

Divided Kingdom

Samuel told the Children of Israel that kings would place a heavy tax burden upon them which Solomon did. His son, Rehoboam, was very foolish in not listening to his father's older wise men's advice to him to lessen the tax burden. Instead listening to his friends, he increased their taxes. Therefore, ten of the twelve tribes rebelled against him anointing Jeroboam as their king.

Studies during the Period of the Divided Kingdom:

- 1 Rehoboam and Jeroboam
- 2 Ahab
- 3 Ahab's Demise
- 4 Jerom, King of Israel
- 5 Elisha's Miracles
- 6 Jehu
- 7 The End of Israel
- 8 Hezekiah, A Good King of Judah
- 9 Josiah, Turned to God With All His Heart
- 10 Disaster Strikes Judah
- 11 Ezra
- 12 Ezra – part 2
- 13 Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem
- 14 Rebuilding the Spiritual Lives of the Jews
- 15 Nehemiah Returns
- 16 Esther

Rehoboam and Jeroboam

Setting: Solomon died and Rehoboam became king. Ten tribes rebelled because of a heavy tax burden. They made Jeroboam their king.

Text: 1 Kings 14 –16:28

Key Point: Asa's father and grandfather did evil and his grandmother built a repulsive Asherah pole to worship these idol gods but Asa did right in God's sight overcoming the evil ways of his family.

Ahab

Setting: Ahab became king of Israel and married Jezebel the daughter of the king of the Sidonians, she being more wicked than he.

Text: 1 Kings 16:28 – 19

Key Point: Sometimes the strongest of faith become afraid and discouraged but God is always near, ready and willing to continue using us for His cause.

Ahab's Demise

Setting: Ahab became king of Israel and married Jezebel the daughter of the king of the Sidonians, she being more wicked than he.

Text: 1 Kings 20 – 22

Key Point: Those who do evil do not want to hear the words of God and when they do, they reject them having contempt for the messenger.

Jeorm, King of Israel

Setting: Ahab died, his son Ahaziah, became king but also died and his brother Joram succeeded him

Text: 2 Kings 1 – 3

Key Point: By consulting the word of God and following it, God's will is done and He is glorified.

Elisha's Miracles

Setting: Throughout the land of Israel Elisha performed miracles.

Text: 2 Kings 4 – 9

Key Point: When God uses us to do His service He is glorified.

Jehu

Setting: Elijah had anointed Jehu king over Israel. He then took the throne by force after Elisha anoints him.

Text: 2 Kings 10 – 13

Key Point: All of Ahab's family is destroyed just as God had foretold for God is faithful and will not let the wicked go unpunished.

The End of Israel

Setting: Fighting continued among nations but now Israel and Judah fight each other. Then Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, attacks.

Text: 2 Kings 14 – 17

Key Point: The Lord warned Israel through prophets to turn from their evil ways. "But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their fathers who did not trust in the Lord their God."

Hezekiah, A Good King of Judah

Setting: Six years before Israel was destroyed Hezekiah became King of Judah.

Text: 2 Kings 18 – 20

Key Point: Choose life not death and sought God in making all decisions.

Josiah – Turned to God With All His Heart

Setting: Josiah's grandfather, Manasseh, was probably the worst king Judah ever had. Josiah's father was murdered after two years so Josiah became king at the tender age of eight.

Text: 2 Kings 21 – 23:30

Key Point: "I have found the Book of the Law" and after reading it God said "Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself ... your eyes will not see all the disaster ..."

Disaster Strikes Judah

Setting: God did not turn away from his fierce anger because of all the evil Manasseh had done for He said "I will

remove Judah also from My presence as I removed Israel.”

Text: 2 Kings 23:31 –25

Key Point: Judah was taken into captivity away from the Promised Land to the land of the Babylonians.

Word Study

25:27 Evil-Merodach - man of Merodach, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Neo-Babylonian Empire, 562-560 B.C.

Ezra

Setting: The captive Children of Israel found favor with Cyrus, Artaxerxes and Darius, kings of Persia, who authorized them to return to Judah.

Text: Ezra 1 – 5

Key Point: Enemies of God will use every available method to prevent spiritual growth, so they “compelled them by force to stop.”

Ezra [part 2]

Setting: Darius is now King and requires the governing authorities in the Palestine area to provide within limits what was necessary to assist the Jews in rebuilding the temple.

Text: Ezra 6– 10

Key Point: We have disregarded the commands of the Lord thus our guilt prevents us from standing in presence of God. Therefore, everyone made confession and separated themselves from evil and evil people.

Rebuilding The Wall of Jerusalem

Setting: The king of Persia sent his cupbearer to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls

Text: Nehemiah 1 – 7

Key Point: God is great. He keeps His covenant with those who obey. But those against God will be mocked, ridiculed and threatened. To succeed “The people (we) worked with all their (our) heart.”

Rebuilding Spiritual Lives of the Jews

Setting: The wall of Jerusalem had been rebuilt even with much opposition. Now the priest Ezra, a descendant of Aaron, read the Book of the Law.

Text: Nehemiah 8 – 10

Key Point: They had respect for God by standing up while Ezra read the Book of the Law. They repented and confessed their sins recognizing the faithfulness of God who is from everlasting to everlasting.

Nehemiah’s Return

Setting: As promised, Nehemiah returned to serve the king and after a period of time the king allowed him to return to Jerusalem.

Text: Nehemiah 11 – 13

Key Point: Men sin. Those who are righteous must confront them. Some refuse to repent while others confess their sins, repent desiring God's forgiveness.

Esther

Setting: The Jews were in captivity having been taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus and Darius had shown favor to the Jews allowing them to return to Judah, but not all chose to go.

Text: Esther

Key Point: When there is task, functions, or some work of the Lord to be done do not resist for who knows the only reason for your existence at this time and place may be to do that work.

Word Study:

1:1 Xerxes – Son of Darius, the Great King of Persia

1:2 Susas – The apparent capital of Persia located east of Babylon and northeast of UR