

Church of God Sunday School

A DIVIDED KINGDOM: REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM

1 Kings 12:1 – 15:30; 2 Chronicles 10:1 – 12:16

King Solomon had married many wives from heathen nations that worshiped idols. The Bible only mentions one child from these many, many marriages. His name was Rehoboam (*ree-uh-BOH-uhm*), and his mother Naamah (*NAY-uh-muh*) was from Ammon.

When Solomon died, Rehoboam went to Shechem (*SHEE-kuhm*), where Israel made him king. When Rehoboam "established the kingdom" and became strong, "he forsook the law of the LORD." (He was not like his father Solomon nor his grandfather David, who loved God's law; Psalm 119:47.)

Jeroboam (*jer-uh-BOH-uhm*), who had fled to Egypt because Solomon wanted to kill him, returned to the land of Israel. "Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel" came before King Rehoboam with a request. They said that the "yoke" (forced labor and taxes) Solomon had placed on the people was severe and difficult.

The people told Rehoboam if he would lighten this heavy yoke, they would serve him. Rehoboam told the people to come back after three days. The king asked the old men who had given counsel to King Solomon, "How do ye advise that I may answer this people?"

The old men gave very good counsel, saying, "If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever."

But Rehoboam did not take this good advice. Instead, he asked the young men who had grown up with him what they thought. The young men told Rehoboam to say to the people, "Whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions [a whip with many sharp barbs]."

This was terrible advice! The people were already unhappy, and such an answer would only make things worse. The wise thing would have been to heed the old men's advice. But Rehoboam was foolish.



When the people and Jeroboam came back on the third day, King Rehoboam answered them

roughly. He said just what the young men had told him to say, and he would not listen to the people. (God had caused the people to come to Rehoboam with this request. God knew what Rehoboam would do, and this would be a fulfillment to the punishment God put on Solomon for his sin; 1 Kings 11:31.)

The people of Israel returned to their tents. The ten tribes of Israel "rebelled against" Rehoboam as king. Instead, they made Jeroboam their king. (Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin stayed with Rehoboam.)

Jeroboam did not want the people of Israel to journey to the temple of God in Jerusalem. He thought they might kill him and return to Rehoboam, king of Judah. So, Jeroboam made two golden calves for the people to worship instead. One calf was placed in Bethel and the other in Dan.

Jeroboam proclaimed a feast day, and he went to Bethel where he made sacrifices on the altar to the golden calf. But a man of God also came and cried out, saying that the altar would break apart and the ashes would split out.

Jeroboam "put forth his hand" and said, "Lay hold on him." Immediately, his outstretched hand withered, and he could not pull it back. Then, just as the man of God had said, the altar split "and the ashes poured out." Jeroboam begged him to ask God to heal his hand. The man of God did, and the hand was healed. Jeroboam asked him to come home and eat with him, but God had warned the man of God not to eat or drink while he was there.

As the man of God made his way home (by a different way, as God had said), an old prophet in Bethel fol-

lowed after the man of God until he found him, "sitting under an oak." He also invited the man of God to return home with him "and eat bread."

When the man of God told the old prophet what God had warned, the old prophet lied and said that an angel had told him to bring the man of God home with him to eat and drink. Sadly, the man of God was fooled by this, and he went home with the old prophet.

When they were sitting at the table, eating in the home of the old prophet, God spoke to the old prophet. This old man cried out to the man of God, telling him that he would not return home safely. As this man was traveling home, a lion came and killed him. The lion and the man's donkey stood beside the dead man.

When the old prophet heard of this, he went and found the dead man of God. The lion had not eaten him, nor had it bothered the man's donkey. The old prophet took the dead man and buried him in his own grave.

Meanwhile, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways. When his son Abijah (*A-bye-juh*) became very sick, Jeroboam sent his wife to the Prophet Ahijah (*A-high-juh*). He told her to go in disguise, so the prophet would not know her. (Ahijah was the prophet who had torn his cloak into twelve pieces, giving ten to Jeroboam and telling him that he would be king.)

Jeroboam's wife was to ask the prophet what would happen to the child. The Lord told Ahijah, who was blind, that Jeroboam's wife was coming and she

was coming in disguise. The Lord told him exactly what to say to her.

When Jeroboam's wife arrived, Ahijah said, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam." He asked why she was pretending to be someone else, and he said that he had bad news for her. She was to take a message from the Lord back to her husband.

God was going to bring great evil on the house of Jeroboam because he had not kept God's commandments nor had he followed God with all his heart. Instead, Jeroboam had done evil: he had created idols for the people to worship. He even declared that these gods had brought Israel "up out of the land of Egypt."

Ahijah told Jeroboam's wife when her "feet enter into the city, the child shall die." It happened just as he said. A few years later, Jeroboam died, and his son Nadab was king. After only two years, he was killed. According to the prophet's words, Nadab and all of the house of Jeroboam was destroyed. This was the punishment for the "sins of Jeroboam . . . which made Israel to sin."

MEMORY VERSE:

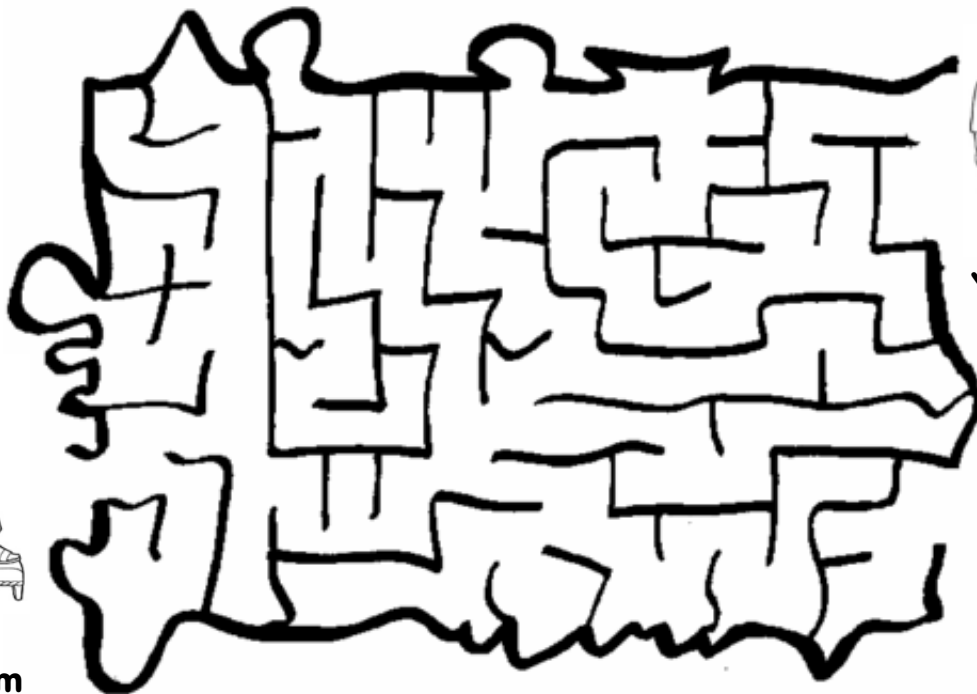
". . . when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him."

—2 Chronicles 12:1

Follow the Maze to See Whose Advice Rehoboam Listened To



Rehoboam



Young Men



Old Men



Worshiping the Golden Calf in Bethel