

(1 Kings) the Fall of Solomon and the United Monarchy

by David Guzik

David Guzik's sermon on the fall of Solomon highlights the dangers of disobedience to God's commands and the seductive power of sin.

Duration: 1:05:22

Scripture: 1 Kings 11:9

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Kingdom Dynamics"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the fall of Solomon's kingdom and the consequences of his disobedience to God. The sermon emphasizes that true security for Israel did not lie in wealth or military power, but in the blessing and obedience of God. The preacher highlights God's mercy towards Solomon by delaying the judgment until the days of his son. The sermon also mentions the different adversaries that God raised against Solomon as a form of judgment, starting with Hadad the Edomite. The preacher concludes by urging the listeners to speak God's word as God's word, like the prophet Shemaya, in order to have the same power and impact.

Transcript

Well, tonight we begin in 1st Kings chapter 11 and it's worth it to just jump right into it. So here it's starting at verse 1 But King Solomon loved many foreign women as well as the daughter of Pharaoh women of the Moabites Ammonites Edomites Sidonians and Hittites From the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel. You shall not intermarry with them nor they with you Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods Solomon clung to these in love and he had 700 wives princesses and 300 concubines and his wives turned away his heart We've been seeing in the previous chapters really the glory of Solomon's kingdom and how wonderful it was and how great it was but Sort of sprinkled throughout the description of the glory of Solomon's kingdom have been several Warning signs about real trouble within the kingdom and within the heart of Solomon Well by the time we get to chapter 11, it's no longer a hint or a little sign of trouble sprinkled here and there It's very evident.

There's significant trouble in Solomon and You can see it there at the end of verse 3 It plainly says that his wives turned away his heart. Well, what was the problem here? Well, it says at the very beginning of verse 1 that Solomon loved many foreign women and there's two obvious problems there First of all that he loved foreign women who worshipped other gods and brought pagan Influences to Israel and it's very

important for us to notice that this was not some kind of Nationalistic thing nor was it some kind of racist thing as if the race of Israel could not intermingle with any other races It's that these foreign women brought their foreign gods and their pagan culture with them They didn't convert to the God of Israel as for example after the pattern of Ruth Much earlier than this in Old Testament history after all Ruth was a pagan. She came from Moabite culture yet She converted Unto a worship of the God of Israel these foreign women of Solomon apparently did not instead of him Converting them to the God of Israel.

They converted him to the worship of these pagan gods So that was one problem that these were foreign women, but the second problem is also evident before us It's that he loved many women This was rejecting God's Plan first of all God's plan for Kings as we saw last week when we took just a look at Deuteronomy chapter 17 where it talked about commands for the future king of Israel one of those Commands was that he should not multiply wives unto himself and so the taking of many wives was wrong But I want you to consider as well That not only was it wrong according to the command given to Kings in Deuteronomy chapter 17 But it also clearly went against God's established plan as it's revealed in the book of Genesis I think sometimes we tend to excuse Polygamy in the Old Testament too much. I mean, I know the typical arguments you say well You know there wasn't a command against polygamy until New Testament times And so we can't really be harsh with David or these other people in the Old Testament who had more than one wife But I will tell you this Jesus made it very clear that the command in Genesis chapter 3 that a man should leave his father and mother and be joined To one woman in a one-flesh relationship. He made it very clear.

God had that plan from the beginning and I believe that these Old Testament Saints these Old Testament believers Should have known enough just from the Genesis 3 passage to know that what they were doing was wrong in the taking of many wives So he loved foreign women and he loved many women These were both problems and a matter of fact the foreign women were nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel You shall not intermarry with them God gave a General warning to the people of Israel that they should not intermarry with the pagan nations around them Why again notice it right here in verse 2? For surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods I Think it's fascinating that for all of Solomon's great wisdom He did not have the wisdom to apply this simple command into his life Isn't it surprising maybe even shocking how stupid a wise man can be I Mean, I think we exhibit it in our own life. Sometimes. I mean we think of ourselves as real.

We're mature people. We're wise people We generally have our lives together in such it's amazing sometimes how Stupid we can be and how much we can act in contradiction to the wisdom that the Lord has given us and so Solomon probably did what many of us do he somehow thought okay, there's the law There's the command, but I somehow will be the exception and I'm gonna escape the consequences of this sin Despite I'm sure Solomon saw how this sin had affected the lives of other people Solomon learned or he should have learned that he would not be the exception to this rule Matter of fact if it can get worse it gets even worse there at the end of verse 2 It says at this point, excuse me. It says Solomon clung to these in love You see it wasn't just that Solomon had an emotional attachment or a political attachment to these wives He clung to them in love at this point Solomon wanted romance and sensual fulfillment more than he wanted the Lord I That's what you simply have to say about somebody who goes off into sexual sin that at that point Maybe it's not true of their whole life.

