

June 1

1 Kings 12-13; 2 Chronicles 10-11

Hello again Christ Community Church. It's good to come at you again with another Project 4:4 Accelerator. Today we read 1 Kings 12-13 and 2 Chronicles 10:1-11:4. We returned to our tour of the Old Testament and before we begin to piece together the period of the Divided Kingdom, which if you remember, came about because Solomon didn't obey the Lord. So, a review of the history of Israel that we have learned from the period of Judges onward. Now remember, it's not extremely important to remember some of the names and places that are important in Old Testament History, however, if we can remember the story, it will help us to appreciate other parts of the bible – especially Psalms or the prophets.

So, we see that Samuel anoints Saul as Israel's first King. Saul, starts out well by leading Israel to victory over the Ammonites, and he established his capitol in Gibeah.

During this period, three "offices" as they are referred to become preeminent in Israel. Instead of looking to Moses or Joshua for direction from God, the nation found itself looking in 3 directions 1) to prophets for direction 2) to priests for worship and sacrifice and 3) to kings for civil leadership. It isn't until David arrives that we find these offices bound together again. We obviously see later on in History that Christ comes and he is even greater than Moses, who only filled two of the three functions. Jesus will be the Prophet, The Priest, and King all in one person.

Moving forward a bit, David's exploits and Solomon's wisdom were renowned throughout the world, but both gave way to tragic mistakes. Solomon violated a biblical principle by multiplying riches, horses and wives, and because of his tolerance of idolatry, God declared, a new prophet, that in the days of his son's reign, the country would be divided and the greater portion would be given to Jeroboam.

So, for 120 years Saul, David and Solomon had kept the kingdom together. All three started well but none of them ended as well as they began. Throughout his reign, David kept his heart focused more on the Lord and proper worship than the other two. But now the kingdom is divided.

God is sovereign. He ordains and he guides history, but we have learned over time that man is responsible for his own actions. Ahijah said during Solomon's life that God was going to divide the kingdom because of Solomon's sins, but Rehoboam, he justifiably bears the guilt for the deed when it finally occurs. The people begin pleading for some relief from the taxation and the trauma that Solomon's building and expansion works laid on them. Rehoboam promises an answer and he confers with the **elders**. This is interesting. The fact that they had elders is interesting. Elders is not just a concept in the New Testament. It's very apparent here in the Old

Testament Structure. The New Testament church, recognizing the value of the office, borrowed it from Old Testament Israel.

The elders give Rehoboam (and us) some wonderful advice about the nature of biblical leadership! **"If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them ... they will always be your servants."** So that spells out for us that in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, the essence of leadership is **servicing!**

So, even then, people have followed servant leaders -- they'll walk to the ends of the earth and back behind anyone they really believe to be a servant leader. However, they will resent tyrants. Servent leadership, as we have seen through Jesus, is what works. Further along, it's clear -- Rehoboam bears responsibility for the civil war that erupts and consumes the nation for 50 years.

What I took from this was this: Rehoboam messed up. He wasn't a Godly leader because he wasn't a servant leader.

Another thought that was interesting was that the "scorpions," that Rehoboam "threatened" the people of Israel with, were whips with nails and iron spikes on the lashes. So, when he made that threat, he wasn't giving any ground or hope for relief for anyone. And so, the people responded with the stoning of Adoniram, the leader in charge of forced labor.

Jeroboam accepted the invitation of the ten tribes and becomes the king of the Northern Kingdom and quickly moves the people into idolatry. Pay attention as we read about these northern kings. The Scripture will tell us that not one of them was a godly king. None of them did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

The reason for Jeroboam's encouragement of idolatry seems to have been his fear that since the true worship of Jehovah would require his people to regularly travel up to Jerusalem to the Temple, it would inevitably weaken his control over the people, and in turn make him susceptible to overthrow in favor of Rehoboam's sons. He knew, because of the prophet Abijah, that God had given him his throne, but obviously he could not allow himself to trust God to preserve that throne. So he defiled the religion of Israel and built two golden calves.

As I mentioned earlier this morning, it is this period of Israel's history that sees the office of the prophet appear and flourish. One of the terms used to denote these divine messengers is the simple expression "a man of God" and that is what they were: an unnamed man of God confronts Jeroboam while he is offering a sacrifice at one of his pagan altars. However, something I thought was interesting, was that Josiah was mentioned by name. This was interesting because though this prophecy must have occurred at about 930 B.C., Josiah would not ascend to the throne of Judah until about 640 B.C. -- 300 years in the future. One of the functions of the prophetic office (though not the primary one) was the delivery of messages from God about the future, sometimes the distant future. If a prophet's words about the future did not

come true, then he was not a true prophet of God. We don't know the name of this prophet, but we know he was a true prophet, despite the fact that he allowed himself to be tricked, and that trick cost him his life. Jeroboam knew he was a true prophet also, even though he would not be around 300 years later to witness the fulfillment. He did get a supernatural sign in the form of a withered hand that was restored only after the prophet prayed.

Jerahboam did not. What's scary today is that people are in this same boat...they have proof of their sin..but they refuse to repent. So take a moment today, and look at the writing on the wall. Have you repented? Are you repentful? Maybe you need to start there. Ask God to give you a repentive heart.

Well, Danny Jacobson, here with June 1st edition of Project 4:4. May the Lord encourage you today!