

Rehoboam and Jeroboam: a nation divided

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I have been recently studying in depth on Rehoboam and Jeroboam because these two fellows were barely covered in my formal theological education and I must say they don't come up very often even in church Bible studies.

These kings are glossed over, not because they are uninteresting, but because keeping their stories straight can get confusing!

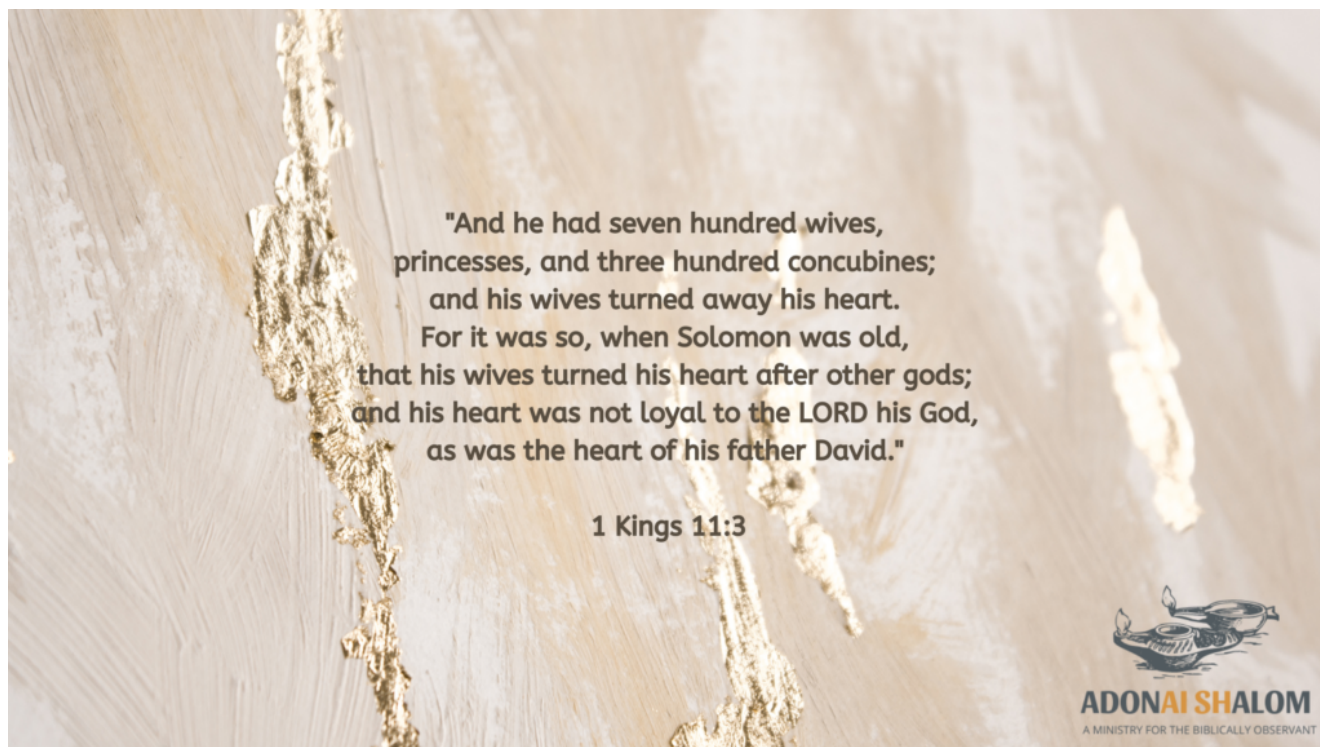
In order to understand them, we must go back to the days of King Solomon.

King Solomon's downfall: lust for seductive women and idolatry

By this point in time, King Solomon's heart had truly deviated from seeking the LORD. The Bible tells us in detail the number of wives and concubines he had:

["And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. For it was](#)

so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.” 1 Kings 11:3



Lust ran in the family. King Solomon's father, King David had struggled with that. Just look at his relationship with Bathsheba ([2 Samuel 11](#)).

But King Solomon took this to another level.

