

FIRST KINGS

Chapter 14

Ahijah's Prophecy Against Jeroboam

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, because they provoked the LORD to anger by making Asherah poles. 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.

14:1 *At that time.* Probably indicating a time not far removed from the event narrated in ch. 13. (CSB)

Abijah. Means “My (divine) Father is the LORD,” suggesting that Jeroboam, at least to some degree, desired to be regarded as a worshiper of the Lord. (CSB)

14:2 *disguise yourself.* Jeroboam’s attempt to mislead the prophet Ahijah into giving a favorable prophecy concerning the sick boy indicates (1) his consciousness of his own guilt, (2) his superstition that prophecy worked in a magical way and (3) his confused but real respect for the power of the Lord’s prophet. (CSB)

Either Jeroboam thought he could hoodwink the prophet or he wanted to keep his wife’s mission to a true prophet a secret. To add to the deception, she was not to take a costly reward for the prophet but only some food (cf 1Sm 9:7). (TLSB)

Shiloh. Fewer than 10 mi N of Bethel, the Lord’s tabernacle had stood here from Joshua’s time to Samuel’s time (1Sm 1:3; Jer 7:12). May have continued as a site for faithful Israelites such as Ahijah, the prophet who foretold Jeroboam’s rise to power (11:29–39). (TLSB)

who told me I would be king over this people. See 11:29–39. (CSB)

14:3 *ten loaves of bread.* The gift of an ordinary farmer (like Saul in 1Sa 9:7–8) rather than that of a king (see 2Ki 8:7–9). (CSB)

14:5 *the LORD had told Ahijah.* See 1Sa 9:15–17; 2Ki 6:32 for other examples of divine revelation concerning an imminent visit. (CSB)

14:6 *Come in, wife of Jeroboam.* Ahijah’s recognition of the woman and his knowledge of the purpose of her visit served to authenticate his message as truly being the word of the Lord. (CSB)

14:7–8 *raised you ... made you a leader ... tore the kingdom away.* Jeroboam is first reminded of the gracious acts of the Lord in his behalf (see 11:26, 30–38). (CSB)

14:8 *you have not been like my servant David.* Jeroboam had not responded to God’s gracious acts and had ignored the requirements given when Ahijah told him he would become king (see 11:38). (CSB)

14:9 *all who lived before you.* Jeroboam’s wickedness surpassed that of Saul, David and Solomon in that he implemented a paganized system of worship for the entire populace of the northern kingdom. *other gods.* See notes on 12:28, 30. (CSB)

As king of Israel’s northern tribes, Jeroboam had no predecessors. But he was not the first leader over the people of Israel who had provoked the Lord to anger by evil deeds (v 7). (TLSB)

14:10–11 A curse in violent and vile expressions. (TLSB)

14:10 *male*. Lit, “one who urinates against a wall.” (TLSB)

slave or free. Without exception (see 21:21; 2Ki 9:8; 14:26). (CSB)

burns up dung. As fuel. Cf Ezk 4:12. (TLSB)

14:11 *birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country*. See note on 16:4. The covenant curse of Dt 28:26 is applied to Jeroboam’s male descendants, none of whom will receive an honorable burial. (CSB)

14:12 *boy*. The Hebrew for this word allows for wide latitude in age (the same term is used for the young advisers of Rehoboam; see 12:8 and note). (CSB)

will die. Although the death of Abijah was a severe disappointment to Jeroboam and his wife, it was an act of God’s mercy to the prince, sparing him the disgrace and suffering that were to come on his father’s house (see Isa 57:1–2). (CSB)

14:13 *All Israel will mourn for him and bury him*. Perhaps an indication that Abijah was the crown prince, and was well known and loved by the people. (CSB)

buried. He alone of Jeroboam’s descendants would receive an honorable burial. (CSB)

something pleasing to the LORD. Lit, “a good word to the LORD.” Phrase appears in Ps 45:2 (Hbr) and Pr 12:25, describing gladness in both cases. Obscure expression describes the Lord’s free mercy to this child, who alone would receive a proper funeral. The passage goes beyond human understanding contradicting our sense of what’s best. Somehow this child (even in his untimely death, by our expectations) is in God’s good care. Parents who lose children may rightly find here comfort about their dear little ones, who are certainly known to the heavenly Father and cannot fall unless He allows it. Cf Mt 10:28–31; Lk 12:4–7. However, none may argue from this text that children are innocent and thereby merit God’s favor. (TLSB)

