

# Jeroboam, this is your life

By Kathy Applebee

CHARACTERS: 6M, 2F, 4 either

SETTING: Courtroom

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES: 1 Kings 11-15, I Chronicles 9-13, Rev. 20

Narrators 1, 2 3

Zeruah: Jeroboam's mother

Wife: Jeroboam's wife

Jeroboam: King of Israel

Ahijah: a prophet

Iddo: a prophet and recorder

Judge

Voice of God

Accuser: prosecuting attorney

Abijah: King of Judah

NARRATOR 1: The courtroom had thrones to seat those with the authority to judge.

NARRATOR 2: Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it.

NARRATOR 3: I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened.

NARRATOR 1: Another book was opened, which is the book of life.

NARRATOR 3: The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

NARRATOR 2: The sea gave up the dead that were in it.

NARRATOR 1: Death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them.

NARRATOR 2: Each person was judged according to what they had done.

NARRATOR 3: Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

NARRATOR 2: Then I heard Jeroboam, the first King of Israel, called to account for his actions and his life.

JUDGE: Jeroboam, you stand accused of not only abandoning God yourself but leading an entire nation astray. As we all know, leaders will be judged more strictly.

JEROBOAM: I know.

ACCUSER: Let all witnesses come forth. Let his mother begin.

ZERUAH: I am a widow. My son Jeroboam was a capable man so King Solomon put him in charge of the whole labor force of the tribes of Joseph.

ACCUSER: What did he do?

ZERUAH: Jeroboam built the terraces and filled in the gap in the wall in Jerusalem. He was a respected official of the king.

ACCUSER: What happened that day you met a prophet of God. Jeroboam?

JEROBOAM: Abijah the prophet met me as I left Jerusalem. He was wearing a new cloak.

ACCUSER: Show and tell us what happened that day.

AHIJAH: I tore my cloak into 12 pieces.

JEROBOAM: He gave me 10 of the pieces. I wondered what it meant.

AHIJAH: Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says:

VOICE OF GOD: I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molek the god of the Ammonites. They have not walked in obedience to me, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my decrees and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

JEROBOAM: I was shocked. I was not of royal blood. My father was dead so I had no connections.

ACCUSER: You were connected to God.

JEROBOAM: Of course, I only meant...

ACCUSER: You meant you cared more about the opinion of men than that God. Here was God, speaking to you.

VOICE OF GOD: However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you

ACCUSER: That was an enormous promise. Did God keep that promise?

JEROBOAM: Not right away. Solomon tried to kill me so I fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there.

ACCUSER: Zeruah, what was going through your mind?

ZERUAH: It reminded me of David. God anointed this shepherd boy, and no one. He arranged for him to be trained in the King's service.

ACCUSER: And when Saul tried to kill David like Solomon tried to kill your son, Jeroboam.

ZERUAH: God arranged for another king to protect my son like the King of Gath took David in.

ACCUSER: How long did God protect your son?

ZERUAH: Until Solomon's death. When Rehoboam took the throne Jeroboam returned.

ACCUSER: So God stopped protecting him then? Is that what you're implying?

ZERUAH: No, I just meant....

ACCUSER: You forgot, like Jeroboam did, that God was always protecting him, even when there was no direct threat. Iddo, what happened next?

IDDO: We asked that Rehoboam ease the burden Solomon had put on us.

JEROBOAM: But he refused. He was going to make things worse.

IDDO: So the people said "What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, Israel! Look after your own house, David!" They made Jeroboam their king.

AHIJAH: Just as God had promised.

ACCUSER: So what did you do as king?

JEROBOAM: I fortified Shechem, built up Peniel and (*embarrassed*) made two golden calves.

ACCUSER: Why?

JEROBOAM: I was afraid the kingdom would revert to the house of David. If the people offered sacrifices at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they might again give their allegiance to Rehoboam. I was afraid they might kill me and return to him.

ACCUSER: But what had God promised you?

VOICE OF GOD: However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you

ACCUSER: What happened next?

IDDO: The golden calves became a sin; the people worshipped them and Jeroboam appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites.

