

Old Testament History

Lesson #16

1 Kings 8:1-1 Kings 15:15

Outline

I. ***The Reign Of Solomon (1 Kings 1:1-11:43)***

- A. The glories of Solomon's reign (5:1-10:29).
 - 1. The dedication of the temple (8:1-66).
 - 2. God's covenant with Solomon (9:1-9).
 - 3. Other events of Solomon's reign (9:10-28).
 - 4. Visit of the queen of Sheba (10:1-13).
 - 5. Solomon's great wealth (10:14-29).
- B. The failures of Solomon's reign (11:1-40).
 - 1. Solomon's idolatries (11:1-13).
 - 2. Solomon's enemies (11:14-25).
 - 3. The rise of Jeroboam (11:26-40).
 - 4. The death of Solomon (11:41-43).

II. ***The Early Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12:1-34)***

- A. The defection of the northern tribes (12:1-24).
- B. Jeroboam I of Israel (12:25-14:20).
- C. Rehoboam of Judah (14:21-33).
- D. Abijah of Judah (15:1-8).
- E. Asa of Judah (15:9-15).

Notes

1 Kings 8:1-66; 2 Chronicles 5:1-7:11

- The solemn dedication took place in the year following its completion, and significantly, immediately before the Feast of Tabernacles. The record of the construction of Solomon's palace follows that of the temple. These two great undertakings were closely related to each other. This was not an ordinary sanctuary, nor was it an ordinary royal residence which Solomon built. The building of the temple marked the fact that the preparatory period of Israel's unsettledness was over.
- The Feast of Tabernacles had three meanings. First, it pointed back to the time when Israel had, as strangers and pilgrims on their way to Canaan, lived in tents. Second, it was also a feast of thanksgiving, when grateful people thanked God for His gracious gifts. Third, the feast pointed forward to the time when the name of the Lord would be known in all of the earth.
- The feast probably took place in the seventh month of the year about 11 months after completion of the temple, and immediately before the Feast of Tabernacles which lasted eight days. The dedication of the

temple had three parts: the consecration services, the consecration prayer, and the festive offerings. It is interesting to note that Solomon is mentioned as conducting the services, while the high priest is not mentioned at all. Solomon was fulfilling the task of being first and foremost a servant of the Lord, which was the purpose of a king in Deuteronomy 17 (1 Kings 8:25, 28-29, 52, 59).

- The consecration services began with the transferring of the ark and the other vessels from Mt. Zion and of the tabernacle from Gibeon. Solomon spoke of the gracious promises and experiences of the past, and he pointed to the present as their fulfillment, especially applying to it what God had said to David (2 Samuel 7:7-8).
- After the consecration service, Solomon ascended the brazen pulpit-like platform before the altar and he prayed. There is hardly any parallel in the Old Testament for Solomon's prayer, which consisted of an introduction, seven petitions, and a conclusion.
- The answer to Solomon's prayer was a descent of fire from heaven. The tone throughout all of Solomon's remarks is one of the loftiest spirituality. The king asked for continued help and blessing from the Lord for the explicit purpose of keeping His commandments. The dedication services concluded by enumerating the massive number of festive offerings brought by Israel.

1 Kings 9:1-10:29; 2 Chronicles 7:11-9:28

- We now reach the period of Solomon's greatest worldly glory, which, so often, also marks the beginning of spiritual decay. The dedication of the temple should probably be dated even later than the completion of Solomon's palace, after he had finished all his other building operations. The words of the Lord were probably intended to be as a general warning which would be appropriate before Solomon, carried away by his success, yielded to the luxury, weakness, and sin of his older age.
- Mt. Moriah was too small to hold on its summit the temple and its surrounding courts. Josephus tells us that extensive substructures had to be built. The Dome of the Rock very likely occupies the exact spot where the temple used to be. The original fortress of the Jebusites was on the slopes of Moriah and Ophel, and David built his palace in the neighborhood below the summit of Moriah. Solomon enlarged Millo and built a wall across the Tyrophean valley making Jerusalem substantially larger. The city would have rapidly increased in population. During Solomon's prosperous reign, it probably had as large, if not larger, population than at any time before the Babylonian Exile.
- Although the temple and the palace were wonders of their day, they were not the only architectural accomplishments of Solomon. He built fortresses or fortified Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Baalath, Tamar, Hamath-

Zaban, and Bethhobron. He also built cities where his chariots and cavalry were stationed -- most of them were probably located in the north.