14:14 *a king ... who will cut off the family of Jeroboam*. Ahijah looked beyond the brief reign of Nadab, Jeroboam’s son (15:25–26), to the revolt of Baasha (15:27–16:7). (CSB)

Extinction of Jeroboam’s house would take place in the immediate future, beginning with the death of his heir and the rise of the Assyrian Empire. However, it would be two centuries before the Assyrians would rule over Israel, scattering them “beyond the Euphrates.” (TLSB)

14:15 *like a reed swaying in the water*. Descriptive of the instability of the royal house in the northern kingdom, which was to be characterized by assassinations and revolts (see 15:27–28; 16:16; 2Ki 9:24; 15:10, 14, 25, 30). (CSB)

A picture of the instability of the Israelite royal house. (TLSB)

He will uproot Israel. The list of curses for covenant breaking found in Deuteronomy climaxes in forced exile for God's people from the land of promise (Dt 28:63–64; 29:25–28). (CSB)

Asherah poles. See NIV text note. Ahijah perceived that Jeroboam's use of golden bulls in worship would inevitably lead to the adoption of other elements of Canaanite nature religion. The goddess Asherah was the consort of Baal (cf. Jdg 3:7; 2Ki 23:4), and the Asherah poles were probably wooden representations of the goddess (see note on Ex 34:13). (CSB)

14:16 *will give Israel up.* Surrendering them to Assyria. (TLSB)

sins Jeroboam has committed. See 12:26–33; 13:33–34. (CSB)

caused Israel to commit. A phrase repeated often in 1,2 Kings (e.g., 15:26; 16:2, 13, 19, 26). (CSB)

14:17 *Tirzah.* Used by the kings of Israel as the royal city until Omri purchased and built up Samaria to serve that purpose (16:24). It is probably modern Tell el-Far'ah, about seven miles north of Shechem (see note on SS 6:4). (CSB)

C 8 mi NE of Shechem (see note, 12:1). Evidently Jeroboam's summer residence. It became the Northern Kingdom's capital. (TLSB)

14:1–18 The prophet Ahijah foretells that Jeroboam's dynasty will come to an end. God brings punishment on those who go against His Word and who refuse to repent of their evil ways. This message is related repeatedly in the history of Israel's kings. But what also is related through this sacred history is God's patience with His people, whom He planned to save by the righteous reign of His Son, Jesus Christ. • Gracious Lord, we pray that in Your mercy, You always keep us close to You and Your Word, never cut off but forever bound in faith. In the Savior's name we ask this. Amen. (TLSB)

14:19 *his wars.* See v. 30; 15:6; 2Ch 13:2–20. (CSB)

annals of the kings of Israel. A record of the reigns of the kings of the northern kingdom used by the author of 1,2 Kings and apparently accessible to those interested in further details of the history of the reigns of Israelite kings. It is not to be confused with the canonical book of 1,2 Chronicles, which was written later than 1,2 Kings and contains the history of the reigns of the kings of Judah only (see Introduction: Author, Sources and Date). (CSB)

14:20 *twenty-two years.* 930–909 B.C. (CSB)

rested with his fathers. See note on 1:21. (CSB)

Nadab. See 15:25–32. (CSB)

14:19–20 Jeroboam’s reign marks the beginning of a line of kings who will continue to lead the people of Israel astray. Because of sin, death has entered our world. The constant reminder of this fact in Scripture and in the world around us should lead us to look to the solution, to Jesus, the Savior whose coming was promised in the OT and recorded in the NT. • King of kings, You rule over the mighty of this world; You are the Lord of life and death. When I pass from this life, let me fall asleep in Jesus, and when He returns awaken to the joys of heaven. Amen. (TLSB)

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.

