

1 Kings 12 - Thursday, October 29th, 2015

1 Kings 12:1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2 So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), 3 that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 “Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.” 5 So he said to them, “Depart for three days, then come back to me.” And the people departed. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, “How do you advise me to answer these people?” 7 And they spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.”

- At this point, we're actually off to a pretty good start with Rehoboam, the only son of Solomon that we know of, seeking counsel.
- It seems that under Solomon's reign the Israelites were subjected to harsh forced labor, and now they're asking for some relief.
- Sadly, everything starts to go down hill from this point on, as about to see here in the next verses with Rehoboam rejecting this.

8 But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. 9 And he said to them, “What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’” Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us’—thus you shall say to them: ‘My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! 11 And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!’ ”

- What Rehoboam does here is actually textbook in the sense that if one doesn't like the advice they receive they go elsewhere.
- The fact of the matter is, they'll keep going elsewhere until they find someone who is willing to tell them what they want to hear.
- This is typical of Christians who keep shopping for churches till they find one that tells them what their ears are itching to hear.

2 Timothy 4:1–5 (NIV) — 1 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me the third day.” 13 Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!” 15 So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

- There's an irony of sorts in what we see with the foolishness of what Rehoboam does as Solomon's son inheriting the throne.
- More specifically, Solomon possessed a supernatural wisdom, so much so that he wisely knew that the one after him might not.
- The truth be made known, this is exactly what would happen, and it's evidenced by what Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 2:8-19.

Ecclesiastes 2:18–19 (NKJV) — 18 Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.

- There's something else here that I would like to point out before we move on to verse sixteen and it has to do with verse fifteen.
- Namely, that the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by Ahijah to Jeroboam.
- The reason I point this out is because God did not force Rehoboam to make this foolish decision; rather, He simply allowed it.

Charles Spurgeon - “Notice also, dear friends, that God is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon's sin and Rehoboam's folly; yet God was in it: “This thing is from me, saith the Lord.” God had nothing to do with the sin or the folly, but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, God was in it all.”

16 Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: “What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel! Now, see to your own house, O David!” So Israel departed to their tents. 17 But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. 18 Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. 19 So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

- Here we're told that all of Israel not only rejected Rehoboam but they also rejected the entirety of David's dynasty as their king.
- Moreover we see a graphic demonstration of this with the stoning to death of Adoram, who was in charge of the IRS at the time.
- I find it interesting v.19 mentions of Israel's rebellion against the house of David to this day, as Israel would never be the same.

One commentator of this noted how that, "From this point on in the history of Israel, the name "Israel" referred to the 10 northern tribes and the name "Judah" referred to the southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah."

20 Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

21 And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22 But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 23 "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 24 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

- This brings up a question of why it is that Rehoboam would make this decision to not make war against the house of Israel.
- In other words, did he change his mind because of the Word of God that came to Shemaiah, or did he lack the courage to do it?
- I'm of the belief that God moved him to change his mind in order to fulfill the prophecy that was made back in 1 Kings 11:29-39.

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah." 28 Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 29 And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. 30 Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. 32 Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

- For those of you who went to Israel with us before, you probably remember this place very well, especially because of this altar.
- It was located at Tel Dan, in Northern Israel, and it's where Jeroboam had this altar constructed along with two golden calves.
- It's not so much THAT Jeroboam did it as much as it is, WHY he did it. We're told it was so Israel would not go to Jerusalem.

- I would suggest that the motivation for Jeroboam to do this was fear. He feared that he would lose his kingdom to Rehoboam.
- This because, had the Israelites traveled all the way back to Jerusalem, the kingdom would likely revert to the house of David.
- It's for this reason that he builds this site, and institutes a newly ordained feast. In so doing, he's making it convenient for Israel.

- The problem with all of this is that having such a convenience will come packaged with the idolatrous worship of a false god.
- While we may not have Jeroboam's altars with golden calves in convenient locations today, Tel Dan is still alive and well today.
- By that I mean, there are what I'll call Tel Dan churches today that seek to make this type of worship both easy and convenient.

- I'll bring it to a close with a couple of thoughts by way of a personal application; beware of the subtle danger of convenience.
- In other words, when it comes to worshipping and serving the Lord, often times, that which is convenient, has built in dangers.
- More specifically, as it relates to our compromising under the banner of convenience such that our worship becomes idolatry.