- Although not mentioned frequently in scripture, Megiddo sat astride one of the great trade routes of antiquity. When the Egyptian king Thutmose III conquered the city (ca. 1482 B.C.), he said that the "capture of Megiddo was like the capture of a thousand towns." At Megiddo, a gate, wall, palaces, and storerooms from the time of Solomon have been discovered. During the days of Ahab, a vertical shaft, 120 feet deep, was cut on the west side of the mound, and a 215-foot horizontal tunnel was then cut in order to bring water from outside the city to inside its walls in order to provide its residents with water during times of siege.
- Solomon loved to build, but the taxation and labor which all of this involved was a heavy burden on the people. This scattered the seeds of dissatisfaction, especially during the days of Solomon's son, which ripened into open rebellion.
- There was a time when the kingdom of Israel was in real danger of falling into the temptation of luxury like the kingdoms of Rome and Greece (1 Kings 10:19-21). The wealth, influence, and intellectual activity of Solomon and Israel astounded the Queen of Sheba (a kingdom in southern Arabia, on the shore of the Red Sea). She is a noteworthy character in the history of Israel, having made the long journey because of wanting to learn, and then realizing that Solomon's wisdom was a wonderful gift from God (cf. Matthew 12:42; Luke 11:31).

1 Kings 11:1-43

- Solomon's many wives ultimately drew him away from God. One can only imagine the state of marriage in Israel when it is taken into account that the king is really the embodiment of the nation. However, Solomon was not drawn away by his wives only. The growing luxury of the court and the desire to outdo rival nations contributed heavily to his apostasy. In fact, the large harem was probably for the purpose of strengthening Solomon's position among his neighbors and showing his great wealth and power.
- Solomon courted influential connections with foreign countries, and many foreign residents would have lived in Jerusalem. The high places which Solomon had built on the southern slope of Mt. Olives remained in use until the time of Josiah (2 Kings 23:13), probably for the worship of those foreigners who came to, or were resident in, Jerusalem. Although there is no evidence that Solomon specifically worshiped idols himself, all that he did certainly implied great public guilt. The sad part to remember is the Solomon, on two occasions, received personal

communication from the Lord, whereas God had never appeared to David.

- All that Solomon had done to bring the country down spiritually had to be judged. Solomon's kingdom would be taken from him and given to another. The event would not happen in the days of Solomon himself, and when it was taken away, it did at least partially remain in his line of descendants.
- Hadad was the first of three men raised up by God to be adversaries against Solomon. It appears that as Solomon's reign drew to a close, these three men became increasingly worrisome to him. Hadad was of Edom's royal family, the only survivor of a severe slaughter when David's army under Abishai, son of Zeruah, defeated the Edomites with a slaughter of 18,000 men (2 Samuel 8:13-14; 1 Chronicles 18:12-13). The second adversary was Rezon of Damascus. The third and by far most serious problem for Solomon in his latter years was Jeroboam, an Ephraimite of considerable ability and energy. Ahijah tore Jeroboam's garment in 12 pieces, symbolizing what was to come.
- Solomon did not live or die like David. As far as we know, there were no words of earnest, loving entreaty to serve God such as David spoken; no joyous testimony regarding the past or strong faith and hope regarding the future. It was as silent as a tomb. There was no bright sunset followed by a more glorious morning. Solomon had done more than any king to denationalize Israel. On the morrow of his death, there was rebellion within the land. Outside the land, Edom and Syria were ready to fight, along with Egypt under Shisak gathering his armies.

