

Lesson 18 (Juniors): "THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM"

I. JUDGMENT ON DAVID'S HOUSE

A. Remember God's promise to David: God would put David's son on the throne forever. That Son is Christ.

1. **The first king of Israel was Saul, but he was a king that the people of Israel wanted, not the true king God had prepared.**
 - a. Therefore, Saul failed as a king: he failed because he sinned.
 - b. David replaced Saul. David sinned too, but David repented. God kept His promise to David, and Solomon, David's son, became King.
 - c. But God said too, that if David's sons sinned he would punish them, but would never take the kingdom completely away for the sake of Christ.
2. **We see what happens to the kingdom of David and Solomon after Solomon died.**
 - a. Solomon, ruled for 40 years over a mighty kingdom in which there was peace and rest from his enemies and in which time he was able to become very rich and build the temple.
 - b. But Solomon fell into terrible sin because he married wicked unbelieving women (never do that!). These women served idol gods and Solomon built temples for them in Jerusalem!
 - c. God judged Solomon for this sin: he told Solomon that He would take the kingdom away from Solomon's son and give in to another man called Jeroboam, the son of Nebat (*describe the meeting in the field and the tearing of A's garment*). Who was Jeroboam: a servant of Solomon, a mighty man of valor, a hard worker and good organizer and one Solomon put in charge. When Solomon heard about the prophecy of Ahijah, he tried to kill Jeroboam and Jeroboam fled to Egypt until Solomon was dead.
 - d. But there was mercy in judgment: David would not lose the whole kingdom.
 - e. God's promise to David that his son would always rule on his throne did not fail despite the sins of David and his sons: that promise came perfectly true in Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32-33).

B. When wise old Solomon died his son Rehoboam became king, but Rehoboam was not a wise king as his father Solomon had been.

1. **When Solomon died all Israel came to Shechem to make Rehoboam king but the people had called Jeroboam back from Egypt to be their leader and spokesman. Rebellion was in the air.**
 - a. The people complained about Solomon, "Thy father made our yoke heavy" (I Kings 12:4). How had Solomon made the yoke of the people heavy? (taxes, labor, etc). *But the people were not thankful* for the wise, good and prosperous rule of Solomon or for the blessings of fellowship with Jehovah in the temple. *The people asked for a lighter load* and then they would serve Rehoboam.
 - b. Jeroboam asked for three days to think about it and he called his advisors together. The old men advised him to be gentle with the people and to be a servant to the people (12:7): *that, is what an officebearer is, a servant, who cares for God's people*. But Rehoboam did not like that advice so he asked the young men instead. *What was their advice?*
 - c. After three days Rehoboam threatened the people (*explain whips vs. scorpions*), (12:14).
2. **Rehoboam's foolishness made the people angry and they made Jeroboam their king.**
 - a. Foolish Rehoboam tried to win the 10 tribes back to himself: he sent *Adoram*, his chief tax collector but the people stoned *Adoram* to death (12:18). Rehoboam had to flee in his chariot.
 - b. Foolish Rehoboam gathered together 180,000 men from Judah and Benjamin to go to war against Israel to win back the tribes to himself but God sent the prophet Shemaiah to forbid him.
 - c. The division in the kingdom was caused by men's sin – the sin of Rehoboam, the sin of Jeroboam, the sin of the people, but God was in control over it and was judging David's house.

II. THE SIN OF JEROBOAM AND ISRAEL

A. It is clear that Rehoboam was foolish in the way he treated God's people but Israel sinned in this.

1. **Israel's sin was first apostasy. Apostasy means to turn away from the Lord and from His truth.**
 - a. This is very clear in their words to Rehoboam: "What portion ..." (Q. 4): by saying this they were turning away from the promised Messiah who would come thru David. They turned away from Jerusalem, from the Lord's house (the temple), from the sacrifices of the priests which pointed to the sacrifice of Christ.
 - b. Jeroboam was afraid that the people might return to Jerusalem to worship God so he made for them a *new religion*: he set up Golden Calves in Dan and Bethel (in the North and South of his kingdom). This new religion pleased Israel - now they did not have to go to Jerusalem, they had beautiful Golden Calves, they had Feast Days which Jeroboam invented to replace Jehovah's Feasts.
 - c. This new religion was an easy religion (read 12:28) but it was a false religion.

2. **Israel's sin was schism. Schism means a sinful division of the unity of the church. God's people is one church but because of sin God's people are divided.**
 - a. This happens because of the foolishness of people: some split the church because something happens in the church which they do not like. Jeroboam and Rehoboam were selfish.
 - b. This happens because of false doctrine: some bring strange teachings into the church and so the faithful members of the church leave and form a new church.

B. God judged Jeroboam and Israel for their sin of schism and apostasy.

1. **Jeroboam's new religion did not meet God's approval and He sent a prophet to tell Jeroboam.**
 - a. The prophet came to the altar which Jeroboam had built and made an amazing prophecy: A child shall be born of the house of David called Josiah and he shall destroy this altar and burn the bones of the idol-worshipping priests on it. That happened many years later!
 - b. As a sign that this prophecy would come true the prophet said that the altar will split apart and the ashes will be poured out. And it happened just as God said! (13:2-6).
 - c. But Jeroboam did not turn from his sin. Instead, he stretched out his hand, "Arrest that man!" Immediately, Jeroboam's hand dried up.
 - d. But that prophet was not totally obedient to God and a lion killed him in Bethel.
2. **The 10 tribes (the N. Kingdom) became the apostate church but God still had His people there.**
 - a. God sent prophets to warn the people – Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Jonah, etc.
 - b. But the N. Kingdom never repented and never returned to Judah and after 250 years there were taken captive by Assyria and they never returned.
 - c. God saved His people through Jesus Christ who is the true Son of David and who builds His Church and unites them in His truth.