

One Kingdom Becomes Two

A Bible Story for Kids

Find it in the Bible: 1 Kings 12:1-24

Characters: Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Elders of Israel, Young counselors

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WHEN KING SOLOMON died, his son Rehoboam was supposed to become the next king. But first, all the people came to meet him in a city called Shechem. They had something important to ask him. A man named Jeroboam spoke for all the people: 'Your father, King Solomon, made us work very hard. He made us pay a lot of taxes and forced us to do hard jobs building his cities and palaces. If you promise to be kinder and not make life so hard for us, we will gladly serve you as our king.' This seemed like a fair request! Rehoboam said, 'Give me three days to think about it.' First, he asked the wise old men who had helped his father Solomon. They said, 'This is your chance to be a good king! If you're kind to the people and treat them well, they'll love you and serve you forever. Make their lives easier!' That was great advice! But Rehoboam didn't like it. So he asked his friends, the young men he grew up with. They had never done hard work in their lives, and they didn't care about regular

people. They said, 'Don't be weak! Tell them you're going to be even tougher than your father! Tell them, "My father was hard on you, but I'm going to be much worse! My father punished you with whips, but I'll punish you with scorpions!"' Rehoboam thought that sounded strong and powerful. When the people came back three days later, Rehoboam gave them the mean answer. The people were shocked and angry! Ten of the twelve tribes of Israel said, 'If that's how you're going to treat us, we won't follow you! We'll get our own king!' They chose Jeroboam to be their king instead. Only two tribes stayed with Rehoboam. The kingdom of Israel split into two kingdoms that day—Israel in the north and Judah in the south. They never joined back together again. All because of one foolish, prideful decision!