

Bible Story 20: THE KINGDOM DIVIDED INTO JUDAH AND ISRAEL

SCRIPTURE: 1 KINGS 11:43; 12:1-17,19-20; 14:21-22; 15:1-3,9-12,14-15

MEMORY VERSE: "EACH OF YOU SHOULD LOOK NOT ONLY TO YOUR OWN INTERESTS, BUT ALSO TO THE INTERESTS OF OTHERS." PHILIPPIANS 2:4 NIV

BIBLE STORY:

King Solomon made the Israelite people work very, very hard. He also insisted that they pay high taxes, which was a lot of money. When his son Rehoboam became the new king, the people asked him to be kinder and give less work. King Rehoboam asked for advice. The young advisors told the king to be harder, but the elders told him to be kinder. King Rehoboam took his young friends' advice to be even harder on the people than his father was to them. When the people heard this, they were unhappy. With harder work and even higher taxes, what were they going to do?

At this time the Israelites were united into one kingdom. All worked together, helping one another. Because the new king was going to be harder, the people disagreed and were very angry. So they divided their kingdom into two parts: **Judah** and **Israel**:

1. **Judah** was the smaller kingdom in the south and Rehoboam continued being their king. Their capital was in Jerusalem. They worshiped God in the Temple in Jerusalem.
2. **Israel** was the larger kingdom that was in the north and Jeroboam was their new king. Their capital was in Samaria. King Jeroboam built a place for his people to worship in Samaria. This king led them to worship God with idols, as well as to worship idols of other gods, which was against God's commandments.

Because the kingdom separated, they had many problems among themselves between the two kingdoms and with their enemies in other countries.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like about the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main people in the story?
4. What problems did the people face?
5. How did the people face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

RETELL THE STORY:

Ask volunteers from the group to retell the story.