

# Ending Badly

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn to our Bible reading now, and this evening we're returning to the book of 1 Kings after a lengthy break. Phil Copeland will be preaching to us on this a little later, and we're going to be reading 1 Kings chapter 14 from verse 1 through to verse 20.

If you don't have a Bible with you, you've got plenty of church visitors' Bibles. They're red, they're spread around at the front, at the sides, at the back. Do grab one and follow along as we read 1 Kings 14, beginning at verse 1.

At that time, Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, arise and disguise yourself, that it not be known that you are the wife of Jeroboam and go to Shilu.

Behold, Ahijah, the prophet, is there, who said of me that I should be king over this people. Take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him.

He will tell you what shall happen to the child. Jeroboam's wife did so. She arose and went to Shilu and came to the house of Ahijah. Now Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were dim because of his age.

[ 1 : 30 ] And the Lord said to Ahijah, behold, the wife of Jeroboam is coming to inquire of you concerning her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus shall you say to her.

When she came, she pretended to be another woman. But when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, she came in at the door. As she came in at the door, he said, come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another? For I am charged with unbearable news for you. Go tell Jeroboam, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over my people Israel and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you.

And yet you have not been like my servant, David, who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart, doing only that which was right in my eyes. But you have done evil above all who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods, metal images, provoking me to anger and have cast me behind your back.

Therefore, behold, I will bring harm upon the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every meal, both bond and free in Israel, and will burn up the house of Jeroboam as a man burns up dung until it is all gone.

[ 2 : 55 ] Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city, the dog shall eat. And anyone who dies in the open country, the birds of the heavens shall eat, for the Lord has spoken it.

Arise, therefore, go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something pleasing to the Lord, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.

Moreover, the Lord will raise up for himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam today. And henceforth, the Lord will strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water and root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their fathers and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their ashram, provoking the Lord to anger.

And he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin. Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed and came to Tirzah.

And as she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And all Israel buried him and mourned for him according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Ahijah, the prophet.

[ 4 : 22 ] Now, the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the king of Israel. And the time that Jeroboam reigned was 22 years.

And he slept with his fathers and Nadab, his son, reigned in his place. Amen. This is God's word and we'll return to it shortly.

Well, on September the 8th, almost a year ago, 2022, Queen Elizabeth II was called home to be with the Lord.

Before she died, she left precise instructions about her funeral service because she wanted to make sure that in that service, her savior and king, the Lord Jesus Christ, would be lifted up. And indeed he was. She ended her reign well. In 1 Kings chapter 14, we read about two dismal kings who end their reign badly.

[ 5 : 34 ] This Sunday, we will look at the first of them, Jeroboam. In this section of the book of Kings, the golden days of Israel, when the kingdom was one time united under Solomon, is long gone.

And what we have now is a divided kingdom ruled by dismal kings. And remember, the kingdom is like this way because Solomon ended his reign badly.

Ending badly is a very common theme throughout this book, I'm afraid. In Solomon's senior years, he turned away from the Lord in his heart to trust in a lot of the gods of his pagan wives.

And in response, the word of the Lord came to him and said that there would be just consequences for his unbelief. The worst of these would happen after Solomon's death, where the majority of the kingdom would be ripped away from the house of David.

And that's what happens in chapter 12. The kingdom is torn in two. And so in the south, you have the one tribe of Judah made into a nation of Judah, ruled over by Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

[ 6 : 42 ] But in the north, you have the kingdom of Israel, consisting of these 10 dissident tribes, ruled over by King Jeroboam. And at the start of his reign, Jeroboam, he was a guy with a lot of potential.

He had a great CV, very impressive. But it didn't take long to show where his heart truly was. And he kicked off his reign, committing a colossal act of rebellion.

Remember, he built these two golden bull calves and also constructed all sorts of worship centers on the high places in Israel, completely rejecting the Lord and his word in the process.

And alarmingly, remember when we looked at this? All of the people under that king's reign fell for it. They all went with it. They were captivated by his cult.

And into chapter 13, we saw that the Lord showed Jeroboam and the northern kingdom wonderful patience and mercy, actually. The Lord sent a messenger, a prophet, a man of God from Judah, up to warn the people and to plead with them to turn away from their idolatry.

