

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO 1 KINGS 14

This chapter relates the sickness of Jeroboam's son, the application of his wife, at his instance, to the prophet Ahijah, in the child's favour, (^{<1140>}1 Kings 14:1-6), the prophecy of the prophet concerning the ruin of Jeroboam's house, and the death of the child, which came to pass, (^{<1140>}1 Kings 14:7-18), an account of the years of Jeroboam's reign, and also of Rehoboam's, (^{<1149>}1 Kings 14:19-21), and of the evil things done and suffered by the latter in his kingdom, and the calamities that came upon him for it, (^{<1142>}1 Kings 14:22-28) and the conclusion of his reign, (^{<1149>}1 Kings 14:29-31).

Ver. 1. *At that time Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick.*] Being smitten of God with some disease, as a punishment of Jeroboam's sin; how long this was after the above things were done cannot be said.

Ver. 2. *And Jeroboam said to his wife,* etc.] Who she was is not known:

arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself; put off her royal apparel, and clothe herself like a common person, mimic the dress and language of a country woman:

that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam: by any that should see her on the road, or at the city she was to go to, or by the prophet to whom she would be sent:

and get thee to Shiloh; which, according to Bunting^{f331}, was twenty four miles, from Tirzah, where Jeroboam now lived, (see ^{<1147>}1 Kings 14:17)

behold, there is Ahijah the prophet: called from thence the Shilonite, (^{<1112>}1 Kings 11:29),

which told me that I should be king over this people: and this coming to pass, proved him to be a true prophet, and to be credited in what he should say concerning their child. Jeroboam desired his wife to go on this errand, because he did not care it should be known that he applied to any of the prophets of the Lord; nor did he choose it should be known whose child

was inquired about, which another must have told, whereas his wife could speak of it as her own; and she was the fittest person to give an account of the child's illness, and would ask the most proper and pertinent questions, and bring him back a faithful report; and he would have her be disguised, lest the prophet, who bore no good will to him because of his apostasy, should refuse to give any answer at all, or else give a very rough and disagreeable one.

Ver. 3. *And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him,* etc.] It being usual to carry a present to a prophet when he was inquired of on any account, (see ^{<000>}1 Samuel 9:7) and this being a plain present, and of such things as the country afforded, she might be taken for a plain countrywoman, and not for such a personage as she was: the ten loaves could not be large for a woman to carry, most probably made of wheat; the cracknels, according to the Greek version in Drusius, were for the prophet's children; they very likely were spiced, or were sweetened with honey, and might be somewhat like our simnels; they seem to have their name in Hebrew from having points and pricks in them for the sake of ornament; such as Plautus ^{f332} calls "scribilitae", because as Turnebus ^{f333} says, they were marked and pricked, and seemed as if they were written:

he shall tell thee what shall become of the child; whether it should live or die, for that was all he wanted to know; he did not desire to know what should be done to the child for its recovery, nor to request the prophet's prayers for it.

Ver. 4. *And Jeroboam's wife did so, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Abijah,* etc.] Disguised herself, and took this long journey, and found the prophet's house; which she did partly in obedience to her husband, and partly from affection to her child: but Abijah could not see; her or anybody else that came into the room to him:

for his eyes were set by reason of his age; or "stood" fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men are; or the nerves and muscles of his eyes stood within the holes thereof, so that he could not see objects.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord said unto Abijah,* etc.] Either in a dream, or by an impulse upon his mind, before Jeroboam's wife came in:

behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, for he is sick; to know whether he will recover or not:

thus and thus shall thou say unto her; as after expressed in some following verses:

for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself another woman; to the people that let her in, and introduce her to the prophet, and to the prophet himself; pretend herself to be a countrywoman come to ask a question of the prophet concerning her son that was ill of a disease.

Ver. 6. *And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door*, etc.] Of the room where the prophet was:

that he said, come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another? which must greatly surprise and confound her, as well as lay open to her the folly of her and her husband to imagine that she could be secreted from God, and a prophet of his; or that a prophet could tell her what was future, and yet not know her that was present; and this might serve to assure her, and so her husband, that what the prophet after delivered would certainly come to pass:

for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings; or hard things, such as would be very disagreeable to her and her husband.

