

## **THE STORY**

### **STUDY 14**

#### **CHAPTER 14**

Summary of Chapter:

- During King Solomon's reign, the prophet Ahijah told Jeroboam, an administrator in Solomon's Kingdom, that God would make him King of Israel and give all but one of the tribes to rule over. Solomon discovers this and tried to kill Jeroboam and so he fled to Egypt.
- King Solomon dies and his own tribe, Judah, accept his son, Rehoboam, as the next King. Jeroboam hears of this and returns to confront Rehoboam at his coronation.
- Israel, under Solomon's rule, had been heavily taxed and had been used as labour for Solomon's grand projects. Jeroboam on behalf of the people of Israel, except Judah, confronted Rehoboam with the request to lighten the taxes and heavy burden of labour that was put on them. If Rehoboam agreed they would serve him as King.
- Rehoboam consulted the elders and they urged him to agree with the requests, but Rehoboam also consulted with the young men that grew up with him and they urged him to increase the burden on the people to show that he is greater than his father Solomon.
- Rehoboam listened to the younger men and not the elders and refused to lighten the burden on the people. This resulted in Israel, except Judah, not recognising Rehoboam as king but made Jeroboam King in his place. Thus the Nation of Israel was divided.
- Rehoboam tried to attack Jeroboam to get Israel back under his rule but he was warned by God not to do so. Jeroboam was afraid that if the people worshiped God at the temple in Jerusalem that Rehoboam would persuade them against him. And so Jeroboam built two golden calves in Bethel and in Dan and told the people of Israel that these were the gods that brought them up from Egypt and they are for the people to worship.
- While Jeroboam was worshipping at one of these altars, a man of God pronounced Judgement on all those who would worship there. When Jeroboam heard this he ordered the man to be seized, but as he stretched out his arm, it shrivelled up. He pleaded with the man of God to intercede for him so that his arm may be restored and he did. But even so, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but appointed more priests, anyone who wanted to be a priest became priests of the high places.
- Jeroboam's son, Abijah, became seriously ill and Jeroboam instructed his wife to go to the Prophet Ahijah at Shiloh, disguised so that no one would recognise her and ask the prophet what would happen to their son.
- Ahijah was blind because of his age but the Lord told him that Jeroboam's wife was coming in a disguise to ask about their son. She will be pretending to

be someone else and Ahijah was to tell her everything the Lord instructs him to.

- Ahijah confronted Jeroboam's wife about her pretending and told her to tell her husband that God had given the Kingdom of Israel to him, but in response Jeroboam had done what was evil in the eyes of the Lord more so than all who lived before him. God would now destroy every male that belongs to Jeroboam's household. The sign of this would be that the boy would die as soon as she returned home.
- The Lord also said that he would raise up a new King who would cut off the family of Jeroboam. And the Lord would give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam and they would be exiled from the land of Israel and be scattered because of the Lord's anger against their sins.
- Various Kings reigned in Israel and Judah. Most of them did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord, except for a few kings like King Asa of Judah. Doing right in the eyes of the Lord included, ridding the Kingdom of idolatry. King Asa went even further by removing his grandmother, Maakah, who was the queen mother, because of her pagan worship.
- Jeroboam's family was removed from power in Israel according to the Lord's Word, but Israel continued to do what was evil in the eyes of the Lord as they were led by their kings. They eventually had a man by the name of Ahab to rule over them, but his wife was more infamous because she hated God's prophets and tried to kill all of them. King Ahab and Queen Jezebel worshipped Baal.

## **1. What caused the Kingdom of Israel to be divided?**

Rehoboam's failure to accept the proposal from Jeroboam and Israel by refusing to listen to the elders who served his father, King Solomon, during his life time, but rather, listening to the young men with whom Rehoboam grew up.

The elders had advised Rehoboam to serve the people and adhere to their request which would result in the people serving him as King. Basically the elders said to him that he should be humble and look after God's people and they would look after him.

