

1 Kings 14
January 19, 2025

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

I think I have shared in the past with this group that while I was doing professional counseling while living in Kansas, I had a teenage client who was brought into my office by her mother. Her mother was bringing this young lady to me because I am a Christian counselor, and her daughter had become a Satanist.

When I asked her how she became a Satanist, she shared a website address that I could go to. Well, I was too scared to do that! I feared that I would somehow invite a “stronghold” by doing that, so I went to my pastor and asked him to do it instead! He did. He said that no matter what page he pulled up on the website, the tagline at the bottom said, “Turn your back on God.”

This gave me insight years ago that the overarching goal of the Enemy is to get us to turn AWAY from God. That’s what the Enemy wants us to do! So I’m finally getting to my opening question:

Q: It’s one thing to create a golden calf, but it up for display and worship a physical object. But how does idolatry happen at the smallest of levels in our life? What might that look like? [Let people engage].

Transition: Today we are headed down a path of narratives over the weeks to come in which the kings of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah) become disturbingly disheartening. It is filled with too many leaders who turn away from God and lead people into idolatry. And the consequences for that are severe! Let’s see what happens to King Jeroboam who governs Israel and King Rehoboam who governs Judah. Let’s begin.

BOOK:

Ahijah’s Prophecy Against Jeroboam

14 At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became ill, ² and Jeroboam said to his wife, “Go, disguise yourself, so you won’t be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam. Then go to Shiloh. Ahijah the prophet is there—the one who told me I would be king over this people. ³ Take ten loaves of bread with you, some cakes and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will happen to the boy.” ⁴ So Jeroboam’s wife did what he said and went to Ahijah’s house in Shiloh.

Now Ahijah could not see; his sight was gone because of his age. ⁵ But the LORD had told Ahijah, “Jeroboam’s wife is coming to ask you about her son, for he is ill, and you are to give her such and such an answer. When she arrives, she will pretend to be someone else.”

⁶ So when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door, he said, “Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretense? I have been sent to you with bad news. ⁷ Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I raised you up from among the people and made you a leader over my people Israel. ⁸ I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed

me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. ⁹ You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back.

¹⁰ “ ‘Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel—slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. ¹¹ Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. The LORD has spoken!’

¹² “As for you, go back home. When you set foot in your city, the boy will die. ¹³ All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the LORD, the God of Israel, has found anything good.

¹⁴ “The LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam. This is the day! What? Yes, even now. ¹⁵ And the LORD will strike Israel, so that it will be like a reed swaying in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land that he gave to their forefathers and scatter them beyond the River (Euphrates), because they provoked the LORD to anger by making Asherah poles (symbols of the goddess Asherah). ¹⁶ And he will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to commit.”

¹⁷ Then Jeroboam’s wife got up and left and went to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped over the threshold of the house, the boy died. ¹⁸ They buried him, and all Israel mourned for him, as the LORD had said through his servant the prophet Ahijah.

¹⁹ The other events of Jeroboam’s reign, his wars and how he ruled, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel. ²⁰ He reigned for twenty-two years and then rested with his fathers. And Nadab his son succeeded him as king.

Rehoboam King of Judah

²¹ Rehoboam son of Solomon was king in Judah. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother’s name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite.

²² Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done. ²³ They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. ²⁴ There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

²⁵ In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. ²⁶ He carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. ²⁷ So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned these to the commanders of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. ²⁸ Whenever the king went to the LORD’s temple, the guards bore the shields, and afterward they returned them to the guardroom.

²⁹ As for the other events of Rehoboam’s reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? ³⁰ There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ³¹ And Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. His mother’s name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. And Abijah his son succeeded him as king.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn't understand? [Let people engage]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

Jeroboam didn't fool God, and neither will we. He sees our sins, knows our desires, and weighs our actions. But if we're willing to step into God's light, repent and seek His forgiveness, we can have a new beginning. Let's obey God and keep our eyes fixed on Jesus!

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (1 Kings 14). Victor Books.

A. Rehoboam (14:21–31).

For seventeen years, this evil son of Solomon led the people into terrible sins. Instead of walking in the laws of the Lord, he patterned himself after the wicked nations Israel had defeated. God punished him by bringing Egypt up to defeat the nation. The people had lost their spiritual values: the expensive gold shields were now replaced with cheaper bronze shields. Things “looked the same,” but God knew they were not the same.