Ver. 7. *Go tell Jeroboam*, etc.] Thy husband:

thus saith the Lord God of Israel; so he continued to be, though they had revolted from him:

forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people; the common people, from a low estate in which he was:

and made thee prince over my people Israel; so they were when he made them king over them; and there were some among them still that loved the Lord, served and feared him, of which the prophet himself, now speaking, was an instance.

Ver. 8. *And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee*, etc.] Even ten parts out of twelve:

and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; who never was guilty of idolatry, but always constantly and cordially attended the pure worship of God, and was careful

to do everything in that according to the will of God, whatever else he might be deficient in.

Ver. 9. *But hast done evil above all that were before thee*, etc.] Not only above David, but above Saul, who never gave into idolatry, yea, even above Solomon, who, though he connived at idolatry, and might be guilty of it in some instances, yet did not attempt to draw his people into it; and if this was the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, which is probable, Rehoboam and Abijam might be both dead; and though they were blameworthy in some things, yet not so bad as Jeroboam; though perhaps this may respect only such who had been kings of Israel before him:

for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger; the two calves of gold; for however he might colour things over, and pretend he did not look upon these as gods, but as representations of God, and that he did not worship them, but God by them, yet the Lord considered it as idolatry, than which nothing is more provoking to him:

and hast cast me behind thy back; as unworthy of his regard; or my worship, as the Targum, which he neglected, and showed no concern for.

Ver. 10. *Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam*, etc.] Calamities, destruction, and ruin:

and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall; not leave a dog of his, or rather a male, (see ⁽¹⁰²⁵²⁾1 Samuel 25:22)

and him that is shut up and left in Israel; in garrisons or in prisons, in cities or in fields, or in whatsoever situation or circumstances they may be. Some interpret it of wealth and substance; it signifies an entire destruction it may be of men and goods, (see ⁽¹⁰³²⁶⁾Deuteronomy 32:36)

and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone; signifying that Jeroboam's family was as loathsome and abominable to the Lord as dung is to men; and that he would make as clean a riddance of them as men do of dung when they sweep it out, and will not leave the least scrap behind.

Ver. 11. *Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat*, etc.] The meaning is, that they should have no burial:

for the Lord hath spoken it; and therefore shall be fulfilled, for what he hath said he will do, (^{<4029>}Numbers 23:19).

Ver. 12. *Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house, etc.]* With all haste, as soon as she could:

and when thy feet enter the city; the city of Tirzah, very probably the king's palace stood at the entry of it, (see ^{<1147>}1 Kings 14:17),

the child shall die; this is an answer to the question she was to ask, and at the same time a token of the sure and certain fulfilment of all the prophet had spoken in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 13. *And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him, etc.]* Give him an honourable interment, and follow him to the grave with lamentation, because he was the heir apparent to the throne, and an hopeful prince, of whom they had raised expectations; that when he came to the throne things would take a different turn, especially in matters of religion, and they might fear, he being removed, things would grow worse instead of better:

for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave; or be buried, the rest should be devoured by dogs or fowls:

because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam; the principles of grace were implanted, and seeds of piety and religion sown in his heart; and there appeared a disposition of mind, and desires in him to the name of God, and the remembrance of it; or to his pure worship and service; it might be discerned that he had a dislike of idolatry, and a desire to have true religion restored. The Jews say ^{f334} that this good thing in him was, that he was the means of removing the watch or guards that were placed in the way to hinder the Israelites from going up to the feasts of the Lord.

Ver. 14. *Moreover the Lord shall raise up a king over Israel, etc.]* Baasha is meant, (^{<1159>}1 Kings 15:29)

who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day; immediately, as soon as on the throne, he should destroy his whole family, as he did, (^{<1159>}1 Kings 15:29),

but what? even now; shall it be that day? yes; even at that very time, and which will be very quickly from this time; for as it may be supposed this

was said at the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, and his son and successor reigned but two years ere this prophecy was accomplished. The Targum is,

“who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam, him that is living today, and shall be from henceforward.”

