

The CHRONICLES of the KINGS

Torn Apart

1st Kings 11:11

April 18, 2026

Solomon failed to make God the center of his life. Everything God instructed kings NOT TO DO – Solomon chose TO DO.

Instead of glorifying God and pointing to him as the provider of all he had, Solomon began to glory in himself – his wisdom, his power, his wealth, his influence. He began to view God's laws as optional - his heart gradually turned from God and toward the many "*loves of his life*," and he became an idolater.

Instead of allowing God to work IN and THROUGH him, Solomon forced God to work AROUND and DESPITE him to accomplish His purposes.

Now Solomon was dead. He had reigned over the United Kingdom for 40 years and his son, Rehoboam assumed the throne.

All Israel went to Shechem to make Rehoboam king.

We will recall from last week that Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam because of the prophecy surrounding the breakup of the nation. When Solomon died, Jeroboam was living in Egypt.

Solomon's wealth and global status had been created on the backs the people. They had paid a high price through imposed taxes and forced labor – and they were tired. They sent for Jeroboam and together they went to Rehoboam, "*Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.*"

Rehoboam asked for 3 days to consider their request.

First, Rehoboam counseled with his father's old advisers, but he didn't like their advice, so he got a 2nd opinion. He asked his peers – the young men he had grown up with and this was the advice they gave him:

"Tell these people, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"

3 days later, when Jeroboam and the people returned, Rehoboam followed the advice of his friends.

In response the men of Israel declared, "*what share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, O Israel – look after your own house.*" And all Israel returned to their homes.

So, the house of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal.

Rehoboam sent Adoniram (in charge of forced labor) after the no-good Israelites, but they stoned him and Rehoboam barely escaped with his life.

Back at Jerusalem, Rehoboam assembled 180,000 warriors – men from Judah and Benjamin – to make war against Israel in an attempt to regain what he had lost, however, God sent word through the prophet, Shemaiah, that Rehoboam was not to fight against Israel, "*Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.*"

Rehoboam obeyed and turned back from marching against Jeroboam.

Here is a snapshot of Rehoboam's reign – 1 Kings 14:21-31 and 2 Chronicles 11:5-12:16:

He lived in Jerusalem and built-up towns in Judah and Benjamin for the defense of Judah – making them very strong.

Judah and Benjamin now made up the nation of Judah.

The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with Rehoboam abandoning their land and property to come to Judah because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of Yahweh.

People from Israel, who desired to follow Yahweh, joined the priests and Levites in Judah. They strengthened Judah and supported Rehoboam for 3 years, because during this time he was faithful to God.

Of Rehoboam's 18 wives and 60 concubines only 2 are named: Mahalath and her 3 sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham and Maacah daughter of Absalom (his cousin), and her 4 children: Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. He had a total of 28 sons and 60 daughters.

Out of all the women in his harem, Rehoboam loved Maacah most and appointed her son, Abijah, to be his heir, but did disperse some of his sons throughout Judah and Benjamin - giving them abundant provisions and many wives.

So far, so good. Rehoboam appears to be walking with Yahweh, but continuing in the narrative we read that after his kingdom was established and he had become strong, he and all the people abandoned Yahweh and the law.

"Judah did evil in the eyes of Yahweh. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than their fathers had done. They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations Yahweh had driven out before the Israelites." (1 Kings 14:22-25)

In the 5th year of Rehoboam's reign (as a result of unfaithfulness), Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt attacked with 1200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen and an uncountable army of Libyans, Sukkites and Cushites. He captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

The prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and all the leaders of Jerusalem, "This is what Yahweh says, 'You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak.'"

To their credit, Rehoboam and the leadership humbled themselves and declared that God was just, so Shemaiah came with another word, "Since they have humbled themselves, I will not destroy them but will soon give them deliverance. My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak. They will, however, become subject to him, so that they may learn the difference between serving me and serving the kings of other lands."

Judah was not destroyed; however, Shishak attacked Jerusalem and took the treasures of the Temple and royal palace – including the gold shields Solomon had made – Bronze shields were made to replace them.

