

The Division of the Kingdom (931n BC)

1 Kings 12:1–24

Rehoboam is Confronted by Jeroboam

1 Rehoboam traveled to Shechem, for all Israel had gathered in Shechem to make Rehoboam king.

2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard the news, he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon and had been living ever since.

3 They sent for him, and Jeroboam and the whole Israelite assembly came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying,

4 “Your father made us work too hard. Now if you lighten the demands he made and don’t make us work as hard, we will serve you.”

5 He said to them, “Go away for three days, then return to me.” So the people went away.

Rehoboam Consults His Older Advisers

6 King Rehoboam consulted with the older advisers who had served his father Solomon when he had been alive. He asked them, “How do you advise me to answer these people?”

7 They said to him,

“Today if you show a willingness to help these people and grant their request,

they will be your servants from this time forward.”

God Causes Rehoboam to Reject the Elders’ Wise Advice

8 But Rehoboam rejected their advice and consulted the young advisers who served him, with whom he had grown up.

9 He asked them, “How do you advise me to respond to these people who said to me, ‘Lessen the demands your father placed on us?’”

10 The young advisers with whom Rehoboam had grown up said to him, “Say this to these people who have said to you, ‘Your father made us work hard, but now lighten our burden.’ Say this to them: ‘I am a lot harsher than my father!

11 My father imposed heavy demands on you; I will make them even heavier. My father punished you with ordinary whips; I will punish you with whips that really sting your flesh.’”

12 Jeroboam and all the people reported to Rehoboam on the third day, just as the king had ordered when he said, “Return to me on the third day.”

13 The king responded to the people harshly. He rejected the advice of the older men

14 and followed the advice of the younger ones. He said, “My father imposed heavy demands on you; I will make them even heavier. My father punished you with ordinary whips; I will punish you with whips that really sting your flesh.”

15 The king refused to listen to the people, because the LORD was instigating this turn of events so that he might bring to pass the prophetic announcement he had made through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

The Northern Tribes Revolt and Proclaim Jeroboam King

16 When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, the people answered the king, “We have no portion in David, no share in the son of Jesse! Return to your homes, O Israel!

2 Chronicles 10:1–11:4

10:1 Rehoboam traveled to Shechem, for all Israel had gathered in Shechem to make Rehoboam king.

2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard the news, he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon.

Jeroboam returned from Egypt.

3 They sent for him and Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying,

4 “Your father made us work too hard! Now if you lighten the demands he made and don’t make us work as hard, we will serve you.”

5 He said to them, “Go away for three days, then return to me.” So the people went away.

6 King Rehoboam consulted with the older advisers who had served his father Solomon when he had been alive. He asked them, “How do you advise me to answer these people?”

7 They said to him,

“If you are fair to these people, grant their request, and are cordial to them,

they will be your servants from this time forward.”

8 But Rehoboam rejected their advice and consulted the young advisers who served him, with whom he had grown up.

9 He asked them, “How do you advise me to respond to these people who said to me, ‘Lessen the demands your father placed on us?’”

10 The young advisers with whom Rehoboam had grown up said to him, “Say this to these people who have said to you, ‘Your father made us work hard, but now lighten our burden’—say this to them: ‘I am a lot harsher than my father!

11 My father imposed heavy demands on you; I will make them even heavier. My father punished you with ordinary whips; I will punish you with whips that really sting your flesh.’”

12 Jeroboam and all the people reported to Rehoboam on the third day, just as the king had ordered when he said, “Return to me on the third day.”

13 The king responded to the people harshly. He rejected the advice of the older men

14 and followed the advice of the younger ones. He said, “My father imposed heavy demands on you; I will make them even heavier. My father punished you with ordinary whips; I will punish you with whips that really sting your flesh.”

15 The king refused to listen to the people, because God was instigating this turn of events so that he might bring to pass the prophetic announcement he had made through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

16 When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, the people answered the king, “We have no portion in David—no share in the son of Jesse! Return to your homes, O Israel!

