

## Old Testament Survey: 9

### North and South

#### **Solomon – The Exile**

Last time we saw that under the rule of David and Solomon things were going well for the people of God. But although things were generally good they were not perfect as Solomon soon forsakes God.

In our last study we saw that there were three things that kings were specifically told to avoid:

1. Not going back to Egypt
2. Not taking many wives – lest his heart be turned away from God
3. Not to multiply silver, gold and riches for himself

Solomon fails on all three counts and the consequences are disastrous. From here on the books of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles trace the decline of the once great golden kingdom of Israel.

#### **1 Kings 11.9-13, 26-37**

God is angry with Solomon because his heart was turned away from the Lord and says that He will tear the kingdom from his family and give it to another. However God is still faithful to His promise to David by allowing Solomon's family to keep one tribe to rule over.

Jeroboam, one of his men, rebels against the king. He met the prophet Ahijah who told him that he would become king over Israel, but Solomon's son would retain rule over the tribe of Judah. Solomon seeks to kill Jeroboam because of this.

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam becomes king – but the nation splits into two halves – the north and the south, just as God had said.

Jeroboam becomes king over the northern kingdom which retains the name 'Kingdom of Israel' with Samaria as the capital city.

The southern kingdom stays in David's family with Rehoboam as king. Jerusalem stays the capital but the kingdom is known as the 'Kingdom of Judah'

Things aren't the same – the golden age of Israel is over. The remaining chapters of 1 Kings, 2 Kings and 1&2 Chronicles continually switch between the northern and southern kingdoms which can make following what is going on difficult.

Let us briefly look at these two kingdoms:

## 1. The Kingdom of Israel – the northern kingdom

- Jeroboam rejects God's word, the Temple (which was located in Jerusalem in the southern kingdom) and leads God's people into idol worship.
- The kings that come after him follow the pattern that Jeroboam set and continue in idolatry, immorality and sin.
- God raises up prophets like Elijah, Elisha, Amos and Hosea who warn the people of the dangers of rejecting God, and call them to repentance.
- Things do not get any better as Israel continues in her wicked ways until it is eventually crushed by the Assyrian Empire (2 Kings 7) and taken into captivity.
- The Kingdom of Israel comes to an end and disappears from the history pages of the Bible.

**1 Kings 9.10** gives us Elijah's assessment of the spiritual condition of Israel.

**Hosea 4.1-3** tells us what Hosea thought about their condition

## 2. The Kingdom of Judah – the southern kingdom

Things aren't going any better in the south:

- Even though Judah keeps its monarch from David's family and has its worship centred on the Temple in Jerusalem they still go astray and rebel against God.
- However, there are some kings, like Josiah, who turn the hearts of the people back to God.
- The warnings of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel seem to fall on deaf ears and Judah soon sin in the same sin as Solomon, going after other gods.
- God warned His people that if they forsook Him and turned after other gods they would be driven out of their land (Deuteronomy 28.36-37) – that's what happened.
- We read in 2 Kings 25 how the Babylonians came and ransacked Jerusalem and took Judah into captivity. This event is commonly referred to as 'The Exile'

see Appendix – Timeline of the Divided Kingdom