Maybe it's not true of everything but at that point in time they want Romantic fulfillment and sensual fulfillment more than they want the Lord For all of his wisdom. He was snared by the power of romantic and sensual love Solomon didn't consider something that I think we really need to seriously consider that it

is possible to be romantically and Sensually attracted to people that you have no business being attracted to whatsoever Now that's hard to hear in our modern years in our modern years. We sort of have the feeling that love justifies everything if I have a strong romantic or Sensual attraction towards somebody then that justifies everything We tend to think that justifies me cheating on my wife because I have a strong romantic or sensual attraction to another person or leaving My wife or forsaking my children or breaking my wedding vows.

We have this feeling that this powerful feeling of love justifies everything Well, you and I know that if we think about it, which is half a rational mind, that's not the case You know if if a man or a woman were to come to me and they were in the midst of adultery and they say But I really love this other person. I really love them I feel that I love them more than I do my wife or my husband The correct biblical answer to them is so what? Didn't Jesus tell you that you would have to lay down things precious to you to follow him Didn't Jesus tell you that you had to have a radical obedience to him and an obedience that would hurt you sometime That Solomon for all of his wisdom He could not perceive this and once he was under the power of this attraction Look at it there at the end of verse 2. It says he clung to these in love He should have given them up to the Lord. He should have stopped and he said whoa Lord I recognize my heart is being given over to places where it should not be given.

I must stop I must reconsider instead of clinging on to this. I need to give it up For the Lord, but he didn't do that. And So as verse 3 says he had 700 wives Princesses and 300 concubines, you know, this is almost an unbelievable number of marriage partners His wives were considered princesses, but his concubines were Legal partners without the same standing as a wife All said I think we have to say that Solomon had far more Marriage partners than any man could give attention to whether that attention be sexual attention or any other kind of attention I Mean this this is almost It's almost grotesque in how many wives Solomon had now We can say that Solomon had so many marriage partners Because he followed the bad example of his father David You know David had several wives and concubines Whereas David maybe had seven wives and three concubines.

I'm just guessing I don't remember the exact number, but if you were just to say that David had seven wives and three concubines Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines So you could say Solomon learned this bad example from his father You could also say that Solomon had so many marriage partners because of his own sexual lust Now this is a profound and sobering example of the principle that if one wife is not enough to satisfy a man a Thousand wives will not be enough when a man is Unsatisfied with the woman that God gave to him. The problem is with the man. It's not with the wife let me put it to you this way a Thousand women cannot satisfy the lust of man Think about that.

Isn't that frightening a Thousand women cannot satisfy the lust of man Solomon should have listened listened to Proverbs 27 20, I guess he wrote this Hell and destruction are never full. So the eyes of man are never satisfied Well, this was Solomon's trap So you could say that it was because of his father David you could say that it was because of his own sexual lust You could also say that Solomon had so many marriage partners because of his own lust for power and prestige You know in those days a large harem was a status symbol It said to the world look at how many wives and children I can support. I'm I'm a powerful man I have authority over these people and I can have the money and the wealth to support them Solomon's desire for worldly prestige led him to these ungodly marriages So I can think of those three reasons.

Maybe there's more But if there was any one underlying Spiritual reason behind this I know this because of knowing the own Tendency to sin in my own life and seeing it in the lives of others I would say if there was anything that snared Solomon, it was the idea that somehow he was an exception That somehow the rules were good. Oh, yes. God.

Your rules are good. Yes. Yes, and people should obey them But for some reason I'm a special case for some reason I get a special excuse.

We think that way don't we? But Solomon wasn't a special case. He wasn't a special excuse. Look at what it says that these wives did verse Three it says and his wives turned away his heart.

Of course they did Based upon the Song of Solomon We can say that the first That at the first Solomon seemed to know what true love was with a woman Yet his subsequent history shows us that it's possible to be in that place and Leave it. I Know that it's common for people to say Love will keep us together That's what will keep us together But Solomon shows us that you can know true love you can experience true love and you can depart from it. I Think it's better to say That the blessing and the power of God will keep us together.

Not love will keep us together Now, I don't know when Solomon added his second wife When he did it was no doubt very easy for him to rationalize it after all the greatest king of Israel his father David had more than one wife Yet once he followed his father David into this departure from God's plan for the beginning It was easy to just keep adding wives and as he kept adding them He broke not only the general commandment against it in Genesis 3 But the specific commandment against it in Deuteronomy chapter 17 Unlike what FB Meyer the wonderful commentator says at this point He says it would have been useless to argue with Solomon for the claims of idols He could at once by his wisdom have annihilated annihilated all infidel arguments and have established the existence and unity of God But step by step he was led with silken cords a captive to the worship of other gods Could you imagine? Meeting with Solomon in a debate and saying I will argue Solomon that you should worship Baal Solomon would destroy you in the debate. He was smart. He was wise he knew all the arguments But what rational thought could not do? These subtle lusts and the power of sensuality could do in the life of Solomon G Campbell Morgan says The whole story of King Solomon is full of the most solemn value His life was full of promise, but it ended in failure and gloom Because his heart turned from loyalty to God in response to the seductions of his sensual nature Well the idea continues on here in verse 4 For it was so when Solomon was old that his wives turned his heart after other gods and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God as was the heart of his father David for Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord and did not fully follow the Lord as did his father David Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab on the hill that is east of Jerusalem and for Molech the Abomination of the people of Ammon and he did likewise for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods It says there in verse 4 that when Solomon was old that his wives turned his heart after other gods Age did not make Solomon wiser Yeah, we usually think that that's how it should work right an older person should be wiser.