The young men advised Rehoboam to not adhere to the people's request, but to rather consider himself greater than his father Solomon and rule even harsher than he had.

Rehoboam listened to the young men, because he wanted to be greater than his father. He worshipped himself more than anything else, including God. He wanted more money, more riches, more grand buildings and projects so that he would be famous- he worshiped himself. And as a result the Kingdom was divided, just as God had fore-warned Solomon because he failed to keep idolatry out of Israel.

## **2. How did Rehoboam and Jeroboam both make mistakes?**

Both of them made the mistake by leading their kingdoms into idolatry. They did not do what was right in the eyes of God, but led the people into the worship of pagan god's and refused to keep the people only for God.

Jeroboam feared the loyalty of his people when they would have to go to Jerusalem to worship God at the temple. So he built golden calves in the cities of Bethel and Dan and commanded the people of Israel to worship these gods, whom he said were the gods that brought them out of Egypt. He also had no regard for the Lord and his word. He allowed anyone who wanted to be a priest, to lead the people in worship. He did what was right in his own eyes instead of what was right in the Lord's eyes.

Even after the Lord's judgment and grace on him with his hand shrivelling up and the Lord restoring it, Jeroboam continued to lead the people into idolatry.

Rehoboam also set up high places, sacred stones and asherah poles on every hill and under every spreading tree. There were male shrine prostitutes and the people were allowed to engage in detestable practices with the nations the Lord had driven out of the land and had commanded to have nothing to do with.

Instead of the two Kings seeking what God wanted for his people, they sought what they wanted from God's people and led them into the very thing they were guilty of, idolatry. This ended up in war between each other and eventually God's judgment coming upon them.

## **3. What observations do you make about God's character and what is important to God, based on this chapter?**

God is Patient with his people as they struggle to live under his rule and even rebel against him and his ways.

God is a Jealous God, He does desire that He alone is worshipped by His people and He does burn with anger when He is not. Being the only true God, the one who has been so kind and gracious to His people, He demands and expects allegiance and loyalty to Him alone.

God is Faithful and true to His Word, that if they will not remain faithful to Him, they will experience curses and not blessings. We read how they continued to practice idolatry and God's judgment came upon them in various ways. They were divided as a nation because they refused to turn from their idolatrous ways just as God had warned them.

What is important to God is a faithful commitment and loyalty to him from his people. He has worked in the past to give them everything they need and he demands that they remain faithful and loyal to Him. His love for them has seen Him give them what they need most and what is of great benefit to them.

In return, He demands they were worship him alone and not insult Him by worshipping things that are not God.

#### **4. Why is it important to always remain loyal to God?**

As we see in this chapter that when we decide to do what is right in our own eyes and not what is right before God, we end up in situations that are not the best that God desires for us. We forfeit the grace and the blessings that God desires us to enjoy from being His children.

We also see that it does not please God when we are unfaithful to Him. His judgment and anger burns against us, when what is rightly reserved for Him, namely His glory, is given to something or someone else.

Often our disloyalty to God influences others to follow and we end up leading people away from God instead of to Him. God knows what is best for his people, He has gone to extreme lengths to give us what is best and for us to give up what God knows is good for us, is not wise.

#### **5. When have you strayed from God? What caused the straying?**

The cause might be that one has treasured or pursued something else more in one's life other than God. Maybe one's loyalty has been to something or someone other than God.

But Isaiah 53:6 tells us that we all have strayed from God at one point when each of us turned to his own way instead of turning to follow God's ways.

#### **6. In what ways has God been kind to you even when you didn't deserve it?**

We might be able to recall many instances of God's kindness towards us when we did not deserve it, but for every Christian, their salvation is the prime example of God's kindness when they did not deserve it. For we read in the Bible that rebellion against God's ways is justifiably punished by God in separating Himself from us for eternity. Instead in His steadfast love and kindness, even though we did not deserve it, God sent His son Jesus Christ, to rescue us from that judgment and give us eternal life with Him.