ACCUSER: I call the man of God to the stand. His identity is to remain hidden. Man of God, did you warn Jeroboam about his behavior?

MAN OF GOD: I did. I went to where he was sacrificing to those stupid golden calves. Jeroboam was standing by the altar. I prophesied that a son named Josiah would be born to the house of David. He would sacrifice the priests Jeroboam appointed and human bones would be burned on the altar.

JEROBOAM: I stretched out my hand and ordered the man of God be seized. But my hand shriveled up. I couldn't pull it back. It was frozen and horrible. Then the altar split apart and its ashes poured out just like the man of God said it would.

ACCUSER: What happened then?

JEROBOAM: I asked the man of God to intercede with the LORD God and pray that my hand would be restored.

MAN OF GOD: I did as he asked. When I prayed the LORD restored the king's hand.

ACCUSER: And still, even though you were warned and God answered your prayer, you continued to forsake him.

JEROBOAM: I did.

ACCUSER: What happened next?

IDDO: There was war between the King of Judah, Abijah and Jeroboam.

ACCUSER: Abijah: Didn't you try to warn Jeroboam about his behavior?

ABIJAH: I did. When we drew up to battle, I said "and now you plan to resist the kingdom of the LORD. You have a vast army, twice as many soldiers as I have, and those detestable idols, the golden calves.

ACCUSER: He was still worshiping false gods.

ABIJAH: Yes and all of Israel with him. I warned him that we had not forsaken the LORD our God. Our priests were sons of Aaron, and we obeyed God's word.

ACCUSER: What did you tell him?

ABIJAH: I told him that “God is with us; he is our leader. I warned the people of Israel, not to fight against the LORD, for they would not succeed.

ACUSER: Then?

JEROBOAM: I sent part of my army around to set an ambush.

ABIJAH: God routed Jeroboam and all Israel and God delivered them into our hands. We were victorious because we relied on the LORD.

JEROBOAM: I did not regain power during the time of Abijah.

ACCUSER: So did you turn back to God?

JEROBOAM: No.

ACCUSER: Did you receive another warning? (*JEROBOAM shakes head “yes”*) I want your wife to tell us about it.

WIFE: Our son became ill so Jeroboam told me to disguise myself and go see Ahijah the prophet.

ACCUSER: Which AHIJAH?

WIFE: The same one as before, the one who told Jeroboam he would be king over this people.

ACCUSER: Did you go in disguise?

WIFE: Yes. We knew Ahijah’s sight was gone because of his age. But when I walked in he knew who I was.

ACCUSER: What was said and done?

AHIJAH: I told I had bad news. I told her to tell Jeroboam that God had spoken.

VOICE OF GOD: Jeroboam, I raised you up from among the people and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have aroused my anger and turned your back on me.

WIFE: It was a terrible message but it got worse.

VOICE OF GOD: Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on your house. I will cut off every last male and will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds will feed on those who die in the country.

WIFE: The prophet told me the moment I set foot in my city, my boy would die. He said all Israel would mourn for him and bury him but that he would be the only one in our family buried, because he was the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the LORD, the God of Israel, has found anything good.

ACCUSER: Is that what happened?

WIFE: Yes, it happened just as Ahijah said.

ACCUSER: Time after time, God spoke to you through his people, his prophets, but you refused to abandon your worthless metal idols. Idols that cannot walk or speak, see or hear.

JEROBOAM: I was afraid the 10 tribes would leave me.

ACCUSER: Even though God had promised you, if you only obeyed him as David did, you would reign and your sons after you? Why didn't you believe God? Why did you trust in your own plans? Your own intelligence? Do you think you are smarter than God? The God who created the heavens and the earth?

JEROBOAM: No.

ACCUSER: Do you think God lies?

JEROBOAM: No.

ACCUSER: Do you think, after seeing all he did for David, after he parted the Red Sea and brought Israel out of Egypt, that the Lord God was not powerful enough to keep his promises?

JEROBOAM: No.

ACCUSER: Then why did you abandon his ways?

JEROBOAM: I wanted to do things my way.

ACCUSER: Prosecution rests. This man had condemned himself by his actions and his own testimony.

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