Unlike King David, King Solomon did not remain faithful to God alone. King Solomon not only kept company with seductive women, he allowed those women to influence his spirituality. He confessed it in his writings:

"And I find more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters. He who pleases God shall escape from her, but the sinner shall be trapped by her." Ecclesiastes 7:26



The Seductive Woman

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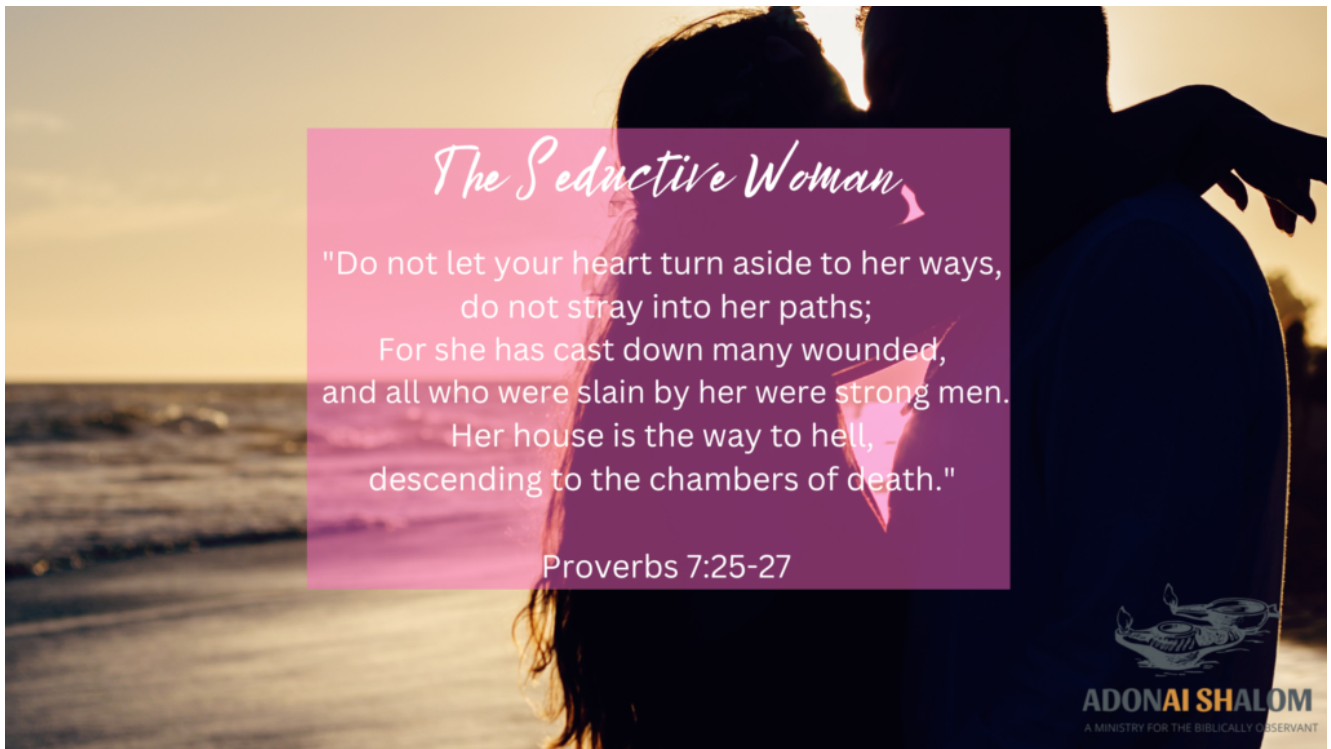


King Solomon recognized that his obsession with women was a path to death:

[“Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths;](#)

[For she has cast down many wounded, and all who were slain by her were strong men.](#)

[Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.” Proverbs 7:25-27](#)



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The Consequence for his sin: King Solomon's kingdom would be torn away and given to one of his servants

King Solomon had overseen the construction of the beautiful Temple ([1 Kings 5-7](#)) and God had appeared to him twice. It is hard to imagine how he could let his heart turn from the One, True LORD.