[ 7 : 52 ] But they refused. And even after that man of God from Judah, do you remember? Lost his life whilst disobeying God's word in that really striking act of parable of warning to the people.

They still refused to repent. And in fact, at the end of chapter 13, Jeroboam was more dedicated to his cult religion than ever. And because of this, Jeroboam, we're told, he sealed his destiny.

Heartbreaking. He sealed his destiny and the destiny of his household. And that leads us into chapter 14. We're going to look at this chapter in two scenes. Here's the first scene.

Verses 1 to 6. I've called the folly of trying to deceive the Lord. Can everyone hear me okay? Is that all right? Am I booming just a wee bit? Maybe just a little bit.

Thanks, Fraser. Scene 1. The folly of trying to deceive the Lord. As the sovereign and all-knowing Lord cannot be deceived, his powerful word cannot be manipulated even by people in power.

[ 8 : 58 ] And his word will always expose the truth. In verse 1, we're told that Jeroboam's son, who's called Abijah, which means the Lord is my father, he falls ill.

And from the immediate context, it's clear this is serious. This is not just a cold. He is dying. He is at death's door. And this hasn't come about by chance. It's actually the just judgment of God coming upon Jeroboam's household because of Jeroboam's sin.

And that's clear from the first three little words of the chapter. Do you notice them there? At that time. We saw this, I believe, in our studies in Genesis recently. Whenever you see at that time, it links an event that happens after the little phrase with what's gone before.

And so here, we're supposed to see that Abijah's illness is a direct consequence of chapter 13, verse 33 and 34. In other words, it's come about because of Jeroboam's sin.

Now, a lot long before this point in the Bible, we read about another king who sinned greatly. And as a result, his son became gravely ill. I'm talking, of course, about King David.

[10:16] Back in 2 Samuel, David's son became ill. And what did that do? It led David to repent, to turn to the Lord, to humbly submit himself to God.

Will Jeroboam respond like that? Will this incident, this sickness, turn out to be a severe mercy of the Lord, bringing about heart transformation in this king and, therefore, in the land?

Tragically, no. Tragically, no. True to form, Jeroboam shows that he is still an unbeliever in his heart. And instead of turning to the Lord, he again relies on his own cunning and his own ability. And he launches this deceitful scheme. In verse 2, he calls to his wife. And he says to her, Disguise yourself so that no one will know that you're my wife.

And incognito, I want you to travel to Shiloh because Ahijah is there. Now, Ahijah was the true prophet of the Lord, whom the Lord had used to speak to Jeroboam back in chapter 11.

[11:23] And Ahijah, if you remember, was the one who said to Jeroboam, The Lord is going to make you king over the ten tribes in the north. Mrs. Jeroboam is to go to him in Shiloh, but incognito.

Why? What is he trying to achieve in all this? Well, the text doesn't say explicitly, But reading this scene in light of all that we've heard about Jeroboam so far, I think it's actually clear what he's trying to do.

Jeroboam is trying to avoid being exposed by the word of the Lord for what he's done. More than that, I think Jeroboam is actually trying to manipulate the prophet of God into speaking positively about the future of his sick son.

Instead of taking responsibility, coming before the Lord, and his word humbly, honestly, and openly, Jeroboam hides behind his disguised wife. He thinks, If I go to Ahijah, I will definitely get it in the neck.

Because the last time I saw him, he called on me to reign like David. To walk by the obedience of faith, to love God and his ways. I've not done that.

[12:38] But if my wife goes disguised as a concerned citizen, who is worried about the king's son, well, things might go much better for us. I will not be condemned, and my wife can maybe manipulate Ahijah into declaring, My son will recover.

I take it that is what Jeroboam is trying to receive, trying to achieve here. Because especially in verse 3, did you notice, he says to his wife, Pack up. Oh, you're right.

We're having sound troubles. Do you think the devil wants sound troubles to happen in churches? I think he does. I think he does. Fraser, you're doing a good job, brother. I shall persevere. And let's focus on the Lord's words here.