<p>Now, look after your own dynasty, O David!" So Israel returned to their homes.</p> <p>17 (Rehoboam continued to rule over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.)</p> <p>18 King Rehoboam sent Adoniram, the supervisor of the work crews, out after them, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to jump into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem.</p> <p>19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the Davidic dynasty to this very day.</p> <p>20 When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they summoned him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. No one except the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the Davidic dynasty.</p> <p>God Prevents a Civil War</p> <p>21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he summoned 180,000 skilled warriors from all of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin to attack Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam son of Solomon.</p> <p>22 But God told Shemaiah the prophet,</p> <p>23 "Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah, and to all Judah and Benjamin,</p> <p>as well as the rest of the people,</p> <p>24 'The LORD says this:</p> <p>"Do not attack and make war with your brothers, the Israelites. Each of you go home, for I have caused this to happen.'""</p> <p>They obeyed the LORD</p> <p>and went home as the LORD had ordered them to do.</p>	<p>Now, look after your own dynasty, O David!" So all Israel returned to their homes.</p> <p>17 (Rehoboam continued to rule over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.)</p> <p>18 King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, the supervisor of the work crews, out after them, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to jump into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem.</p> <p>19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the Davidic dynasty to this very day.</p> <p>11:1 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he summoned 180,000 skilled warriors from Judah and Benjamin to attack Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.</p> <p>2 But the LORD told Shemaiah the prophet,</p> <p>3 "Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin,</p> <p>4 'The LORD says this:</p> <p>"Do not attack and make war with your brothers. Each of you go home, for I have caused this to happen.'""</p> <p>They obeyed the LORD</p> <p>and called off the attack against Jeroboam.</p>
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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 Jeroboam built up Shechem in the Ephraimite hill country and lived there. From there he went out and built up Penuel.

Rehoboam Fortifies the Southern Kingdom

2 Chr 11:5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem; he built up these fortified cities throughout Judah:

6 Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,

7 Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam,

8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,

9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,

10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These were the fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin.

11 He fortified these cities and placed officers in them, as well as storehouses of food, olive oil, and wine.

12 In each city there were shields and spears; he strongly fortified them. Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

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 then thought to himself: "Now the Davidic dynasty could regain the kingdom.

27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the LORD's temple in Jerusalem, their loyalty could shift to their former master, King Rehoboam of Judah. They might kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah."

28 After the king had consulted with his advisers, he made two golden calves. Then he said to the people, "It is too much trouble for you to go up to Jerusalem. Look, Israel, here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

29 He put one in Bethel and the other in Dan.

30 This caused Israel to sin; the people went to Bethel and Dan to worship the calves.

31 He built temples on the high places and appointed as priests people who were not Levites.

The Priests and Levites Move to Judah

2 Chr 11:13 The priests and Levites who lived throughout Israel supported him [Rehoboam], no matter where they resided.

14 The Levites even left their pasturelands and their property behind and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons prohibited them from serving as the LORD's priests.

15 Jeroboam appointed his own priests to serve at the worship centers and to lead in the worship of the goat idols and calf idols he had made.

16 Those among all the Israelite tribes who were determined to worship the LORD God of Israel followed them to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their ancestors.

17 They supported the kingdom of Judah and were loyal to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years; they followed the edicts 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 inaugurated a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival celebrated in Judah. On the altar in Bethel he offered sacrifices to the calves he had made. In Bethel he also appointed priests for the high places he had made.

33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month (a date he had arbitrarily chosen) Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar he had made in Bethel. He inaugurated a festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to offer sacrifices.

13:1 Just then a prophet from Judah, sent by the LORD, arrived in Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing near the altar ready to offer a sacrifice.

2 With the authority of the LORD he cried out against the altar, "O altar, altar! This is what the LORD says, 'Look, a son named Josiah will be born to the Davidic dynasty. He will sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who offer sacrifices on you. Human bones will be burned on you.'"

3 That day he also announced a sign, "This is the sign the LORD has predetermined: The altar will be split open and the ashes on it will fall to the ground."

4 When the king heard what the prophet cried out against the altar in Bethel, Jeroboam, standing at the altar, extended his hand and ordered, "Seize him!" The hand he had extended shriveled up and he could not pull it back.

5 The altar split open and the ashes fell from the altar to the ground, in fulfillment of the sign the prophet had announced with the LORD's authority.

Jeroboam's False Repentance and Attempted Bribe

6 The king pled with the prophet, "Seek the favor of the LORD your God and pray for me, so that my hand may be restored." So the prophet sought the LORD's favor and the king's hand was restored to its former condition.

7 The king then said to the prophet, "Come home with me and have something to eat. I'd like to give a present."

8 But the prophet said to the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I could not go with you and eat and drink in this place.

9 For the LORD gave me strict orders, 'Do not eat or drink there and do not go home the way you came.'"

10 So he started back on another road; he did not travel back on the same road he had taken to Bethel.

The Old Prophet's Treachery

11 Now there was an old prophet living in Bethel. When his sons came home, they told their father everything the prophet had done in Bethel that day and all the words he had spoken to the king.

12 Their father asked them, "Which road did he take?" His sons showed him the road the prophet from Judah had taken.

13 He then told his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." When they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it

14 and took off after the prophet, whom he found sitting under an oak tree. He asked him, "Are you the prophet from Judah?" He answered, "Yes, I am."