But when sin seeps into our lives and we no longer recognize it, it launches us straight into destruction.

Justifiably, the LORD God of Israel became angry with Solomon. Scripture records the consequence: King Solomon's kingdom would be torn away . . . and given to one of his servants.

I'm certain that would have been considered very embarrassing!

Here is what the Bible says:

“So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded.

Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, “Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, **I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant.** Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; **I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David,** and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen.” 1 Kings 11:9-13, *emphases added*



King Solomon’s heart had not been loyal to the LORD and now one of his own servants would be unloyal to him.

Jeroboam, a servant who becomes a

king

Jeroboam was a servant of [King Solomon](#). The Scriptures inform us that King Solomon considered him “industrious” ([1 Kings 11:28](#)).

The Bible says this hard worker was still a young man. King Solomon appointed Jeroboam to be the officer over the labor force of the house of Joseph ([1 Kings 11:28](#)).

Little did King Solomon know, but God would use Jeroboam against him!

The Prophet Ahijah prophesies to Jeroboam

[“Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam,](#)

[“Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: ‘Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you \(but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel\), because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David.](#)

[However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand,](#)

because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes.

And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel.

Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.' ” 1 Kings 11:29-39, *emphases added*

The LORD spoke through Ahijah to tell Jeroboam that He would tear the kingdom from King Solomon and give Jeroboam 10 of the tribes. Whoa! This was a major turning point in Israel's history, one that would shape the future very dramatically.

The prophecy was so significant that King Solomon wanted to *kill* Jeroboam ([1 Kings 11:40](#)).

Jeroboam had to flee to Egypt until King Solomon died! ([1 Kings 11:40](#)).

Rehoboam, a wicked king

Names ending with “oboam” must've been very popular in those days.

King Solomon died and his son, *Rehoboam*, took over. ([1 Kings 11:43](#)).

Rehoboam was a terrible guy. Jeroboam and the others in Israel

reasonably asked the newly crowned king of Israel to please lighten the work burden as it had been quite heavy under King Solomon's reign. ([1 Kings 12:3-4](#)).

King Rehoboam consulted his elders, who wisely counseled that if he were to lighten their load, the people would happily serve him forever. But this wicked king rejected the sage advice of the elders.

Then King Rehoboam consulted his friends from his youth – and if they were friends with him, we can assume they were just as depraved as he was. Indeed, King Rehoboam's friends advised him to flaunt his wealth by becoming fat and inform the people that he would harshly come after them with scourges (a literal translation is: "scorpions."). ([1 Kings 12:14](#))

The LORD hardened King Rehoboam's heart in order for His plan as spoken through Prophet Ahijah to be fulfilled ([1 Kings 12:15](#)).

The Kingdom Splits in Two

The people of Israel were distressed when they realized King Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was going to be an unreasonable leader.

["So Israel departed to their tents. But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah."](#)
[1 Kings 12:17](#)

They knew this king would not listen to them, so 10 of the tribes chose Jeroboam to be their king.

["Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only."](#) 1 Kings 12:20, *emphasis added*

Jeroboam became the first king of the Northern Kingdom.

King Rehoboam, therefore, by default, was the first king of Judah as the Southern Kingdom.

Israel and the House of David

Did you notice the connection between [1 Kings 11:39](#) and [1 Kings 12:19](#)?

The Word of God says, [“And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.”](#) [1 Kings 11:39](#)