So verse 3, He tells his wife to pack up a hamper of cakes and loaves and honey, and to give that to Ahijah, no doubt as a statement of flattery, a sort of bribe to the prophet.

Jeroboam actually used that tactic back in chapter 13, with a man of God from Judah. I wonder if you remember. He tried to make the man of God from Judah give him a favorable word from the Lord by bribing him with hospitality and a reward.

[13:54] What Jeroboam seems to have totally forgotten about in all of this is who the Lord God is. Who the Lord God is. As Bob Files says, In launching this deceitful scheme, it is clear Jeroboam no longer believes, if he ever did, in the God who fills heaven and earth.

The God who sees and knows everything. If Jeroboam truly believed in the Lord, if he knew the Lord, he would never dare carry out such a deceitful scheme.

But he does. And it gives away where his heart is. And shows how little he thinks of the prophet of the Lord. And how little, therefore, he thinks of God himself.

James Phillips says this. Jeroboam's attitude in this story is very revealing. It reflects the contempt that many of the godless and the careless have for the servants of God.

He obviously thought that it would be a simple matter to deceive Ahijah the prophet and pull the wool over his eyes. Hence his naive suggestion to his wife. We cannot think that a man so accomplished in wickedness as Jeroboam was could have thought that such a serbterfuge would deceive any but a simpleton.

[15:15] And this is what he apparently considered the man of God to be. Well, in verse 4, Mrs. Jeroboam is in disguise.

And she's on her way to Shiloh. And whilst that's happening, the camera scene, boom, focuses on Ahijah. And the Lord comes to him in his house. At this point, he is old and blind.

Makes you think, actually, how much contact did Jeroboam ever have with the prophet of the Lord? Probably not very much at all. He's told his wife to go in disguise to a blind man.

What's the point in that? He must really have despised the word of God. Well, Ahijah's blindness, friends, is irrelevant.

It doesn't mean a thing because the Lord always sees. Everything and everyone. There's nowhere to hide. There's no such thing as a private life before the Lord. He knows exactly what Jeroboam had done.

[16:15] And in verse 5, he warns Ahijah in advance about the identity of the woman who was about to arrive at his door. And the Lord also tells him a message which he's to pass on at the end of verse 5.

And we're left at the end of verse 5 in a mini suspense. What will the Lord say? Will it be favorable? What will he say? We're left hanging for the unbearable news.

And finally, the wife arrives at the door. And before she's even said a word to Ahijah, in verse 6, Ahijah says, Come in, wife of Jeroboam.

Why do you pretend to be another? For I am charged with unbearable news for you. And we'll look at that unbearable news in just a moment. But before then, let's just think about two big lessons that we can learn today.

Loads of lessons to learn from this passage. Here's just two of them. Firstly, I take it this scene should challenge all of us today to walk by spirit-inspired integrity before the Lord.

[17:22] Because it is pure folly to try and deceive the Lord God in any way. It is futile to try and disguise the reality of who we are before the Lord.

for He is the God who fills heaven and earth. The God who sees all and knows all. Not just out there in the world but also in here and in there in you in your minds in my mind in our thoughts in our hearts.

Friends, the Lord knows. The Lord sees what we get up to wherever we are and whatever room we are in in our house. He knows and sees and hears every word that we speak.

Every word that we communicate. He is especially interested, friends, in the words that we use about other people within the church family, says the New Testament. He knows what we get up to when we are on our own when no one else is here.

We might be able to deceive others into the church into thinking that we are better than we really are. You know, we can after the service over coffee spout off all sorts of impressive pious super spiritual sounding talk to others so that they might get the impression that we are really godly.

[18:41] Or we could carry out lots of acts of activities of service in the church, sign up to all sorts of serving teams and look really, really busy. Look how godly we are. Or we can go to our growth group Bible study and spout off loads of lines of impressive sounding books that we have read in advance on the passage in order to show off to others the depths of our knowledge whilst never ever wanting or letting the word of God that we are studying change us and expose us.

or we can deceive ourselves into thinking that we are better than we really are and a classic way of doing that is pointing out the faults and the failures of others especially those in the church.

That is a belter of a way to deceive yourself into thinking that you are better than you really are.

