

The Kingdom Divided

1 Kings 12-14



The Story

When King Solomon began ruling Israel, he worshiped and believed in the true God. As Solomon grew older, he turned away from the Lord and built idols for his family. The Lord was very unhappy with Solomon. Because Solomon turned away from the Lord, the Lord told Solomon that he would divide Solomon's kingdom into two parts after he died.

Rehoboam became king when Solomon died. He was not wise like his father. Before he was crowned king, the leaders of the 10 tribes of Israel asked him, "Please take away some of the hard work and high taxes your father made us pay. Then we will be your servants." Rehoboam didn't know how to answer.

He said, "Give me three days to think about it." Rehoboam asked his father's advisors what to do.

They said, "Listen to the people and take away some of the hard work and high taxes." Rehoboam also asked his rich friends what he should do.

They said, "Make the people work harder and pay more taxes." Rehoboam decided to follow this advice.

So he told the leaders of Israel, "You will work harder and pay more taxes to me than you did for my father."

The 10 tribes of Israel didn't like the answer Rehoboam gave them. They said that Jeroboam, Solomon's servant, would be their king. God's words to Solomon had come true. Solomon's kingdom was split into two parts.

Rehoboam stayed king over two tribes. He ruled in the southern part of Solomon's kingdom. His kingdom was called Judah. Jeroboam became the king over the other 10 tribes of Israel. He ruled over the northern part of Solomon's kingdom. His kingdom was called Israel.

Jeroboam was a bad king. He did not follow the Lord and do what He said. Jeroboam made two golden calves for the people to worship. He put one in the city of Dan and the other in Bethel. He did not want the people in Israel to go to Jerusalem to worship in the temple. Jeroboam led the people of Israel away from the true God to worship idols. Because Jeroboam led the people away from the Lord, the Lord said that bad things would happen to Jeroboam's family.

Rehoboam also was a bad king. He did not follow the Lord. He made idols for the people in Judah. They put idols on the hills and in the trees. Bad things would also happen to Rehoboam's family because he did not follow the ways of the Lord.

God's kingdom of Israel is divided.

Disobedience to God has serious consequences.

Activity One - Answer the following discussion questions orally as a whole group or in smaller groups as time permits.

1. How did Solomon begin ruling Israel?
2. What did Solomon do to make the Lord unhappy? What did the Lord do to Solomon's kingdom?
3. Who became king after Solomon?
4. What question did the 10 tribes of Israel ask Rehoboam?
5. What answer did Rehoboam give the 10 tribes?
6. What did the 10 tribes do after Rehoboam's answer? Who became their king?
7. What kind of king was Rehoboam? What kind of king was Jeroboam?
8. What consequences came to both Jeroboam and Rehoboam because they did not follow what the Lord said?

Activity Two - 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.



Passages

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

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

The kings in our story did not follow God's Word. What happens when we do not follow God's Word?

What are some other things that could replace God's Word in someone's life?

What are some things we could do if someone was trying to take God's Word away from us?

Hymn - TLH #462 v. 1, 4

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

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.

Prayer

Dear Jesus,

Thank You for giving us Your Word in the Bible. Please help us to worship only You and walk in Your ways. Help us not to lead others from Your Word but lead them to Your Word. Amen.