

The Kingdom Divides

1 Kings 11:28–12:24

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Getting Ready to Split

Soon after God declared that the kingdom of Israel would be taken from Solomon's descendants, God raised up enemies against Israel (1 Kings 11:14, 23). They caused problems for Solomon for the remainder of his life. But they were not his biggest problem. Jeroboam, one of Solomon's trusted officials, turned against him—and God was on Jeroboam's side.

Ahijah the prophet, speaking for the Lord, predicted the division of the kingdom and gave leadership of 10 tribes to Jeroboam. God's offer to Jeroboam echoed both God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and David's charge to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1-4. This theme of God's blessing in return for obedience and punishment in return for rebellion recurred as God dealt with the kings chosen to rule his people.

Solomon Reacts to God's Plan

When Solomon learned that God had chosen Jeroboam to succeed him, Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam. He acted much as Saul, Israel's first king, had acted when he tried to kill David. Both of these attempts stand in contrast to David's refusal to kill Saul even when he had the opportunity. The wise Solomon had lost all trust in the God who had given him so much, and he had no intention of obeying him. Thus he lost God's blessing on his life and on his kingdom.

The Split Is Complete

Rehoboam, the son who succeeded Solomon as king, apparently didn't inherit Solomon's wisdom. Instead of listening to Solomon's advisers and the pleas of his people, Rehoboam chose to listen to his young friends. Instead of winning the favor of the people by lightening their tax load, he increased it in order to fill his own coffers.

Rehoboam sent Adoniram, who was in charge of forced labor, to the people of Israel. But the people stoned Adoniram. Rehoboam then gathered an army and prepared to attack Jeroboam and Israel. God spoke through the prophet Shemaiah to prevent the 180,000-man army of Judah from attacking Israel. In contrast to his father, whose later life was characterized by disobedience, Rehoboam obeyed God this time, and the split between the two parts of the kingdom was complete.

The Jesus Connection

Rehoboam was driven by his own greed, rather than sound wisdom. When we follow God, our relationship with Jesus is the driving force in every decision we make.

Reread 1 Kings 11:34-38. What do God's promises for Jeroboam in this passage mean to you?

Pray that the way you observe God's commands will have a lasting effect on future generations. You can write your prayer here.

The Kingdom Divides—1 Kings 11:28–12:24

► **Bible Point**—Choose to follow God.

Key Verse—“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

WEAVING FAITH
AT HOME

Daily Challenges

Choose one or more of these activities to do this week.

- **Make a list of people and things you want to pray for, and then pray through your list regularly. Keep track of answered prayers—seeing how God has been faithful to us is a great reminder that we also should be faithful to God.**
- **If there’s an area of your life where you’ve been in rebellion, confess it to God and ask his forgiveness. You may also want to talk with a trusted Christian friend or leader and ask him or her to pray with you, too.**
- **Talk with a friend this week about your relationship with Jesus Christ. Share with that person what it means for you to follow God.**

Through the Week

Use the following passages to explore additional biblical perspectives on rebellion and obedience to God.

Monday—Deuteronomy 30:16-20

- **Based on this passage, what are some of the consequences of obeying God?**

Tuesday—Joshua 24:14-15

- **Why did Joshua give the people this choice? What were the possible consequences?**

Wednesday—Numbers 14:18

- **Why do you think the Lord still allows us to experience negative consequences for wrong choices even though he forgives us?**

Thursday—Proverbs 16:16

- **How can you choose wisdom and understanding rather than gold or silver?**

Friday—Micah 6:8

- **How can this verse guide you in choosing God’s way this week?**

Saturday—Luke 10:38-42

- **Why did Jesus say Mary had made the right choice?**

Talk Topics

- **Share a time you were rebellious toward God and the resulting negative consequences for you. Others can learn a lot from your mistakes as well as from your successes.**
- **Talk about the fact that every person has a purpose in life. Explain that when we rebel against God, we run the risk of missing the purpose for our lives.**
- **Discuss God’s grace and God’s willingness to forgive our mistakes. Talk about the hope we have in being given another chance.**
- **Explore the different areas of life in which you feel tempted. How can you plan so you are able to resist these temptations when they come along?**

**OK
TO COPY**