15 He then said to him, "Come home with me and eat something."

16 But he replied, "I can't go back with you or eat and drink with you in this place.

17 For the LORD gave me strict orders, 'Do not eat or drink there; do not go back the way you came.'"

18 The old prophet then said, "I too am a prophet like you. An angel told me with the LORD's authority, 'Bring him back with you to your house so he can eat and drink.'" But he was lying to him.

God's Judgment Falls on the Man of God

19 So the prophet went back with him and ate and drank in his house.

20 While they were sitting at the table, the LORD spoke through the old prophet

21 and he cried out to the prophet from Judah, “This is what the LORD says, ‘You have rebelled against the LORD and have not obeyed the command the LORD your God gave you.

22 You went back and ate and drank in this place, even though he said to you, “Do not eat or drink there.” Therefore your corpse will not be buried in your ancestral tomb.”

23 When the prophet from Judah finished his meal, the old prophet saddled his visitor’s donkey for him.

24 As the prophet from Judah was traveling, a lion attacked him on the road and killed him. His corpse was lying on the road, and the donkey and the lion just stood there beside it.

The Old Prophet Buries the Man of God

25 Some men came by and saw the corpse lying in the road with the lion standing beside it. They went and reported what they had seen in the city where the old prophet lived.

26 When the old prophet who had invited him to his house heard the news, he said, “It is the prophet who rebelled against the LORD. The LORD delivered him over to the lion and it ripped him up and killed him, just as the LORD warned him.”

27 He told his sons, “Saddle my donkey,” and they did so.

28 He went and found the corpse lying in the road with the donkey and the lion standing beside it; the lion had neither eaten the corpse nor attacked the donkey.

29 The old prophet picked up the corpse of the prophet, put it on the donkey, and brought it back. The old prophet then entered the city to mourn him and to bury him.

30 He put the corpse into his own tomb, and they mourned over him, saying, “Ah, my brother!”

31 After he buried him, he said to his sons, “When I die, bury me in the tomb where the prophet is buried; put my bones right beside his bones,

32 for the prophecy he announced with the LORD’s authority against the altar in Bethel and against all the temples on the high places in the cities of the north will certainly be fulfilled.”

Jeroboam Hardens His Heart in Spite of the Miraculous Events

33 After this happened, Jeroboam still did not change his evil ways; he continued to appoint common people as priests at the high places. Anyone who wanted the job he consecrated as a priest.

34 This sin caused Jeroboam’s dynasty to come to an end and to be destroyed from 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 Jeroboam’s son Abijah became sick.

2 Jeroboam told his wife, “Disguise yourself so that people cannot recognize you are Jeroboam’s wife. Then go to Shiloh; Ahijah the prophet, who told me I would rule over this nation, lives there.

3 Take ten loaves of bread, some small cakes, and a container of honey and visit him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy.”

4 Jeroboam’s wife did as she was told. She went to Shiloh and visited Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see; he had lost his eyesight in his old age.

5 But the LORD had told Ahijah, “Look, Jeroboam’s wife is coming to find out from you what will happen to her son, for he is sick. Tell her so-and-so. When she comes, she will be in a disguise.”

6 When Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, “Come on in, wife of Jeroboam! Why are you pretending to be someone else? I have been commissioned to give you bad news.

7 Go, tell Jeroboam, ‘This is what the LORD God of Israel says: “I raised you up from among the people and made you ruler over my people Israel.

8 I tore the kingdom away from the Davidic dynasty and gave it to you. But you are not like my servant David, who kept my commandments and followed me wholeheartedly by doing only what I approve.

9 You have sinned more than all who came before you. You went and angered me by making other gods, formed out of metal; you have completely disregarded me.

10 So I am ready to bring disaster on the dynasty of Jeroboam. I will cut off every last male belonging to Jeroboam in Israel, including even the weak and incapacitated. I will burn up the dynasty of Jeroboam, just as one burns manure until it is completely consumed.

11 Dogs will eat the members of your family who die in the city, and the birds of the sky will eat the ones who die in the country.””
Indeed, the LORD has announced it!

12 “As for you, get up and go home. When you set foot in the city, the boy will die.

13 All Israel will mourn him and bury him. He is the only one in Jeroboam’s family who will receive a decent burial, for he is the only one in whom the LORD God of Israel found anything good.

14 The LORD will raise up a king over Israel who will cut off Jeroboam’s dynasty. It is ready to happen!

15 The LORD will attack Israel, making it like a reed that sways in the water. He will remove Israel from this good land he gave to their ancestors and scatter them beyond the Euphrates River, because they angered the LORD by making Asherah poles.

16 He will hand Israel over to their enemies because of the sins which Jeroboam committed and which he made Israel commit.”

17 So Jeroboam’s wife got up and went back to Tirzah. As she crossed the threshold of the house, the boy died.

18 All Israel buried him and mourned for him, just as the LORD had predicted through his servant the prophet Ahijah.

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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.