

19.02 Rehoboam's Death; Jeroboam's Split Altar (1 Kings 12:25–33; 13:1–34; 14:21–31; 2 Chronicles 11:5–23; 12:1–16)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

Brackets [. . .] indicate a remark to the teacher that should not be read aloud, or they show answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Map; gold-covered box filled with “ashes” (shredded newspaper)
- A good picture of the broken altar is in *Egermeier's Bible Story Book*, p. 247.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach: Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- (None this week)

Scripture: (ESV)

1 Kings 12:25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. 27 If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” 28 So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” 29 And he set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Then this thing became a sin, for the people went as far as Dan to be before one. 31 He also made temples on high places and appointed priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites. 32 And Jeroboam appointed a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month like the feast that was in Judah, and he offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he made. And he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places that he had made. 33 He went up to the altar that he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, in the month that he had devised from his own heart. And he instituted a feast for the people of Israel and went up to the altar to make offerings.

13:1 And behold, a man of God came out of Judah by the word of the Lord to Bethel. Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make offerings. 2 And the man cried against the altar by the word of the Lord and said, “O altar, altar, thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you.’” 3 And he gave a sign the same day, saying, “This is the sign that the Lord has spoken: ‘Behold, the altar shall be torn down, and the ashes that are on it shall be poured out.’” 4 And when the king heard the saying of the man of God, which he cried against the altar at Bethel, Jeroboam stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, “Seize him.” And his hand, which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself. 5 The altar also was torn down, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign that the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. 6 And the king said to the man of God, “Entreat now the favor of the Lord your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me.” And the man of God entreated the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him and became as it was before. 7 And the king said to the man of God, “Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward.” 8 And the man of God said to the king, “If you give me half your house, I will not go in with you. And I will not eat bread or drink water in this place, 9 for so was it commanded me by the word of the Lord, saying, ‘You shall neither eat bread nor drink water nor return by the way that you came.’” 10 So he went another way and did not return by the way that he came to Bethel.

11 Now an old prophet lived in Bethel. And his sons came and told him all that the man of God had done

that day in Bethel. They also told to their father the words that he had spoken to the king. 12 And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him the way that the man of God who came from Judah had gone. 13 And he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it. 14 And he went after the man of God and found him sitting under an oak. And he said to him, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" And he said, "I am." 15 Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread." 16 And he said, "I may not return with you, or go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place, 17 for it was said to me by the word of the Lord, 'You shall neither eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by the way that you came.'" 18 And he said to him, "I also am a prophet as you are, and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied to him. 19 So he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.

20 And as they sat at the table, the word of the Lord came to the prophet who had brought him back. 21 And he cried to the man of God who came from Judah, "Thus says the Lord, 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the Lord and have not kept the command that the Lord your God commanded you, 22 but have come back and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he said to you, Eat no bread and drink no water, your body shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.'" 23 And after he had eaten bread and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 And as he went away a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his body was thrown in the road, and the donkey stood beside it; the lion also stood beside the body. 25 And behold, men passed by and saw the body thrown in the road and the lion standing by the body. And they came and told it in the city where the old prophet lived.

26 And when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who disobeyed the word of the Lord; therefore the Lord has given him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word that the Lord spoke to him." 27 And he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And they saddled it. 28 And he went and found his body thrown in the road, and the donkey and the lion standing beside the body. The lion had not eaten the body or torn the donkey. 29 And the prophet took up the body of the man of God and laid it on the donkey and brought it back to the city to mourn and to bury him. 30 And he laid the body in his own grave. And they mourned over him, saying, "Alas, my brother!" 31 And after he had buried him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave in which the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. 32 For the saying that he called out by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel and against all the houses of the high places that are in the cities of Samaria shall surely come to pass."

33 After this thing Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but made priests for the high places again from among all the people. Any who would, he ordained to be priests of the high places. 34 And this thing became sin to the house of Jeroboam, so as to cut it off and to destroy it from the face of the earth.

14:21 Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city that the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. 22 And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, 24 and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.

2 Chronicles 11:5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem, and he built cities for defense in Judah. . . . 11 He made the fortresses strong, and put commanders in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 And he put shields and spears in all the cities and made them very strong. So he held Judah and Benjamin.