Rehoboam established himself firmly in Jerusalem and continued as king, but there was continual warfare between the house of Rehoboam and the house of Jeroboam.

The events of Rehoboam's reign, from beginning to end, were written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet, Iddo the seer (genealogies) and the book of the annals of the kings of Judah.

Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king. He reigned 17 years. He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking Yahweh.

Rehoboam rested with his fathers and Abijah succeeded him as king.

The remaining chapters of 1st Kings focus primarily on Israel. Only 4 kings of Judah are mentioned: Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, and Jehoshaphat.

Here is a snapshot of Jeroboam's reign – 1 Kings 12:25-14:20:

He ruled from Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim.

He must have felt insecure in his reign because he began to think that it was only a matter of time before Israel returned to the house of David – especially if they continued to go to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer sacrifices.

Jeroboam worried they would give their allegiance back to Rehoboam and that he would be killed, so, after seeking advice, Jeroboam made 2 golden calves and then addressed the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” One was set up in Bethel, the other in Dan.

Additionally, he built shrines and appointed priests from among the people even though they were not Levites.

He instituted a festival – at a time of his own choosing – to be celebrated in Israel like the festival held in Judah. He offered sacrifices on the altar before the golden calf at Bethel.

As Jeroboam was standing at the altar making sacrifices, a man of God from Judah showed up and cried out against the altar: “O altar, altar! This is what Yahweh says: ‘A son named Josiah will be born to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who now make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you. ---- This is the sign Yahweh has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out.’”

Ellen White {PK 102}: At the time of the feast at Bethel the hearts of the Israelites were not fully hardened. Many were susceptible to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The Lord designed that those who were taking rapid steps in apostasy should be checked in their course before it should be too late. He sent His messenger to interrupt the idolatrous proceedings and to reveal to king and people what the outworking of this apostasy would be. The rending of the altar was a sign of God's displeasure at the abomination that was being wrought in Israel...

Jeroboam found himself at a fork in the road and he had a decision to make. Choose God or choose pride, fear and self-preservation. He chose pride, fear and self-preservation.

After the man of God spoke, Jeroboam stretched out his hand and yelled, “Seize him!” As he yelled, the hand that was stretched toward the man of God shriveled up and he could not draw it back. If that weren't bad enough, suddenly his altar split apart and all the ashes spilled to the ground, “according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of Yahweh.”

Jeroboam asked the man to intercede for him that his hand might be restored. The man did and the hand was restored.

As you can imagine, the king was grateful, so he invited the man home for a meal and a reward. Being invited to eat at the king's table was generally viewed as a power move. By eating the king's food at his table, you were acknowledging your dependence on him and expressing your loyalty to him. No doubt, Jeroboam was looking to have a prophet on his payroll because a prophet would make his new government and religion look more legit.

As tempting as the invitation would have been, the man of God declined, “Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. For I was commanded by Yahweh: ‘You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.’”

Yahweh had specifically told this young prophet, “Say what I tell you to say and leave immediately. Do not linger. Do not stop to smell the flowers. Do not eat, do not drink. Get in and get out and take a different road home.”

Having done what he came to do the man obeyed and returned Judah – by a different route. So far – so good!

Detour

The story suddenly changes by introducing an older prophet who lived in Bethel. His sons had been present when the prophet from Judah had rebuked the king before his altar. They went home and told their father the whole story.

The old prophet immediately decided to take the younger man home, so he saddled his donkey and took off - He found him sitting under an oak tree.

Uh oh! God had said, “Do not pass go, do not collect \$200 – get in and get out and go home!”

By not obeying all the way to the border and choosing instead to linger “under the oak tree,” the young man had chosen to play a very dangerous game – a game that will cost him his life.

Initially, however, the young man declined the invitation, repeating the message he had received from Yahweh.

Good for you, my son, now get on your donkey and run away!

However, Satan doesn’t give up that easily, so the old prophet amped up the pressure, “I too am a prophet, as you are. An angel said to me by the word of Yahweh: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (But he was lying to him.)

At this point, what SHOULD the young man have done?

