

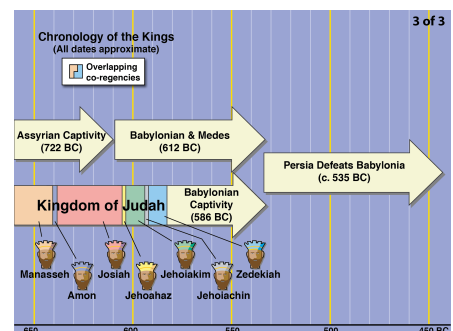
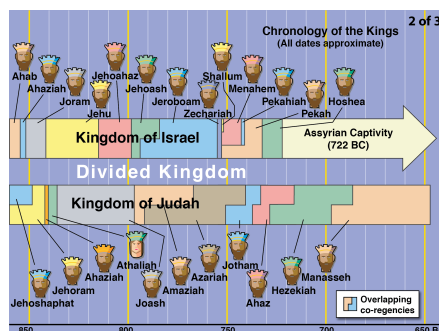
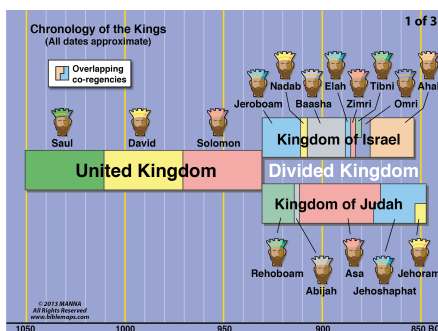
For more than a hundred years (1050-930 B.C.), the first three kings of Israel—Saul, David, and Solomon—ruled over a united kingdom. But in 930 B.C., something happened that changed everything for the children of Israel, and it all went downhill from there. By the time we reach **2 Chronicles 36:15-16** (approximately 345 years later), the descendants of Abraham were in a very dark place.



The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent persistently to them by his

\_\_\_\_\_, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place. But they kept mocking the messengers of God, \_\_\_\_\_ his words and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD rose against his people, until there was no \_\_\_\_\_.

How would you summarize the message of that sad summary in your own words?



So what happened? How did everything begin to unravel? **1 Kings 11:43** tells us that when Solomon died, his son \_\_\_\_\_ began to reign in his place. **1 Kings 12** tells us that the people of Israel made a request of their new king:

"Your father made our yoke \_\_\_\_\_. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you." He said to them, "Go away for \_\_\_\_\_ days, then come again to me." So the people went away. (**12:4-5**)

King Rehoboam began looking for advice, and he started with "the old men, who had stood before Solomon his father." Their counsel?

"If you will be a \_\_\_\_\_ to this people today and serve them, and speak good words to them when you answer them, then they will be your servants forever." (**12:7**)

But Rehoboam also got input from "the young men who had grown up with him," and their advice was very different.

"Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us,' thus shall you say to them, 'My little \_\_\_\_\_ is thicker than my father's thighs. And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will \_\_\_\_\_ to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'" (**12:10-11**)

On the third day, Rehoboam replied to his people in the harsh way his young friends had encouraged. When all Israel saw that their king wouldn't listen to them, they left and ten of the twelve tribes established a separate kingdom, making \_\_\_\_\_ (more about him in our next lesson) king over the northern kingdom of Israel.

- ✿ What do you think about Rehoboam's approach to the people's request in **12:3-11**?
- ✿ How would you rephrase the counsel of the old men in **12:7**? Was that good advice?
- ✿ How would you summarize the counsel of the young men in **12:10-11**? Why would they encourage Rehoboam in this way?
- ✿ What have you seen and heard in **1 Kings 12** that makes you appreciate Jesus our King even more?
- ✿ What can we learn from this chapter in Israel's history?