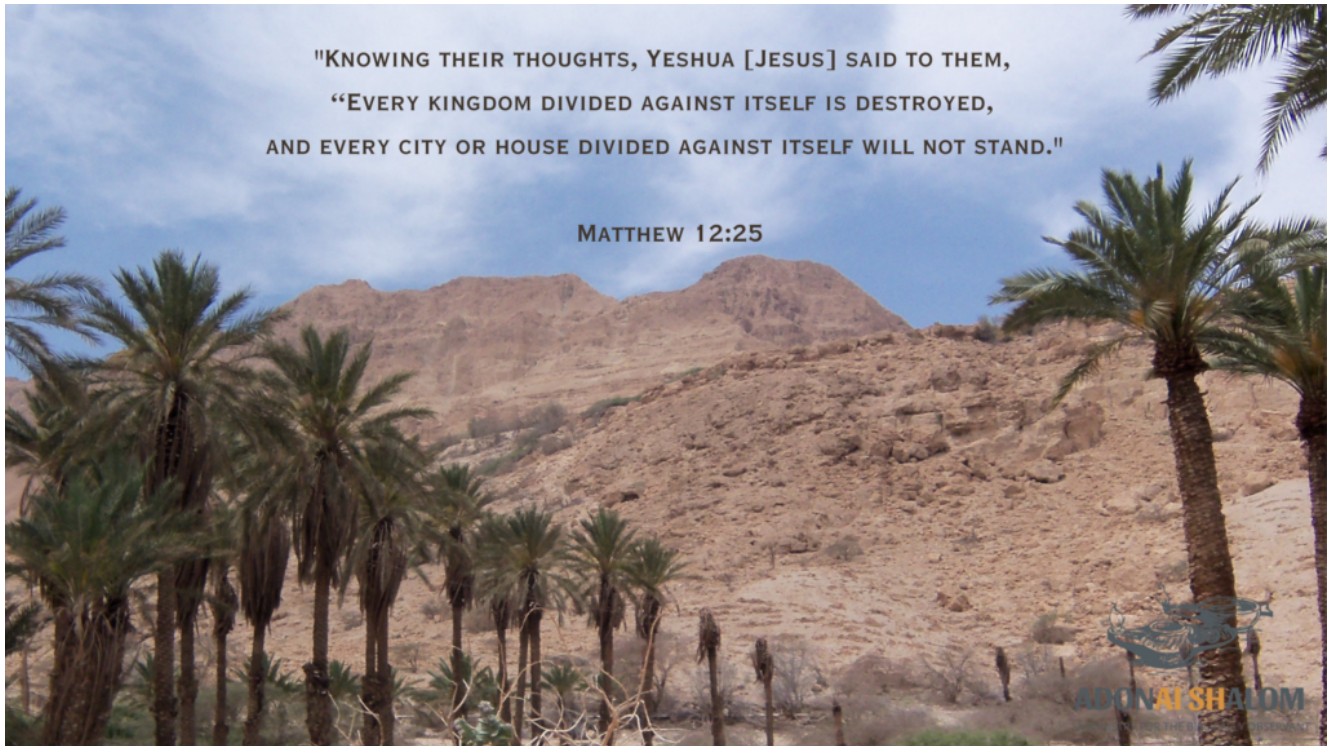


[“So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.”](#) [1 Kings 12:19](#)

God promised that for the sake of his servant David and the sake of Jerusalem, their affliction would not last forever. Israel (the Northern Kingdom) rebelled against Judah (the Southern Kingdom) and this continues even today. But we know there must be a future restoration because our Savior taught:

[“Knowing their thoughts, Yeshua \[Jesus\] said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is destroyed, and every city or](#)

house divided against itself will not stand.” Matthew 12:25



Israel must be united in faith once again!

Our LORD Yeshua (Jesus) is of the lineage of King David and the Gospels testify of this fact. [Mark 10:48](#) “Have mercy on me, Son of David!”

Also, our Messiah Yeshua (Jesus) is the [Lion of the Tribe of Judah!](#) ([Revelation 5:5](#))



“. . . Do not weep.
Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah,
the Root of David, has prevailed . . .”

Revelation 5:5



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He will bring restoration and redemption. So much of native Israel continues to reject Yeshua (Jesus) as their promised Messiah, but this rebellion will one day cease. We see many previously unbelievers coming to faith in Him, so continue to pray!

[“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philipians 2:9-11.](#)

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PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11



God has kept His Word and all of His promises. As history continues to unfold, we see that each and every prophecy is being accomplished in His perfect timing.

I hope that this study has helped clarify for you some of the dynamics of what was going on as Israel and Judah divided. We pray for His return and the [millennial reign](#) of our LORD who will bring peace and unity!