

A Nation Divided

Lesson Twelve

1 Kings 12-22; 2 Kings 2,9

This lesson will begin the study of the period of time from when Israel becomes a divided nation until their captivity in Babylon. This is from 930-586 B.C. It takes 344 years for these events to occur. During this 344-year period of time, the various kings who ruled in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were generally not interested in serving the Lord. There were exceptions, of course. Also, during this time, God raised up prophets to warn the people of the coming captivity if they would not repent and turn to the Lord.

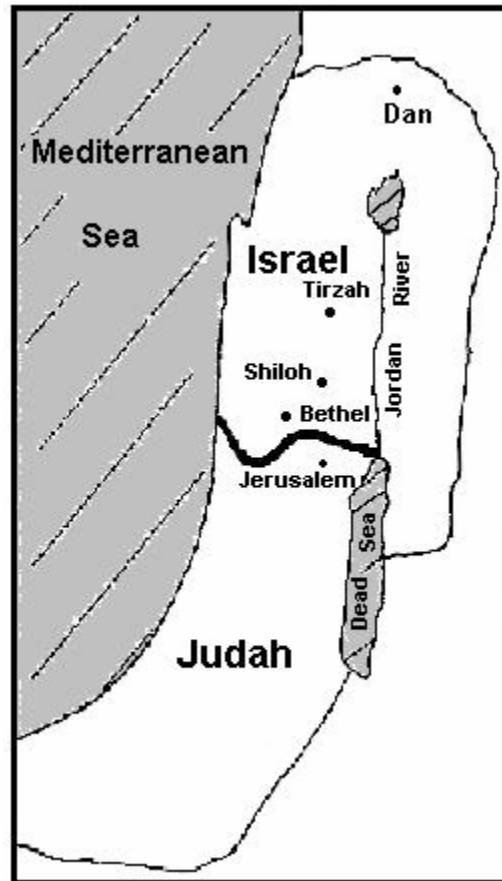
This lesson deals with the breaking apart of the kingdom into two kingdoms, each with its own king. The lesson also covers some of the events from the life of the prophet Elijah.

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

1 Kings 12-14

In the last lesson the prophet Ahijah told Jeroboam that he would be the ruler over ten of the tribes of Israel. This would happen after the death of Solomon. When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam was named king. Rehoboam was not a good king and was soon in deep trouble. Jeroboam and Rehoboam would strive for power, and the result would be the division of the kingdom of Israel. The map below shows where the kingdom was divided. The northern kingdom was called Israel and the southern kingdom was called Judah.

Rehoboam went to Shechem for all Israel came to Shechem to make him king. Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam saying, "Your father made our yoke grievous; now, therefore, make the grievous service and heavy yoke lighter, and we will serve you." 1 King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon and said, "How do you advise that I may answer this people?" They spoke to him, "If you will grant the request of this people this day, then they will be your servants forever." But he forsook the counsel of the old men that they had given him, and consulted with the young men that had grown up with him. The young men answered, "Thus shall you speak to this people, 'My



father did laden you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." So Rehoboam, the king, answered the people roughly after the counsel of the young men. When Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered, "What portion do we have in David? To your tents, O Israel!" So Israel rebelled against the house of David and made Jeroboam king over Israel. There was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin.

Not all of the tribe of Benjamin sided with the tribe of Judah. The ones around the city of Jerusalem were the ones that continued with the king from the house of David.

To whom does Rehoboam not listen? *The old men*

To whom does Rehoboam listen? *The young men*

Who gave the best advice? *The old men*

Is Rehoboam wise like his father or foolish? *foolish*

The new leader of the northern kingdom soon does evil. He trusts in his own understanding and reasoning instead of in the Lord. **Read 1 Kings 12:25-33. (Slide 2, 3)**

What does Jeroboam think will happen if the people continue to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the Lord?

They will give allegiance to Rehoboam

What will happen to Jeroboam if what he thinks will happen comes true? *He will die*

What does Jeroboam make? *Two golden calves*

Where did he place these? 1.) *Bethel* 2.) *Dan*

Did the Levites continue to be priests in Israel? *no*

From the previous lessons, it can be concluded that this type of action will not go unpunished. The Lord will not put up with idolatry.

At that time Abijah, the son of Jeroboam fell sick. Jeroboam said to his wife, "Arise and disguise yourself that you not be known to be the wife of Jeroboam and go to Shiloh. Behold, there is Ahijah, the prophet, who told me that I should be king over this people. He shall tell you what shall become of the child." Jeroboam's wife did so. But Ahijah could not see by reason of his age. The Lord said to Ahijah, "Behold, the wife of Jeroboam is coming. Thus and thus shall you say to her." As she came in at the door, Ahijah said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another? For I am sent to you with heavy tidings. Go, tell Jeroboam that thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'I exalted you from among

the people and made you prince over My people Israel and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you. Yet you have not been as My servant David who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart. You have made other gods; therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam till it be all gone. Him that dies of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat. Him that dies in the field shall the fowls of the air eat, for the Lord has spoken it.' Arise, go to your own house; and when your feet enter into the city, the child shall die." And Jeroboam's wife arose and departed and came to Tirzah. When she came in the threshold of the door, the child died.

