

1 Kings Chapter 14

Verses 1-6: In his desperation, “Jeroboam” attempted to manipulate a prophet of the Lord in hopes of receiving a favorable message about his ill son. Ahijah’s physical eyesight was poor, but his spiritual sight was keen. He saw right through Jeroboam’s deception.

1 Kings 14:1 "At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick."

“At that time”: Probably indicating a time shortly after the incident recorded (in chapter 13).

“Abijah”: Meaning “my father is the Lord,” Jeroboam’s son’s name implies that his father desired to be regarded as a worshiper of the Lord at the time of his son’s birth. Abijah was referred to as a “child” (verses 12:17), a term which can be used from childhood through young adulthood. Of all of Jeroboam’s family, Abijah was the most responsive to the Lord (verse 13). Jeroboam’s son, Abijah, should not be confused with Rehoboam’s son of the same name (see note on 15:1-8).

This is the son that Jeroboam had planned to take over the kingdom when he died. "Abijah" means ‘the Lord is my father’. This sickness is punishment to Jeroboam for his sin.

1 Kings 14:2 "And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there [is] Ahijah the prophet, which told me that [I should be] king over this people."

“Disguise thyself”: Probably for the avoidance of recognition by the people. Jeroboam did not want his subjects to know that he was consulting a prophet of the Lord.

“Shiloh” (see note on 11:29).

The message that Jeroboam would send to Ahijah is too personal to warrant anyone else carrying it. He would not go himself, for fear of being found out, and also Ahijah might not see him because of his sins against the LORD. This would be a journey over rough land of about 30 miles. This would also be a dangerous journey if it were known this was Jeroboam's wife. This same Ahijah had told Jeroboam he would be king of the ten tribes of Israel.

1 Kings 14:3 "And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child."

“Take with thee ten loaves”: A simple ordinary food gift added to the disguise (1 Sam. 9:7-8; 2 Kings 8:8). Then loaves of bread, some cakes and a jar of honey reflected the means of a common person, not royalty.

Jeroboam did not trust the people, he had put into office as spiritual leaders. He knew they were not called of God. The present that Jeroboam sent to the prophet was meager, not what a king's wife would bring. She is to inquire whether her child will live or not?

1 Kings 14:4 "And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age."

Disguised herself and took this long journey, and found the prophet's house; which she did partly in obedience to her husband, and partly from affection to her child. But Ahijah could not see; her or anybody else that came into the room to him.

"For his eyes were set by reason of his age": Or "stood" fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men are. Or the nerves and muscles of his eyes stood within the holes thereof, so that he could not see objects.

She was as anxious as Jeroboam to know of the welfare of their son. Ahijah was blind and could not see her.

1 Kings 14:5 "And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he [is] sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself [to be] another [woman]."

Either in a dream or by an impulse upon his mind before Jeroboam's wife came in.

"Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, for he is sick": To know whether he will recover or not.

"Thus and thus shalt thou say unto her": As after expressed in some following verses.

"For it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself another woman": To the people that let her in, and introduce her to the prophet, and to the prophet himself. She would pretend to be a country woman come to ask a question of the prophet concerning her son that was ill of a disease.

For "Ahijah" (see the note on 11:29-31).

The woman was doing as her husband had instructed her to do. Her disguise is so that Ahijah will receive her. The LORD tells Ahijah exactly what to say to the woman.

1 Kings 14:6 "And it was [so], when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself [to be] another? for I [am] sent to thee [with] heavy [tidings]."

Which must have greatly surprised and confound her, as well as lay open to her the folly of her and her husband to imagine that she could be secreted from God, and a prophet of his. Or that a prophet could tell her what was future, and yet not know her that was present. This might serve to assure her, and her husband, that what the prophet says would certainly come to pass.

"For I am sent to thee with heavy tidings": Or hard things, such as would be very disagreeable to her and her husband.

Ahijah would not be deceived by the costume she was wearing, because the LORD had told him who she was. She had come to him, because he would be able to tell her what would happen to her son. She should not be surprised that he would know her also. Now, she knows the news is bad.

