

The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe
Week # 8– Adult Bible Study – 2025 & 2026

Discovering the Bible

Notes – The Two Kingdoms

Oct. 28 & 29

1 Kings 12:1-20, Northern Tribes Revolt
1 Kings 14:21-31, The Reign of King Rehoboam of Judah
1 Kings 18:1-46, Elijah on Mount Carmel
1 Kings 19:1-21, Elijah at Mount Sinai
2 Kings 5:1-19, Elisha and Naaman
2 Kings 9:1-13, 30-37, Elisha and Jehu's Revolution
2 Kings 17:1-18, King Hoshea and the Fall of Samaria
2 Kings 22:1-20, Josiah and the Book of the Law
2 Kings 24:10-20; 25:1-12, The Fall of Jerusalem

The final four kings of Judah “did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.”
In 586 BCE during the reign of King Jehoiachin, the kingdom of Judah was conquered
by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.

1. This story made it clear that it was not God's idea that the Hebrews have a king, but since they insisted, God let them have their way.
2. God never abdicated his sovereignty to any of the Hebrew kings. The idea was that they would represent his sovereignty, not that he would delegate his sovereignty to them.
3. After 500 hundred years and something over 40 kings, there wasn't much to show for the long line of kings.
4. In the midst of the incredible mess these kings were making of God's purposes, God continues to work his purposes and uses *them* in the work.
5. The fall of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, focus on idolatry, unfaithfulness, and a rejection of God's guidance as primary causes for their downfall.
6. What happened after Solomon's death is often referred to as “*the division of the kingdom.*” The primary reason for the divided kingdom was Solomon's sin and the subsequent poor leadership of his son, Rehoboam.
7. Rehoboam's rejection of their request for justice and mercy caused the northern ten tribes to rebel and separate from his rule. The extensive empire ruled over by Solomon was split into two.

8. The ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel were Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulun. After the united kingdom split following the reign of King Solomon, these tribes formed the northern kingdom. The two southern tribes, Judah and Benjamin, formed the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
9. The final ideological fissure between the tribes occurred when Jeroboam, the new king of the northern kingdom, institutionalized a rival religious system to prevent his people from returning to Jerusalem to worship.
10. The role of the biblical prophet was to serve as God's spokesperson, delivering divine messages to the people. Their primary functions included calling for repentance, condemning social and religious sins, offering warnings of judgment, and providing hope and promises of restoration.

Timeline	Kingdom of Israel (North)	Kingdom of Judah (South)
~922 BC	Division: Following Solomon's death, the northern ten tribes revolt and form their own kingdom, with Jeroboam I as king.	Remains: The tribes of Judah and Benjamin, along with the Levites, remain loyal to the Davidic line and to Rehoboam.
~922-721 BC	Rule: A succession of kings, some good and many evil, rule the kingdom.	Rule: A succession of kings, some good and many evil, rule the kingdom.
~721 BC	Fall: The Neo-Assyrian Empire conquers the Kingdom of Israel, deporting many of its people.	Client State: Remains intact, though it becomes a client state to the Assyrians.
~721-586 BC	No Longer Exists: The northern kingdom is destroyed and its people are scattered.	Continued Rule: Continues to exist as a kingdom, though it later becomes a client state of the Neo-Babylonian Empire.
~586 BC		Fall: The Neo-Babylonian Empire conquers Judah, destroys Jerusalem and the Temple, and deports many of its people to Babylon.

After the death of King Solomon around 930 BCE, the unified Kingdom of Israel split into two rival kingdoms: Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The Northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722 BCE, while the Southern Kingdom of Judah lasted longer before being conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.

A Comparison Timeline

Event/Era	United Kingdom of Israel (c. 1050–930 BCE)	Kingdom of Israel (Northern Kingdom) (c. 930–722 BCE)	Kingdom of Judah (Southern Kingdom) (c. 930–586 BCE)
Beginning	Established under its first king, Saul, and later consolidated by King David. David made Jerusalem the capital.	The northern 10 tribes seceded and anointed Jeroboam as their king, following the oppression of Solomon and Rehoboam.	The tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to Solomon's son, Rehoboam, with Jerusalem as their capital.
Kings	Saul: First king, known for his military prowess. David: Unified the kingdom and established a powerful dynasty. Solomon: Ruled during a period of peace and wealth, built the first temple in Jerusalem.	Experienced a succession of nine different, often unstable dynasties. Kings are mostly regarded as wicked in the biblical account.	Enjoyed more dynastic stability, with the throne consistently held by the House of David. Kings varied in their faithfulness to God.
Religious Practices	Centralized worship in Jerusalem, particularly under King Solomon after the First Temple was built.	Idolatry: To keep his people from returning to Jerusalem to worship, Jeroboam built rival worship centers at Bethel and Dan with golden calves. Idolatry became a persistent problem.	Mixed Record: Had periods of strong faithfulness under kings like Hezekiah and Josiah but also struggled with widespread idolatry at other times.

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Relationship with Neighboring Powers	Prospered and expanded under Solomon, who formed diplomatic alliances through marriage.	Often faced conflict and was eventually reduced to a vassal state of Damascus before the Assyrian threat.	Sometimes allied with Israel against common enemies like Damascus. Faced pressure from the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.
Major Prophets	The prophet Samuel was instrumental in anointing Israel's first kings.	Elijah and Elisha condemned the rampant idolatry practiced by kings like Ahab and Jezebel. Other prophets included Amos and Hosea.	Major prophets such as Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and Habakkuk ministered to Judah and warned of its impending downfall.
Destruction	Conquered by Assyria in 722 BCE. The Assyrian Empire invaded and exiled the Israelite population, leading to the "Ten Lost Tribes".	The final phase of its decline began with internal instability and tribute payments to Assyria, culminating in the siege and destruction of Samaria in 722 BCE.	Conquered by Babylonia in 586 BCE. The Babylonians besieged Jerusalem, destroyed the temple, and exiled the inhabitants.
End of Independence	The kingdom ceased to exist as a separate entity after the Assyrian conquest.	The kingdom was absorbed as an Assyrian province, ending its independence.	The independent kingdom ended with the Babylonian exile, beginning a period of Jewish diaspora.

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Historical Legacy	The story of the United Monarchy serves as a focal point for Israelite and Jewish identity.	The history is often regarded as a cautionary tale of unfaithfulness leading to destruction.	The Davidic royal line was preserved through the exile, and the Jewish people, named for Judah, were later able to return to their land.

REFLECTIONS

1. How can you ensure your faith stays strong when you see a leader make poor decisions?
2. How does the division of the kingdom serve as a warning to the modern church and other communities?
3. How does God's faithfulness to his people, even when they turn away from Him, come through in the stories in Kings?
4. What modern-day distractions could be considered modern-day idolatry that may lead people away from God?
5. Elijah soaks his offering with water, creating a seemingly impossible situation before God answers with fire. Why do you think Elijah made the miracle harder to achieve? What does this teach us about the certainty of God's power versus human trickery?
6. Even after the dramatic victory on Mount Carmel, Ahab's repentance was temporary. What does his reaction reveal about the difference between being convinced by a miracle and having a heart that is truly converted?
7. Why do you think God chose to speak to Elijah through a gentle whisper instead of grand natural phenomena?

8. It was Naaman's servants who persuaded him to put aside his pride and obey Elisha's instructions. Who in your life speaks truth to you, even when it is difficult to hear? Are you willing to listen to and learn from those of a lower social position?

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Primary Source: Discovering the Bible: A New Generation, published by The Kerygma Program, Pittsburgh, PA. Boyd Lien, author.