



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

Old Testament Survey

Lesson 27 – The First Sixty Years of the Divided Kingdom (First Kings 12-16; Second Chronicles 10-16)

The Divided Kingdom

After the death of Solomon, the kingdom divided into two kingdoms as prophesied by the prophet Ahijah. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained faithful to the house of David, which had the promise of an everlasting kingdom. The kingdom of **Israel** was the northern kingdom. It lasted for 209 years until the Assyrian Captivity in 722 BC. The kingdom of **Judah** was the southern kingdom. It lasted 135 years longer, for a total of 344 years, until the Babylonian Captivity in 586 BC. The two books of Kings give a history of both Israel and Judah. Second Chronicles gives only the history of Judah.

During these years there was not a single king in Israel who remained faithful to the true God. All of them followed in “**the sin of Jeroboam**”, who set up golden calves for the LORD’s worship in the south at Bethel and in the north at Dan. Shortly after these golden calves were set up, a man of God testified against this false worship and prophesied its destruction. He even foretold the name of the man who would destroy it. Over 300 years later King Josiah of Judah fulfilled this prophecy. Because of Jeroboam’s sin God destroyed his dynasty through the dynasty of Baasha, which in turn was destroyed by another dynasty, etc. The most important and powerful dynasty in the early days of Israel was the dynasty of Omri.

In Judah, however, there was only one dynasty: the dynasty of David. God blessed Judah with several pious kings who had long reigns. Yet even in Judah idolatry was often permitted and sometimes even encouraged by the rulers. The chief form of idolatry was the worship of the female goddess Asherah. Immoral adultery was often connected with this worship.

The “**sin of Jeroboam**” is repeated in our time today whenever people try to worship God in their own way rather than in the way prescribed by God in the Bible. For example, anyone claiming to worship God without honoring Jesus as God, is worshiping God in his own false way rather than in the way God teaches us in the Bible. Jeroboam of Israel instituted a false worship. He did not want his people to go to Jerusalem to worship God in the Temple, as God had commanded. So he set up two other places in his kingdom where the people could worship God: Bethel and Dan. He did this on his own without consulting God and in direct opposition to God’s command.

During this period God continued to send His prophets to both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Some of these prophets are well-known, like Elijah and Elisha and Isaiah and Jeremiah. But many of them are mentioned only once in Scripture. Some of them are not even given a name. But they were all important, for they were the ones who spoke God’s revealed Word to the people and their leaders.

Read as many chapters of this section as you can, as you study the events below. If you have questions, do not hesitate to ask them.

Rehoboam of Judah (931-913 BC)

1. Rehoboam takes the advice of young men and tells Israel he will be a harsher king than Solomon (1 Kings 12:1-15; 2 Chronicles 10:1-15).
2. Israel rebels against Rehoboam and sets up Jeroboam I as king (1 Kings 12:16-20; 2 Chronicles 10:16-19).

3. The prophet Shemaiah prevents Rehoboam from attacking Jeroboam I (1 Kings 12:21-24; 2 Chronicles 11:1-4).
4. Rehoboam fortifies his kingdom by building cities (2 Chronicles 11:5-12).
5. Priests, Levites, and pious Israelites emigrate to Judah (2 Chronicles 11:13-17).
6. Rehoboam has 78 wives and 88 children (2 Chronicles 11:18-23).
7. After his first three years Rehoboam permits idolatry (1 Kings 14:21-24; 2 Chronicles 12:1).
8. Shishak of Egypt enslaves Rehoboam and robs the Temple; the prophet Shemaiah preaches repentance (1 Kings 14:25-28; 2 Chronicles 12:2-12).
9. Rehoboam concludes his reign and dies (1 Kings 14:25-28; 2 Chronicles 12:13-16).

Note: Shishak of Egypt is also known as Sheshonk I of the 22nd Dynasty. He ruled from 935 to 914 BC. In 1939 Shishak's body was discovered in his burial chamber in Tanis, Egypt.

Jeroboam I of Israel (931-910 BC)

10. Jeroboam sets up his own form of worship and makes golden calves in Bethel and Dan (1 Kings 12:25-33).
11. A man of God miraculously testifies against Jeroboam's false worship and prophesies its eventual destruction (1 Kings 13:1-10).
12. An old prophet in Bethel lies to the man of God and entices him to eat with him (1 Kings 13:11-19).
13. The old prophet announces God's judgment on the man of God, and God's judgement comes almost immediately (1 Kings 13:20-32).
14. Despite this, Jeroboam continues the false worship (1 Kings 13:33-34).
15. Jeroboam's son Abijah is sick; his wife visits the prophet Ahijah (1 Kings 14:1-4).
16. Ahijah announces God's judgment on Jeroboam's house and the death of Abijah (1 Kings 14:5-18).
Note: God spares Jeroboam's pious son Abijah by letting him die.
17. Jeroboam concludes his reign and dies (1 Kings 14:19-20).