1 Kings 12:1-24; 14:21-32; 2 Chronicles 10:1-12:16

- Although many alliances were made with neighboring nations through all of Solomon's marriages, and immense wealth was accumulated, the house of Solomon was not strong at the time of his death.
- David had carefully committed the upbringing of his son to Nathan the prophet, but when Rehoboam was born, Solomon had already entered upon the fatal path which led to his ruin. Rehoboam was raised with the young nobles which had learned foreign manners and modes of thinking. In general, it appears that Rehoboam was vain, weak, and impulsive. He did not have firm religious principles.
- Under all of the kings of Israel, there was not a single king who really served the Lord or worshiped in His temple. On the other hand, Judah had several kings who were considered good (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah). The temple in Jerusalem provided an influence for good among the people of the southern kingdom. Also, the idolatrous kings of Judah were always succeeded by godly kings who swept away the practices of their predecessors. The

reigns of the idolatrous kings were brief compared to the godly rulers. In the 253 years between the accession of Rehoboam and the deportation of the ten tribes, 200 passed under the rule of godly kings, while only 53 years were under bad kings.

- The separation of the ten tribes cannot solely be attributed to the foolish refusal of Rehoboam to resolve the grievances of the people. It was only the spark that caused the situation to ignite. There was a lot of dissatisfaction toward Solomon during the latter part of his reign, and deep-seated tribal jealousy between Ephraim and Judah.
- When Solomon died, Rehoboam seems to have immediately, and without opposition, assumed the position of leader of the government. Instead of representatives gathering in Jerusalem and celebrating the succession, representatives of the ten tribes gathered at Shechem, the capital of Ephraim, to make Rehoboam king, but only with concessions to their tribal claims.
- When the ten tribes explained their grievances to Rehoboam, he consulted Solomon's old advisors, who wanted him to grant their wishes. However, he ultimately listened to his young counselors whom he had grown up with during his youth. They counseled him to give them a harsh reply. The ten tribes stoned one of Rehoboam's officials, and they formed their own independent kingdom. They quickly made Jeroboam their leader.
- When Jeroboam was elevated to the throne of Israel, Rehoboam made one more attempt to recover the lost parts of David's kingdom with an army of 180,000 men from Judah and Benjamin. However, the attempt was stopped by divine direction through the prophet Shemaiah.
- After the first three years of Rehoboam's reign a great change came over the religious aspect of the country. Rehoboam and Judah did not openly renounce the worship of God. They continued to attend the house of the Lord in royal state, and after the incursion of Shishak there was even a partial religious revival (2 Chronicles 12:11-12). However, high places were built and the practice of idolatry slowly continued to grow in Judah.
- In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign Shishak marched a large army of Egyptians, Lybians, Sukkim, and Ethiopians into Judea, and, after taking several fenced cities, marched on Jerusalem. Once more Shemaiah averted a fight which would have ended in disaster. On the wall of the great Egyptian temple of Karnak, Shishak left a record of his victorious expedition. Among the conquests there are 133 names which have been deciphered. The names are arranged in three groups: those of Judean cities, Arabic tribes, and Levitical and Canaanite cities.

