



## ***A Nation Divided- Jeroboam***

- I. Introduction. Because of Solomon's sin, God divided the Kingdom into North Israel and South Judah. God chose a young leader named Jeroboam to lead the 10 Northern tribes of Israel (1 Kings 11:27-33). God did not tear the Kingdom away from Solomon because of his love for David; he waited until after Solomon's death (1 Kings 11:34-40). Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he hid in Egypt until Solomon died. At Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam became King of Israel. Because Rehoboam refused to lighten the work load and tax burden on the people, the 10 Northern tribes chose Jeroboam to be their King. They split from Judah and became their own independent nation (1 Kings 12:20).
  
- II. Jeroboam- Lessons from The King of Israel
  - A. Insecurity breeds disobedience- 1 Kings 12:25-30. Jeroboam was anointed the first King of Israel, but he was a man with big insecurities. He didn't want the northern Israelites to go back to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to God because they might reject him as King and follow Rehoboam. His solution was to start a new religion in his country. This religion would ensure the people would stay loyal to him. His insecurity led to decisions that ultimately cost him the very thing that was the source of his insecurity. Many of our worst decisions come out of insecurity and fear. Why does insecurity lead to bad decisions? What should we do when we are insecure? What measures should we put into place to keep us from making major decisions out of insecurity?
  
  - B. One of the critical decisions of life is whom we choose as our advisors- 1 Kings 12:28. Jeroboam chose a set of advisors that he leaned on for wisdom for his decisions. These advisors persuaded him to reject God and make two golden calves as their gods. Did Jeroboam or these advisors remember Aaron making the golden calf in the wilderness when God led the Israelites out of Egypt? Did they know how that story ended? The single biggest decision Jeroboam made as King was on the advice he received from his "counselors." We must be very careful whom we choose to let into our inner circle for advice and counsel. Their influence will help set the direction for our future. What criteria do you use to decide who is your inner circle of friends? What is the best advice you have received from a friend? How do you know when to seek out perspective from your close friends? What criteria do you use to filter their advice?
  
  - C. Every generation must critique the past and learn from it- 1 Kings 12:29-31. Jeroboam had at his disposal the stories of the Exodus. He probably knew how God punished Israel for making the golden calf in the desert. He was the beneficiary of Solomon's bad decisions concerning his unwillingness to tear down the high places which led to the rebellion of idolatry. Jeroboam had many examples of bad decisions from leaders in his recent and distant past that he could critique to help him make better decisions. However, instead of examining the past and learning from it, he made the same poor decisions as his predecessors and reaped the same consequences. As men of God, we need to learn from the mistakes of those who have gone before us so that we do not suffer the same fate. It is true that we reap what we sow. We need to learn from the

mistakes of others so that we can avoid taking ourselves and those we love through the pain of bad decisions. Why is it difficult to learn from others mistakes? What lies do we believe that allow us to ignore the bad decisions of those who have gone before us? What would you tell your children or a younger person about this truth?

- D. We must value and follow God's methods- 1 Kings 12:31-33; 13:33-34. There were 12 tribes in Israel. One of those tribes was the priestly tribe of Levi. God specifically commanded that all priests come from the Levites. Jeroboam made up his own religion, but its structure was based on Judaism. He simply mimicked how God had set up Judaism. The most offensive action to God by Jeroboam was that he allowed anyone to be a priest (13:33-34). Any person could represent God to the people. God was horrified by this action, and this decision by Jeroboam cost him his Kingdom and family. God has a particular way he wants things done in his Kingdom. Any move away from his methods is an offense to his sovereignty as King. Can you think of examples of how the church has gone away from God's standards to appease culture? What do you believe will be the consequence for the church for moving away from God's methods?
- E. The Word of the Lord proves to be true every time- 1 Kings 13, 14. In these two chapters we read two stories where God spoke something and it came to pass. In chapter 13, God sent a prophet to Jeroboam with a prophecy about God's judgement upon the priests of the pagan gods. The sign to verify the prophecy was that the altar that Jeroboam was using to sacrifice would split apart and its ashes would be poured out upon the ground. Jeroboam was angry at the prophecy, and God split the altar in the presence of the King. In chapter 14, God delivered on his promise that Jeroboam would lose the Kingdom and his family would be killed. We need to live by this reality: when God speaks it will come to pass (1 Corinthians 10:11). This applies to both his promises and his warnings. What does this reveal about the nature of God? Why is this a relevant reminder for us? What is your primary takeaway from this study?