It doesn't always work that way He seemed to be wiser in his youth an old age Simply hardened the sinful tendencies that were present in his younger days Age and experience should make us more godly and wise, but they don't automatically do so It only happens if it's age and experience in the Lord But Solomon his heart was not after the Lord his heart as it says here was not loyal to the Lord his God as was the heart of his father David another contrast there between David and Solomon and You know from what we know

of the world beyond From the story of Jesus in Luke chapter 16 And when I say the world beyond I mean the world beyond in the days of Solomon not in the days of Of our present day It's a complicated subject Let me just say that from my understanding of the scriptures. I would say that at this time in Solomon's life David was not yet in heaven, but in a place of blessing and comfort known as the bosom of Abraham if it were possible for someone in Abraham's bosom to see life on earth and be sorry Then David was very sorry when he saw Solomon in his sin You see David no doubt hoped that his children would be better than him don't we always hope that You know as a father. I know my own sinful tendencies I know my own you know Predilections towards sin and my hope is that my sons my daughter will be better than that You should know that it's not necessarily that way Sometimes what is a small sin in the father is a great sin in the son And this was the case with David and Solomon This shows how much important it was for David to not even allow that to be a small sin But to wipe it out altogether, and he did not and I want you to notice something David's sin did not turn his heart away from the Lord but Solomon's sin did and I just imagined David thinking and saying this great sin in Solomon's life It's as if I by my experience by my example.

I planted the seed to that sin And it didn't ruin me David says But it apparently ruined Solomon and did it ever ruin him I mean it hindered David, but it destroyed Solomon This is another reason why we have to be so careful with the sin of stumbling another brother or sister or our own children Because listen what is a small sin to you might be a great and a destroying sin for somebody else We read here in these verses that Solomon went after Ashtoreth he went after Milcom He went after Chumash. He went after Molech. This seems almost unbelievable What we might not even accept this unless the scriptures clearly stated that as it does right in front of us This man of great heritage of great wisdom of great blessing turns to the most depraved and wicked gods of the pagan nations Now I can't get inside Solomon's head these many thousands of years later, but let me try I Suggest to you that Solomon did not see this as a denial of the Lord God of Israel Probably in his mind.

He thought that he still honored the Lord He just added the honor of these other gods to it But this is never acceptable to God he demands to be the only God in our life You know, there's not many people who say, okay I'm a Christian, but now I'm going to forsake Jesus Christ and follow after this sin Not many people do that, do they? What did they do instead they said? Oh, yes, I'm a Christian, but I'll just allow this sin in my life We think we can have both just like Solomon did Just like Solomon thought I can worship the Lord Yahweh of Israel and Molech and Shemosh and Asterix and all of the others You see this is a tragic example of the power of the lust of the flesh because of his lust Solomon found himself in a place where he never thought that he would find himself Solomon found himself Burning incense at the altars of depraved pagan gods. He found himself at the altar of child Sacrifice that's the God Molech This is the power of lust It can capture us in a spell in a fog of spiritual confusion Until you are doing things that you thought you would never do Let me give you a very sobering word and I want to say it to myself just as much to you If this was the case with the wisest man who ever lived Then what hope do you and I have except from constant dependence upon Jesus Christ? You see the bad example of Solomon should make us depend upon Jesus who was greater than Solomon more than ever and So it's tragic to think of this horrible horrible Idolatry in the life of Solomon, but God would not allow it to go unpunished. Look here at verse 9 So the Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel Who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods But he did not keep what the Lord had commanded Therefore the Lord said to Solomon Because you have done this and have not kept my covenant in my statutes, which I commanded you I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days for the sake of your father David.

I will tear it out of the hand of your son However, I will not tear away the whole kingdom I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem Which I have chosen It says so the Lord became angry with Solomon I believe that God had special reason to be angry with Solomon because God gave Solomon the privilege of two personal appearances It says he appeared to him twice and yet Solomon still went after other gods Solomon's sin was horrible in gratitude and it was a waste of a great spiritual privilege But it should remind us of something else. Don't we sometimes think that a great? Spiritual experience will keep us from sin and will keep us faithful to God. Oh You know all I if I have this great experience if I have this power Experience with the Holy Spirit that will keep me from sin Listen that wasn't the case with the wisest man who ever lived.