Verses 7-16: "Ahijah" the prophet made it clear that Jeroboam's disobedience would cost him his kingdom and his son. This is a sobering reminder that those who do not take God's word seriously put their future in jeopardy.

1 Kings 14:7 "Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,"

The Hebrew term translated "prince" designates a spiritual leader. Unfortunately, Jeroboam scarcely proved to be one.

The LORD is speaking through Ahijah. The LORD God is still over Jeroboam, even though he had done this terrible thing. It was the LORD who exalted him, and it would be the LORD who brought him down.

1 Kings 14:8 "And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and [yet] thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do [that] only [which was] right in mine eyes;"

Even ten parts out of twelve.

"And yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes": Who never was guilty of idolatry, but always constantly and cordially attended the pure worship of God. And was careful to do everything in that according to the will of God, whatever else he might be deficient in.

The ten tribes that were torn away from Solomon, David's son, are the tribes that followed Jeroboam. David had loved God in his heart. It was the sin of idolatry that Solomon had gotten into that caused the tribes to be given to Jeroboam.

1 Kings 14:9 "But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:"

"Done evil": Jeroboam had not only failed to live up to the standard of David, but his wickedness had surpassed even that of Saul and Solomon. He had installed a paganized system of worship for the entire population of the northern kingdom (16:25, 30; 2 Kings 21:11).

This is specifically speaking of the two golden calves along with all the other idolatry. They not only made the golden calves, but worshipped them as well.

1 Kings 14:10 "Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, [and] him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone."

Calamities, destruction and ruin.

"And will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall": Not leave a dog of his, or rather a male (see 1 Sam. 25:22).

"And him that is shut up and left in Israel": In garrisons or in prisons, in cities or in fields, or in whatsoever situation or circumstances they may be. Some interpret it of wealth and substance; it signifies an entire destruction it may be of men and goods (see Deut. 32:36).

"And will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone": Signifying that Jeroboam's family was as loathsome and abominable to the Lord as dung is to men. And that he would make as clean a riddance of them as men do of dung when they sweep it out, and will not leave the least scrap behind.

This is speaking of cutting off all the men in the family of Jeroboam. To God they are like the dung. They will be cast away completely.

1 Kings 14:11 "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken [it]."

"Dogs": "Dogs" were scavengers in ancient Israel, not pets. "Birds" refers to vultures and ravens. The offspring of Jeroboam would not receive burial in the family tomb; instead, their bodies would be ravaged by wild animals. The covenant curse (of Deut. 28:26), was applied to Jeroboam's male descendants.

In their sight, one of the most disgraceful things to happen to a person was to be left for the dogs, or the fowls, and not buried properly. Not only will they be killed, but disgraced as well.

1 Kings 14:12 "Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: [and] when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die."

With all haste, as soon as she could.

"And when thy feet enter the city": The city of Tirzah, very probably the king's palace stood at the entry of it (see 1 Kings 14:17).

"The child shall die": This is an answer to the question she was to ask, and at the same time a token of the sure and certain fulfilment of all the prophet had spoken in the name of the Lord.

This was not the news this mother wanted to hear. When the mother arrives home, and the baby dies immediately, she will know that all of the other part of the prophecy will certainly happen too.

1 Kings 14:13 "And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found [some] good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."

Some have suggested that this may be a companion proof text, along with (2 Sam. 12:23), of God's gracious reception of the souls of young children.

"The grave" (see note on 13:22).

This is speaking of Jeroboam's son. The mother was pleased that at least her son will have a decent burial. It appears that he had done something that had not gone unnoticed by the LORD. Some believe that he helped those who slipped out and went to Jerusalem to worship. He, at the least, was not involved in the worship of the golden calves.

1 Kings 14:14 "Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now."

"A king": I.e., Baasha (15:27:27-30).

Judgment had already begun. The house of Jeroboam will be so far removed, there will be no memory.

1 Kings 14:15 "For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger."

Ahijah announced God's stern judgment on Israel for joining Jeroboam's apostasy. Struck by the Lord, Israel would sway like a reed in a rushing river, a biblical metaphor for political instability (Matt. 11:7; Luke 7:24). One day, the Lord would uproot Israel from Palestinian soil and scatter it in exile east of the Euphrates. The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded (in 2 Kings 17:23).

