

Week Twenty-Four

Days 162–168



Divided Kingdom Narrative: 1 Kings 12–21 | Supplemental: 2 Chronicles 10–22; Song of Solomon 1–7

GOD LETS A DIVIDED KINGDOM STAND



Rehoboam Fortifying Cities in Judah

The “Divided Kingdom” period of *The Bible in a Year* begins after the death of Solomon. A king on the throne from the house of David was meant to be permanent. The monarchy, though, was split between the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) in 930 BC. The first king of the north is Jeroboam, while Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, rules in the south. Although this division was not God’s will, he continues to have a relationship with the people of both the north and the south to try to lead them to obedience.

- The division of the kingdom occurs because Rehoboam ignores the advice of advisors who counsel him to lift some of the burdens Solomon had invoked. Rehoboam thinks he must threaten and oppress the people to maintain his rule.
- Led by Jeroboam, the northern tribes rebel against Rehoboam and form the kingdom of Israel, leaving Rehoboam’s kingdom of Judah comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.
- To keep the people from going to Jerusalem to worship in the Temple—which could turn them back to Rehoboam—Jeroboam establishes places of worship in Bethel and Dan in the Northern Kingdom. This act of idolatry results in many Levitical priests moving to Judah.
- A key theme in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles is faithfulness to God.
- The Bible describes the northern kings as bad, and southern kings are not much better, though a few are good.
- King Asa in the south is generally good, but he is not perfect. He does not fully trust in God and is rebuked for this by a seer near the end of his otherwise faithful life.
- Our readings introduce us to the prophet Elijah, whose life is shaped especially by his calling by God to condemn the evil rule of Ahab the King of Israel and to perform miracles.
- A key theme in the Old Testament and in the “Divided Kingdom” is: When we know what God wants us to do, we need to do it—even when we are tempted to follow our own ideas.