I don't think it'll be the case with us either now I'm not saying that such spiritual experiences are bad. I Just don't want you to think that having such experience gives you somehow a guarantee against falling into terrible sin It doesn't And so God said I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant God promised the entire kingdom of Israel to the descendants of David if they only remained obedient David reminded Solomon of that promise shortly before his death Yet they could not be faithful for even one generation after the death of David Isn't that sobering? not for one generation You see Solomon's kingdom was an outstanding example of wealth and military power and prestige Yet the true security of Israel it didn't rest in any of those things It rested in the blessing of God and of the obedience of God. Excuse me the obedience of the people and the king to God Now out of mercy to David God said I won't do it in your days Solomon But I will do it in the days of your son and he showed Solomon great great mercy Even in the midst of this announcement of judgment verse 14 Now I need to make a break here you can make a little division here between the first 13 verses of this chapter and then the the 14 to the end of the Chapter here where we have a division where you see Solomon's sin and God's announcement of judgment and now you're going to see different adversaries that God brings up against Solomon as a form of judgment The first one begins in verse 14 if had ad the Edomite we read here Now the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon had ad the Edomite He was a descendant of the king in Edom For it happened when David was in Edom and Joab the commander of the army had gone up to bury the slain After he had killed every male in Edom because for six months Joab remained there with all Israel And he had cut down every male in Edom that had ad had fled to go to Egypt and he was certain He and certain earth Edomites of his father's servant with him.

Hey dad was still a little child Then they arose from Midian and came to Paran and they took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt to Pharaoh king of Egypt who gave him a house a portion food for him and gave him land and Had ad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife That is the sister of Queen toughness Then the sister of toughness bore him given His son whom toughness weaned in Pharaoh's house and Ganuba was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh's So when hey dad heard in Egypt that David rested with his father's and that Joab the commander of the army was dead Hey dad said to Pharaoh let me depart that I may go to my own country then Pharaoh said to him But what have you lacked with me that suddenly you seek to go to your own country?

So he answered nothing, but do let me go away Solomon's reign was glorious, but God did not allow it to be completely without problems He raised up adversaries Like had ad against Solomon and it says here that he was a descendant of the king of Edom He wanted to avenge his conquered people and he found Refuge and support in his own country now We're not told specifically how hey dad troubled or was an adversary to Solomon Only that he returned to bother Solomon with the permission of Solomon So

extremely with the permission of Pharaoh and so this is one enemy of Solomon next verse 23 and God raised up another adversary against him Rezaan the son of Elida who had fled from his lord Had that days are the king of Zoba so when he gathered men to him and became captain over a band of raiders when David killed those of Zoba and They went to Damascus and dwelt there and reigned in Damascus And he was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon Beside the trouble that had had caused and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Syria So here's another troubler one from the south that would be the first one had dad and then now one from the north Rezaan now when we come to verse 26, we come to a very special Adversary and if you don't mind me spoiling the suspense of the story the man we're going to read about beginning in verse 26 He's going to be the first king of the divided kingdom of Israel if you remember when God said to Solomon I Will take a servant of yours and raise him up to take part of the kingdom away.

This is the guy I don't mean to ruin the suspense, but this is the guy verse 26 Then Solomon's servant Jeroboam the son of Nebat and Ephraim from Zereda whose mother's name was Zeruah a widow Also rebelled against the king and this is what caused him to rebel against the king Solomon had built the millow and repaired the damages to the city of David his father Then the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor and Solomon seeing that the young man was industrious Made him officer all of the lay over all the labor force of the house of Joseph so Jeroboam was different from the previously mentioned adversaries of Solomon the two previous ones that we mentioned Haddad and Rezaan they were foreigners Jeroboam was a native Israelite and he was a Foreman a organizer one of the top supervisors on some of the great construction problems in the kingdom Solomon and he was a natural leader Matter of fact he had a way of connecting with the people it seems.

Do you know what his name means Jeroboam it means? May the people be great and it just seems like he was a good politician He had that way of connecting with the people and he was also a mighty man of valor this made him more popular to the people, but it also made him a more powerful enemy of Solomon so let's continue on here now verse 39 Now it happened at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem that the Prophet Ahiya the Silonite Met him on the way And he had clothed himself with a new garment and the two were alone in the field Then Ahiya took hold of the new garment that was on it and tore it into twelve pieces And he said to Jeroboam take for yourself ten pieces for thus says the Lord God the Lord the God of Israel Behold I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give you ten tribes But he shall have one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem the city Which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel Because they have forsaken me and worshipped astra at the goddess of the Sidonians Chumash the God of the Moabites and Milcom the God of the people of Ammon and have not walked in my ways to do what is right in my eyes and keep My statutes and my judgments as did his father David However, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for The sake of my servant David whom I chose because he kept my commandments and my statutes But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you ten tribes and his to his son I will give one tribe that my servant David may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem the city Which I have chosen myself for myself to put my name there So do you see what's happened here?