What sin had Solomon committed that caused the Lord to take the kingdom away from the house of David?

idolatry

Was this information known by Jeroboam? (1 Kings 11:33) yes

What will happen to all of Jeroboam's family? They will die

Jeroboam does rule for twenty-two years and one of his sons rules for two years. Then a new king overthrows the house of Jeroboam and kills them all in the manner described above.

THE PROPHET ELIJAH

1 Kings 16

2 Kings 2

The eighth king of Israel is Ahab. It has been fifty-six years since the division of the kingdom. Most of the kings of Israel continue to do evil in the sight of the Lord. In the reign of Ahab, the Lord raises up a prophet to talk to the people to get them to stop worshipping false gods, this time specifically Baal. The Lord does this because the kings and priests who were supposed to lead the people to serve Him have failed to do so.

Read 1 Kings 16:29-34 and 1 Kings 17:1-7 for details of the conflict that occurs between Ahab and Elijah and the manner in which the Lord takes care of Elijah. **(Slide 4)**

For how long does Ahab reign? Twenty-two years

Who is the most evil king so far? Ahab

Who is Ahab's wife? Jezebel

Does the Lord want Jericho rebuilt? no

What happens to the man who tries to rebuild it? His two sons die

What does Elijah tell Ahab? No rain until Elijah says so

Where does the Lord tell Elijah to go? *Kerith Ravine*

What is to feed Elijah? *Ravens*

The word of the Lord came to him saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath which belongs to Sidon. Behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain you." 5 So Elijah arose and went to Zarephath. Behold, the widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and said, "Fetch me, I pray you, a little water that I may drink and a morsel of bread." She said, "As the Lord lives, I have not a cake but only a handful of meal in a barrel and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering sticks that I may go in and make a meal for myself and my son that we may eat it and die." Elijah said to her, "Fear not. Go and do as you have said, but make me a little cake first and bring it to me. After that make something for you and your son. For thus says the Lord, "The barrel of meal shall not be used up, neither the jug of oil fail.'" She went and did according to the saying of Elijah. And she and he and her house did eat many days. The barrel of meal was not used up, neither did the jug of oil fail according to the word of the Lord which the Lord spoke to Elijah.



Note that Sidon is outside the area of Israel. In fact, it is located in an area that Jezebel's father ruled. Since Baal was the god of Jezebel, the Lord was sending Elijah into the heart of the land where Baal was worshipped.

Does the woman do as Elijah tells her to do? *yes*

Is she rewarded for her obedience? *yes*

There is more in the story of the woman from Zarephath. **Read 1 Kings 17:17-24** for more of the story. **(Slide 6)**

What happens to the woman's son? *Gets sick*

How sick does he get? *He dies*

Of what does she accuse Elijah? 1.) *killing her son*

2.) *remind her of her sin*

To whom does Elijah plead for the boy's life? *The Lord*

What happens to the boy? *He lives*

ELIJAH AND THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

1 Kings 18

The time has come for Elijah to directly challenge the people about their worship of Baal. He challenges the false god to a test. He wants the people to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Lord is God.

The word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year saying, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth." There was a sore famine in Samaria. Elijah went and when Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, "Are you he that troubles Israel?" He answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and have followed Baal. Now therefore, send and gather to me all Israel on Mount Carmel and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hundred prophets of Asherah which eat at Jezebel's table." Ahab gathered all the children of Israel and the prophets of Baal together on Mount Carmel.

Who is the real "troublemaker" of Israel? Ahab

Read 1 Kings 18:20-24 to see what specific challenge Elijah has in mind. (Slide 7)

What must the people decide? Who is their God

What is the challenge? To see which God will set fire to the bull

Do the people agree to this? yes

The prophets of Baal took the bull and dressed it and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon saying, "O Baal, hear us." But there was no voice nor any that answered. They leaped upon the altar that was made. At noon Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry aloud, for he is a god, either he is talking or he is busy, or he is on a journey or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." They cried aloud and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances till the blood gushed out upon them. They cried until the time of the evening sacrifice and there was neither voice nor any answer nor any who paid attention.

