

Norwood's Notes: Brief Summaries of Bible Stories

These "notes" are intended to provide a general overview of the basic stories of the Bible in the hope of building greater biblical knowledge and encouraging Bible reading and study. For more information, visit www.UjimaChurch.org

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22 - Highlights from 1 Kings 12-15 & 2 Chronicles 10-16, "The Kingdom Divided"

When King Solomon's son, Rehoboam, ascended to the throne, he leaned upon the foolish counsel of inexperienced advisors and caused 10 of the tribes of Israel to turn away from following him. While Judah remained loyal to King Rehoboam, Israel made Jeroboam its king. Jeroboam feared that when his people offered sacrifices to the Lord at the Temple in Jerusalem, their heart would turn again to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon and grandson of David. So he made two golden calves as idols and told his people to worship them as the gods who delivered them from Egypt. He built temples and appointed priests who were not Levites and established feast days, all of which led his people into idolatry (1Kings 12; 1Chr 10-11). The Lord sent a prophet from Judah to declare that one day the idolatrous altars built by Jeroboam would be destroyed by one who would be born to the house of David, whose name would be "Josiah." When King Jeroboam heard the prophet's words, he ordered that he be seized, but when he stretched out his hand against the prophet, his hand withered immediately - losing all its strength. As King Jeroboam cried for mercy to the prophet, the prophet interceded with the Lord and the king's hand was restored.

The prophet from Judah had been ordered by the Lord fast until he returned from the land of Israel to the land of Judah. As he departed, a prophet from the land of Israel pursued him and lied to him, saying that an angel had appeared revealing that the prophet from Judah should return and share a meal with the prophet from Israel. Without verifying that this was indeed a word from the Lord, the prophet from Judah disobeyed the word he had received from the Lord, breaking his fast in the home of the prophet from Israel, who then told him that because he had disobeyed the word of the Lord, he would surely die in the land of Israel. As the prophet from Judah departed, a lion attacked him on the road and killed him. When the old prophet from Israel heard it, he buried his remains in his own grave and mourned him. He told his sons that, when he died, he wanted to be buried next to the prophet from Judah, for the word he had spoken against Jeroboam would surely be kept by the Lord, even though the prophet himself had disobeyed God by breaking his fast before he returned to Judah. When King Jeroboam heard of the

death of the prophet from Judah, he returned to his idolatry, leading Israel astray (1Kings 13).

King Rehoboam of Judah grew strong, and in his arrogance he abandoned the law of the Lord and turned to idols (1Kings 14). In the fifth year of his reign, the Lord allowed Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt to come against him. While the Lord kept Shishak from conquering Jerusalem, he humbled Rehoboam by making him serve Shishak, who took as bounty the treasures of the king's house and the treasures of the Temple. Rehoboam humbled himself before the Lord, and the Lord blessed Judah. King Rehoboam reigned over Judah for seventeen years. His son, Abijah (also called Abijam) succeeded him (2Chr 12).

There was war between King Abijah of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel. King Abijah relied upon the Lord, so that even when the forces of the wicked Jeroboam surrounded him in ambush, the Lord still gave him the victory. King Abijah took cities and villages from Jeroboam (2Chr 13). However, his heart was not wholly true to the Lord and he only reigned for three years and was succeeded by his son Asa (1Kings 15).

King Jeroboam of Israel also had a son named Abijah, who became very sick. Following the king's instruction, his mother disguised herself and sought out the prophet Ahijah, who - in the days of Solomon - had told Jeroboam that he would become king over ten of the tribes of Israel. Old and almost blind, the prophet still knew who approached his home and for what reason. He told Jeroboam's wife that eventually all the men of the king's entire idolatrous family would be killed and their bodies consumed by scavengers. The prophet also told her that while her child would die from his sickness, unlike the other men of the family, his body would be buried, and the Lord would show him grace because he was pleased with him (2Chr 14). Jeroboam died, his other son Nadab only reigned for two years, following in the wicked ways of his father. He was overthrown by Baasha, who had conspired against him and also killed the remaining men of the house of Jeroboam, as had been prophesied. King Baasha of Israel also continued in wicked idolatry.

After his father King Abijah died, King Asa began his forty-one year reign over Judah. Heeding the prophecy of Azariah, who told him to put away all of the idols and pagan practices, Asa brought sweeping religious reforms in Judah, ridding the land of the idols and even removing his mother from her position because she had made an idol (2Chr 15). When Zerah the Ethiopian came against King Asa's forces with a million men and 300 chariots, King Asa cried out to the Lord and was granted an overwhelming victory. Afterward, when King Baasha of Israel built the city of Ramah to cut off travel in and out of Judah, Asa sought the help of the King of Syria instead of relying upon the Lord. When the prophet Hanani condemned him for this, Asa had him imprisoned (2Chr 16). After Asa died from disease, his son Jehoshaphat succeeded him.