This prophet named Ahiya comes and does an acted out prophecy He has a garment He rips it into 12 pieces and he gives 10 pieces to Jeroboam saying you're gonna be the king over Divided Israel you will have 10 tribes and the descendants of Solomon will have two tribes and why? Because they have forsaken me Ahiya said you see God promised to divide Israel and put ten of the twelve tribes under

Jeroboam as a judgment for the sin and the idolatry of Solomon and this is the first we hear of the divided kingdom which became Israel's history for hundreds of years after the death of Solomon. You see at first the description we would expect that the ten tribes under Jeroboam. What would make a larger and greater and more enduring Kingdom than the one tribe and then Solomon's tribe the tribe of Judah those two tribes in the south, but it didn't happen. Because you know what even though Solomon forsook the Lord. So did the ten northern tribes and so God's blessing was never on the ten northern tribes. In the same way that his blessing was on the ten.

Excuse me the two southern tribes. Verse 37 he continues on. So I will take you and you shall reign over all your heart desires and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be if you heed all that I command you. Walk in my ways and do what is right in my sight to keep my statutes and my commandments as my servant David did. Then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house as I built for David. And I will give Israel to you and I will afflict the descendants of David because of this but not forever. Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam but Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt to Shishak king of Egypt and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. So God ordained this division of Israel and as I think about it right now, I think what a waste. God made a simple promise to David and his descendants if you obey me I will protect your kingdom forever but they couldn't do it for even one generation after David not even one. In their turning away from the Lord then God divided the kingdom, but his mercy was there. I want you to consider that God had the right to take twelve tribes away from Solomon. But his mercy was present even in judgment. And God made an amazing offer to Jeroboam. Did you see that look at it here in verse 38? it shall be if you heed all that I command you walk in my ways and do whatever is right in my sight and to keep my statutes and my commandments as my servant David did. Then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house as I built for David. Do you see the promise that God makes for Jeroboam right here? Jeroboam if you follow me if you obey me you never have to worry about security. You never have to worry about the Babylonians. You never have to worry about the Egyptians. You never have to worry about the Assyrians.

You never have to worry about the man on the moon. You never have to worry about anybody inside of your uncle. You have to worry about anybody just obey me. This was an amazing promise that God made to Jeroboam. What would Jeroboam do with it? You could say that Jeroboam is almost, or has the opportunity to be, a second David. They're both appointed by God to follow after disobedient kings, right? The disobedient king David followed after was Saul.

The disobedient king that Jeroboam follows after is Solomon. David waited upon the Lord to make his own way clear to the throne. Jeroboam would not.

Jeroboam had this promise to God that he would seize the throne when he had opportunity. And because of this, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. And by the way, this is another startling evidence of Solomon's decline.

God specifically said that this would happen after the death of Solomon and that it was in response to Solomon's own apostasy. Solomon didn't want to hear it, so he tried to kill Jeroboam. What should have Solomon done instead? He should have repented.

You don't want Jeroboam to come to power? Don't try to kill him. Repent. Maybe if you get right with God, something would change.

But this shows us how far gone Solomon was. Verse 41. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did in his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the Acts of Solomon? And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was 40 years.

Then Solomon rested with his father with his fathers and was buried in the city of David, his father, and Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his place. Now, I want you to think just briefly about that phrase. Solomon rested with his fathers.

It does not necessarily mean that Solomon died a saved man. This term is used 45, excuse me, 25 times in the books of 1 Kings and 2 Kings. And it's used even of such wicked kings as King Ahab over Israel.

It simply means that Solomon passed to the world beyond. It doesn't mean that he particularly went to heaven or went to hell. I have to say, we cannot say with certainty that Solomon is in heaven.

The last look at the life of Solomon in 1 Kings leads us to believe that he died in apostasy. Is there anything in this text that suggests otherwise? There is no hopeful or cheerful end to the story in this account. If he did repent, the scriptures are silent about it.

Now, there is one theory, and the theory is that Solomon wrote the book of Ecclesiastes at the very end of his life, and that was his declaration of repentance. I would say that's a possibility, but it is by no means a certainty. It will be interesting to see if we see Solomon in heaven.

John Trapp, the old Puritan commentator, he has a unique way with words because he's writing from the 16th century. He says, and surely it had been better for Solomon to have been buried alive than thus to have miscarried in his old age into the great dishonor of God, into the offense of his people of Israel. Amen.

Well, let's get into chapter 12 here. Now, let's see what happens after Solomon. And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king.

So it happened when Jeroboam, the son of Nehobot, heard he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt, that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam saying, your father made our yoke heavy. Now, therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and this heavy yoke which he has put on us, and we will serve you.

So he said to them, depart for three days, then come back to me. And the people departed. Now, this was a logical continuation of the Davidic dynasty.

David was succeeded by his son, Solomon. And now Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was assumed to be the next king. Can I give you something shocking right here? Are you sitting down? Of course, you're sitting down.

Rehoboam is the only son of Solomon that we know of. He's the only son of Solomon named in the scriptures. Solomon had a thousand wives and concubines, yet we read of only one son to bear up his name.

