

**Old Testament Survey 09 - Divided Monarchy : Kings, Chronicles, and  
Early Prophets** for the Bible Institute at  
Gulf Coast Baptist Church **Spring 2026** by Steve Thomas

**Introduction**

God's Covenant with Israel and David set up much of the context for the Divided Kingdom and following carrying of the Tribes into Exile. God had set up stipulations that the Israelites broke time after time. Prophets warned of the coming doom. Neighboring nations were used to afflict Israel with tribulation until God rose up two powerful empires to chastise the Divided Kingdom of Israel and Judah. Wickedness was the rule of the day in the Northern 10 tribes.

Israel's failure to live up to their side of the Mosaic Covenant led to dire consequences. Several prophets were used by God to pronounce judgement. At times, there was repentance and revival, much more evident from the Southern Tribes of Judah than from the Northern Tribes. But even Ahab showed repentance. The Sin of Jereboam was repeated by the kings of the Northern Kingdom and idol worship became the norm for God's Chosen People. The Justice of God would not allow this to go unchecked.

This period of Israel's history is a microcosm of what was to come and what lies in their future. A Bright Hope of redemption was prophesied - the Redeemer was still to come. This Messiah would deliver them from the bondage and set them free, fulfilling the Davidic Covenant, as well as the other promises made to Israel. But would the people accept this Messiah when He came?

**1 Kings 12 (division)**

Following the golden years of Solomon, the height of Israel's wealth and power, there was division. Solomon's son Rehoboam was not a wise king like his father, and vowed to lay an even heavier burden on the people than Solomon did. He chastised them with whips, but Rehoboam would chastise them with scorpions. This led to the Division of the Kingdom, with Rehoboam the ruler of the two tribes of Judah, and Jereboam the leader of the 10 northern tribes called Israel.

**The Sin of Jereboam/ Fall of Israel**

To keep the people from returning to Jerusalem each year to worship, Jereboam set up golden calves at the northern and southern boundaries to Israel. This idol worship was denounced by God and led to God's chastisement. 2 Kings 17 records the fall of Israel to the hands of the Assyrians.

**The Tools of Chastisement : Assyria and Babylon**

Assyria was the great world power that God used primarily to judge and discipline the Northern Kingdom of Israel. It was centered in northern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq). Its major capitals included Nineveh, Ashur, and Calah. They were known for military strength, cruelty,

siege warfare, and forced deportations. Assyria rose to power during the divided kingdom period and increasingly threatened Israel because of the nation's idolatry and covenant unfaithfulness.

God repeatedly warned Israel through prophets such as: Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah. When Israel refused to repent, Assyria became the instrument of divine judgment. Assyria conquered much of the Northern Kingdom. In 722 BC, Samaria fell under Assyrian king Shalmaneser V and later Sargon II. The Israelites were deported and scattered among the nations. This event ended the Northern Kingdom permanently. God described Assyria as: "the rod of Mine anger" (Isaiah 10:5) Yet Assyria itself was arrogant and violent. After using Assyria for judgment, God later judged Assyria for its pride, cruelty, and wickedness. The empire eventually weakened Nineveh fell in 612 BC to a coalition led by Babylon and the Medes. The prophet Nahum foretold Nineveh's destruction.

Babylon was the empire God used primarily to discipline the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Located in southern Mesopotamia, its capital city was Babylon. They were famous for wealth, learning, massive walls, and pagan religion. Under king Nebuchadnezzar II, Babylon became the dominant world empire after defeating Assyria and Egypt. Judah had witnessed Israel's destruction but still continued in: idolatry, injustice, and covenant rebellion.

God sent prophets such as: Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah. These prophets warned Judah that Babylon would come unless the nation repented. The First Deportation of Judah came in 605 BC when Babylon defeated Egypt at Carchemish. Young captives such as Daniel and the Hebrew were taken to Babylon. The Second Deportation took place in 597 BC when King Jehoiachin and many leaders were exiled- Ezekiel was among the captives. The Destruction of Jerusalem came in 586 BC. Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple, King Zedekiah was captured and his family was executed just before they Babylonians put out his eyes. Judah officially fell at this time.

Babylon represented: divine judgment, exile, and loss of covenant blessings. Yet God also promised restoration after the exile. The exile purified the Jewish people from widespread idolatry and prepared the way for later restoration.

Babylon itself later became proud and corrupt. In 539 BC, the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon. Cyrus the Great allowed the Jewish exiles to return home. This fulfilled prophecies from: Isaiah and Jeremiah.

### **Valuable Study/Dispensational Tie In**

A significant study of God's dealings with His covenant people is 2 Kings 18-19, which chronicles the events of the reign of Hezekiah the king. Present here is Hezekiah's correct actions as a 25 year old king, and the trouble he faced. Also present is his flawed response, and then his faith. One of the best representatives of Old Testament prayer is found in chapter 19.

The events of these books was predicted in the Pentateuch. The blessings and cursings of Deuteronomy 28 are found in the ups and downs of the time of the Divided Kingdom. When Israel was obedient, they flourished, when they were wicked, judgement came on them. God was faithful and merciful in meeting out this judgement. Each time that the prophets were used

to carry God's word to the people, prophetic hope frequently included national restoration, a righteous king, and international peace. These elements will be included in the eschatology of the nation of Israel. The majority of the Bible is written during the Dispensation of Law. This is possibly why so many believers carry these truths out of context and into the Dispensation of Grace. The mobility of God should be emphasized here. God will deal differently with His people during different rules of life.

### **Conclusion**

Israel divided because of a poor decision by Solomon's son Rehoboam. But it stayed divided because of the wickedness of Jereboam and his descendants. Ultimately the idolatry, injustice, and unfaithfulness of God's people led to their discipline. The multiple opportunities to repent and obey were given. God sent them faithful prophets and gave the time to repent. The times when they did repent (Judah) God's delivering power was evident. The books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel give some harsh prophecies about the tough times that remain ahead for Isreal, but they also give the hope that a Coming Messiah will bring.