13 And the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel presented themselves to him from all places where they lived. 14 For the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of the Lord, 15 and he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat idols and for the calves that he had made. 16 And those who had set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord, the God of their fathers. 17 They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made

Rehoboam the son of Solomon secure, for they walked for three years in the way of

18 Rehoboam took as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse, 19 and she bore him sons, Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. 20 After her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21 Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and concubines (he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters). 22 And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as chief prince among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. 23 And he dealt wisely and distributed some of his sons through all the districts of Judah and Benjamin, in all the fortified cities, and he gave them abundant provisions and procured wives for them.

12:1 When the rule of Rehoboam was established and he was strong, he abandoned the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him. 2 In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, because they had been unfaithful to the Lord, Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem 3 with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. And the people were without number who came with him from Egypt—Libyans, Sukkiim, and Ethiopians. 4 And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. 5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and to the princes of Judah, who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, “Thus says the Lord, ‘You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak.’” 6 Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, “The Lord is righteous.” 7 When the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah: “They have humbled themselves. I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8 Nevertheless, they shall be servants to him, that they may know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.”

9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. He took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house. He took away everything. He also took away the shields of gold that Solomon had made, 10 and King Rehoboam made in their place shields of bronze and committed them to the hands of the officers of the guard, who kept the door of the king’s house. 11 And as often as the king went into the house of the Lord, the guard came and carried them and brought them back to the guardroom. 12 And when he humbled himself the wrath of the Lord turned from him, so as not to make a complete destruction. Moreover, conditions were good in Judah. . . .

15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the chronicles of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer? There were continual wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 16 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David, and Abijah his son reigned in his place.

Introduction/Review:

Instead of one king reigning over all Israel, two kings reigned. One was King Jeroboam in the north, ruling over most of Israel. The other was King Rehoboam, Solomon’s son, ruling one main tribe, Judah, and two smaller ones, Simeon and Benjamin.

Last week we asked you what you think will happen. Will Rehoboam follow the Lord? Will Jeroboam? Many of us hope they will. Today we will answer the questions, starting with Rehoboam.

Story:

Rehoboam’s actions

Rehoboam started out following God. In fact, several Levites and other people who lived in the north came south to live in Judah because Rehoboam lived like David and Solomon in his good years. Rehoboam built up fifteen separate cities in order to make himself strong and protected. Sounds good so far. He did something, though, that his father had done that wasn’t so good. What do you suppose it was? He married eighteen wives and took sixty concubines.

He walked in the way of the Lord for three years, but after he got settled as king, he turned away from the Lord in the remaining fourteen years of his reign. He placed idols to worship all over the land, just like the

idol-worshippers of the nations around him.

Judah's punishment

When we do wrong, we need to be punished. God punished Judah and Rehoboam because they had forsaken Him to serve other gods. He did it by sending an enemy, Shishak, king of Egypt, when Rehoboam had ruled only five years. Shishak came in war against Judah with 1200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen and so many foot soldiers that no one could count them.

Shemaiah, God's prophet, went to Rehoboam, saying, "Thus saith the Lord, 'You abandoned me. Now I will abandon you.'" When Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah heard Shemaiah's word from the Lord and saw that the enemies were coming, they humbled themselves and said, "The Lord is righteous."

God's grace

What do the words, "the Lord is righteous," mean? They mean that the Lord does right. In this case, when the people said, "The Lord is righteous," He sent Shemaiah the prophet back to Rehoboam with this message from God: "I will not destroy you, but you will have war with Shishak and become his servants." In other words, rather than be destroyed outright by Shishak, Judah would live but continue to have war with Egypt.

So Shishak came up against Jerusalem and took away all the precious treasures in the temple and in the king's house—everything, including the gold shields Solomon had made. To replace these shields, Rehoboam made bronze shields that were inferior to gold.

Even though he had humbled himself before God when Shishak came against him, sadly, Rehoboam returned to worship false gods and did evil in the sight of God until he died.

Jeroboam's plans

Now Jeroboam. King Jeroboam of Israel got to thinking, "Jehovah said to worship and go to the feasts in Jerusalem. If the people go down to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices, then they will want to go back there to live and to have Rehoboam be their king. Then they might kill me. What shall I do?"

He asked for advice and then built two altars—one way up north in Dan and one way down south in Bethel [locate]. "You have gone to Jerusalem long enough," he said. Then, pointing to the golden calves, he said, "These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you out of Egypt."

Oh, how terrible! But Jeroboam didn't stop there: he built high places where people could worship idols, and he appointed priests who were not from the tribe, Levi, that God had chosen to be priests. Then he set up his own feast days to worship the calves.