And he was a fool. This demonstrates sin is a bad way of building up a family. It's difficult to believe that he had no other sons, but it's a fact Rehoboam is the only one mentioned.

So when he goes to Shechem to take the throne of Israel, Jeroboam hears of it. And Jeroboam knows he has this promise from God through the prophet Ahiah that he is to take the next throne of Israel. So he comes back to see how God's going to work all of this out or how he can work it out for himself.

Now, Rehoboam had some counselors, right? Or he had some representatives from the people, I should say. Representatives from the people came and spoke to Rehoboam. And what did they say? It's right here.

They said, your father made our yoke heavy. Now, therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father. Listen, Solomon was a great king, but he took a lot from the people.

You know what they wanted? They wanted tax relief. They wanted relief from the heavy taxation and from the heavy required service that they had to do. And they said, Rehoboam, we'll serve you.

We'll be your people. Just lighten the taxes. People haven't changed in many thousand years, right? Everybody wants less taxes.

And so I want you to notice something else here. They make an economic demand of Solomon, don't they? Excuse me, of Rehoboam. The elders of Israel made no spiritual demand or request on Rehoboam.

How much better it would have been if the elders of Israel would have come and they would have said, OK, listen, Rehoboam, first thing first, that temple of Asherah, destroy it. That temple of Molech, get rid of it. We're not going to have these temples that your father Solomon built.

Clear them away. They made no spiritual demands. Seemingly, it was all right with them.

They just wanted less taxes. Now look at verse six. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived.

And he said, how do you advise me to answer these people? And they spoke to him, saying, if you will be a servant to these people today and serve them and answer them and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever. So Rehoboam was wise. He asked the council the experience of older, wiser men.

And they seemed to advise Solomon well. So now here they're getting advice for Rehoboam. And the elders knew what was going on.

They said, listen, don't expect them to obey you just because you're Solomon's son. If you serve them, if you bless them, if you show kindness to them, they'll be obedient in your people forever. This was very good advice.

But you know how it is when people seek advice. If they don't hear what they want to hear, what do they do? They go out and ask for more advice. Verse eight.

But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, what advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, lighten the yoke which your father put on us? And then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, your father made our yoke heavy, but you shall make it lighter on us. Thus you shall say to them, my little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist.

And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scourges. I want you to notice something.

Before Rehoboam ever asked the advice of the young men, he had rejected the advice of the older and wiser men. This is a common phenomenon that we have today, what some people call advice shopping. You just shop around for the advice that you want to hear.

I have to say that in my many years as a pastor, this was something that really frustrated me. You would have somebody, they'd come in for counseling, you'd give them your time, you'd give them your attention, you'd give them your heart in counseling, and you'd give them good, straight biblical advice. But the bottom line was, they didn't want to do it.

And so they'd go find somebody who gave them advice that they did want to follow. You know, it's better to have a few trusted counselors that you will listen to, even when they tell you what you don't want to hear. But he consulted the young men who had grown up with him, and these were men much more likely to tell Rehoboam what he already thought.

And so by turning to these men, it shows, I think that Rehoboam was only asking for advice for the sake of appearance. He knew what he wanted to do. He just wanted to have the appearance of somebody.

And so it says, Where as my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke. The young men offered the exact opposite advice as the older men. They suggested an adversarial approach, one that would make Rehoboam more feared than Solomon was.

Now, Solomon asked a lot from Israel, both in taxes and in service. Yet we never get the impression that Israel followed Solomon out of fear. We get the feeling that Israel followed Solomon out of a sense of shared purpose, shared vision.

You know, yeah, this temple is a lot of work to build, but let's build it together. This fortress, this thing. Yeah, let's do it together.

It seemed like there was a shared vision and purpose. But now Rehoboam doesn't care about shared vision. He doesn't care about shared purpose.

He cares about being feared. And this is what he is. He's like a bungling dictator.

With these rash words, Rehoboam opened the door for 400 years of strife and civil war and weakness. Now, Jeroboam, remember him? We haven't forgotten him, have we? Jeroboam says when he hears that advice that Rehoboam gives today, what he says to the people, I'm going to be even harder than my father, Solomon. You have to fear me.

When he hears that, what do you think Jeroboam says? He says, oh, yes, this is just the opportunity I've been waiting for. Look at it here, verse 12. So Jeroboam and all the people came back to Rehoboam the third day as the king had directed, saying, come back to me the third day.

Then the king answered the people roughly and rejected the advice which the elders had given him. And he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, my father made our yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges.

So the king did not listen to the people, for the turn of events was from the Lord that he might fulfill his word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahiah the Silonite to Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. Well, this is a case where Rehoboam clearly should have listened to the people. Now, that's not always the case with a leader.

Sometimes being a good leader is taking the people beyond where they want to go. And that, but not in every case. And this certainly was not the case here with Rehoboam.

