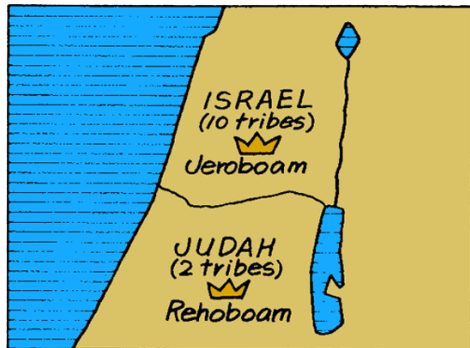


God's Nation Divides



Scripture Reference: [1 Kings 11:41-12:24](#);
[2 Chronicles 10:1-11:4](#)

Suggested Emphasis: Listen to advice from older, wiser people; parents, elders, teachers.

Memory Verse: "Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.." [Proverbs 19:20, NIV](#)



Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



Review Questions



Songs



Learning Activities



Other Online Resources

Story Overview:

Rehoboam was officially appointed the new king when his father, Solomon, died. When Rehoboam became king, a man named Jeroboam, gathered the people together and asked Rehoboam to be easier on the people and not make them work too hard like Solomon had done. The elders of the court advised Rehoboam that, if

he did this, the people would love him and follow him. Rehoboam ignored this good advice and listened to his young friends instead. They told him to make the people work harder and to treat them more like slaves. Because of this, the people rebelled and the kingdom divided into two parts. Rehoboam was king of the smaller part- called Judah. Jeroboam became king of the larger part- called Israel.

Background Study:

Solomon had asked God for wisdom to rule well, and he did rule well for a long time. He built a beautiful temple for the Lord. He wrote wise proverbs to teach young men the right way to live. He made his country even stronger than it had been in David's time. As he grew older, Solomon grew careless about obeying God. He married foreign women and let them bring their heathen idols into Israel. He became too proud of his beautiful cities and huge army. He made taxes too heavy for the common people. He also drafted them to work for him and serve in the army. (Read 1 Kings chapter 11).

Jeroboam was a popular leader in the tribe of Ephraim. He served Solomon well until Ahijah, a prophet, said he would someday rule part of the kingdom. Solomon thought only a traitor could think of taking part of the kingdom, so he wanted to punish Jeroboam for treason. Jeroboam saved his life by moving to Egypt (1 Kings 11:26-40).

When Solomon died after ruling forty years, Jeroboam came back from Egypt. Again he was a popular leader among the people as they gathered to crown Solomon's son Rehoboam as their king. Jeroboam and other leaders representing all Israel went to Rehoboam and asked him to lower their taxes and not demand so much work and military service from them. They promised to be loyal subjects of the new king if he would do that.

The business of government was new to Rehoboam, and the request may have surprised him. He wanted time to think it over. Any ruler has to have help in the government. The men who had helped Solomon knew more about the needs of the people and about what should happen when Rehoboam gave his answer. Rehoboam wisely asked them for advice.

The old men advised Rehoboam to cut taxes and not to draft so many people. If he would do that, the people would be glad to have him as their king. They would obey him as long as they lived.

Now Rehoboam turned to the young men who had grown up with him in the luxury of the king's court. They knew little about the serious business of government and cared little about the common people. They were playboys rather than statesmen. The young men advised Rehoboam to let the people know he was the boss by making taxes higher, demanding more work, and punishing people more severely if they displeased him. Very unwisely Rehoboam took the advice of the foolish young men and this tore the country apart. The Lord had known in advance that Rehoboam was going to make a foolish decision.

Most of the people of Israel would not have a king who promised to treat them so cruelly. Jeroboam became king of the tribes that rebelled. These tribes became their own country and they called themselves "Israel." Jeroboam knew that he needed to keep the people away from Jerusalem or they might go back to Rehoboam's "side" so he established the town of Bethel as a place of worship instead of Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:25-13:34). This whole area was known as Samaria. Even hundreds of years later, in the New Testament times, the people of Samaria were not considered "true" Jews.

The tribe of Judah kept Rehoboam as its king. This was Rehoboam's own tribe. The capitol city of Jerusalem was in the territory of Judah. The tribe of Benjamin seems to have remained loyal to Judah (1 Kings 11:21). Now, these tribes became their own country and they were called "Judah." Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king and he went on to rule in Jerusalem for 17 years. He did not follow God (2 Chronicles 12:13-14).

There is nothing sadder than the thought of division among God's people. The next years were bad ones. Many turned away from the Lord and began to worship the gods of the people in the surrounding countries.

