



Jeroboam's Royal Drama (Biblical Refigurations)

Keith Bodner

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Among the most challenging biblical figures to understand is Jeroboam son of Nebat, the first monarch of northern Israel whose story is told in 1 Kings 11-14. This book explores the characterization of Jeroboam in the Hebrew text, and traces his rags to riches career trajectory. What are the circumstances whereby this widow's son is elevated to the position of king, with a conditional promise for a lasting dynasty? A close reading of the narrative reveals a literary achievement of great subtlety and complexity. Even though he becomes the negative standard for the rest of Israel's royal history, Jeroboam's portrait is far more nuanced than is often realized and yields a host of surprises for the engaged reader. Numerous issues are raised in the 1 Kings 11-14 material, including questions of power, leadership, and the role of the prophetic office in national affairs. Against the grain of conventional interpretation that tends to idealize or vilify biblical characters, Keith Bodner's study locates the arrival of Jeroboam's kingship as a direct response to scandalous activity within the Solomonic empire.

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