The "groves" (literally, Asherim), were sacred trees or poles set aside for the Canaanite goddess Asherah (see the note at Judges 3:6-7).

The grove worship was yet another type of idolatrous worship condemned here. The people could have refused to worship the false gods of Jeroboam, but they did not. They were involved too. The punishment would reach to them all.

1 Kings 14:16 "And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin."

Into the hands of their enemies.

"Because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin": By his devices and stratagems, by his example and edicts, and by the methods he took to prevent Israel from worshipping in the manner and place he directed to.

It appears that Israel sinned along with Jeroboam, and the LORD had condemned them along with Jeroboam. He sinned himself, and led others into his sin. They are all guilty.

1 Kings 14:17 "And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: [and] when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;"

"Tirzah" was noted for its beauty (SOS 6:4), hence became the residence of several kings. The founder of Israel's Second Dynasty, Baasha, apparently made it his capital (15:33), and Zimri lost his throne and life there (16:15-20).

Jeroboam had apparently moved his capital from Shechem to Tirzah (12:25), located in the tribal region of Manasseh, about 7 miles northeast of Shechem and 35 miles north of Jerusalem.

This had to be a very long journey back, knowing that when she arrived, her son would be dead. The prophecy is true, the child died.

1 Kings 14:18 "And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet."

He was buried in an honorable manner, suitable to his rank and pedigree.

"And all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet" (1 Kings 14:13).

The mother had to be relieved in a sense, that they buried her son. It is God's way of doing things, to have the destruction of Jeroboam spoken by the same prophet, who proclaimed he would be king.

1 Kings 14:19 "And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they [are] written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel."

As he did with Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:30), and with Abijam his son, who was more than a match for him (see 2 Chron. 13:1).

"And how he reigned": Over the people of Israel, whether wisely, and justly, and in clemency, or not.

"Behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel": Not in that canonical book of Scripture, so called, for in that there is very little account of the reign of Jeroboam. But in the annals and diaries of the kings of Israel, written by persons appointed for

that purpose, and out of which it is generally thought that inspired writers, by divine direction, took what was thought proper to be transmitted to future times. So with the Romans, from their very beginning to the times of Mutius, all the events of every year were committed to writing by the order of the Pontifex Maximus. And lay open to be read by the people in common; and these, as Tully says, were what are called annals.

It appears during this time, they had begun to record the happenings of the kings. The book mentioned above, is not the books of Chronicles that are part of the Bible.

1 Kings 14:20 "And the days which Jeroboam reigned [were] two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead."

So that he outlived Rehoboam five years, and lived to the second year of the reign of his grandson, Asa.

"And he slept with his fathers": Or died as they did.

"And Nadab his son reigned in his stead": Who perhaps was younger than Abijah, whose sickness and death are before related.

"Two and twenty years": 931-910 B.C.

We are not given the name of his mother. It does appear, however, that Jeroboam just had one wife; so perhaps, Nadab was another of her sons. Jeroboam reigned 22 years and died.

1 Kings 14:21 "And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam [was] forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name [was] Naamah an Ammonitess."

He reigned over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when Jeroboam reigned over the other ten.

"Rehoboam was forty one years old when he began to reign": Being born one year before his father Solomon began to reign, and so it might have been expected he would have begun his reign more wisely than he did.

"And he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem": Not half so long as his father and grandfather, being neither so wise nor so good a prince as either of them.

"The city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there": To have a temple built for him, and his worship carried on in it. Which was an aggravation of the sin of Rehoboam that he should reign in such a place, and yet be guilty of the crimes he was. The three first years he reigned well, but afterwards forsook the law of the Lord (2 Chron. 11:17).

"And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess": And which is observed again (1 Kings 14:31), she being the instrument of drawing him into idolatry, which it is very probable she practiced in the days of Solomon (1 Kings 11:5).

“Seventeen years”: 931-913 B.C.

