

The Division of the Kingdom (931n BC)

1 Kings 12:1–24

Rehoboam is Confronted by Jeroboam

1 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king.
 2 Now when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *of it*, he was living in Egypt
 (for he was yet in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon).
 3 Then they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying,
 4 “Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.”
 5 Then he said to them,
 “Depart for three days, then return to me.”
 So the people departed.

Rehoboam Consults His Older Advisers

6 King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying,
 “How do you counsel *me* to answer this people?”
 7 Then they spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”

God Causes Rehoboam to Reject the Elders’ Wise Advice

8 But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.
 9 So he said to them, “What counsel do you give that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us’?”
 10 The young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying,
 “Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!’ But you shall speak to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins!
 11 Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’”
 12 Then Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, “Return to me on the third day.”
 13 The king answered the people harshly, for he forsook the advice of the elders which they had given him,
 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.”
 15 So the king did not listen to the people; for it was a turn *of events* from the LORD, that He might establish His word, which the LORD spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

2 Chronicles 10:1–11:4

10:1 Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king.
 2 When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *of it*
 (for he was in Egypt where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon),
 Jeroboam returned from Egypt.
 3 So they sent and summoned him. When Jeroboam and all Israel came, they spoke to Rehoboam, saying,
 4 “Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.”
 5 He said to them,
 “Return to me again in three days.”
 So the people departed.

6 Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying,
 “How do you counsel *me* to answer this people?”
 7 They spoke to him, saying, “If you will be kind to this people and please them
 and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”

8 But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him.
 9 So he said to them, “What counsel do you give that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us’?”
 10 The young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying,
 “Thus you shall say to the people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us.’ Thus you shall say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins!
 11 Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I *will discipline you* with scorpions.’”
 12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, “Return to me on the third day.”
 13 The king answered them harshly, and King Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the elders.
 14 He spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father disciplined you with whips, but I *will discipline you* with scorpions.”
 15 So the king did not listen to the people, for it was a turn *of events* from God that the LORD might establish His word, which He spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

The Northern Tribes Revolt and Proclaim Jeroboam King

16 When all Israel *saw* that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying, “What portion do we have in David? *We have* no inheritance in the son of Jesse;

To your tents, O Israel! Now look after your own house, David!” So Israel departed to their tents.

17 But as for the sons of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death. And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

20 It came about when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, that they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. None but the tribe of Judah followed the house of David.

God Prevents a Civil War

21 Now when Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

22 But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

23 “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people, saying,

24 ‘Thus says the LORD, “You must not go up and fight against your relatives the sons of Israel; return every man to his house, for this thing has come from Me.”’” So they listened to the word of the LORD, and returned and went *their way* according to the word of the LORD.

16 When all Israel *saw* that the king did not listen to them the people answered the king, saying, “What portion do we have in David? *We have* no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

Every man to your tents, O Israel; Now look after your own house, David.” So all Israel departed to their tents.

17 But as for the sons of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was over the forced labor, and the sons of Israel stoned him to death. And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11:1 Now when Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors, to fight against Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

3 “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

4 ‘Thus says the LORD, “You shall not go up or fight against your relatives; return every man to his house, for this thing is from Me.”’” So they listened to the words of the LORD and returned from going against Jeroboam.

The North and the South (931–929 BC)

1 Kings 12:25; 2 Chronicles 11:5–12

Jeroboam Fortifies the Northern Kingdom

1 Kgs 12:25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel.

Rehoboam Fortifies the Southern Kingdom

2 Chr 11:5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built cities for defense in Judah.

6 Thus he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,

7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam,

8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,

9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,

10 Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron, which are fortified cities in Judah and in Benjamin.

11 He also strengthened the fortresses and put officers in them and stores of food, oil and wine.

12 He put shields and spears in every city and strengthened them greatly. So he held Judah and Benjamin.

Jeroboam’s Sin and Rehoboam’s Obedience (931–929 BC)

1 Kings 12:26–31; 2 Chronicles 11:13–17

Jeroboam Institutes a Religious System of His Own Making

1 Kgs 12:26 Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will return to the house of David.

27 “If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord,

even to Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.”

28 So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

29 He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan.

31 And he made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.

The Priests and Levites Move to Judah

2 Chr 11:13 Moreover, the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel stood with him [*Rehoboam*] from all their districts.

14 For the Levites left their pasture lands and their property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had excluded them from serving as priests to the LORD.

15 He set up priests of his own for the high places, for the satyrs and for the calves which he had made.

16 Those from all the tribes of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD God of Israel followed them to Jerusalem, to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.

17 They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam the son of Solomon for three years, for they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

God Sends a Prophet to Bethel (c. 15 Marchesvan [November] 929 BC)

1 Kings 12:32–13:34

The Man of God Cries Out Against Jeroboam’s Altar

12:32 Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.

13:1 Now behold, there came a man of God from Judah to Bethel by the word of the LORD, while Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense.

2 He cried against the altar by the word of the LORD, and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’”

3 Then he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign which the LORD has spoken, ‘Behold, the altar shall be split apart and the ashes which are on it shall be poured out.’”

4 Now when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” But his hand which he stretched out against him dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself.

5 The altar also was split apart and the ashes were poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

Jeroboam’s False Repentance and Attempted Bribe

6 The king said to the man of God, “Please entreat the LORD your God, and 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 it became as it was before.