14:21–16:28 From the division of the kingdom and the first king of Israel, the account returns to the reign of Solomon’s son Rehoboam (14:21–29) and of two of his successors: Abijah and Asa (15:1–24). In order to synchronize the history of the two kingdoms, the author of 1Ki then resumes the story of five kings who ruled in the north (15:25–16:28). (TLSB)

14:21 *forty-one years old.* Rehoboam was born shortly before David’s death (see 11:42; see also note on 2:24). (CSB)

seventeen years. 930–913 B.C. (CSB)

city the LORD had chosen ... to put his Name. See 9:3; Ps 132:13. (CSB)

His mother’s name. In the formula introducing the kings of Judah (not of Israel), the name of the queen mother is a regular feature. The part that Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother,

played in putting her son on the throne (1:11–31) is a good example of the influence wielded by dowager queens. (TLSB)

Ammonite. One of Solomon's many foreign wives. (TLSB)

14:22 *Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD.* The reign of Rehoboam is described in greater detail in 2Ch 11–12. The priests and Levites who immigrated to Judah from the north led the country to follow the way of David and Solomon for the first three years of Rehoboam's reign (see 12:24; 2Ch 11:17). In later years Rehoboam and the people of Judah turned away from the Lord (2Ch 12:1). (CSB)

14:23 *high places.* See note on 3:2. (CSB)

sacred stones. Stone pillars, bearing a religious significance, that were placed next to the altars. The use of such pillars was common among the Canaanites and was explicitly forbidden to the Israelites in the Mosaic law (Ex 23:24; Lev 26:1; Dt 16:21–22). It is likely that the pillars were intended to be representations of the deity (2Ki 3:2). For legitimate uses of stone pillars see Ge 28:18; 31:45; Ex 24:4. (CSB)

Asherah poles. See note on v. 15. (CSB)

14:24 *male shrine prostitutes.* Ritual prostitution was an important feature of Canaanite fertility religion. The Israelites had been warned by Moses not to engage in this abominable practice (see Dt 23:17–18; see also 1Ki 15:12; 2Ki 23:7; Hos 4:14). (CSB)

Sacred prostitution, both female and male, played a prominent part in Baal worship. His devotees expected these abominations to have the power of sympathetic magic, automatically putting the deity under a spell to produce fertility in human beings, herds, and crops. (TLSB)

14:25 *fifth year of King Rehoboam.* 926 B.C. (CSB)

Shishak. See notes on 3:1; 11:40. (CSB)

Account of Egyptian invasion, only incident recorded for Rehoboam's reign, intentionally follows description of abominations that provoked the Lord to jealousy. A Karnak inscription describes the events. One later tradition has Shishak removing the ark of the covenant at this time and taking it to Egypt or Ethiopia. However, the texts make no mention of this. (TLSB)

attacked Jerusalem. Shishak's invasion is described in more detail in 2Ch 12:2–4 and is also attested in a victory inscription found on the walls of the temple of Amun in Thebes, where numerous cities that Shishak plundered in both Judah and the northern kingdom are listed. 2Ch 12:5–8 indicates that fear of the impending invasion led to a temporary reformation in Judah. (CSB)

14:26 *took away.* Rehoboam willingly paid tribute. (TLSB)

gold shields Solomon had made. See 10:16–17. (CSB)

14:27 *bronze shields.* The reduced realm could not match the great wealth Solomon had accumulated in Jerusalem (see 10:21, 23, 27). (CSB)

14:29 *annals of the kings of Judah.* A record of the reigns of the kings of Judah similar to the one for the kings of the northern kingdom (see note on v. 19; see also Introduction: Author, Sources and Date). (CSB)

14:30 *continual warfare.* See notes on v. 19; 12:24. (CSB)

14:31 *rested with his fathers.* See note on 1:21. (CSB)

14:21–31 Idolatry marks Rehoboam's reign, even though he does not promote it as Jeroboam does in Israel. Sin and rebellion against God are not limited by politics or geography. No one is immune from God's judgment. Pray that God in His mercy will forgive and spare the new Israel, the Church, for the sake of Jesus, the Savior. His faithful reign extends to all people. • Lord God Almighty, send Your Holy Spirit to enlighten and strengthen us, that we may not fall into sin and unbelief. In the Savior's name we pray. Amen. (TLSB)