Friends, none of that will ever work on the Lord. What is the opposite of walking in deception before God?

The answer is walking in the light. Walking in the light. Walking humbly with the Lord God. Letting his word of truth expose the things in our lives that should not be and instructing us on how to change.

Being honest and open about that before the Lord. Confessing our sin. Repenting and coming to him for repeated cleansing. That is what the apostle John says. This is the message we've heard from him and proclaimed to you.

[20:09] That God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned we make him a liar and his truth is not in us. So friends as God's people today in Christ let's pray that the Lord will help us to walk before him with spirit inspired open

integrity.

To be a what you see is what you get type of church. church. In other words let's look to the Lord to help us shun the ways of Jeroboam. The ways of unbelief.

A second big challenge from us for this scene is this. It is possible you know to be someone who is only interested in the word of the Lord when you are in trouble.

[ 21 : 25 ] I'll say that again. It is possible to be someone who is only interested in the word of the Lord when you are in trouble. When is it that Jeroboam seeks out the word of the Lord?

Albeit he does it with bad motives but he still in some ways seeks the word of the Lord answer. It's when he is in trouble. Now there is nothing wrong with seeking the Lord's word when we are in trouble.

Psalms 50 verse 15 the Lord himself says call on me in the day of trouble. Call on me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you and you shall glorify me. It is just one example of a passage like that in the Bible where we are encouraged to turn to the Lord in our trouble.

However, Jeroboam turned a totally deaf ear to the word of God in chapter 12 and 13 and yet now when the dark days come he seeks what he had despised.

Jeroboam wants the help of the word in the emergencies of life but not the rule of the word over the course of his life. He desires only the occasional word of God.

[ 22 : 34 ] He wants the word of God for his crisis but not for his routine or practice. He craves the light in his trouble but not on his path. He doesn't want to live with the word but only visits it from time to time.

So again, friends, let's turn to the Lord and pray that we will be a people who love his word at all times. And that we will let it master our lives every day especially when things are going well.

Yes. And we won't just turn to the Lord when we're in trouble. Well, that's scene one. Let's look at scene two. This is from verse 7 to 20 which I've called the fallout of despising the Lord.

The fallout of despising the Lord. Now in this scene, Ahijah, he speaks the word of the Lord to Mrs. Jeroboam and really she's to take this message back to Jeroboam and it's chilling.

Friends, it's chilling. I know it's a sunny Sunday evening. It's a very warm evening as well. I could see that because there's a few droopy eyes but this passage, friends, it will be like a bucket of water over us.

[ 23 : 48 ] It is chilling but it's God's word and we must not avoid it. There is unbearable news concerning the household of Jeroboam and unbearable news for the whole of the northern kingdom.

The Lord is going to bring on them covenant curses. But before the Lord spells out these covenant curses in verse 10, the Lord begins by giving a history lesson and laying out clearly why these covenant curses are just and fully deserved.

Because you know that's what God is like. Whenever God is angry with someone, he never flies off the handle with them like I so often do with my three-year-old son. He is always the God who is just and fair and righteous.

And so the Lord lays out his case. In verses 7 to 8, he basically describes the grace that he's shown Jeroboam. And he says four things. Just run your eye over it as I read them out.

Number one, he says, I exalted you from among the people. Number two, I made you ruler over notice my people Israel. Number three, I tore the kingdom away from the house of David.

[ 24 : 59 ] And number four, I gave it to you. I showed you such grace, such kindness that was undeserved. Also in verse 8, the Lord says that despite doing all of this for Jeroboam, he refused to walk by the obedience of faith.

He refused to rule like King David. And in verse 9, the Lord says to Jeroboam, you've done four things that offended everything that the Lord has done for you.

Let me run through them in verse 9. Number one, you have done evil above all who were before you, even greater evil than Saul. Two, you have gone and made for yourself other gods and metal images.

Three, you have provoked me to wrath, to anger. For you have cast me behind your back. In other words, Jeroboam has despised the Lord and the Lord's precious grace.

By establishing his own cult of bull calf worship and leading the Lord's people astray into sin, Jeroboam has cast aside the Lord behind his back like he's a piece of trash.

