

# THE STORY...

# HIS STORY

Chapter 14

A Kingdom Torn In Two

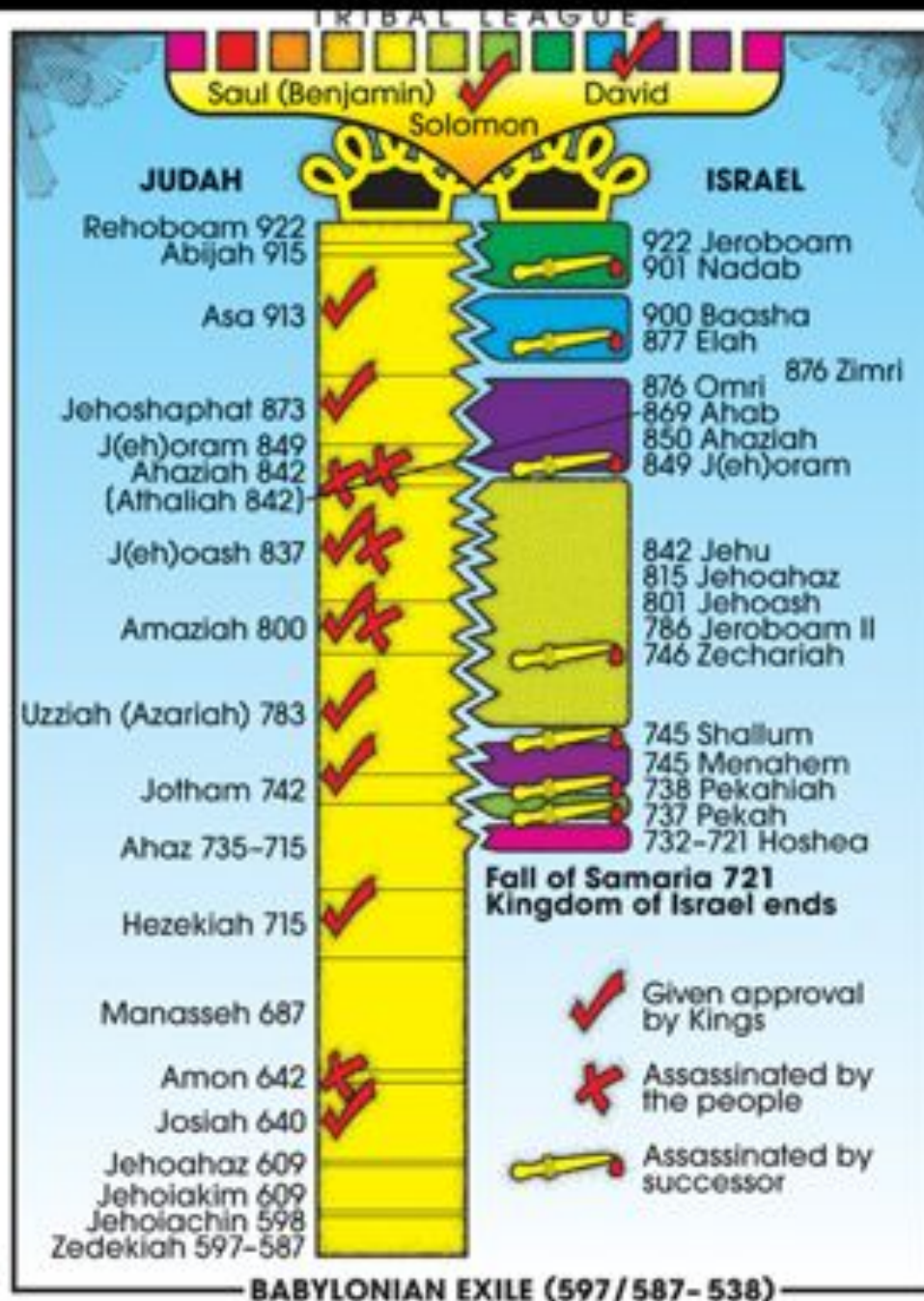


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# Plot Points

- In three generations, Israel came to see that Samuel's warnings about monarchy were true.
- Following Solomon's rule, the divided kingdoms were marked by unfaithfulness to the Lord and nationalized idolatry, with righteous kings being the exception.
- Only the Lord's continuing regard for the house of David kept his hand of judgment from falling.





# Chapter Overview

- Just three generations before Rehoboam, Israel had begged for a king.
- They believed that having a king would unite the separate tribes and form one strong nation.
- They dreamed that they could be just like the nations around them, with a national identity centered around a royal line.