Does Baal answer? no

About how much time is spent trying to get a response? Morning to evening

So much for Baal having any power whatsoever. Now it is time for Elijah to show the people of what the Lord is capable. Notice how difficult he makes this task. **Read 1 Kings 18:30-46.** (Slide 8)

The twelve stones represent whom? The twelve tribes

What are they to do with the four large jars of water? Pour the water on the offering and the wood

How many times do they do this? three

Does fire come? yes

What does the fire consume? (five things) 1) sacrifice 2) wood

3) stones 4) soil 5) water

What is the reaction of the people? Fall down and worship the Lord

What happens to the priests of Baal and Asherah? They are killed

How many times does the servant go to look out over the sea? seven

Why does Elijah tell Ahab to get going? It is going to rain hard

Ahab is in the chariot; Elijah is on foot. Who leads the way back to Jezreel? Elijah

ELIJAH IN THE WILDERNESS

1 Kings 19

Jezebel is not about to take the death of all those priests of her god lightly. She is angry, and the target of her anger is Elijah. **Read 1 Kings 19:1-9. (Slide 9)**

What is Jezebel's threat to Elijah? She is going to have him killed

What does Elijah ask of the Lord? That he can die

What does the angel give to Elijah? Bread and water

Why? He needs strength for a long journey

Where is he to go? To Horeb

How long does it take to get there? Forty days and forty nights

He came into a cave and lodged there. Behold, the word of the Lord came to him and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, thrown down Your altars, and slain Your prophets with the sword. And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away." And He said, "Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord." Behold, the Lord passed by and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in

pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still, small voice. 10 And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. The Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way and anoint Hazael to be king over Syria, and Jehu to be king over Israel, and Elisha to be prophet after you. Yet I have left seven thousand in Israel, all the knees of whom have not bowed to Baal."



What Elijah tells the Lord about the people of Israel is bad enough that the Lord has every right to destroy them in wind, earthquake or fire. This seems to be the reason for this demonstration. However, the "still, small voice" of the Lord tells Elijah that the Lord is not ready to do these things.

How many people have not bowed down to Baal? 7000

How many did Elijah think had not bowed down? One, himself

Who is to be the prophet after Elijah to do God's work for another generation? Elisha

Elijah knows that his work is to be carried on by Elisha. **Read 1 Kings 19:19-21** to see how this comes about. **(Slide 11)**

Does Elisha come willingly? yes

What does Elisha do with his oxen and plowing equipment? Burns the equipment to cook the meat of the oxen

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

1 Kings 21,22

2 Kings 9

Ahab's wife Jezebel is a very evil woman. She has previously had many of the Lord's prophets put to death. She wanted Elijah to die. Her wicked ways are not reserved entirely for the prophets of the Lord.

Naboth had a vineyard in Jezreel near the palace of Ahab, the king. Ahab said, "Give me your vineyard that I may have it for a garden, and I will give you a better vineyard or the worth of it in money." Naboth said, "The Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you." And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased and laid down upon his bed and would eat no bread.

Will Naboth sell his vineyard? no

Jezebel will make sure her husband is not unhappy for long. **Read 1 Kings 21:7-15** to see what she does.

Of what will they accuse Naboth? Cursing God and the king

What will be his punishment? Death by stoning

Does everything go as she plans? yes



*The word of the Lord came to Elijah saying, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab in the vineyard of Naboth, **12** where he has gone down to possess it. And you shall speak to him saying, 'Thus says the Lord: Have you killed and also taken possession?' Then say to him, 'Thus says the Lord: In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick your blood, even yours. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.'"*

*After three years Ahab went to war against the king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead. A certain man drew a bow at a venture and killed the king of Israel **13** and the blood ran out of the wound into the chariot. So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria. And one washed the chariot, and the dogs licked up his blood according to the word of the Lord.*

The Lord has also pronounced death to Jezebel. **Read 2 Kings 9:30-37** to find out how this happens. **(Slide 14)**

Is Jezebel courteous in her greeting of Jehu? no

How does she die? Thrown out of a window, then trampled

Why is she not buried? She is eaten before they can bury her

REVIEW

1. How many tribes does Jeroboam rule? ten
2. What is the Northern Kingdom called? Israel
3. What is the Southern Kingdom called? Judah
4. To whom does Rehoboam listen for counsel? The young friends
5. What is Jeroboam's sin? idolatry
6. What is Jeroboam's punishment? Death to his household
7. Does the punishment come quickly? no
8. Who is the eighth king of Israel? Ahab
9. Who is his wife? Jezebel
10. What does the Lord do for the woman who takes care of Elijah? Food, heals her son
11. What false god is Elijah sent to deal with? Baal
12. What has happened to most of the prophets of God? killed
13. Who directs this action? Jezebel
14. What is the challenge issued by Elijah to the priests of Baal? See which god will light the sacrifice
15. Who wins? God
16. What happens to the priests of Baal and Asherah? They are killed
17. How does God speak to Elijah in the cave when he tells him what he wants him to do?
Still, small voice
18. Who will replace Elijah? Elisha
19. Who frames Naboth? Jezebel
20. Who gives orders for Jezebel to die? Jehu