And it says here that the turn of events was from the Lord. Did you see that there in verse 15? For the turn of events was from the Lord. Isn't that interesting? I want you to think about this.

God managed this whole series of events, right? Isn't this telling us this? God was in control of the whole thing. At the same time, did God make Rehoboam perform these sinful and unwise actions? Did he? No. Yet God was in control of the whole thing.

God simply left Rehoboam alone and allowed Rehoboam to make the critical errors that his sinful heart wanted to make. And so this year you see an interesting combination of the free activity of man and the overarching plan of God fitting together perfectly. God worked it out just how he wanted to.

And Rehoboam had it just how his sinful heart wanted it to be. So now verse 16. Now, when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king saying, What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

To your tents, O Israel. Now see to your own house, O David. So Israel departed to their tents, but Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

Then King Rehoboam sent Aduram, who was in charge of the revenue. But all Israel stoned him with stones and he died. Therefore, King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem.

So Israel has been a rebellion against the house of David to this day. Isn't this sad? What did they say? What share have we in David? Poor David. This isn't his fault.

And yet they didn't reject just Rehoboam. They rejected the entire dynasty of David because of Rehoboam's foolish actions. And you have to say Rehoboam was a fool.

The people rebel against him because he promised higher taxes and more fear. And what does he do to try to exert his authority? He sends the chief tax collector to go speak to the people. Not very smart.

He knew when Aduram was murdered that the rebellion was for real. And so Israel has been in rebellion against the house of Israel to this day. Now, from this point on, when we say Israel, we mean the ten northern tribes.

When we say Judah, we mean the two southern tribes. And Rehoboam, he should have been thankful that God's mercy and love left him even two tribes. Now, verse 20.

Now, it came to pass when all Israel heard that Rehoboam had come back, that they sent for him and called him to the congregation and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

But the word came to Shemiah, the man of God, saying, Speak to Rehoboam, son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people, saying, Thus says the Lord, You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren, the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from me. Therefore, they obeyed the word of the Lord and turned back according to the word of the Lord.

So, now the prophecy of Ahiah is fulfilled. All Israel hears that Jeroboam had come back, and the ten tribes of the north say, We want Jeroboam to be our leader. And then what did Rehoboam do? He said, I'm going to conquer that northern kingdom by force.

He assembled a huge army. What did it say there? 180,000 chosen men who were warriors, and they were all set to fight a brutal, bloody war against the northern kingdom. But for the first time in his life, maybe Rehoboam listened to the Lord.

Because God said, No, this thing is of me. You should not fight against them. You know who I think is wonderful here? Shemaiah, the man of God.

Do you think that took courage to say to a king who was proud and arrogant and had 180,000 troops behind him? Don't go and fight against the northern kingdom, because this situation is from the Lord, and you should not fight against it. That took some courage. I like what Spurgeon says here.

He says, Here is one Shemaiah. Some of you never heard of him before, and perhaps you'll never hear of him again. He appears once in this history, and then he vanishes.

He comes and he goes. Only fancy this one man constraining to peace 180,000 chosen men, warriors ready to fight against the house of Israel by giving them in very plain, unpolished words the simple command of God. Then Spurgeon asks, Why don't we have the same power? Because we do not always speak in the name of the Lord or speak God's word as God's word.

If we are simply tellers of our own thoughts, why should men mind us? But Shemaiah was different. He spoke the word of the Lord, and God answered it. Hey, one man used of God to hold back 180,000 warriors.

That's power. Okay, verse 25. Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim and dwelt there, and he also went out from there and built Peniel.

So here he is building a kingdom, building a government. He's the new king over the northern kingdom of Israel, and he has great opportunity, does he not? If he will only obey the Lord and keep his commandments, then what's going to happen? He'll have a secure kingdom forever. God would preserve his reign, his dynasty, just as much as he promised to preserve David's.

But is this what Jeroboam did? Look at verse 26. It didn't take very long. And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now the kingdom may return to the house of David.

If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord of Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their Lord, Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam, king of Judah. Therefore, the king asked advice and made two calves of gold and said to the people, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.

And he set up one in Bethel and the other he put in Dan. That's almost unbelievable to read, isn't it? Jeroboam, who the prophet of God had said, Go obey the Lord, follow him, and you'll have a secure kingdom forever. Jeroboam, who was put on his throne by the power and the permission of God.

Jeroboam, who had such promise, such opportunity, almost as soon as he can, he sets up two golden calves, just like Aaron in the wilderness. And he says, These are the gods that brought you up out of Egypt, O Israel. Worship them.

And why did he do it? Out of pure political gain. He said, You know what? If they go to Jerusalem and worship at the temple the way that God has commanded, they may say, Hey, we kind of like Jerusalem. We kind of like this southern kingdom of Judah, because Jerusalem was in the southern kingdom of Judah.

So I don't want them to go to Jerusalem. We'll make it easy for them. Don't you find it interesting what he said right here in verse 28? He said, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem.

Oh, it's too much. It's too hard. And so, hey, don't do it.