# Chapter Overview

- But by the time Rehoboam assumed the throne, the dream of past generations had become a nightmare.



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# Chapter Overview

- The monarchy, from this point forward, would be one of the key sources of the nation's undoing.
- When Rehoboam tried to carry on his father's forced labor policies, rebellion erupted.



# Chapter Overview

- Jeroboam, a prophesied leader with great potential, would only lead the people deeper into idolatry in a futile effort to shore up his own power base.



# Chapter Overview

- Six in twenty kings of Judah were be categorized as “doing right” in the Lord’s eyes.



# Chapter Overview

- Israel was even worse, with only one king, Jehu, rising to the level of a “mixed” record.



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# Chapter Overview

- As went the monarchy, so went the nation.
- Rather than strengthening Israel and uniting them as one, the monarchy became the catalyst for the eventual dissolution of the nation.



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- What is the main problem both kingdoms faced in Chapter 13?



# A First Commandment Issue



**Y**ou shall have  
no other gods  
before **Me.**



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# The First Commandment

- “‘You shall have no other gods.’ That is, you shall regard me alone as your God. What does this mean, and how is it to be understood?” (LC I, 1)



# What is a god?

- “A god is that to which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart” (LC I, 2)



**I**n the beginning,  
man made **GOD**,  
and then the  
problems started

# What is a god?

- “The purpose of this commandment, therefore, is to require true faith and confidence of the heart, and these fly straight to the one true God and cling to Him alone. The meaning is: ‘See to it that you let me alone be your God, and never seek another.’ In other words: ‘Whatever good thing you lack, look to me for it and seek it from me, and whenever you suffer misfortune and distress, crawl to me and cling to me.’” (LC I, 4)



- “There are some who think they have God and everything they need when they have money and property; they trust in them and boast in them so stubbornly and securely that they care for no one else...The desire for wealth clings and sticks to our nature all the way to the grave.” (LC I, 5,9)
- “To have a god is to have something in which the heart trusts completely” (LC I, 10)



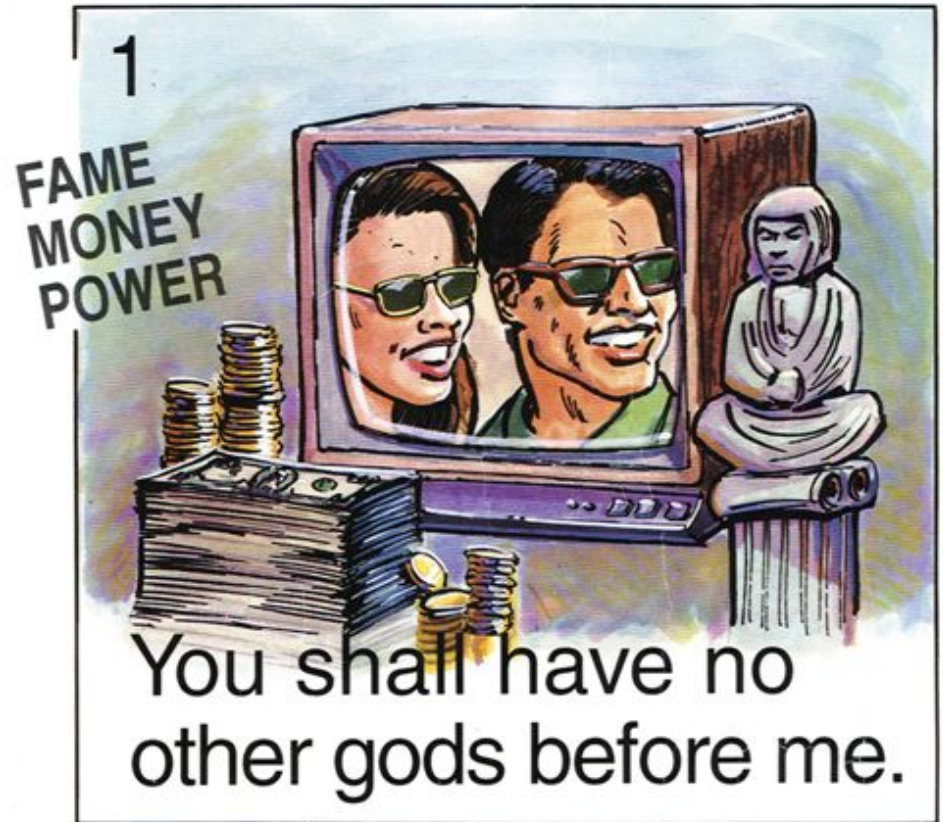
# What is idolatry?