- *Made no response, just gotten on his donkey.....*
- *“I’m pretty sure Yahweh would have told me if there was a change in plans, so hang on a sec and I’ll check.”*
- *“Yahweh was very clear in His orders and I was wrong to rest while still in Israel. Now, buh-bye!”*

Well, he didn’t do any of that. He didn’t ask Yahweh for clarification and it doesn’t appear that he hesitated or even questioned the older man. Scripture simply says, “So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.”

Suddenly in the middle of dinner the old prophet cries out: *“This is what Yahweh says: ‘You have defied My word and have not kept My commands. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where I told you not to eat or drink. Therefore, your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.’”*

After dinner the old prophet saddled the young man’s donkey and sent him on his way, “Okay, bye!”

As the young man traveled down the road a lion popped out from behind a rock and killed him, but then did a very un-lion-like thing: he did not eat the prophet nor did he attack the donkey – he just stood there, in the road, with a dead guy and his donkey.

Some travelers came across the strange scene and it was reported to the old prophet. He had his son’s saddle a donkey and he rode out to where the young man lay – a donkey and a lion looking on. He picked up the body, brought it back to town and buried it in his tomb. After burying the young man, he told his sons that, upon his death, he wanted to bury next to the bones of the young man, “For the message he declared by the word of Yahweh against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines on the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true.”

This story, placed between the accounts of Jeroboam’s sins, shows us the stories are connected.

Ellen White {PK 107}: *The penalty that overtook the unfaithful messenger was a still further evidence of the truth of the prophecy uttered over the altar. If, after disobeying the word of the Lord, the prophet had been permitted to go on in safety, the king would have used this fact in an attempt to vindicate his own disobedience...*

Jeroboam needed to understand clearly that God expects obedience from His people – especially His leaders. If God would not let the sin of His prophet go unpunished neither would he allow Jeroboam’s continued sin to go unpunished.

However..... *“Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.”*

Some time went by...

On of Jeroboam’s sons, Abijah, became ill, so Jeroboam instructed his wife to disguise herself, take some gifts, and go see the prophet Ahijah, who was living at Shiloh, “He will tell you what will happen to the boy.”

Ahijah was old and blind, but Yahweh told him that Jeroboam’s wife was coming to see him to ask about her son, but would be in disguise.

When Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door, he said, *"Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretense? I have been sent to you with bad news. Go, tell Jeroboam that this is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says: 'I raised you up from among the people and made you a leader over my people Israel. I tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what was right in my eyes. You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have provoked me to anger and thrust me behind your back. Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel – slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country. Yahweh has spoken!' As for you, go back home. When you set foot in your city, the boy will die. All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom Yahweh has found anything good. Yahweh will raise up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam. This is the day! What? Yes, even now. And Yahweh will strike Israel, so that it will be like a reed swaying in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land that he gave to their forefathers and scatter them beyond the River, because they provoked Him to anger by making Asherah poles. And he will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to commit."*

Jeroboam's wife went home and the minute she stepped across the threshold of her house, the boy died. He was buried and all Israel mourned for him, just as Yahweh had said.

The other events of Jeroboam's reign, his wars and how he ruled, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel.

He reigned for 22 years and his son, Nadab, succeeded him as king.

In the years to come Judah and Israel would have many kings, most of whom were not chosen by God.

Hosea 8:4 - *They set up kings without my consent; they choose princes without my approval. With their silver and gold, they make idols for themselves to their own destruction.*

Just like Solomon, instead of allowing God to work in and through them, they forced Him to work around and despite them to accomplish His promises.

- Of the 20 kings of Israel, only 1 did right/evil – 19 did evil.

The fall of Samaria in 722 BC – at the hands of the Assyrians, marked the end of the Northern Kingdom after a tragic history of little more than 200 years.

- Of the 19 kings and 1 queen of Judah, 4 did right, 4 did right/evil and 12 did evil:

Judah outlasted Israel by just 136 years, finally being destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC. They had every opportunity to learn the lessons Israel had refused to learn.

Until Next Time.....