

The Divided Kingdom

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

The glorious and grand reigns of David and Solomon quickly faded during the reigns of succeeding kings. During the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam, a split occurred between the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom from which Israel never recovered. The subsequent history of the divided kingdom is a gradual descent into idolatry, defeat, and national destruction. Rejecting all the warnings of God's prophets, both kingdoms were eventually conquered by foreign nations and the inhabitants taken out of their homeland into exile. In this lecture, Dr. Sproul discusses the history of the divided kingdom.

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Kings 11–2 Kings

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To identify the causes of the division of the nation of Israel.
2. To identify the significance of Jeroboam's idolatrous leadership.
3. To trace the subsequent histories of the kingdom of Israel and the kingdom of Judah.

QUOTATIONS

The writer of Kings was concerned to demonstrate the historical reality of God's faithfulness to his promises to David. He presents an unbroken dynasty maintained in Judah through about three and a half centuries. The book ends on this note of hope, that

even during the Exile and under foreign domination, divine favor still attended David's descendants. The gospel writers are concerned to trace the Davidic ancestry of Jesus and his rightful claim to the title "son of David," heir to the kingdom that God would erect as a consequence of his promises to David.

—Raymond Dillard & Tremper Longman

LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. The glories of the reigns of David and Solomon were quickly reduced to dust during the reigns of subsequent kings.
- B. Jeroboam was chosen by God to lead the northern Israelites away from the reign of the house of David.
 - Jeroboam was in charge of Solomon's forced labor corps.
- C. Ahijah the prophet meets Jeroboam and gives him the Word of the Lord through an object lesson.
 1. Old Testament prophets often performed a concrete action to portray an impending action by God.
 2. Ahijah the prophet tore his garment into twelve pieces and gave ten pieces to Jeroboam as a symbol of the ten tribes he was to rule over.
 3. Because of God's love for David and His promise of an enduring dynasty, the house of David was left one tribe over which to rule.
- D. The nation of Israel was divided into two parts.
 1. The northern kingdom was called the kingdom of Israel with its capital at Samaria.
 2. The southern kingdom was called the kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem.
- E. Rehoboam succeeded his father, Solomon, as king.
 1. Jeroboam led the northern tribes in a request for Rehoboam to lessen the forced labor requirements on the people.
 2. The king of God's people was never to be autonomous and oppress the people. He was to be subject to Yahweh and the king's law.
 3. The history of Israel's monarchy is of one monarch after another arrogating unlawful authority for themselves.

4. Rehoboam rejected the request of Jeroboam and the people and promises a *more* oppressive reign than that of his father.
 5. The northern tribes rebelled against Rehoboam's rule and make Jeroboam their king.
- F. Jeroboam ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel, and Rehoboam and the house of David retained authority over the southern kingdom of Judah.
- Jeroboam establishes two pagan shrines with golden calves and leads the people into idolatry.
- G. After the division, the northern kingdom lasted approximately 200 years.
1. There were twenty kings with nine different dynasties during the northern kingdom's history.
 2. The house of Omri was one of the most significant dynasties because they established a rival capital at Samaria.
 3. Omri was a brilliant administrator, but also exceedingly wicked in leading Israel deeper into idolatry.
- H. Ahab was one of the most significant and evil kings in the line of Omri.
1. Ahab's wife Jezebel was known for her wickedness and determination to convert Israel to the worship of pagan gods.
 2. God raised up a line of prophets, spearheaded by Elijah, to confront the evil in the northern kingdom.
- I. The southern kingdom maintained some stability with some godly kings and occasional reforms.
- The southern kingdom lasted 350 years with twenty kings from the one dynasty of the house of David.
- J. In 722 BC the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrian army, and the people were taken away into exile.
- K. In 586–587 BC the southern kingdom fell to the Babylonian army, and the people were taken away into exile.
- L. Defeat and darkness falls upon the people of God in exile.

- M. Amos prophesied regarding the “booth of David” which had fallen, but predicted that one day it would be restored.
- The greatest Son of David would one day come to claim his throne and his kingdom would last forever.

BIBLE STUDY

1. What object lesson did the prophet Ahijah perform for Jeroboam and what did it mean (1 Kings 11:26–40)? Were such object lessons a common way for the prophets to communicate their messages?
2. What motivated the ten northern tribes of Israel to rebel against the Davidic king (1 Kings 12:1–24)?
3. To whom was the king of God’s people supposed to subject himself (Deut. 17:14–20)? Would Rehoboam’s arrogance (1 Kings 12:1–15) become typical or atypical of the kings of God’s people under the old covenant?
4. Fill in the blanks: Dr. Sproul states, that after Solomon, the nation of Israel was divided into two parts. The northern kingdom of _____ lasted _____ years after the division and its capital was _____. The southern kingdom of _____ lasted _____ after the division and its capital was _____.
5. What did Jeroboam do that would become indicative of all of the kings of the northern kingdom (1 Kings 12:25–33)?
6. According to Dr. Sproul, what were the high points and low points of Omri’s reign in the northern kingdom (1 Kings 16:21–28)?
7. Who were Ahab and Jezebel, and who was raised up to prophesy against them?
8. What empire conquered the northern kingdom and exiled its people? In what year did this happen? What empire conquered the southern kingdom and exiled its people? In what year did this happen?
9. Does Amos 9:11–15 view exile as the last word for God’s people? What does this prophecy signify, according to Dr. Sproul?

DISCUSSION

1. Is it a new thing for young people to ignore the wisdom of their elders (1 Kings 12:1-15)? If you are an older person, how can you form relationships with young people in your church in order that they might be willing to receive your wisdom? If you are a younger person, how can you best seek the wisdom of an older brother or sister in Christ?
2. Do you think God still judges nations with decline and even exile as He did with Israel and Judah? Is it possible to know for sure when He does this today? Why or why not?
3. Are you ever tempted to doubt that God will keep His promises? How does God's faithfulness to David's line (Amos 9:11-15) encourage you to trust Him at His Word?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Davis, Dale Ralph. *2 Kings: The Power and Fury*
House, Paul. *1, 2 Kings*