A prophet's rebuke

A man of God (we don't know his name) came to Bethel while Jeroboam was burning incense. Instead of talking to Jeroboam, the man of God talked to the altar: "O altar, altar. The Lord says, 'A son shall be born, whose name will be Josiah. He will sacrifice the bones of Jeroboam's priests on you. This is the sign that I am telling you God's word. This altar will break apart, and the ashes on it will be spilled out.'"

Jeroboam, hearing this and being angry, stretched his arm out and ordered, "Arrest him!" That arm of Jeroboam's dried up right then so that he couldn't bring it back to his body. Also, the altar broke apart and the ashes poured out, just as the man of God had said.

Jeroboam now changed his attitude. "Please ask God to heal my arm!" he begged. The man of God did ask for healing, and Jeroboam's arm was healed. Jeroboam said to the man of God, "Now, come on home with me to rest up a while, and I will give you a reward."

The prophet's exit

The man of God answered, "If you gave me half of your possessions, I would not go with you. Neither will I

eat bread or drink water here, for God told me not to stay but to go home a different way than I came.”

Then this prophet left to go home.

Another prophet, an old man, also lived in Bethel. His sons had seen what had happened to the altar and Jeroboam’s arm. They came home to tell their father, the old prophet, all about it.

“Get me my donkey,” he said, and he set off to find the young prophet. When he caught up, the young man was resting under an oak tree. “Are you the prophet from Judah?” asked the old prophet.

“Yes, I am,” answered the young man of God.

“Come on home with me to eat some bread,” said the old prophet.

“I may not eat or drink in this place, for the Lord told me I cannot.”

Then the old prophet told a lie. “I’m a prophet just as you are. An angel told me by the word of the Lord, ‘Bring him back to your house so that he may eat bread.’”

Now, what would you advise the young man to do—go with the old prophet or go on home? [Allow answers.] This young man went—[pause] with the old prophet to eat. As the two sat at the table, the real word of the Lord came to the old prophet, and he proclaimed, “Because you did not obey the commandment of the Lord not to come back and not to eat or drink in this place, you will soon die and not be buried with your fathers.”

The prophet’s death

When the meal was over, the old prophet saddled his own donkey for the young man of God and sent him on his way. The man didn’t get far, however, for a lion met him on the road and killed him. The young man’s body was left in the road with the lion standing on one side and the donkey on the other side. The lion had not eaten the body, nor had he attacked the donkey. People passing by could see this strange sight: a dead man, a live donkey, and a lion eating neither the man nor the donkey.

The old prophet heard about this and went himself to get the body of the man and bring it back to the city for a proper funeral. He buried the man in his own grave and told his sons, “When I die, bury me right beside this man, for what he prophesied will certainly happen.”

What about Jeroboam? Do you suppose the broken altar, the ashes poured out, and the dried-up arm convinced him to follow God? No, it did not. Some people refuse to obey God even when He sternly warns them. Jeroboam became the ungodly model for all the wicked kings who would follow him in Israel and for some of the kings in Judah.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- We see Jesus:

In contrast to the man of God in this story, Jesus never disobeyed the will of His Father, saying, “I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29).

Activities:

- Play dough: arm; oak tree; donkey; lion
- Snack: Lion cookies with caramel corn mane as seen at [\(835\) Pinterest](#).
- Ask students about another time a golden calf was credited with bringing the people out of Egypt. Who else said, “These be thy gods, O Israel, that brought thee out of Egypt”? When did he speak these words? [Aaron when he built a golden calf while Moses was on Mount Sinai.]
- Pantomime or play-act this story, especially the part in which Jeroboam’s arm dries up.

