

# Talk It Over 45: Bible Study Edition

Teaching Series: *The Story*

Message: A Kingdom Torn in Two (*Chapter 14*) — Todd Petkau

Passages: 1 Kings 12-16

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## How to use Talk It Over

This version of Talk It Over is designed for groups whose primary focus is studying the Word of God. There is lots of depth in information and questions about the principle passage of the weekend message. This study is designed to be done in 30 to 60 minutes. To take full advantage of the TiO created for our exploration of *The Story* it is recommended that you do the following (in this order): 1) Read the associated chapter in *The Story*; 2) Watch the sermon for the chapter; 3) Gather as a small group and talk together using this document as your guide. Because each chapter in *The Story* contains only pieces of the books of the Bible, please check out page 494-495 to see what parts of the Bible are actually being referenced.

## The Main Idea

The Kingdom of Israel is divided by internal strife and the disobedience of rulers and the people. While each ruler and tries in his own way to reunify they are always prevented from doing so by their own arrogance and disobedience. Over the course of many years very few rulers of either Kingdom show themselves to be *fully devoted to God*, as David had been.

## Warm Up Questions: (Choose 1 or 2)

**Q1: Consider the division of North and South Korea. What personal characteristics of the leaders of both countries will be required to make reunification possible?**

**Q2: Think about past friends (or family) with whom you used to be close but no longer are: what circumstances caused this?**

**Q3: Do you have a story about reunification with someone from your past? Tell that story to the group.**

## Dig a Little Deeper

Chapter 13 of *The Story* ends with Solomon being promised that God's judgement will fall on the house of David and that the Kingdom will be torn from his family and put into the hands of someone not in his family line. And so chapter 14 picks up this narrative. The Kingdom is divided in two: Jeroboam, a member of Solomon's court will be king of Israel and Rehoboam, the son of Solomon will be the king of Judah. But neither king follows God's instructions and so we see the beginning of the fall of both Israel and Judah, a circumstance from which neither will recover. From this point forward they are doomed to be a conquered people—although this does not happen for a few chapters.

Here are some things to keep in mind as you study this chapter, because there are two narrative threads which do not really cross each other:

- 1) Under Saul and David the twelve tribes of Israel (named after the sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel) were united as a formal political unit in addition to being a religious one.
- 2) In this chapter the Kingdom of Israel is split: the northern Kingdom retains the name of Israel and the southern Kingdom gets the name Judah.
- 3) The northern Kingdom consists of 10 tribes and is ruled by Jeroboam who is not a member of Solomon's family.
- 4) The southern Kingdom consists of 2 tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and is ruled by Rehoboam, Solomon's son.
- 5) The city of Jerusalem, where the temple that Solomon built was located, continued to be the centre of worship for all of the people of Israel but was located in the north of Judah, the southern Kingdom—that is important to keep in mind as you consider Jeroboam's response to the question of people leaving Israel to go to Jerusalem to worship.
- 6) At the time of the divided Kingdom the population of Israel as a whole was about 5 million people. It is probably the case that those populations were roughly divided in half between the northern and southern kingdoms.
- 7) There was never a real reunification. By the time of Jesus the territory of the Jews (which was occupied by Rome) was roughly ancient Judah and the province called Samaria (into which Jesus travelled a few times) was roughly ancient Israel.

### **Act 1: The Kingdom Is Divided (pp. 193-195)**

"So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David [Judah] to this day."

After promising Solomon that the Kingdom would be torn from his hands God sent a prophet to appoint Jeroboam, a member of the royal court but not of the royal family, King of Israel. When Solomon died Rehoboam (his son) took over the throne and Jeroboam took off to Egypt to live in exile. He returned with a delegation of the people of Israel to petition the king (Rehoboam) to cut back on forced labour and taxes but Rehoboam refused. Ultimately, this resulted in a rebellion, led by Jeroboam, and the kingdom was divided—Jeroboam leading Israel (north) and Rehoboam leading Judah (south).

## **Act 2: Jeroboam Rebels Against God (pp. 196-198)**

“Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people.”

The first story we hear after the dividing of the Kingdom is Jeroboam's. Despite being chosen by God to take over from Solomon, Jeroboam is too practically minded and this compromises his obedience to God. His concern? That people from Israel would travel to Jerusalem (in Judah) to worship in the temple, thus causing his people to change allegiances and depose him. So, for practical purposes, he created idols inside of his territory and told the people to worship them: which the people in his kingdom seemed to do so gladly. This was the beginning of the rebellion of Jeroboam and the story culminates in the death of his son and the declaration by the prophet Ahijah that God was turning his back on Jeroboam.

## **Act 3: Rehoboam Rebels Against God (pp. 198-199)**

“Judah did evil In the eyes of the LORD.”

Despite being the heir to the throne of Solomon, despite having the centre of the faith of the people of Israel in their territory, the people of Judah rebelled against God and Rehoboam led that rebellion. He installed false gods and embraced foreign religions.

## **Act 4: Civil War (pp. 199-201)**

“There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.”

From this point forward there was war between Israel and Judah. Kings came and went, some were good but most were bad. And God did not bless either nation because they both did evil and refused to be fully devoted to him.

## **Act 5: The Rise of Ahab, A Really Bad Guy (pp. 201-202)**

“Ahab son of Omri did more evil In the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him.”

Just when it seemed that things could not get worse, Israel ends up with Ahab as king. But, that is a story to be told in the next chapter. And while Ahab's rise was horrible, it also signaled a new rise: the rise of the prophets of God.

**Looking back at the story of the divided kingdom**, the primary theme seems to be “do not let the wisdom of your heart overshadow the wisdom of God” or “seek God's will first.” This is seen time and time again in the hearts and decisions of the kings.

**Q1: On page 192-193 we see the first major decision of Rehoboam. What do you see as his mistake? What is the result of his decision?**

**Q2: On page 196 we see a major decision that Jeroboam makes regarding worship of God. What causes him to make this decision? In practical terms, what are the good and bad aspects of his decision? What is the result of his decision?**

Have someone read the middle section on page 199 of *The Story* (1 Kings 14:29-15-8).

**Q3: How is David contrasted with the other kings of Judah? What are the essential characteristics that David had that the other kings of Judah did not?**

## **Next Steps**

Two Kings, two Kingdoms. But neither king followed God and so the people went where the kings led. No one was devoted to God. All taking their own path because of personal ambition, desire, fear, or simply practicality. This is a theme which began with the first humans, Adam and Eve, has plagued the human race throughout our existence. As Todd said in his sermon, "These guys were setup for success and they managed to blow it anyway." Choosing the right actions, the actions that God wants, is hard. Never too hard, but often hard.

**Q1: Are there areas in you life in which making the right choice (the hard choice) is hard or impractical or inconvenient? Think about these things and share them if you are able.**

**Q2: What concrete actions can you take to set yourself up for success in areas where you find yourself failing: either occasionally or habitually? Share those thoughts with your group.**

Pray together for your areas of failing, that you might be fully devoted to God not just in your desires but in you're actions as well.