

Sunday Evening Message

June 2, 2024

What Happened to the Two First Kings of the Divided Kingdom? – Part Two - Rehoboam

Text – 1 Kings 14:21 - 31

Introduction

In chapter twelve, we saw that there was a split in the kingdom of Israel, which divided into two nations. The northern kingdom was called “Israel” and was led by King Jeroboam, and the southern kingdom was called “Judah” and was led by King Rehoboam. In chapter thirteen, we saw a prophecy pronounced against the northern kingdom for the two altars that were built by Jeroboam: one in Dan and one in Bethel. These two altars were built for the purpose of keeping the people of the north from travelling into Jerusalem in the south to worship the Lord. Jeroboam figured that if he made the people of the north their own altars to make their sacrifices, they would forget all about Jerusalem and the Temple. This plan of Jeroboam backfires because all the true worshippers of God would eventually leave the northern kingdom permanently and settle down in the southern kingdom so that they could worship at the Temple (2 Chronicles 11:14 – 17)

Jeroboam ended up losing all the godly people out of his kingdom, which made it a very evil place to live that would not have the blessing of the Lord:

"34 Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34)

Chapter fourteen of 1st Kings will tell us what happens to the two kings: Rehoboam of Judah, and Jeroboam of Israel. In vs. 1 – 20, the text revealed what happened to Jeroboam from the northern kingdom.

The remainder of this chapter discusses Rehoboam from the southern kingdom of Judah. We already know a little bit about Rehoboam. Chapter twelve revealed the events leading up to the split in the kingdom, which took place shortly after Rehoboam took over for his father Solomon. Representatives from the north came to him and asked him to “make their yoke easier,” meaning they wanted their taxes lowered. Apparently, Solomon had become quite oppressive in his taxation toward the end of his reign.

After consulting with some of the younger men of his kingdom, Rehoboam refuses to reduce the people’s taxes, and threatens them that he will make things more difficult for them. This leads to the rebellion of the northern part of the kingdom against him, and divides Israel into the northern kingdom and Israel with ten tribes, and the southern kingdom of Judah, which retains the tribe of Judah, and many within the tribe of Levi.

- I. The Results of Rehoboam's Reign (vs. 21 – 24)
- II. The Attack of Shishack and the Egyptians (vs. 25 – 28)
- III. The Death of Rehoboam (vs. 29 – 31)
- IV. The Rest of the Story (2 Chronicles 11:5 – 12:16)

2 Chronicles ten repeats the story of the split within the kingdom that we previously saw in 1 Kings twelve. Chapter eleven of 2 Chronicles gives us much more information regarding Rehoboam than we find in 1 Kings fourteen.

- The Lord's Refusal to Allow Judah to Attack the Northern Kingdom (vs. 1 – 4)
- Rehoboam's Strengthening of the Defenses of Judah (vs. 5 – 12)
- The Return of the Priests and Levites to Judah (vs. 13 – 17)

Notice the statement made in v. 17: *"for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon."* This is an important fact. Besides the foolish move made in the very beginning of his reign of refusing to work with the citizens from the northern part of his kingdom, which led to their rebellion, Rehoboam rules well for the first three years, and for three years, God blesses them.

- Rehoboam's Many Wives (vs. 18 – 23)
- Rehoboam's Rebellion Against the Lord (2 Chronicles 12)

Rehoboam did well and the Nation of Judah did well as long as they were following the Lord:

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." (Proverbs 14:34)

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance." (Psalm 33:12)

That same principle can be applied to your family. If you are following the Lord, God will be with you, and you will have benefit of His blessing, protection, and provision. But if you forsake the Lord, you can expect God's hand of blessing to be withdrawn.

Rehoboam did not wake up one day after three years and make a conscious decision to forsake God, but he did perhaps make many conscious decisions that were leading him and the Nation of Judah away from the will of God.

What "little" decisions are you making that are leading your family away from God's will? Are you as much in love with the Lord today as you were when you first trusted Christ as your Savior, or has your love and devotion to Him diminished somewhat?

Rehoboam's spiritual condition affected not only his family and the entire nation, but it also had a severe negative impact on generations to come.