- Discuss why the old prophet deceived the younger man of God. Was it because he was jealous that God hadn't used him to rebuke Jeroboam? Was it because he was loyal to Jeroboam? Was God testing the faith of the man of God? The Bible doesn't give us the answer; so our guesses are merely that—guesses.
- Review questions: (Game: Print an extra copy of the map found below. Back with paper towel and cut into nine puzzle pieces. The student who answers a question correctly may place a piece of the puzzle on the flannel board.)
 1. What did Jeroboam fear would happen if the people of Israel went to sacrifice in Jerusalem? [The people would again be loyal to Rehoboam, king of Judah, and kill Jeroboam.]
 2. What did Jeroboam do to keep the people from going to worship in Jerusalem? [Made two calves and set them up as gods in Dan and Bethel.]
 3. Who became priests in Jeroboam's Israel? [Anyone who wanted to become priest.]
 4. As Jeroboam was standing by his altar in Bethel, who came to him? [A man of God from Judah.]
 5. What did the man of God say about the altar? ["A son shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and he shall sacrifice on you the priests of the high places who make offerings on you, and human bones shall be burned on you."]
 6. What was the sign that the words of the man of God would come true? [Jeroboam's altar would split apart and its ashes would be poured out.]
 7. True or false. God had told the man of God to go to the home of the old prophet at Bethel. [False.]
 8. Because the man of God disobeyed, what happened to him? [A lion killed him.]
 9. Where did the old prophet want to be buried? [In the same grave as the man of God from Judah.]

Memory Verse[s]:

- Review Psalm 100 (KJV): Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2 Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3 Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5 For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.
- Ephesians 5:17: "Be . . . not unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

Handwork:

- Print the clipart of the altar found at the end of this lesson. Before class, shred newspapers. Students will draw a black line on the altar to show its being broken. They will then glue newspaper shreds to the picture to show the ashes coming out of the altar.

