

Lesson 10: 1 Kings 12:1-33 The Kingdom is Divided

In our last lesson we read about Solomon at the height of his reign. He had unimaginable wealth, and a fleet of ships. **He had 700 wives and 300 concubines.** The Queen of Sheba had heard of his wisdom and came to see if the stories were true. Both his wisdom and his wealth impressed her.

As Solomon reached the latter years of his life, he allowed his foreign wives to influence him. He built temples in the High Places for the gods of the Amorites, the Sidonians and the Moabites. The LORD became angry with Solomon. The LORD told Solomon that He would tear the kingdom away from the house of David and give it to one of his servants, rather than to his son. But not all of the kingdom would be taken away. For the sake of David, and Jerusalem, the LORD would leave one tribe in the hands of Solomon's son. It was an act of mercy, that the LORD did not do these things while Solomon was still alive. Chapter 11 ended with the beginning of adversaries arising against King Solomon. King Solomon died having reigned as king of Israel and Judah for 40 years.

- 1. Read 1 Kings 12:1-17 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.**
 - a. Who is Rehoboam? See 1 Kings 11:43.**
 - b. Who is Jeroboam? See 1 Kings 11:26-28, 40.**
 - c. What do the Israelites ask of their new king? See 1 Kings 12:3-5.**
 - d. Rehoboam went to the elders for advice. What advice did *they* give him?**
 - e. What part of their advice *might be difficult* for a young king who had grown up as a son of King Solomon?**
 - f. What is the advice given to King Rehoboam by his friends and servants?**
 - g. *Why* did Rehoboam take the advice of the young men? (See 12:15)**
 - h. Looking back over previous chapters, what was it that the people were protesting?**
 - i. When the king did not listen to them, what did the people of Israel do?**
 - j. Reflection: When Solomon was a very young king, he prayed that the LORD would give him a "listening heart". Rehoboam does not seem to have a listening heart. How would you describe his character in these first stories of his kingship?**
- 2. Read 1 Kings 12:18-25 and footnotes.**
 - a. Which of the LORDS promises from chapter 11, are fulfilled in these verses? See 1 Kings 11:9-13.**
 - b. How was *Jeroboam* received by his people in Israel? (12:20)**
 - c. Why did *Rehoboam* not go to war against Israel and Jeroboam? (12:21-24)**

d. What seems to be *Jeroboam's* first tasks as King of Israel? (12:25)

3. Read 1 Kings 12:26-31 and footnotes. Share any interesting footnotes with the group.

a. Why did Jeroboam feel it was *necessary* to have *Temples* for the LORD in Israel?

b. What is it about these new temples that would lead the people to sin?

See Deuteronomy 12:26 below:

Deuteronomy 12:26 *All sacrifices and offerings to the Lord must be taken to the place where He chooses to be worshiped.*

Numbers 33:52 "...dispossess all the inhabitants of the land before you; destroy all their stone figures, *destroy all their molten images, and demolish all their high places.*"

c. Why might Jeroboam's appointed priests be offensive to the LORD?

Read verses from Numbers and Deuteronomy here for clues:

Numbers 3: 12-13 Then the Lord said to Moses: ¹²I hereby take the Levites from the Israelites in place of every firstborn that opens the womb among the Israelites. **The Levites, therefore, are mine,** ¹³because every firstborn is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated to me every firstborn in Israel, human being and beast alike. They belong to me; I am the Lord.

Deuteronomy 18:1-2 The people of the Levi tribe, including the priests, will not receive any land. Instead, *they will receive part of the sacrifices that are offered to the Lord,* ²*because he has promised to provide for them in this way.*

d. So, Jeroboam, made his own priests and his own temples. What is he doing in 1 Kings 12:32-33?

4. For Reflection: Read Isaiah 45:6b-9a

Can these words from the prophet Isaiah help to explain the trouble that exists between Judah and Israel?

I am the Lord, there is no other. I form the light, and create the darkness,
I make weal and create woe; I, the Lord, do all these things.

⁸Let justice descend, you heavens, like dew from above, like gentle rain let the clouds drop it down. Let the earth open and salvation bud forth;
let righteousness spring up with them! I, the Lord, have created this.

⁹***Woe to anyone who contends with their Maker;***

(Weal means well-being, order, prosperity, or happiness. Woe means grief, chaos, anguish, affliction, calamity or trouble.)