- “Idolatry does not consist merely of erecting an image and praying to it. It is primarily in the heart, which pursues other things and seeks help and consolation from creatures, saints, or devils. It neither cares for God nor expects good things from him sufficiently to trust that he wants to help, nor does it believe that whatever good it receives comes from God.” (LC I, 21)



# Idolatry

- What other gods do we worship?
- The 4 Ps
- In what ways do we attempt to make ourselves into gods?



# What does it mean to trust in God?

- “To cling to him with your heart is nothing else than to entrust yourself to him completely. He wishes to turn us away from everything else apart from him, and to draw us to himself, because he is the one, eternal good.” (LC I, 14-15)



# Why is the first commandment important?

- “These words apply to all the commandments (as we shall hear later), yet they are attached precisely to this commandment at the head of the list, because it is most important that a person have the right head. For where one’s head is right, one’s whole life must also be right, and vice versa” (LC I, 31, 32)



# Why is the first commandment important?

- “For...where the heart is rightly set toward God and this commandment is observed, all the other commandments follow.” (LC I, 48)
- **Luther’s great insight into the Commandments was his realization that the First Commandment really includes all the others.**
- If we truly kept this commandment, we would not need any of the others.



# Idolatry in the New Testament

- As the gospel spread from Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), new churches emerged from pagan, idolatrous cultures. Their new found faith required a change in worldview and a resulting change in their way of life.



# Idolatry in the New Testament

- The church in Corinth emerged from a culture that worshiped all kinds of Greek gods, and which placed a major emphasis upon “higher knowledge” and being very “spiritual.” Paul told them, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” (1 Cor. 10:14)



# Idolatry in the New Testament

- The church in Colossae was reminded that their identity was bound up with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because of the new self in Christ, their old way of living should be put away. But notice Paul's comment about idolatry.
- "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry." (Col. 3:5)



# Idolatry in the New Testament

- “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” (Matt. 6:24)



# How Not To Lead



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# Be careless:

- The basis of the atrocious leadership manifested in Chapter 14 was Solomon's fraternity and intermarriage with the many pagan cultures surrounding Israel. As I Kings 11:4 says, "His wives turned his heart after other gods." This carelessness was the seed that blossomed into a cascading generational spiral that divided the Kingdom and left his heirs with no good example to follow.



# Seek out “yes men:”

- Rehoboam refused to become a servant-leader, as the elders who served his father suggested (p. 160). His insecurity took over and rejecting their advice, listened to the sycophants around him and went on a power trip, swaggering and threatening Israel that they hadn't seen anything yet when it came to oppression.
- Bad leaders always seek out “yes men.”



# Repeat mistakes:

- Jeroboam also sought counsel (p. 196), but then made two golden calves and quoted Aaron from centuries earlier at the base of Sinai: “Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”



# Promote conflict and disunity:

- An effect of this poor leadership was that division was promoted throughout the split Kingdom. Jeroboam's northern tribes and Rehoboam's southern tribe-and-a-half were divided in worship practices, politics, priesthood, security and safety (p. 195).
- Bad leadership never promotes unity.



# Delegate to unqualified people:

- Jeroboam then perpetuated his bad leadership by appointing priests (leaders) “from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites” (p. 196). Such is the pernicious nature of sin – it infiltrated not just through the intermarrying with other peoples, but then they became leaders (worship leaders) that carried the people further away from God.



# Refuse correction or reproof:

- On p. 196, when the man of God warned that human bones would be burned on the altar and it would be split apart because of the sacrilege of what worship had become, Jeroboam tried to have the prophet seized and silenced, but the hand he stretched toward the man shriveled. But even after his hand was healed, Jeroboam “did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people.”
- Bad leaders are, as Solomon said in holier times, fools, or “thick-headed.”



# Practice deception:

- When Jeroboam's son became ill, he sent his wife in disguise to Ahijah the prophet to find out what would happen. Why? Likely because the last thing he really wanted to know was if God was bringing judgment on his reign – and sure enough he was.
- Bad leadership not only practices deception but cannot bear to hear truth.



# Pass it on:

- Poor leadership causes consequences not just on the bad leader, but on those he leads. On p. 198, after pronouncing the judgments on Jeroboam's household, it says, "And he [the Lord] will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to commit."
- Recall back in chapter 10 the judgment on Eli the priest: *"I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family...for I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them."*





KING  
*Jesus*

beyond religion. beyond politics. beyond what you know.



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