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

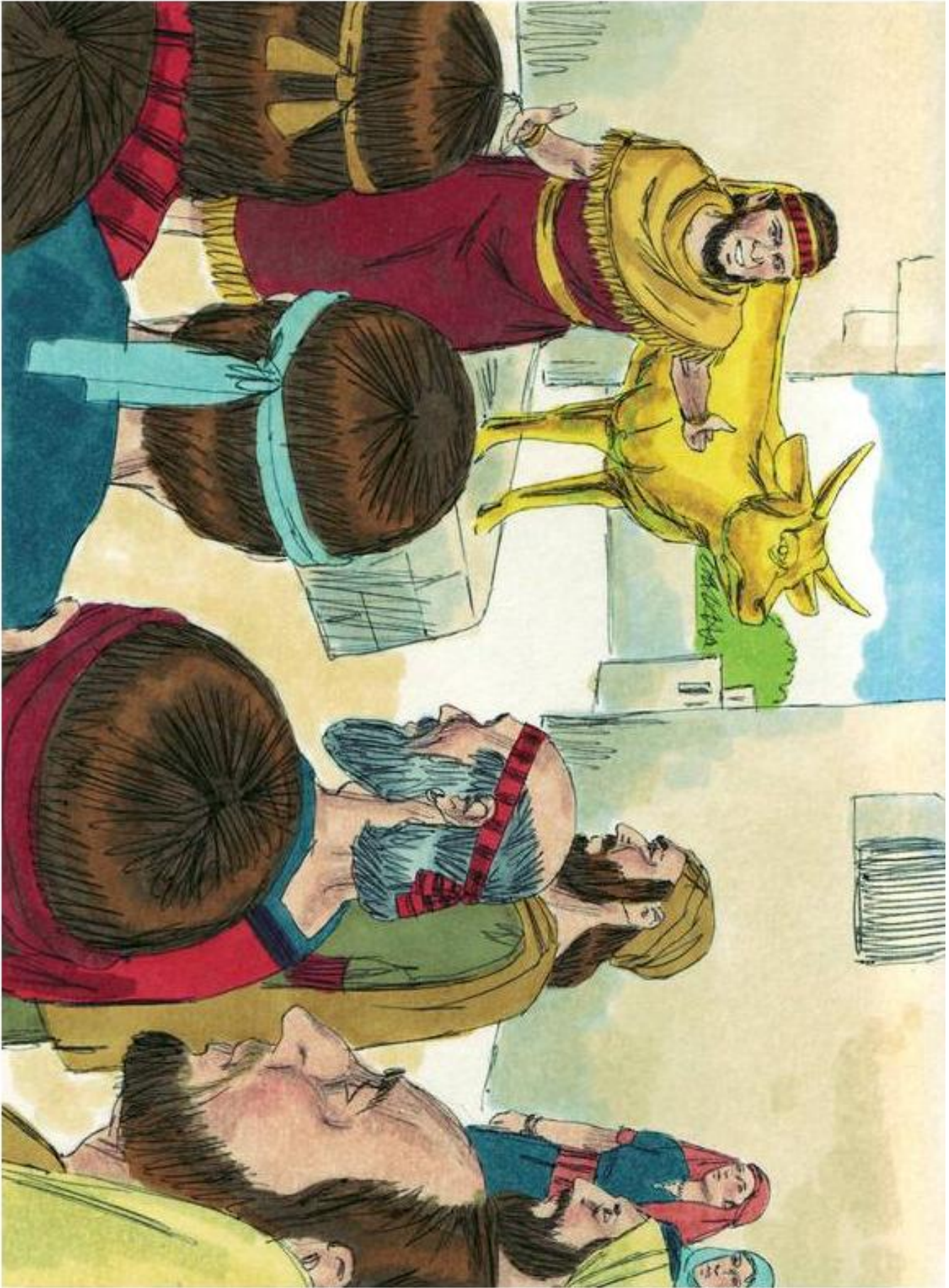
Mediterranean Sea

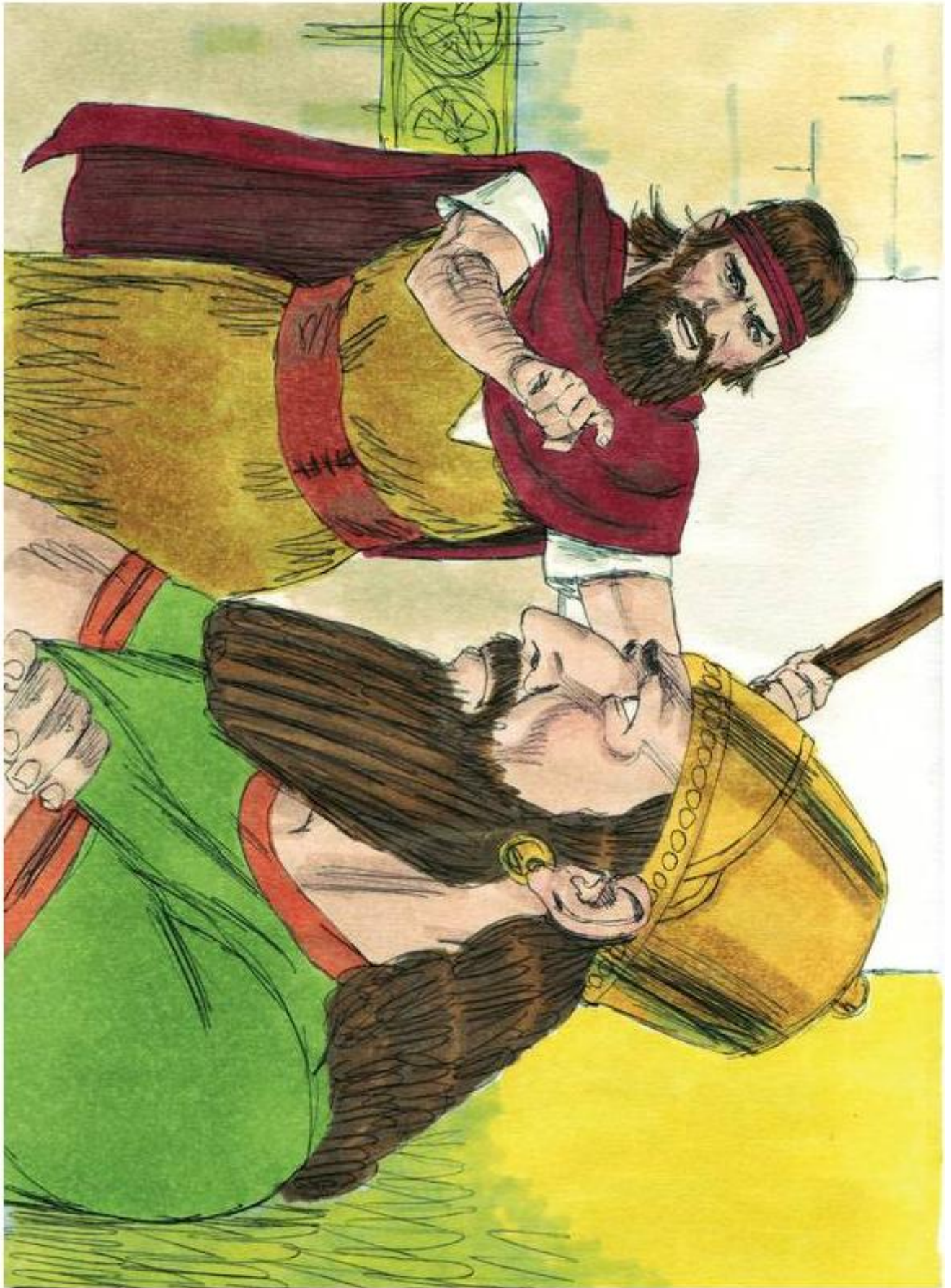