Constable, C.L. (1985). 1 Kings. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 1, pp. 516-518) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

4. AHIJAH'S PROPHECY AGAINST JEROBOAM (14:1-18)

Whereas the prophecy of the man of God (13:2) dealt primarily with the destruction of Jeroboam's religious system, Ahijah's prophecy addressed Jeroboam's house (dynasty).

a. *The sickness of Jeroboam's son (14:1-5)*

14:1-5. **At that time** probably refers to a time shortly after the incident recorded in chapter 13. Jeroboam's son, **Abijah**, should not be confused with Rehoboam's son of the same name (15:1). Jeroboam's **son** was just a **boy** at this time (14:3, 12, 17). It is not possible to determine what ailed the lad, nor is this information essential to the narrative.

Jeroboam obviously did not believe that Yahweh could or would reveal his wife's identity to the prophet. Perhaps the **king** asked her to **disguise** herself because he did not want other people to observe her visiting a prophet of **the LORD**. **Ahijah the prophet** was living at **Shiloh**, the former site of the tabernacle in Israel. Jeroboam's allusion to Ahijah's prediction of his coronation (cf. 11:29-39) suggests that perhaps the king hoped to receive another welcome prophecy, this time that his son would recover. The gifts of food sent to **Ahijah** may have been simply customary, but in light of Jeroboam's other actions they seem designed to win a positive word from the prophet. **Ahijah** was old and blind, but God gave him a message and insight into the king's plan.

b. *The fate of Jeroboam's dynasty (14:6-18)*

14:6-7a. Jeroboam's **wife** hoped to hear a message of deliverance for her boy, but instead she heard a message of doom for her husband, herself, and her son. The prophet quickly unmasked the actress (**Why this pretense?**). The king's wife thought she had been sent to **Ahijah**, but the prophet said he had **been sent to** her. **The LORD is the God of Israel**, not the idols **Jeroboam** had set up. The message he had for her came from Him.

14:7b-9. God reminded the king through the prophet that it was He who had **made him a leader over His people**. But Jeroboam had not followed in David's footsteps as he should have done. In fact, God said Jeroboam had **done more evil than all who lived before him**. Whether Jeroboam intended his golden calves to be idols or aids in the worship of Yahweh, God called them **other gods** and **idols**. They were only pieces of **metal**. The king's idolatry had angered the Lord who regarded it as a rejection of Himself.

14:10-11. Because **Jeroboam** had led God's people away from God his **house** (dynasty) would be **cut off**. No **male** would be able to perpetuate his line which God compared to **dung**. Jeroboam's family would not be buried but would be eaten by **dogs** and **birds**, a terrible disgrace in the minds of Semites. (This would also be true of Baasha's family, 16:4, and Ahab's family, 21:24.)

14:12-13. The **only** male descendant of **Jeroboam to be buried** would be Abijah, who would die very soon. His death on the return of the queen to her **home** would signify the sure fulfillment of the more distant aspects of Ahijah's prophecy.

14:14–15. Ahijah the prophet said a **king** would be raised up **who** would **cut off** Jeroboam’s **family**. This was Baasha (15:27–29). The last part of 14:14, which is subject to several interpretations, probably means that this would surely come to pass. Moreover, the whole nation would experience instability and waver like a **reed**. **Jeroboam** had planted Israel not in the solid soil of God’s Word but in the unsubstantial waters of idolatry, like Egyptian rushes or papyrus reeds. God promised to **uproot** the nation **from the good land that He gave to their forefathers** and to **scatter them beyond the River** Euphrates, which He did in 722 B.C. by the hands of the Assyrians. The Israelites’ idolatry was the reason for this judgment. **Asherah poles** (cf. v. 23; 15:13; 16:33) were wooden shafts carved to encourage worship of the Canaanite goddess Asherah.

14:16. God’s giving **Israel up** must be understood in a limited sense. He promised Abraham that his descendants would be blessed forever (Gen. 12:2–3; 18:17–18; 22:17–18). Later God brought Israel back from captivity but still has not fulfilled all His promises of blessing which they will yet experience (Isa. 62). God did give them up to judgment in captivity, however, which is the forsaking that is in view here.

14:17–18. These verses record the exact fulfillment of Ahijah’s prophecy of the death of Prince Abijah. The queen must have traveled from Shiloh (v. 2) back to her home in **Tirzah** with a heavy heart. Jeroboam had moved to Tirzah from Shechem (cf. 12:25).