Ver. 15. *And the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water,* etc.] Either by the wind or by the stream; and may signify the fluctuating and uncertain condition Israel should be in future reigns, through civil wars, and the translation of the kingdom into different families; so that there was continually disquietude and uneasiness, and no settled peace and tranquillity:

and he shall root up Israel out this good land he gave to their fathers; which was brought about, first by Tiglathpileser, and then by Shalmaneser, kings of Assyria, that carried them captives from hence:

and shall scatter them beyond the river; the river Euphrates, as the Targum: or, as others, the river Gozan, (^{<2176>}2 Kings 17:6)

because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger: in which groves they placed idols, and worshipped them, which was highly provoking to the Lord, and the cause of their dispersion.

Ver. 16. *And he shall give Israel up,* etc.] Into the hands of their enemies:

because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin; by his devices and stratagems, by his example and edicts, and by the methods he took to prevent Israel from worshipping in the manner and place he directed to.

Ver. 17. *And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed,* &c.] Upon this speech of the prophet's to her:

and came to Tirzah; where Jeroboam now had his court, and where their son now was; it was a royal city in the time of the Canaanites, and is commonly placed in the tribe of Manasseh, and was a very pleasant one, as its name signifies, to which there is an allusion, (^{<2184>}Song of Solomon 6:4), (see Gill on ^{<1624>}Joshua 12:24”),

and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died: just as she was about to step over the threshold of the royal palace, which seems to have been at the entering of the city of Tirzah, (^{<1142>}1 Kings 14:12).

Ver. 18. *And they buried him*, etc.] In an honourable manner, suitable to his rank and pedigree:

and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet, (^{<1143>}1 Kings 14:13).

Ver. 19. *And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred*, etc.] As he did with Rehoboam, (^{<1143>}1 Kings 14:30), and with Abijam his son, who was an more than a match for him, (see ^{<4131>}2 Chronicles 13:1-22)

and how he reigned; over the people of Israel, whether wisely, and justly, and in clemency, or not:

behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel; not in that canonical book of Scripture, so called, for in that there is very little account of the reign of Jeroboam; but in the annals and diaries of the kings of Israel, written by persons appointed for that purpose, and out of which it is generally thought that inspired writers, by divine direction, took what was thought proper to be transmitted to future times. So with the Romans, from their very beginning to the times of Mutius, all the events of every year were committed to writing by the order of the Pontifex Maximus, and lay open to be read by the people in common; and these, as Tully^{f335} says, were what are called annals.

Ver. 20. *And the days which Jeroboam reigned were twenty two years*, etc.] So that he outlived Rehoboam five years, and lived to the second year of the reign of his grandson Asa:

and he slept with his fathers; or died as they did:

and Nadab his son reigned in his stead; who perhaps was younger than Abijah, whose sickness and death are before related.

Ver. 21. *And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah*, etc.] Over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when Jeroboam reigned over the other ten:

Rehoboam [was] forty one years old when he began to reign; being born one year before his father Solomon began to reign, and so it might have been expected he would have begun his reign more wisely than he did:

and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem; not half so long as his father and grandfather, being neither so wise nor so good a prince as either of them:

the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there; to have a temple built for him, and his worship carried on in it; which was an aggravation of the sin of Rehoboam, that he should reign in such a place, and yet be guilty of the crimes he was; the three first years he reigned well, but afterwards forsook the law of the Lord, (^{<4117>}2 Chronicles 11:17 12:1)

and his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess; and which is observed again, (^{<1146>}1 Kings 14:31), she being the instrument of drawing him into idolatry, which it is very probable she practised in the days of Solomon, (^{<1105>}1 Kings 11:5,7).

Ver. 22. *And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord*, etc.] At the end of three years, from the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam:

and they provoked him to jealousy, with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done; that is, with their idolatries; for they were the sins which moved the Lord to jealousy, and provoked the eyes of his glory; in which they had outdone not the ten tribes, but their fathers, in the times of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, and of their kings before their separation, Saul, David, and Solomon.