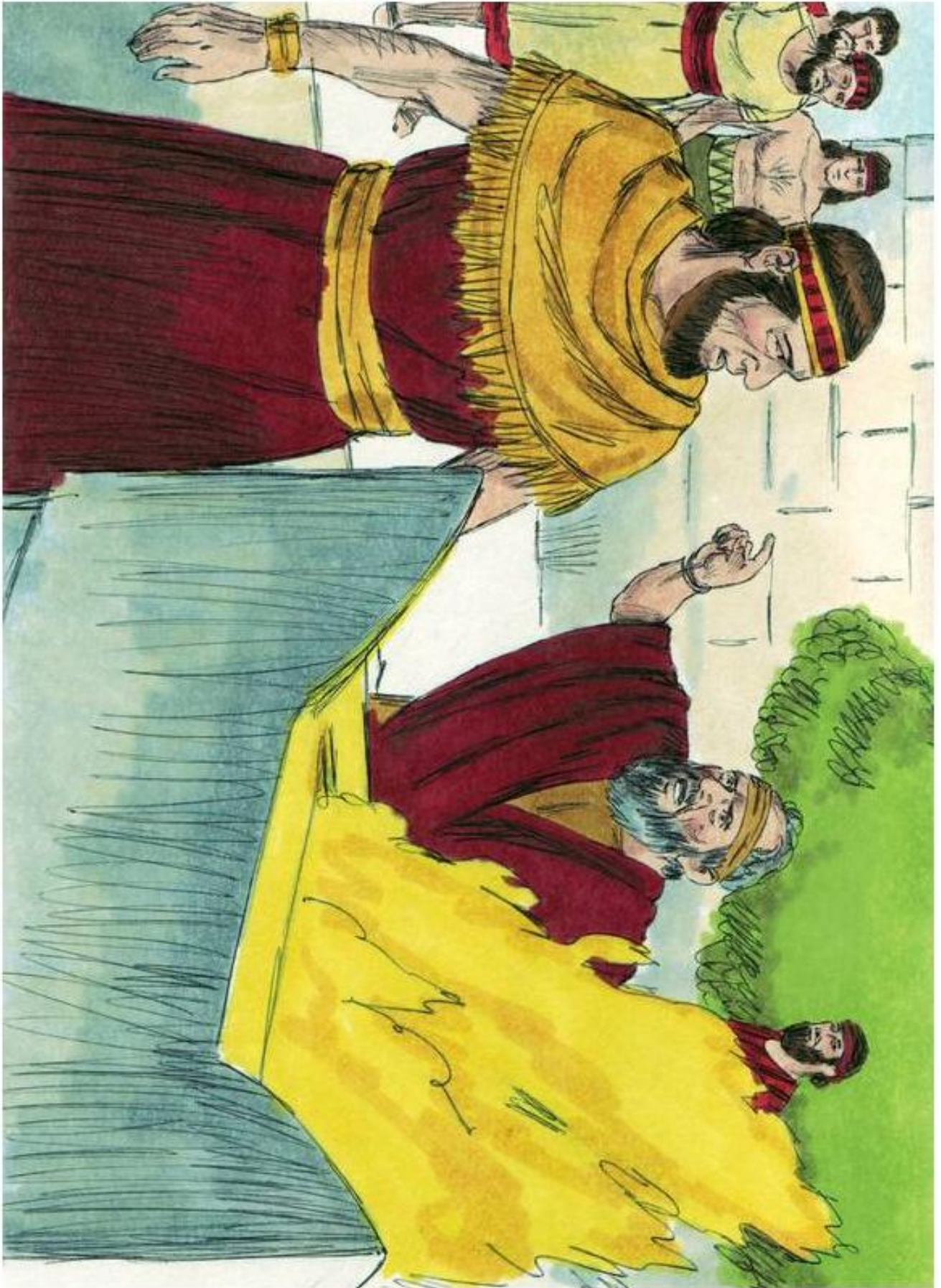
JEROBOAM



REHOBOAM







**The man
of God
from
Judah
prophesied
against
Jeroboam's
altar
(2 Kings
13:1-9)**