Abijam (Abijah) of Judah (913-911 BC)

18. Abijam continues the shameful idolatry of Rehoboam (1 Kings 15:1-8).
19. Abijam addresses Israel with a stirring speech before battle with Jeroboam I (2 Chronicles 13:1-12).
20. Abijam wins a great victory over Jeroboam I (2 Chronicles 13:13-22).
Note: Of the 800 000 Israelite soldiers, 500 000 were killed by the 400 000 Jews.

Asa of Judah (911-870 BC)

21. Asa abandons his fathers' idolatry and strengthens his kingdom (1 Kings 15:9-12; 2 Chronicles 14:1-7).
22. Asa wins a great victory over Zerah the Ethiopian through faith (2 Chronicles 14:8-15).
23. The prophet Azariah calls upon the people to be faithful to the LORD (2 Chronicles 15:1-7).
24. The people of Judah (also some from Israel) renew their covenant with the LORD (1 Kings 15:13-15; 2 Chronicles 15:8-19).
25. Asa makes a treaty with Benhadad I of Syria against Baasha of Israel (1 Kings 15:16-22; 2 Chronicles 16:1-6).

26. The prophet Hanani rebukes Asa for his lack of faith and is persecuted (2 Chronicles 16:7-10).
 27. Asa has diseased feet, dies, and has a great burial (1 Kings 15:23-24; 2 Chronicles 16:11-14).

Nadab of Israel (910-909 BC)

28. Nadab follows in the sins of Jeroboam I and is destroyed by Baasha (1 Kings 15:25-32).

Baasha of Israel (909-886 BC)

29. Baasha also follows in the sins of Jeroboam I (1 Kings 15:33-34).
 30. The prophet Jehu announces the destruction of Baasha's dynasty (1 Kings 16:1-7).

Elah of Israel (886-885 BC)

31. Elah sins in the same way and is killed while drunk by captain Zimri (1 Kings 16:8-14).

Zimri of Israel (885 BC)

32. Zimri reigns seven days and commits suicide (1 Kings 16:15-20).

Tibni (885-880 BC) **and Omri** (885-874 BC) **of Israel**

33. There is civil war for six years between Tibni and Omri (1 Kings 16:21-22).
 34. Omri makes Samaria his capital and sins worse than those before him (1 Kings 16:23-28).

Note: The Moabite Stone, discovered in 1868, shows that Omri was a mighty king who conquered the Moabites.

A Table of Prophets and Kings

<u>Prophets</u>	<u>Kings of Israel</u>	<u>Kings of Judah</u>	<u>2 Chron.</u>	<u>1 Kings</u>
Ahijah	1) Jeroboam I (931-910)	Rehoboam (931-913)	10-12	2-14
Shemaiah				
Iddo				
<u>"a man of God"</u>				
<u>"an old prophet"</u>		Abijam (913-911)	13	15
Oded	1) Nadab (910-909)	<u>Asa</u> (911-870)	14-15	16
Azariah, his son	2) Baasha (909-886)			
Hanani				
Jehu, his son				
	2) Elah (886-885)			
	3) Zimri (885)			
	4) Tibni (885-880)			
	5) Omri (885-874)			
	5) Ahab (874-853)	<u>Jehoshaphat</u> (873-848)	17-18	

Note: The numbers besides the kings of Israel refer to their various dynasties. Jeroboam I passed the kingdom to his son Nadab, but Nadab was overthrown by Baasha, a man from a different family, who established a second dynasty and passed the kingdom on to his son Elah. Many dynasties ruled over Israel. But in Judah there was only one dynasty: the dynasty of David, and to this dynasty God promised an everlasting kingdom.

The underlined kings of Judah (Asa and Jehoshaphat) are those who are described in the Bible as God-fearing kings. They were far from perfect in their loyalty to God, but it seems that they trusted in God's promises concerning the coming Christ (**JESUS**) and tried to walk in the ways of the Lord.

Questions

1. Why did the kingdom of David and Solomon divide into Israel and Judah?
2. List some of the differences between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
3. What is the “sin of Jeroboam” and why did it continue for so many years?
4. Why did God keep the dynasty of David in power in the kingdom of Judah?
5. What foolish decision did Rehoboam make at the beginning of his reign?
6. What did the prophet from Judah foretell about the worship at Bethel?
7. Why was King Abijam of Judah convinced that God was on his side in the war against Israel?
8. List some of the good decisions and some of the bad decisions made by King Asa of Judah.
9. What can we learn from the history of the kings of the divided kingdom?