Ver. 23. *For they also built them high places*, etc.] Which, though allowed of, or at least connived at, before the temple was built, and when the tabernacle was unfixed, yet afterwards unlawful; and the tribe of Judah could have no excuse for them, who had the temple in their tribe:

and images; contrary to the express command of God, (^{<0204>}Exodus 20:4),

and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree; that is, set up idols, and temples for idols, amidst groves of trees, and under all green trees; as was the custom of the Heathens, who sacrificed on the heights of hills and tops of mountains, as was particularly the custom of the Persians, as both Herodotus ^{f336} and Xenophon ^{f337} relate; and with the Getae, a people in Thrace, was a mountain they reckoned sacred ^{f338}.

Ver. 24. *And there were also Sodomites in the land*, &c.] Such as were addicted to unnatural lusts between men and men, which the men of

Sodom were guilty of, from whence they had their name: Jarchi interprets the word adultery and some versions render it whoremongers; and filthy actions of this nature, both by men and women, usually attended idolatrous practices among the heathens; in their temples and groves such wickednesses were privately perpetrated:

[and] they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel; the Canaanites, of whose uncleannesses, incests, and bestialities, (see ^{<880>}Leviticus 18:1-30).

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam,* etc.] Two years after he and his people fell into the above wicked practices:

that Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem; of whom (see ^{<114>}1 Kings 11:40), this was suffered as a chastisement from the Lord for their abominations.

Ver. 26. *And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord,* etc.] Which perhaps Jeroboam had informed him of, and for the sake of which he came, as well as to make a diversion in favour of Jeroboam, who had contracted an intimacy with him when in Egypt; and who might have no regard for Rehoboam, who was not a son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so no relation to him: these were the treasures which David had left to his son Solomon, and had dedicated for the temple, even gold, silver, and vessels, which he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord, and perhaps added to them, (^{<105>}1 Kings 7:51), and the treasures of the king's house; the riches, gold, silver, and jewels, whatever of worth and value he had in his chests and cabinets:

he even took away all: that he could find and come at; for that there were some left is plain from (^{<158>}1 Kings 15:18),

and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made; and which were put in the house of the forest of Lebanon, (^{<106>}1 Kings 10:16,17).

Ver. 27. *And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields,* etc.] For the king of Egypt had so stripped him of his gold, that he was not able to replace golden ones:

and committed them into the hands of the chief of the guard; or “runners”^{f339}, that went before the king, or attended him as his bodyguard when he went abroad:

which kept the door of the king’s house; which kept guard night and day in their turns.

Ver. 28. *And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord*, etc.] The temple; for though he had fallen into idolatry, he had not wholly forsaken the worship of God in the temple, and perhaps by the late humbling providence he might be stirred up to attend there more frequently:

that the guard bare them: before him, partly for pomp and grandeur, and partly to keep in awe such as were inclined to mutiny and sedition:

and brought them back into the guard chamber; when the king returned, the place where the guard lodged and slept by turns.

Ver. 29. *Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did*, etc.] In the course of his reign, that was memorable:

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? who had annalists or historiographers to write for them, as the kings of Israel had, (^{<1149>}1 Kings 14:19), in the writing of which, especially with respect to genealogies, Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer, were concerned, (^{<1425>}2 Chronicles 12:15).

Ver. 30. *And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days*.] For though Rehoboam did not enter into an offensive war, and attack the children of Israel, being dissuaded from it by Shemaiah the prophet in the name of the Lord, yet he might maintain a defensive war; and though there were no pitched battles between them as afterwards, in his son’s time, yet there might be skirmishes and bickerings on the borders of their countries.

Ver. 31. *And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David*, etc.] Where David and Solomon were buried, (^{<1120>}1 Kings 2:10 11:43) and his mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonitess; which is repeated, that it might be observed as what was the leading step to his idolatry, and the means of his continuing in it: and

Abijam his son reigned in his stead; of whom there is a further account in the following chapter.