[Background Information on the Divided Kingdom.](#)

-  [What happened before this story?](#)
-  [What happens after this story?](#)

-  [List of all Bible stories and themes on this website.](#)

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Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask around and collect some advice that would apply to children. Some of these might be: “Don’t laugh when your mouth is full (or when milk is in your mouth); Don’t get gum too close to your hair; Put your homework in your school bag the night before school; etc.” Ask the children what good advice they have heard and then discuss it. Talk about why someone might advise not putting gum too close to hair. Maybe they learned from their own mistake or from watching someone else make the mistake. Talk about how that the older people get, the more experience they have. The children in your class might have good advice for children younger than them. “In today’s story we are going to learn about someone who did not listen to advice from older people. This person listened to advice from people who did not have any experience.”

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The Story:

King Solomon was a wise and good king for many years. All of the 12 tribes of Israel followed him and were part of his kingdom. Solomon built a beautiful temple for the Lord and also a huge palace. But Solomon did not always choose to do right. Solomon wanted to make more and more beautiful buildings. He made people work very hard even when they did not want to. He also made them pay high taxes. Solomon also had many wives and they did not worship God. Solomon had altars built so that his wives could worship their false gods.

Jeroboam was one of Solomon’s workers. A prophet of the Lord came to Jeroboam and said, “Solomon has disobeyed the Lord. Solomon will be the king until he dies but after that, the 12 tribes of the kingdom will be divided into two parts. Solomon’s son will rule two tribes and you will rule 10 tribes.

After King Solomon died, everyone expected his son Rehoboam, to be the new king. All of the people gathered in the town of Shechem to crown Rehoboam.

Jeroboam came before the king. Jeroboam and the people said, "Your father, Solomon, was very strict with us. He made us work long and hard for him and pay many taxes, too. If you will be easier on us, we will serve you well."

Rehoboam said, "I need three days to think about this." The people went away. First, Rehoboam went to the older men who had a great deal of wisdom and experience. Rehoboam asked, "What do you think I should say to these people? Should I lower taxes and give them less work? Should I do what they've asked?"

The older men said, "Yes! If you treat the people kindly, they will be your loyal servants." These older men had been advisers to King Solomon. They knew that the people were not happy when they had to work so hard. They wanted Rehoboam to be a good king.

But this was not what Rehoboam wanted to do; so he went to the young men who were his own servants. These men didn't have any experience, and they didn't ask for God's wisdom. They said, "Tell the people that you will give them even more work and higher taxes than your father did. That will show them how tough you are, and that you are much stronger than your father."

Three days later, when Rehoboam met with the people of Israel again, he followed the young men's foolish advice and said, "I am going to be even stricter than my father was - more work and higher taxes." Rehoboam thought that acting tough would make the people respect and serve him; but this was not God's way of thinking or acting.

The people were very angry. Many of them did not want to follow a king who was going to be mean. Ten of the tribes decided to make their own country and have Jeroboam as their king. They named their country Israel. They decided that they would never come to Jerusalem and the temple again. They would make their own place to worship.

Two of the tribes stayed with King Rehoboam. These were the tribes of Judah and

Benjamin. They decided that the new name for their country would be “Judah.” They used to sometimes be called Israel, too, but now they would never use that name again.

God knew all along that Rehoboam would make a bad choice. Everything happened just like the prophet of God had said that it would. The kingdom of God’s people divided into two parts! Rehoboam was not a good king and he did not follow God. Jeroboam was not a good king either. It was very sad because many people stopped worshipping God and began to worship the false gods of the countries around them.

King Rehoboam must have wished that he had listened to good advice.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. Who was Solomon’s son that was crowned king? Rehoboam
2. What advice did the older men give Rehoboam? Don’t make the people work too hard or pay such high taxes and they will be happy to serve you.
3. What advice did the younger men give Rehoboam? Be mean and the people will have to serve you.
4. The kingdom divided in two with two different names. Who became king of Judah? Rehoboam

5. Who became king of Israel? Jeroboam

Song Suggestions:

- Booster Song
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Discuss the attributes of a good advisor (wise, experienced, practical, knowledgeable, etc.)
- Start this term by dividing a bulletin board or poster in two parts. One side will be for Judah and the other for Israel. Each week, as you tell the stories pin up or write names and words that describe each kingdom. This week you might write “Rehoboam, Jerusalem, temple, Solomon’s son, bad advice, Judah, Benjamin” under Judah. “Jeroboam, Bethel, rebel, Samaria” could go under Israel. Keep adding to this every week.
- To help young children understand the concept of “dividing” try dividing a number of groups of items between the children (blocks, crayons, pizza).
- Use a bible atlas or maps in the back of bibles to see the way the kingdom was divided. Older children should learn to find Palestine on a world map. They should learn to be able to point out Jerusalem and the Jordan River on a map of the country.

Crafts:

- Make a poster of Proverbs 19:20 and use paint to decorate it.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for "God's Nation Divides" printables to print on A4 size paper](#)

[Click here for "God's Nation Divides" printables \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Lesson plan and ideas at http://ministry-to-children/](http://ministry-to-children/)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/divided-kingdom/>

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