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

8 But the man of God said to the king, “If you were to give me half your house I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water in this place.

9 For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, ‘You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return by the way which you came.’”

10 So he went another way and did not return by the way which he came to Bethel.

The Old Prophet’s Treachery

11 Now an old prophet was living in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the deeds which the man of God had done that day in Bethel; the words which he had spoken to the king, these also they related to their father.

12 Their father said to them, “Which way did he go?” Now his sons had seen the way which the man of God who came from Judah had gone.

13 Then he said to his sons, “Saddle the donkey for me.” So they saddled the donkey for him and he rode away on it.

14 So he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak; and he said to him, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” And he said, “I am.”

15 Then he said to him, “Come home with me and eat bread.”

16 He said, "I cannot return with you, nor go with you, nor will I eat bread or drink water with you in this place.

17 For a command *came* to me by the word of the LORD, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water there; do not return by going the way which you came.'"

18 He said to him, "I also am a prophet like you, 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.'" *But* he lied to him.

God's Judgment Falls on the Man of God

19 So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house and drank water.

20 Now it came about, as they were sitting down at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back;

21 and he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD, 'Because you have disobeyed the command of the LORD, and have not observed the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you,

22 but have returned and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water"; your body shall not come to the grave of your fathers.'"

23 It came about after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

24 Now when he had gone, a lion met him on the way and killed him, and his body was thrown on the road, with the donkey standing beside it; the lion also was standing beside the body.

The Old Prophet Buries the Man of God

25 And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown on the road, and the lion standing beside the body; so they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet lived.

26 Now when the prophet who brought him back from the way heard *it*, he said, "It is the man of God, who disobeyed the command of the LORD; therefore the LORD has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him."

27 Then he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." And they saddled *it*.

28 He went and found his body thrown on the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside the body; the lion had not eaten the body nor torn the donkey.

29 So the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back, and he came to the city of the old prophet to mourn and to bury him.

30 He laid his body in his own grave, and they mourned over him, *saying*, "Alas, my brother!"

31 After he had buried him, he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones.

32 For the thing shall surely come to pass which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria."

Jeroboam Hardens His Heart in Spite of the Miraculous Events

33 After this event Jeroboam did not return from his evil way, but again he made priests of the high places from among all the people; any who would, he ordained, to be priests of the high places.

34 This event became sin to the house of Jeroboam, even to blot *it* out and destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

Jeroboam's Refusal to Repent Provokes God's Judgment (c. 928n BC)

1 Kings 14:1–18

1 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick.

2 Jeroboam said to his wife, "Arise now, and disguise yourself so that they will not know that you are the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh; behold, Ahijah the prophet is there, who spoke concerning me *that I would be* king over this people.

3 Take ten loaves with you, *some* cakes and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy."

4 Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were dim because of his age.

5 Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Behold, the wife of Jeroboam is coming to inquire of you concerning her son, for he is sick. You shall say thus and thus to her, for it will be when she arrives that she will pretend to be another woman."

6 When Ahijah heard the sound of her feet coming in the doorway, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam, why do you pretend to be another woman? For I am sent to you *with* a harsh *message*.

7 Go, say to Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel, "Because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over My people Israel,

8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you—yet you have not been like My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in My sight;

9 you also have done more evil than all who were before you, and have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back—
10 therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone.
11 Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken *it*.”
12 “Now you, arise, go to your house. When your feet enter the city the child will die.
13 All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he alone of Jeroboam’s *family* will come to the grave, because in him something good was found toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.
14 Moreover, the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam this day and from now on.
15 For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the *Euphrates* River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking the LORD to anger.
16 He will give up Israel on account of the sins of Jeroboam, which he committed and with which he made Israel to sin.”
17 Then Jeroboam’s wife arose and departed and came to Tirzah. As she was entering the threshold of the house, the child died.
18 All Israel buried him and mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

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Chronological Notes

- 1) The Hebrew calendar was (and is) lunar-solar. Each month started with the new moon. Since twelve lunar months fall short of a full solar year, in some years a thirteenth month was added. In later years the formula was worked out with some exactitude as to when this should be done. The month that began near the spring equinox was called Nisan. The northern kingdom (Israel) considered the year to start in Nisan throughout its history, whereas for civil purposes Judah considered the year to start in the seventh month, Tishri, corresponding roughly to our October.
- 2) The Scriptures often give the number of the month instead of the month’s name, and when this is done the numbering always starts from Nisan, independently of whether the official year started in Nisan or Tishri. In the readings, the expression “931n” is used to represent the year beginning on Nisan 1, 931 BC and ending the day before Nisan 1, 930 BC. This is the kind of year that would be used in the court records of the northern kingdom. “931t” represents the year beginning Tishri 1, 931 BC and ending the day before Tishri 1, 930 BC; this is the kind of year that would be used in Judah. The six-month overlap of these two dates is written as 931t/930n, meaning the time period that began on Tishri 1 of 931 BC and ended the day before Nisan 1 of 930 BC. The overlap of 932t and 931n is written 931n/931t. This method of expressing dates may be called the “Nisan/Tishri” notation.¹

¹ Rodger C. Young, “Tables of Reign Lengths from the Hebrew Court Records,” *JETS* 48/2 (June 2005): 225.