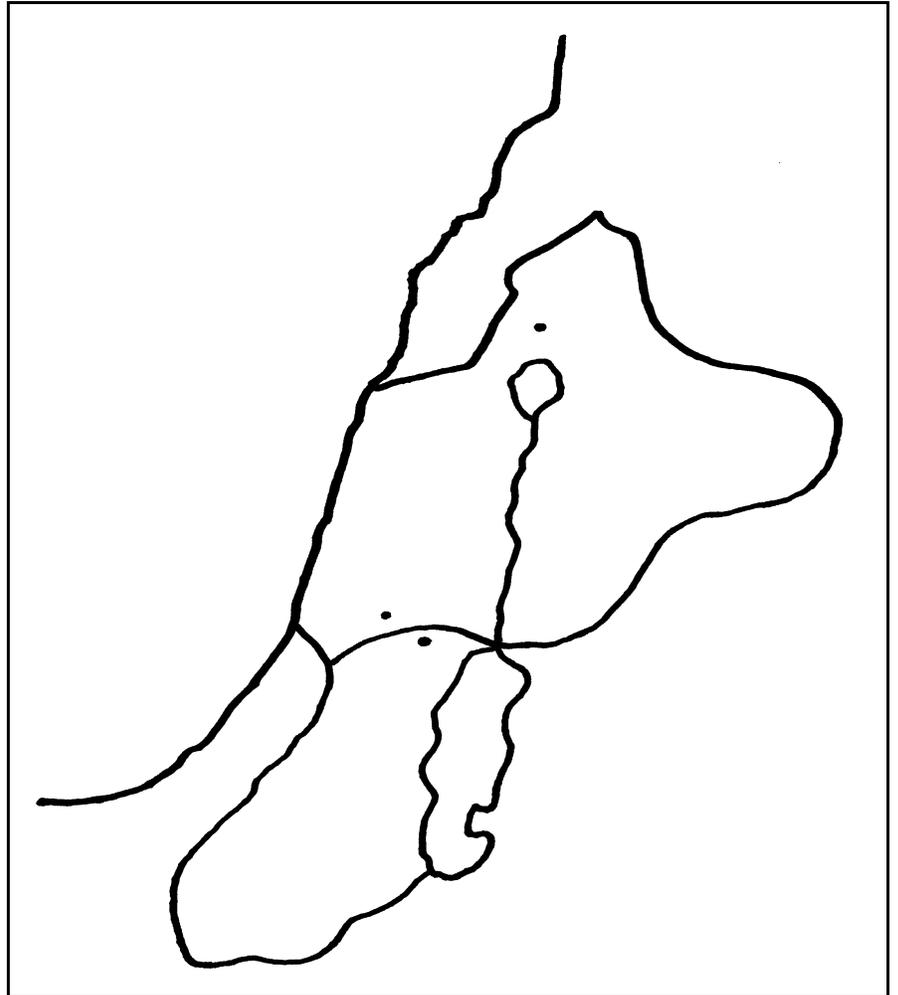
Rehoboam	idolatry	two	ashes	Bethel
Judah (2)	Benjamin	Ahijah	Egypt	home
friends	Dan	Israel	country	died
Jeroboam (3)	sin	city	harder	withered

1. After Solomon died, _____ was made king of Israel.
2. _____ came back from _____ to ask that the burdens of the people be lessened.
3. Rehoboam got advice from _____ groups of people. The advice he followed was from his _____.
4. Rehoboam would make life _____ for the people in his kingdom.
5. Ten of the tribes of Israel decided to follow _____. The two tribes that stayed with Rehoboam were _____ and _____.
6. Jeroboam's kingdom was called _____. Rehoboam's kingdom was called _____.
7. Jeroboam introduced _____ to his kingdom. He placed idols in _____ and _____.
8. A prophet of the Lord talked to the people of Israel. As he talked, Jeroboam stretched out his hand, it _____. Then _____ poured out of the altar as a sign that Jeroboam's kingdom would be destroyed.
9. The prophet of the Lord was to go _____. He was tricked and _____ because he did not listen to what the Lord told him.
10. _____'s son got sick. He tried to trick _____ to find out what the Lord's plan was for his son.
11. Ahijah, the Lord's prophet, knew about Jeroboam's trick. Jeroboam's family would be punished because of his _____. Dogs would eat the family members that died in the _____. Birds would eat the family members that died in the _____.

Inner Aim - Disobedience to God has dire consequences.

Your Turn - Map Skills - THE DIVIDED KINGDOM. Follow the directions to put the items on the map.

1. Label the northern part Israel. (10 tribes of Israel)
2. Label the southern part Judah. (Judah and Benjamin)
3. There are 3 cities on the map, Label the city to the far north Dan. Label the city near the southern border of Israel Bethel. Label the only city in Judah Jerusalem.
4. Label the sea in Israel Sea of Galilee.
5. Label the sea near Judah Dead Sea.
6. Label the river between them Jordan River.
7. Color Israel yellow.
8. Color Judah red.
9. Color the seas and rivers blue.



What God's Word Tells Us

- Discussion Questions. These questions are to be discussed as a whole class or in small groups.

1. Several people in today's story disobeyed God's commands. Tell how each of the following people disobeyed God—Rehoboam, Jeroboam, the prophet of the Lord.
2. Because each of the men above disobeyed God, God sent a consequence (something that happened because they disobeyed Him). What were the consequences that God sent to each of the men in question #1.
3. We sin everyday. Our sins have consequences also. Give examples sins and their consequences that happen in your lives.
4. How can we repent of our sins and show that we are truly sorry for our sins?

Passages

Psalm 119:105 - Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Matthew 4:10 - You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.

Proverbs 15:1 - A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Hymn/Prayer - TLH #462 or v. 1, 3, 4, 5

I love Thy kingdom, Lord,
The house of Thine abode,
The Church our blest Redeemer saved
With His own precious blood.

Should I with scoffers join
Her altars to abuse?
No! Better far my tongue were dumb,
My hand its skill should lose.

For her my tears shall fall,
For her my prayers ascend,
To her my cares and toils be given
Till toils and cares shall end.

Beyond my highest joy
I prize her heavenly ways,
Her sweet communion, solemn vows,
Her hymns of love and praise. Amen.