Have a convenient worship. Jeroboam appealed to their natural desire for convenience. Isn't this true about us? We will almost always take the easy way when we can.

OK, so do you want to walk 50 miles and worship at Jerusalem? Or do you want to walk 15 miles and worship at Bethel? Which would you rather do? I'll take the easy one. That's our human nature. We will take the easy way when it's offered to us.

Jeroboam became an example of a political leader who shapes religion for his own purpose. The issue of true religion was unimportant to Jeroboam. He was interested in useful religion.

That's what he cared. If the religion was useful to him politically. Now, it's possible, it's even likely, I would say it's almost certain that Jeroboam intended that the gold calves would represent the God of Israel.

I want you to understand this. Understand what Jeroboam's sin was and what it was not. It was not the introduction of a new God to Israel.

Rather, it was the false worship of the true God. Understand, that is the idolatry of Jeroboam. You can have two different kind of sins.

You can worship a false God or you can falsely worship the true God. And this was Jeroboam's problem. I bet they look beautiful.

I bet it was artistically and aesthetically pleasing. But it wasn't pleasing to the Lord and it wasn't obedient. So now, verse 30 to the end of the chapter.

Now, this thing became a sin where the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places. By the way, if you go on a tour to Israel, go to Dan.

You can see the city of Dan and you can see where this altar stood. It's really one of the remarkable things. Dan is really beautiful.

You think of a lot of Israel being sort of desert-ish and wilderness and that kind of thing. Dan, up in that part of Galilee, there's woods and streams and trees and it's pretty. It would be a very nice place to worship.

But it wasn't an obedient place to worship. Anyway, this thing became a sin for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places and made priests from every class of people who were not of the sons of Levi.

Jeroboam ordained a feast on the 15th day on the 18th month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel, he installed the priest of the high places which he had made.

So he had made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the 15th day of the 8th month in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense. I want you to notice something, what it says there in verse 30.

It says, now this thing became a sin for the people went to worship before the one. Listen, it was a sin when Jeroboam suggested it. It was more of a sin when the people followed it.

Make a distinction between the two. The people didn't have to follow this. Oh, that the people would have been righteous and that they would have risen up against Jeroboam and they would have said, we're not worshipping these false idols.

We're not going to worship these false representations of Yahweh. We're going to go to Jerusalem to worship just as we should. But they didn't.

It became a sin. And they even went as far as Dan to the far north of Israel to worship at the shrine of the golden calf there. And he made his own priesthood and he made his own religious calendar as it was in his own heart.

It said that he devised it in his own heart. Friends, isn't this the case today? Don't most people in the world today embrace the religion of Jeroboam? Not talking about golden calves and high places, but a religion that they devise in their own heart according to their own tastes. I read a book about this once.

It was called Habits of the Heart. And the two authors interviewed a number of people asking them about spirituality and religion and their opinions. They interviewed a young nurse whose name was Sheila.

And they thought that Sheila really accurately expressed the way that many people in the Western world think about religion. And so speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life, this is what Sheila said. She said, I believe in God.

I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time that I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way.

It's Sheila-ism, just my own little voice. Listen, isn't that the religion of Jeroboam? Isn't Sheila-ism the dominant faith of the Western world? I just pick and choose as I please. I eat at the smorgasbord of religion.

I take a little here and a little here, fill my plate with whatever I want. And this pick and choose as I go along, according to my own inner voice. This is the modern version of Jeroboam's religion.

And I have to say, we have a different faith. As followers of Jesus Christ, we believe in revealed religion. We understand our faith does not come from what we have in our own heart.

Our faith and our doctrine comes from this book. And it's our job to match our heart to this book. Not to match everything else to our heart.

Therefore, Jeroboam did it. And he started slipping into sin. And we'll find out more about Jeroboam next week.

But I just want you to consider it just for a couple minutes here. Look how far we've fallen from the beginning of chapter 11 to the end of chapter 12. How tragic, isn't it? We went from the glory of Solomon's kingdom all the way to this horrible idolatry.

And listen, I don't even want to tell you what was going on in Judah at this time. We're just talking about Israel, right? Chapter 11, verse 1 begins in my Bible with the word, but. That's a pretty big word to get around.

The fall from the glory of Solomon's kingdom was fast and painful. And it's going to be played out over the next 400 years of Israel's history. Let's conclude in prayer and then we'll open it up for any questions.

Father, it is our prayer that you would teach us something from these men. Be they good examples like that bold prophet that we saw. Whether they be bad examples like Solomon at the end of his life and Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

Lord Jesus, keep us from making idols. Keep us from making false representations of who you are. Purify our hearts and our minds so that we are followers of you as you are in truth.

Not as we imagine you to be. As you are in truth and help us to fulfill the calling and the promise that you give to us. Not as Jeroboam and Solomon who ruined this promise so quickly.

We pray for this grace from you, Lord, and are confident that you'll give it in Jesus name. Amen.

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