1 Kings 12:25-14:20

- The record of the formation of the kingdom of Israel is found only in Kings. The first desire of Jeroboam was to strengthen his throne's defenses. For this reason, he fortified Shechem (or the modern Nablus).
- The fact of how far Israel had sunk was seen in the fact that the king acted with the approval of his advisors, who were probably the representatives of the ten tribes. The people, perhaps with the exception of the Levites, accepted the change as well. It amounted to a complete transformation of the religion of God for political purposes.
- Jeroboam, fearing that the hearts of the people would be turned back to God and Rehoboam if they went to Jerusalem for the feasts, introduced a complete change in the worship of Israel. Jeroboam made two golden calves and placed them in the southern and northern extremities of the territory of the ten tribes.
- With one change came other changes. A new priesthood was appointed, which was not confined to any tribe or family. The great Feast of Tabernacles was also changed from the 7th to the 8th month, presumably as a more convenient time for a harvest festival in the northern parts of Palestine. This religion was purely from Jeroboam's heart, and the departure from God's word called for an immediate response.
- A man of God was chosen to prophesy to Jeroboam while he was burning incense at the altar. The prophesy informed Jeroboam that the altar and the system which had been invented around it would be torn down by a descendant of David (2 Kings 23:15-18). The sign accompanying the prophecy would be that the altar was rent and that Jeroboam lost control of his hand. God informed the man of God to not eat or drink with the king or to stop on the way. Sadly, he was deceived by an old prophet and killed by a lion on his way home. The moral effect of God's message was weakened through the sin of His messenger; therefore, the young prophet's actions demanded stern judgment. Perhaps the carrying out of God's charge may have been sheerly from command, not conviction. The old prophet possibly hoped for fellowship and encouragement from the young prophet, but he cast a stumbling block in the way of the young prophet, contributing to his death.
- Abijah, Jeroboam's son, and apparently the intended successor to his throne, was sick. The king sent his wife in disguise to Ahijah to learn whether the prince would recover. Since Ahijah had successfully predicted his kingship (1 Kings 11:29-39), Jeroboam doubtless hoped that the old prophet might once again have good news. Perhaps he sent his wife because he himself felt convicted that he had not heeded Ahijah's admonitions earlier.

- Despite God's goodness to him, Jeroboam had utterly despised God and committed gross sin. Jeroboam's contemptuous attitude is emphasized by the phrase "cast me behind thy back." Not only would Jeroboam's dynasty quickly be cut off, but because the sinful condition initiated by Jeroboam would permeate all Israel, the kingdom itself would one day fail, and its people would be scattered. The Bible never mentions Jeroboam again.
- The notices of Rehoboam's reign in Judah begin with a spiritual evaluation. Tragically, Rehoboam's record was little better than Jeroboam's. He, too, allowed rival worship centers and pagan fertility practices to spread throughout the land. While Rehoboam seems to have begun his reign well, he soon abandoned the law of the Lord.

1 Kings 15:1-15; 2 Chronicles 13:1-15:19

- Jeroboam not only lived beyond Rehoboam, but he also saw the accession of two other kings of Judah, Abijah and Asa. The reign of Abijah was very brief, lasting only three years.
- Not only had Rehoboam followed the example of his father Solomon during his later years, but he greatly increased the evil which had started in those days. Maacah was the granddaughter of Absalom, David's rebellious son. The favorite of Rehoboam's 18 wives, she was the mother of Abijah and the grandmother of Asa. Rehoboam's spiritual example was reflected in his son. Abijah's imitation of his father's religion stands in bold contrast to that of his forefather David. In fact, the family of David deserved to be removed from the throne if it were not for God's faithfulness to His promises.
- Abijah inherited his father's continued friction with Jeroboam and the northern kingdom, only now it took the form of open warfare between the two. The language of 2 Chronicles 13:2-3 implies that the war between Judah and Israel was started by Abijah. Abijah was succeeded on the throne by his son, Asa, probably only ten or eleven years old at the time.
- During the first ten years of Asa's reign the land had rest. Asa used these ten years wisely, removing idolatry and enforcing the observance of true religion, securing the defenses of the country and strengthening the armed forces. He broke down the foreign altars, high places, pillars or sacred stones, sun images, and the Asherah poles. He even removed Maacah as queen because she worshiped an idol.
- During his 41 years on the throne he saw seven kings ascend the throne of Israel. In the third month of the 15th year of his reign, Asa, encouraged by the prophet Azariah, convened an assembly in which all true Israelites were invited to renew the covenant with the Lord. The meeting was attended with great praise and joy.