

“Jeroboam’s Counterfeit Religion” (I Kings 12:25-33)

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king: This was a logical continuation of the Davidic dynasty. Solomon succeeded David, and now Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was assumed to be the next king.

Introduction (vss. 1-24)

After the experiencing the “*zenith*” of the kingdom under King David (and somewhat under Saul, his predecessor). Then, under Solomon, the Kingdom faces a severe crisis of leadership when, Solomon’s son, Rehoboam, has his leadership critically challenged by the likes of Jeroboam.

Wisely, Rehoboam asked the counsel of these older, experienced men. They seemed to advise Solomon well, so it was fitting that Rehoboam asked for their advice. But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him and consulted the young men. Before Rehoboam ever consulted with the younger men, he rejected the advice of the elders.

In this case, Rehoboam clearly should have listened to the people. This is not to say that a leader should always lead by popular vote, but a leader needs the wisdom to know when what the people want is actually best for them.

**“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. 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.” (Ecclesiastes 2:18-19).*

Rehoboam’s foolishness made Israel reject not only Rehoboam, but also the entire dynasty of David. They rejected the descendants of Israel’s greatest king.

(vss. 20-24)

Thus, the prophecy of Ahijah in I Kings 11:29-39 was fulfilled. At the time the prophecy was made, it seemed unlikely – but God’s word through His prophet was fulfilled.

This King Jeroboam is sometimes called Jeroboam I to distinguish him from a later king of Israel also named Jeroboam, usually known as Jeroboam II (II Kings 14:23-29).

Jeroboam’s idolatry – Israel’s new capital - Schechem

(vss. 25 – 33)

Jeroboam needed a capital city because Jerusalem was in the territory of Judah and Benjamin. The city of *Schechem* became the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel. It seems that Jeroboam’s reign began with energy and opportunity. He had a significant promise from God through the prophet Ahijah.

**I Kings 11:38; I Timothy 4:1-3 (NKJV)*

1) *“Ordered”* a False Place of Worship (vss. 28-30)

**(I Kings 12:28-30)*

“Men are willing to worship God if they are allowed to have rituals and symbols which they have themselves devised”. ~ Charles H. Spurgeon

2) *“Ordained”* False Priests of Worship (vs. 31b)

**(I Kings 12:31b)*

Jeroboam appointed priests to run his sanctuaries from all his tribes. His action blatantly violated the stipulation that **ONLY** Aaron’s descendants were to hold that office in Israel (Numbers 3).

“He made shrines on the high places” - Jeroboam made more places of worship than the main centers at Bethel and Dan. These high places were even more convenient for the people.

“he made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi” - Jeroboam rejected the commandments of God regarding the priesthood of Israel and established a priesthood of his own liking!!!

**(II Chronicles 11:13-16)*

Jeroboam felt he could afford to let priests and worshippers whose standards were higher abandon their possessions and go south to Judah.

3) *“Offered”* False practices of worship (vss. 32-33)

**“...sacrificed offerings to the false calves with burnt offerings and burned incense.*

Jeroboam instituted a religious festival to compete with the Feast of Tabernacles held at the temple in Jerusalem and scheduled it for the 15th day of the 8th month (Chesvan - Oct./Nov.), exactly one month after its **divinely** ordained Judean counterpart (Exodus 34, Leviticus 23) which was the 15th of Tishrei.

“In the month which he had devised in his own heart” - This is a good summary of Jeroboam’s religion – it was **devised in his own heart**. Jeroboam is an example of those who create their own religion according to their own taste. *(*John 10:1-4; NKJV)*