Rehoboam is the same as Reboam, and Roboam. This son of Solomon was 41 years old, when he began to reign, and he reigned for 17 years. Solomon had many wives. The mother of Rehoboam was Naamah. "Rehoboam" means “whom enlarges the people”. "Naamah" means “pleasant”. Jerusalem was the headquarters for Judah, and was the city where God had chosen to put His name.

Verses 22-24: Judah outdid her ancestors in evil, provoking the Lord to jealous anger (verse 22). Signs of idolatrous practice were everywhere (verses 23-24). She even practiced sacred prostitution to promote fertility (verse 24). Judah had begun the downward slide toward doom that Israel was in.

1 Kings 14:22 "And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done."

Judah served the Lord at the beginning of Rehoboam’s reign (2 Chron. 11:5-17), but Rehoboam soon turned aside from serving God, and Judah fell into apostasy (2 Chron. 12:1). As important as it is to begin well, it is even more important for God’s people to finish their lives following Him (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

The first three years of his reign, the kingdom was strong and kept the faith. The idolatry that was brought in with the many wives of Solomon seems to have influenced the people of Judah. It appears that many of them had fallen into idolatry. Solomon at first, and especially David, at least had their heart stayed upon God.

Verses 23:24: “High places” were sites of idol worship. Some scholars think the “sacred pillars (standing stones that symbolized a god), had sexual connotations in connection with Canaanite religion (Deut. 16:22).

“Images” were Asherahs, obscene carvings associated with the Canaanite deity Asherah.

“Sodomites”: were those involved in the sexual rituals of the Canaanite fertility religions. They were cult prostitutes (both male and female), dedicated to a worship that proved a severe stumbling block to Israel. The history of Israel’s faith is largely centered in the struggle between devotion to Yahweh or to Canaanite culture and religion.

1 Kings 14:23 "For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree."

(See the notes on Judges 3:6-7 and 1 Kings 3:2-3).

All of these things are speaking of the worship of false gods. It seems idolatry is rampant, even in Judah.

1 Kings 14:24 "And there were also sodomites in the land: [and] they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel."

Cultic prostitution involving both sexes was carried on at the Canaanite religious shrines. These debased practices became a stumbling block to Israel's spiritual experience. They would contribute to God's judgment of Judah (2 Chron. 12:1-2).

"Sodomites" means those involved in sex with the same gender. This is speaking of homosexuality and lesbianism. They were primarily speaking of male prostitutes for other males. The worship of Astarte is what is indicated here. This is one of the reasons God wanted the people killed, when they took their land. He wanted to keep this sin down. "Abomination" means "a revolting sin".

Verses 25-26: The accuracy of the biblical note here is certain, for Pharaoh "Shishak" (or Sheshonq I), of Egypt's Twenty second Dynasty made an extensive invasion that encompassed both the northern and southern kingdoms. His triumphs are recounted particularly in an inscription found in the temple of Amon at Karnak. Only Rehoboam's repentance saved "Jerusalem" and Judah from full extinction at this time (2 Chron. 12:6-12). For Rehoboam's attempt at thwarting the rising menace of "Egypt" (see the note on 2 Chron. 11:5-12).

The southern kingdom of Judah fared no better than the northern kingdom of Israel! The beginning of its decline was evidenced by the looting of the "house of the Lord" by the "king of Egypt." The shields that had been made of gold (10:16-17), were taken, and "King Rehoboam" could only replace them with less costly "bronze shields."

1 Kings 14:25 "And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, [that] Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem:"

Two years after he and his people fell into the above wicked practices.

"That Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem": Of whom (see 1 Kings 11:40), this was suffered as a chastisement from the Lord for their abominations.

"Fifth year" (927/926 B.C).

"Shishak" (see note on 11:40).

The chastisement of God came on Judah immediately. God wanted them to repent, and return to worship of the One True God. The reason Shishak thought he could win a war with them, is because the ten tribes had broken off from Judah.