As the Lord’s word came to pass immediately in the death of the prince, His long-range prophecies also began to take shape in Jeroboam’s reign. One may safely assume that all the territory Solomon ruled except Judah came under Jeroboam’s control. Much of this was lost during his reign. This lost area included the land around Damascus to the north which became an independent Aramean state. In the southwest the Philistines repossessed some of their former territory and grew stronger (cf. 15:27). On the east Moab was apparently lost. Ironically Jeroboam’s protector in Egypt (11:40), Shishak (Sheshonk I), invaded Judah (14:25) during Jeroboam’s reign. This resulted in heavy damage and widespread destruction. Jeroboam was also defeated by King Abijah of Judah (2 Chron. 13:13–20). Israel suffered both in military strength and in territorial holdings during Jeroboam’s reign.

5. JEROBOAM’S DEATH (14:19–20)

14:19–20. Starting with Jeroboam the events of the reigns of 18 of the 20 kings of the Northern Kingdom are said in 1 and 2 Kings to have been recorded in **the book of the annals of the kings of Israel** (all except Tibni, 1 Kings 16:21–22, and Hoshea, 2 Kings 17:1–6). Similarly, the events of the reigns of 14 of the 19 kings of the Southern Kingdom are said in 1 and 2 Kings to be recorded in “the book of the annals of the kings of Judah” (starting with Rehoboam, 1 Kings 14:29). These books were historical documents, perhaps kept in the royal archives. They are no longer extant. (Also cf. 1 Chron. 27:24, “the book of the annals of King David,” and 1 Kings 11:41, “the book of the annals of Solomon,” and see “Authorship” in the *Introduction* to 1 Chron.) The writer of 1 Kings selected his material under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to emphasize the unspiritual aspects of Jeroboam’s **22-year** rule over Israel. **Nadab his son succeeded him** on the throne.

Jeroboam must have been a powerful man to have separated Israel from Judah and ruled it for so long a time. But he lacked the commitment to the Lord that would have made him a great and successful king.

C. Rehoboam's evil reign in Judah (14:21–31)

The scene shifts now to the southern monarchy of Judah.

1. REHOBOAM'S WICKEDNESS (14:21–24)

14:21. **Rehoboam ... reigned 17 years** (931–913 B.C.). He and all succeeding kings of Judah reigned **in Jerusalem**. Perhaps to contrast this city with the capitals of the Northern Kingdom (Shechem, Tirzah, and Samaria; cf. comments on 12:25) the writer described it as **the city the LORD had chosen**, not like the northern capitals that were chosen by men. The king's mother **Naamah** was one of Solomon's foreign wives. As **an Ammonite** she worshiped the detestable idol-god Molech (cf. 11:5, 33). Probably she was partially responsible for the revival of Canaanite paganism that took place during Rehoboam's reign.

14:22–24. Rehoboam turned from the Lord after he had become established on the throne and was strong (2 Chron. 12:1, 14). This revival of idolatry reintroduced conditions that had prevailed in the days of the Judges before David turned the nation to **the LORD**. The Lord's **jealous anger** was directed at those responsible for the sins that destroyed His beloved people. The **high places** were sometimes places where Yahweh was worshiped but not as He had commanded. The **sacred stones** or pillars **and Asherah poles** (cf. 1 Kings 14:15) were aids to the worship of male and female Canaanite idols. The **high hills** and **spreading trees** were favorite locations for these cultic shrines. **Male shrine prostitutes** (sodomites) were used in pagan worship. The same practices that moved God to purge the land of the moral cancer that plagued it in Joshua's day were those to which the Israelites returned under Rehoboam's leadership.

2. SHISHAK'S INVASION (14:25–28)

14:25–28. **Shishak** (cf. 11:40), **king (pharaoh) of Egypt** (945–924 B.C.), also known as Sheshonk I, was the founder of her 22nd dynasty. He had given asylum to Jeroboam earlier (cf. 11:40). In Rehoboam's **fifth year** Shishak tried to establish Egyptian supremacy over Palestine. His military campaign into Judah, Israel, Edom, and Philistia netted him control of 156 cities. The record of his campaigns is inscribed on the exterior of the Amon temple's south wall at Karnak in Egypt. Shishak captured cities in Judah and threatened to besiege **Jerusalem**. This resulted in **Rehoboam** and the leaders humbling themselves before the Lord, and God spared Jerusalem from destruction (2 Chron. 12:2–12). Rehoboam bought Shishak off by giving him many of the **treasures of the temple** and **of the ... palace** (1 Kings 14:26). These included the 500 **gold shields** made by **Solomon** (cf. 10:16–17). These were replaced by less expensive **bronze shields** which were kept locked up and used mainly in escorting **the king to the temple**. Shishak's invasion was the first serious attack against Judah by any foreign power since Saul's days. The Egyptian king was not able to subdue Palestine as he had hoped.

