

Associates for Scriptural Knowledge • P.O. Box 25000, Portland, OR 97298-0990, USA

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Webpage on the Internet: <http://www.askelm.com> • E-Mail address: askoffice@askelm.com

Dear Associates and Friends,

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Rebellion, murder, and war are the subjects of this month's article "[Israel and Judah: 20. Civil War and Division](#)." The events described led to the breakup of the united kingdom of Israel and its descent to eventual destruction. God is in total control of every step downward. As you read about the idolatry of King Rehoboam of Judah and King Jeroboam of Israel, think of their idolatry as an invitation for God to punish His chosen people, exactly as He said He would do if the people of Israel violated their covenant with Him.

Note the comment by the Jewish historian Josephus about Jeroboam's announced intention to raise up two golden calves for them to worship. After all, what could possibly go wrong with such a great idea as that?

"When Jeroboam had said this, he deluded the people, and made them to revolt from the worship of their forefathers, and to transgress their laws. This was the beginning of the miseries to the Hebrews, and the cause why they were overcome in war by foreigners, and so fell into captivity."

• **Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews 8:229**

In the previous installment of "[Israel and Judah: 19. Solomon's Glory and Death](#)," you read about King Solomon's slippery-slope descent into idolatry. This month's article deals with the division of the united kingdom into two kingdoms, north and south (done by God because of Israel's idolatry), and how the separate kingdoms fared before YHWH. They both continued into idolatry.

Two Kings

1. Rehoboam was the king of a united Israel, looking to be crowned in Shechem. His name means "enlarger of the people." This name is ironic in the sense that 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam and formed a separate kingdom. Rehoboam remained ruler of a diminished kingdom composed of only two tribes: Judah, Benjamin, and part of the tribe of Levi.
2. Jeroboam was the king of the northern realm of Israel. His name means "whose people is many." He deliberately turned to idolatry to distract his subjects from going to Jerusalem for spring and fall feasts mandated by Moses.

It is interesting that both Rehoboam and Jeroboam have names similar in meaning. Both names have reference to rapid growth in population. Perhaps they were named when Israel's numbers were vastly increased. Such rapid population growth can come only in times of long-term peace, prosperity, and abundant food. These conditions existed with the relatively stable reigns of David and Solomon.¹

Four Prophets

In the article four men are presented, all of whom transmit messages from YHWH to one recipient or a group of people. Three tell the truth, one is a false prophet who lies, yet on one occasion even he accurately tells what God told him to say. Two make no mistakes while two make grievous errors. For one of them, the error cost him his life. The four prophets are (not in order of appearance):

¹ "Jeroboam" and "Rehoboam" in A.R. Faussett, *Faussett Bible Dictionary* (1888). n.p.: International Bible Translators, 1998. BibleWorks.

1. Ahijah, a prophet of northern Israel. His name means “my brother is YHWH.” He gives prophetic words to King Jeroboam of Israel. He was the prophet who told Jeroboam about God’s decision to break off and give him 10 of the 12 tribes of Israel.
2. Shemiah (or Shemaiah), a prophet of Judah. His name means “YHWH hears.” He gives God’s words to King Rehoboam of Judah. He warns Rehoboam not to go to war, and later tells him that God will not destroy Judah — yet.
3. An unnamed man from Judah is called the “**man of God**” or better the “**man of Elohim.**”² He is not called a prophet, though he delivers a message from YHWH verbally to Jeroboam. The message is both an indictment and a strong warning for Jeroboam to repent of his persistent idolatry. He traveled from Judah to Bethel to give a major prophecy to Jeroboam about the destruction of his dynasty and his new kingdom. Miracles occurred when Jeroboam threatened him. On his way home from Bethel, he met the next prophet.
4. Another unnamed prophet simply called, “**a certain old prophet dwelling in Bethel.**” This wonderful man lied to the “**man of Elohim**” so he would disobey God. After his lie, God gave this “**old prophet**” a true prophecy — he was to tell the “**man of Elohim**” he would be killed by a lion while riding home. The kindly “**old prophet**” even helped the “**man of Elohim**” saddle his donkey to speed his way toward his death. The lion did what lions do, just as prophesied, but without eating the victim. The cold hostility of the “**old prophet**” is amazing, but there is no textual evidence that God punished him at all.

In fact, several people are stunningly cold-hearted in this episode of interaction between Israel and Judah. As you read, keep close track of these six individuals while you read.

Thank You

Let me share what I wrote one man about what ASK tries to achieve with its publications and all its material. All of Dr. Martin’s research and teaching had the same goal that the apostle Paul wrote about in Ephesians. While they have died, we who are alive continue to work ...

**“For the perfecting of the saints,
for the work of the ministry,
for the edifying of the body of Christ:**

**Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,
unto a perfect man,
unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:**

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

• Ephesians 4:12–14

The words “**the knowledge**” in Greek is *tas epignosis*, in other words “**the full-knowledge of the Son of God.**” It means more than simply knowing about the Son of God. It means knowing everything important about Him. That likely will not fully occur in our lifetimes, but that is the goal until we die.

Thank you for your continued financial support, your prayers, and your many, many encouragements.

David W. SIELAFF
david@askelm.com

² Shemiah is also called a “**man of Elohim**” but he is also termed “**a prophet**”