[ 26 : 12 ] utter garbage. Now friends, that little phrase that provoking the Lord to anger, I've spent all summer reading 1st Kings and 2nd Kings again and again.

Let me just see, all the way into 2nd Kings this phrase pops up again and again and again. You almost get sick of hearing it because it pops up so much in relation to Israel's kings.

Jeroboam has set the trajectory not just for his own household but for the whole nation. And so having laid out the charges against Jeroboam, the Lord now passes sentence.

And really the Lord says two things. There will be harm for the household of Jeroboam and exile for Israel. Let me just unpack these two things. Firstly, A, there will be harm for the household of Jeroboam.

Please look at verse 10. The Lord says, I will bring harm upon the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male or literally the Hebrew is much more coarse.

[ 27 : 19 ] Literally the Hebrew says, I will cut off from Jeroboam everyone who urinates against the wall. Both bond and free in Israel and will burn up the house of Jeroboam as a man burns up dung until it is all gone.

What's been announced here is nothing less than the destruction of the house of Jeroboam. That's what the Lord means. This talk, the coarse language of urinating and dung.

The Lord seems to be saying that this is what the house of Jeroboam has become in his eyes. This house stinks. And the only way to clean it is burning.

And verse 11 is truly chilling. Verse 11. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city, the dog shall eat. And anyone who dies in the open country, the birds of the heavens shall eat.

For the Lord has spoken it. Well, in verse 12, having finished reporting the Lord's message that Mrs. Jeroboam is to take back to her husband.

[ 28 : 28 ] In verse 12, Ahijah now turns to Mrs. Jeroboam directly. And he says, arise, go to your house. And when your feet enter the city, your son Abijah will die.

But just notice verse 13. And this is concerning the son who will die. All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him. For he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there was found something pleasing to the Lord, the God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam.

So in the midst of Jeroboam's apostasy, there was something pleasing to the Lord, which is the life of this son. Now we can't know whether this means that this lad Abijah lived up to his name, which remember meant the Lord as my father.

Perhaps it just means that he did not participate in Jeroboam's idolatry. Whatever it was, we may reasonably say that it was a miracle of God's grace that anything good could be found in this stinking household.

Because of this, we must understand that the child's death was actually a punishment for Jeroboam, not for the child himself. Now friends, of course we'd read that, and of course we'd read that and are troubled and find it chilling.

[ 29 : 49 ] Of course we feel that way. But we must see that the Lord is perfectly capable of looking after a child beyond the grave. And the honourable bury of this son, in contrast to what was just announced for every other male in the family, it would be a sign of God's favour actually resting upon him.

It's almost like the Lord is taking him away in mercy, away from this brutal and horribly spiritually dangerous family. Well, the fulfilment of this brutal word is reported in verse 17 and 18.

Please look down to there. Verse 17, Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed and came to Tirzah, which was the city. And as she came to the threshold of the house, the child died.

And we may ask, why did she return? Or had she, did she not believe the prophet? Or had she fatalistically resigned herself to the tragedy?

We do not know. What we do know is that there is not a trace of her pleading with the Lord for her son's life as David had done back in 2 Samuel 12. It seems that she, like her husband, was also a woman of unrepentance.

[ 31 : 07 ] And she had cast the Lord behind her back. Just listen to John Woodhouse on this. I totally missed this when I read this passage through. He says this, I wonder whether we should see the gracious hand of God briefly holding back the announced tragedy.

Notice in verse 17, Abijah did not die the moment she entered the city. As the prophet said, there was time, even between her arrival at the city gates and reaching her house, in which she could have humbly begged the Lord for mercy.

You get that? The prophet had said, once your feet touch the entrance of the city, your son will die. She didn't repent. She went into the city and the Lord relented even then.

And the child only died when she crossed the foothold of her house. There was still time to repent, but she did not. And the word of the Lord came to pass.

That's the first curse that the Lord announces here. Harm on the household of Jeroboam. Here's the second, much more briefly. Exile for Israel. In verse 14, the Lord mentions that he will soon raise up a king to take over Israel from the line of Jeroboam.

