

Who was Ahijah in the Bible?

There are seven men in the Bible with the name Ahijah, but most of them are only briefly mentioned. The ones who appear in only one verse in the Bible can be found in 1 Kings 4:3; 1 Chronicles 2:25; 8:7; and 11:36. Two more Ahijahs are mentioned in more than one verse: Ahijah the priest (and grandson of Eli), who was in charge of the ark of the covenant while Saul was king (1 Samuel 14:3; 18); and Ahijah the father of Baasha, one of the kings of Israel (1 Kings 15:27, 33; 21:22; 2 Kings 9:9).

Besides all these, there is still one more Ahijah in the Bible, and his role was a larger one. This Ahijah was a prophet from Shiloh during the time of Solomon. Through Ahijah, God had a message that would change the kingdom of Israel forever. This message was relayed to Jeroboam, one of King Solomon's officials. Scripture says that "Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak" (1 Kings 11:29). While the two men spoke alone in the countryside, Ahijah took hold of his new cloak and tore it into twelve pieces, giving Jeroboam ten of the pieces. He then prophesied that the kingdom would be divided, with Jeroboam becoming king over ten of the tribes. Ahijah told Jeroboam that, if he followed the Lord and was faithful to the Law, then he would have God's promise: "I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you" (verse 38).

After Ahijah's prophecy, Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam for his rebellion, but Jeroboam fled safely to Egypt. When Solomon passed away, Jeroboam returned to warn Solomon's son Rehoboam to lighten the load of labor Solomon had imposed upon the people of Israel (1 Kings 12:4). Rehoboam refused and angrily promised to increase the load (verses 13-14). In response, the people of Israel rose up against Rehoboam. Everything then happened as Ahijah had prophesied: the kingdom split; Jeroboam became king over most of the tribes

(the northern kingdom of Israel), and David's descendants were left with the tribe of Judah.

King Jeroboam, not wanting the people to return to Jerusalem in the southern kingdom of Judah to worship the Lord, made two golden calves, one in Bethel and one in Dan, for the people to worship (1 Kings 12:26-30). In the coming days, he continued to promulgate idol worship and led the people astray. So the Lord determined to destroy Jeroboam's household (1 Kings 13:33-34). Jeroboam's son, Abijah, fell ill, and Jeroboam asked his wife to disguise herself and visit Ahijah with a gift (1 Kings 14:1-2). Ahijah, in his old age, was blind, but the Lord let him know that it was Jeroboam's wife who had come to see him (verse 5).

When the queen arrived at Ahijah's house, Ahijah had the Lord's message ready: "Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: '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. . . . 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. Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel—slave or free. I 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. The LORD has spoken!'" (1 Kings 14:7-11). Ahijah went on to say that Jeroboam's son would die as soon as the queen arrived back home and that the kingdom of Israel would eventually be uprooted because of their sins.

No more is said about Ahijah the prophet, except the mention of his name in 1 Kings 15:29 when his prophecy was fulfilled with the destruction of Jeroboam's entire family at the hand of King Baasha.