

1 Kings Chapter 12 Commentary Verses 17-33

1Ki 12:17 "But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. 18 Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore, king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19 So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day."

When Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was the collector of tribute and taxes, to Israel. Israel stoned him to death. Rehoboam then flees to Jerusalem. Rehoboam now understands that he has messed up and flees to Jerusalem. The fact that Rehoboam sent the tax collector, right after the ten tribes had rejected him as king, is proof that he not a worthy leader, at least not a very smart one. The heavy burden of taxes was one of their complaints to Rehoboam.

Now, let's take this principle and apply it to church pastors. If the pastor is lording over the church, first they should come to him in love and try to reason with him and bring him back to his position and duty as prescribed by the scriptures. This failing, they should do as the ten tribes did and reject him from his position. Remember our commandment in *Eph 4:1-7; 1 ¶ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 ¶ With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*"

20 "And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. 21 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, and the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, that were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. 22 But the word of God came unto Shemiah the man of God, saying, 23 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 24 Thus saith Jehovah, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is of me. So, they hearkened unto the word of Jehovah, and returned and went their way, according to the word of Jehovah."

When the ten tribes of Israel heard that Jeroboam was returned to Israel, they made him king over them. Rehoboam gathers Judah and Benjamin to fight against the ten tribes, with the hope of restoring them to one complete nation. However, God sends Shemiah, a man of God, to Rehoboam, Benjamin, Judah, and all Israel with a message from God. God tells them to not fight for this is his will. Surprisingly, the people believed God and returned to their homes.

This is a reminder to the church congregations, that they do not cast aside a pastor, who is doing God's bidding and preaching and teaching the truth of God, but submit themselves to the word of God. God knows the needs of every congregation and will send them what they need to hear, and they should be submissive to the word of God. God also knows if a congregation has turned from worshiping him and taken in the things of the world, and he will send messages through the pastor that will be a rebuke to them.

Remember, this is all happening because King Solomon turned to idolatry in his older years. The only reason that Rehoboam has the one tribe and Jerusalem is because of God's promise to King David. This is a reminder to us; what we do in our lives does affect the lives of our families and others. Remember, people learn from what they see.

25 "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill-country of Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and he went out from thence, and built Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now will the kingdom return to the house of David: 27 if this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem, then will the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah; and they will kill me, and return to Rehoboam king of Judah. 28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold; and he said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. 29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. 31 And he made houses of high places, and made priests from among all the people, that

were not of the sons of Levi. 32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he went up unto the altar; so did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places that he had made. 33 And he went up unto the altar which he had made in Beth-el on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart: and he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and went up unto the altar, to burn incense."

Jeroboam builds Shechem and dwells there. Then he builds Penuel. Jeroboam is afraid that Israel will kill him and return to Rehoboam, if they go to Jerusalem to worship God as they have been commanded. Jeroboam has forgotten the promise of God given to him in ***1Ki 11:38 "And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee."*** To keep the ten tribes from going to Jerusalem to worship God, he takes council from his advisors and makes two golden calves, telling the ten tribes that these be your gods. Jeroboam then sets up a system of false worship, political religion, which the ten tribes adhere to. This was easily put into service because of Solomon's idolatry, which had prepared Israel to turn to idolatry once again.

Jeroboam does not use the Levitical priesthood, but chooses whom he will to serve as priest. We would think that the Levites would know better than to join in idolatrous worship, and they would refuse to serve as priests of idolatry. We would suspect that Jeroboam chose political allies to serve in the priest's offices he is inventing. Jeroboam even invents a feast that coincides with the feast of tabernacles to keep the people from remembering the Lord. He serves as high priest and offers sacrifices, thus combining civil and spiritual power into one office.

Jeroboam creates a feast to be held at the same time as the feast of tabernacles, to keep the ten tribes from turning back to God. False religion has done this very same thing, especially with Christmas and Easter. Many organizations, calling themselves church, have introduced many flesh pleasing things into organized religion, which keeps people away from worshipping God in Spirit and Truth.

This is a prophetic picture of organized religion in the world today. What do you mean? Jesus, when he came to earth the first time, established the New Testament Church. Men, who do not want to worship God, and acknowledge that Jesus is the Christ, and Saviour of all of God's people, have done as Jeroboam and set up systems of false worship that they have devised in their own hearts.

Dear God of heaven and earth, please keep our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies, in willing subjection to thy divine will and purpose, that we may bring glory and honor to thy holy name, Amen!