[ 32 : 26 ] God willing, we shall look at that in the next few weeks. But for now, please look at verse 15. The Lord will strike Israel as a reed is shaken in water and root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their forefathers and will scatter them beyond the Euphrates because they have made their asherim, provoking the Lord to anger.

And he will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin. As I said earlier, Jeroboam's sin, all the things that he did to provoke the Lord to anger, it actually opened the door for much, much more disobedience in Israel.

Not only do the people follow their king in his bullcalf worship, but they also get busy carrying out their own idolatry building project. In verse 15, they make asherim, which were wooden poles.

Back then, it represented the pagan Canaanite goddess, Asherah. She was, in Canaanite religion, the partner of the highest God and the mother of all gods.

The people filled the land with these things, the land that the Lord had so graciously given to them and their fathers. Again, there's the Lord's grace.

[ 33 : 48 ] What did the people do with it? They despised it, cast him behind their backs as though he were garbage. And they provoked the Lord to anger. The first king of the ten tribes of Israel has finished them, friends.

This is the beginning of the kingdom of Israel, but it's also the beginning of the end. Bad leadership has led to bad community and has led to bad worship.

And the sins of Jeroboam will continue to plague that nation throughout all future generations until judgment finally falls. For you see, just like Abijah's death, there is a delay in judgment coming.

Exile is not immediate here. The Lord gives his people time to turn. In verse 15 to 16, here are these words that Ahijah has spoken. They will hang over Israel another 180 years.

Plenty of time to turn to the Lord. But tragically, they turn out to be 180 more years of more and more kings simply repeating the sins of Jeroboam.

[ 35 : 00 ] Until finally, time is up and the Lord's word comes to pass and the vine that he planted in the promised land will be ripped up and scattered out into the darkness of exile.

Friends, as I close, let me say two things. Firstly, 1 Kings chapter 14, it warns us of the dangers of bad leadership in God's church.

Leadership that despises God, rejects his word and his grace. And when the church has bad leadership, it's not just the current generation that will suffer. As Ralph Davis says, one needn't be a king to propagate such ruin.

Our times are impatient with orthodoxy and with the intolerant God of the Bible who won't negotiate on the first commandment. Our narcissistic contemporaries assure us that we can do as we want.

We can worship God however way we want. We needn't stay obligated to Bible-bound worship.

And of course, they are right. You can choose your calf and damn your church and your descendants for generations.

[ 36 : 19 ] I think this is a word that is especially challenging as well for those of us who have the privilege of being fathers in the church. The decisions we make and the way that we lead our households and the way that we lead our children, the priorities we set in our lives and for their lives, they will have a deep impact upon our children and the direction of their lives.

It's a real challenge for us. A real challenge for me. Secondly, the Lord's warnings of judgment, friends, they must not be mocked or ignored.

The Lord announced judgment would fall on the house of Jeroboam and it did. The Lord announced that judgment would fall on the nation of Israel and it did.

And the Lord has also announced that he is going to judge history. Judgment is going to fall on the world and it will. And the Lord has proven that it will by raising his judge from the dead, the Lord Jesus Christ.

But just like, friends, just like the judgments with Israel and with Abijah, the Lord has mercifully delayed judgment. The New Testament tells us so clearly he has done so in order to give everyone the chance to repent because he is a God who is rich in mercy.

[ 37 : 47 ] Friends, all who turn away from sin and idolatry to instead worship the true God through Jesus Christ alone, his great and perfect King, they will be safe from the judgment to come and brought into his kingdom of glory forever.

So 1 Kings 14, it teaches us many things, but above all, it pleads with us. With the help of the Lord our God, shun the ways of Jeroboam and worship the King, the Lord Jesus.

We'll come back next Sunday when, God willing, we will look at what happens in the kingdom in the south. But let's be quiet for a moment and then I'll pray for us. Let's pray for us.

Let's pray for us. Let's pray for us. Our gracious God and heavenly Father, we pray that you will have mercy on us.

Give us the strength that we need to shun the ways of Jeroboam, to instead walk by the obedience of faith, following the ways of King Jesus.

[ 39 : 08 ] We cannot do this on our own. Lord, please help us. Have mercy, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.