1 Kings 14:26 "And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made."

That perhaps Jeroboam had informed him of, and for the sake of which he came. As well as to make a diversion in favor of Jeroboam, who had contracted an intimacy with him when in Egypt. And who might have no regard for Rehoboam, who was not a son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so no relation to him. These were the treasures which David had left to his son Solomon, and had dedicated for the temple, even gold, silver, and vessels, which he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord, and perhaps added to them (1 Kings 7:51). And the treasures of the king's house; the riches, gold, silver, and jewels, whatever of worth and value he had in his chests and cabinets.

"He even took away all": That he could find and come at; for that there were some left is plain from (1 Kings 15:18).

"And he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made": And which were put in the house of the forest of Lebanon (1 Kings 10:16).

In a previous lesson, we had determined that these shields were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars in gold. These treasures would have been worth millions.

1 Kings 14:27 "And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen shields, and committed [them] unto the hands of the chief of the guard, which kept the door of the king's house."

“Brazen shields” These bronze shields replaced Solomon’s gold shields, which were used as a ransom paid to Shishak. The bronze shields illustrate the sharp decline from the reign of Solomon to Rehoboam.

Brass was very plentiful and also very durable. We see also, the great wealth of Solomon taken away. This son of Solomon, not only lost the treasury of the gold his father had accumulated, but he lost the God that David and Solomon had loved. It appears he went along with all of the idol worship. This might have been because of the influence of his mother, who was an Ammonite. They had turned their back on the One True God.

1 Kings 14:28 "And it was [so], when the king went into the house of the LORD, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard chamber."

The temple: For though he had fallen into idolatry, he had not wholly forsaken the worship of God in the temple. And perhaps by the late humbling providence he might be stirred up to attend there more frequently.

"That the guard bare them": Before him, partly for pomp and grandeur, and partly to keep in awe such as were inclined to mutiny and sedition.

"And brought them back into the guard chamber": When the king returned, the place where the guard lodged and slept by turns.

This is speaking of the shields being kept in the guard chamber. It appears, that Rehoboam still went to the temple and worshipped, even though he was allowing the idol worship.

1 Kings 14:29 "Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, [are] they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?"

In the course of his reign, that was memorable.

"Are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?" Who had annalists or historiographers to write for them, as the kings of Israel had (1 Kings 14:19). In the writing of which, especially with respect to genealogies, Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer, were concerned (2 Chron. 12:15).

1 Kings 14:30 "And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all [their] days."

"War ... all their days": Many border skirmishes erupted as the armies in the north/south maneuvered for tactical advantage and control of territory (14:19; 15:6). A major battle ultimately erupted during the reign of Abijam (2 Chron. 13:1-20).

This is not speaking of all-out war, but skirmishes they had from time to time. The book mentioned is not in the Bible.

1 Kings 14:31 "And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name [was] Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in his stead."

"Abijam" is rendered "Abijah" (in 2 Chron. 13:1). The spelling here (in 1 Kings), probably represents a popular designation for the king. Some scholars have suggested that there were actually two kings named Abijah.

Rehoboam had an honorable burial. He was buried with Solomon, in Jerusalem. His mother was not a Hebrew. She possibly influenced him greatly about the idol worship that he allowed.

1 Kings Chapter 14 Questions

1. Who fell sick in verse 1?
2. What does "Abijah" mean?

3. Who was the prophet that told Jeroboam he would be king?
4. Why does he send his wife to see the prophet?
5. Where is the prophet?
6. What is she to take to the prophet?
7. How long is this journey?
8. Why could Ahijah not see?
9. Who told Ahijah about Jeroboam's wife?
10. What does the prophet say to her?
11. Who had made Jeroboam king?
12. What kind of a person was Jeroboam?
13. What had Jeroboam done, that had so angered God?
14. What judgment did the LORD speak on Jeroboam?
15. What did He compare him to in verse 10?
16. Those of Jeroboam that die in the city will be eaten of _____.
17. When will the child die?
18. Who is the only member of Jeroboam's family who will have a burial?
19. What was grove worship?
20. Where are the rest of Jeroboam's acts found?
21. How long did Jeroboam reign?
22. How old was Rehoboam, when he began to reign?
23. How long did he reign?
24. Who was the mother of Rehoboam?
25. What were some of their sins in verse 23?
26. Who are "sodomites"?
27. What is an "abomination"?