3. REHOBOAM'S DEATH (14:29–31)

14:29–30. In addition to **the book of the annals of the kings of Judah** the chronicler noted other contemporary sources where more of Rehoboam's deeds were recorded (2 Chron. 12:13–16). The **continual warfare** mentioned here (1 Kings 14:30) is mentioned briefly again (15:6; cf. 2 Chron. 12:15) but is not explained. In view of Rehoboam's initial plan to regain Israel by force

(1 Kings 12:21; which he abandoned after the Prophet Shemaiah reported God's prohibition of civil war, 2 Chron. 11:1–4), these constant wars probably involved border disputes in the territory of Benjamin. It appears that **Rehoboam** was more successful in these border disputes since he won both the hearts and the land of the Benjamites. The exact border probably changed many times in these early years of the divided monarchy.

The 15 cities Rehoboam fortified were located in Judah and Benjamin, south and west of Jerusalem (see the map "Fifteen Judean Cities Fortified by Rehoboam," near 2 Chron. 11:5–10). Probably after Shishak's invasion they were strengthened to defend Judah against future attacks from Egypt and Philistia.

14:31. **Rehoboam** died **and was buried** in the old **City of David** (cf. comments on 2:10) in Jerusalem. **His mother's name** is given again (cf. 14:21) as part of the regular summary of the kings' reigns. His son **Abijah ... succeeded him**.

Mathews, K. A. (1998). *The Historical Books. In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), Holman Concise Bible Commentary (p. 141). Broadman & Holman Publishers.*

Denouncing Jeroboam (14:1–20). Jeroboam's wife, disguised as another woman, visited Ahijah the prophet at Shiloh to learn the fate of her ailing son Abijah. The prophet was not fooled and denounced the house of her husband. He predicted the boy would die and the Lord would raise up another dynasty to cut off the progeny of Jeroboam (see 15:29). The prophet also foretold the exile of Israel. Jeroboam reigned twenty-two years (930–909 B.C.).

Chastening Rehoboam (14:21–31). Rehoboam squandered his heritage through spiritual apostasy. His reign was as wicked as Jeroboam's with its high places and male cult prostitutes. Although Judah was preserved because of the promise to David, the Lord in anger punished Rehoboam for his wickedness. He was afflicted by Shishak (Shoshenq), who was the founder of Egypt's Twenty-second Dynasty (945–924). An account of his wars is inscribed on the wall of the temple at Karnak. Rehoboam paid him handsomely from the gold accumulated by Solomon. Rehoboam reigned for seventeen years (930–913 B.C.).

Tatum, S. L. (1972). *1 Kings. In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), The Teacher's Bible Commentary (p. 201). Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers.*

The Deaths of Jeroboam and Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:1–31)

The passage—Jeroboam's wickedness went from bad to worse. His son became very ill. He sent his wife to Ahijah, the prophet of God. She disguised herself so he would not recognize her. Though the prophet was blind, God revealed the identity of Jeroboam's wife to him. He foretold the doom of Jeroboam. When Jeroboam's wife returned home her child died. In due time Jeroboam also died.

Meanwhile Rehoboam was king in Judah. He was almost as evil as Jeroboam. He led his nation away from God. They also built shrines to idols. Shishak, king of Egypt, came up to Jerusalem and stole the treasures out of the Temple of God. Rehoboam substituted shields of brass for the shields of gold that had been stolen. After the decline of his power, Rehoboam died.

Special points—The heathen worship in Judah included both male and female prostitutes. The male prostitutes are called sodomites here, after the name of the ancient city God destroyed for its wickedness.

Truth for today—When Jeroboam and his wife looked to Ahijah, the prophet of God, for prayer and counsel in the sickness of their son, they remind us of those who turn their backs on God and his church. In time of trouble, they expect God and his people to minister to their desires.

Rehoboam's shields of brass substituted for the shields of gold are symbols of a religious glory that passes away from those who compromise their principles. The form of religion may remain, but its content is like brass compared to gold.

The Holy Bible: New International Version. (1984). (1 Kings 14). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

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