

# YOU ARE THERE JEROBOAM, A VALIANT WARRIOR

## Introduction, through the eyes of someone who was there

You are Jeroboam, one of the key men in the reign of King Solomon. You are in charge of all the forced labor of the house of Joseph. But Ahijah, a prophet of God, has come to you to tell you that God is taking the kingdom away from Solomon and giving it to you. (All of the kingdom besides Judah, that is.) God is doing this because Solomon has forsaken God and worshipped false gods.

Solomon finds out about the prophecy and you have to escape to Egypt to avoid being killed. But now Solomon is dead, and it's time to find out whether the prophet was correct ...

Original illustration (also available in full-color card sets)



## Basic verses and other related passages

### THE BASIC STORY

1 Kings 11-14 (2 Chronicles 10) (God gives Israel to Jeroboam)

### BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE ...

2 Samuel 5:1-5 (Seven years after Saul dies, all of Israel acknowledges David as king)

1 Kings 5:13-18 (King Solomon requires forced labor from all over Israel)

1 Kings 9:1-9 (God warns Solomon to stay obedient to Him)

## More depth and detail

As the two kingdoms divide, Jeroboam has plenty of problems. He doesn't have a capital or officials to lead a kingdom. Families have been split, and must decide if they will move to stay together. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, is preparing for war to force him back into his kingdom. But perhaps his worst problem is that all faithful Jews must travel to the Temple in Jerusalem — leaving his kingdom — three times a year. That's not a very stable situation for a young kingdom, but what can he do about it?

Note that tribal borders are becoming blurred, and God's award of 10 tribes to Jeroboam is not totally literal. Originally, the land of the tribe of Simeon is within the area given to Judah. When the kingdom splits, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin stay with King Rehoboam ... but what does the tribe of Simeon do? It appears that many of them remain loyal to Rehoboam, also. Levites (not now counted as one of the twelve tribes) live throughout the kingdom, some in the south and some in the north, and some move south to stay with God's Temple. And when Rehoboam's grandson, King Asa, turns to God, parts of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon switch from Israel to Judah. (2 Chronicles 15)

## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT JEROBOAM?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

"Summing up" time (if needed)

## DID YOU KNOW? FORCED LABOR

Nowhere in the Bible does God promote slavery, but He does recognize its existence and gives strict rules regarding the treatment of slaves. Slaves are not to be oppressed; they are to be treated with dignity and respect. (This makes Israel unique among the nations, who often use slave labor to build their empires.) God has separate laws for foreign-born slaves and Jewish slaves. Foreign-born slaves, whether captured during warfare or bought, are to be treated kindly and given basic human rights, such as food, shelter, and rest on the Sabbath. A Jewish slave is to be treated even better, as a member of the family.

Related facts about Bible life & times

A Jew can sell himself or his child as a slave to repay a debt, to atone for theft, or because of extreme poverty. If a Jewish male is sold, he is to be set free after six years, unless he chooses to become a permanent slave. If however, during those seven years he marries another slave and has children, his wife and children remain with their owner. If a female is sold, she is to be taken care of fairly, but her owner is not required to set her free unless he mistreats her (Exodus 21:1-11). And, all male Jewish slaves are to be set free in the year of Jubilee (Leviticus 25:39-55). God punishes Zedekiah for not freeing his slaves. (Jeremiah 34:8-22)

In order to build the Temple, Solomon relies not only on slave labor, but also conscripted labor. Each tribe of Israel sent men, 30,000 in all, who worked one month for Solomon, two months at home, until the Temple is completed. Forced labor also built Solomon's palace, the walls of Jerusalem, the Millo (a stronghold in Jerusalem), and three other cities. (1 Kings 9:15)

**1** God gives most of the kingdom to Jeroboam, but within a few years, he has transformed the religious law that God gave Moses, replacing the Temple with idolatry. Why does God do this? Has He made a mistake?

**2** What should Jeroboam do about the Israelites who want to travel to Jerusalem to worship? (Remember that Jerusalem is only about five miles over the border.)

**The heart of the lesson:**  
**What can we learn from Jeroboam?**  
**How can we use his experiences to make us better?**

**3** Why are both Rehoboam and Jeroboam so foolish?

Teacher notes with ways to discuss and develop each question are available (at no cost)

When and in what ways are you likely to be just as foolish?

**4** What can you learn from Jeroboam?

**A second "summing up" time**

In violation of Moses' Law, Solomon marries women from **Edom, Moab, Ammon, Sidon**, and other foreign lands. Ahijah meets Jeroboam on the road outside **Jerusalem**. Jeroboam hides in **Egypt** until Solomon dies and Rehoboam succeeds him.. The northern tribes of **Israel** swear allegiance to Jeroboam. Jeroboam builds **Shechem** (the first capital of Israel?) and **Penuel**, and sets golden calf idols in **Dan** and **Bethel**.



**Map with notes on the places in the lesson**

## THE MINOR PROPHETS OVERVIEW

Why are the last twelve books of the Old Testament called the "Minor Prophets"? Simply because they're so much shorter than the other books (especially the other prophets' books) in the Old Testament. Using a Bible chosen at random, the "Major Prophet" books of **Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel** fill 65, 72, 53 and 17 pages, respectively. The Minor Prophet books are much smaller; they fill 52 pages all together.

They span a wide range of styles:

- **Hosea** begins with an object lesson, and God's explanation of the lesson.
- **Joel** is so unspecific that we aren't sure what he writes, or whether his central example of an attacking horde of locusts is literal or figurative.
- **Amos** has a message that he doesn't want to speak, and no one wants to hear.
- **Obadiah** is the shortest Old Testament book, and is addressed specifically to Edom.
- **Jonah** is one of the best-loved children's stories, about what happens when a prophet tries to dodge the job God gives him. Very little of the book (3:4 — one verse?) is really prophecy.
- **Micah, Zephaniah and Malachi** are the closest to "standard" books of prophecy. Micah and Zephaniah are in poetry; Malachi is in prose.
- **Nahum** is addressed specifically to Assyria.
- **Habakkuk** asks two questions, each of which God answers, and then concludes with a prayer.
- **Haggai** is as much history as prophecy. Haggai tells the people what God wants, and then we read that they did it.
- **Zechariah** is full of the types of images we find in Daniel and the Revelation.

**Sidebar for each lesson, on a related theme**