

Wednesday Night Adult Bible Study

May 27, 2020

Chapters 12 & 13 of 1 Kings in their entirety. If chapter 10 was the high, chapter 12 is the low, and chapter 13...well...very interesting.

1 Kings 12:1-7

¹ Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. ² When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. ³ So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: ⁴ "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." ⁵ Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away. ⁶ Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked. ⁷ They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

So Rehoboam was Solomon's son and Jeroboam was one of Solomon's officials. At this point, Jeroboam has been told that the Lord is going to tear 10 tribes from the line of Solomon and give them to him. I can't help but think Jeroboam set Rehoboam up just a little.

1 Kings 12:8-15

⁸ But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁹ He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?" ¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him replied, "These people have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.' Now tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. ¹¹ 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.'" ¹² Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." ¹³ The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, ¹⁴ he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." ¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

The Lord searches the heart and knows the beginning from the end.

1 Kings 12:16-20

¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king: "What share do we have in David, what part in Jesse's son? To your tents, Israel! Look after your own house, David!" So the Israelites went home. ¹⁷ But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them. ¹⁸ King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. ²⁰ When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David.

The Israelites were in rebellion against the house of David in 33AD. Today, the country celebrates religious diversity. How about America?

1 Kings 12:25-33

²⁵ Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel. ²⁶ Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. ²⁷ If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam."

²⁸ After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

²⁹ One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ³⁰ And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other.

³¹ Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. ³² He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. ³³ On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.

It is interesting that for Jeroboam, religion was a means to a political end. He created a more convenient option with all the benefits, but it was nothing more than a cheap copy. 2 Corinthians 11:12-15

1 Kings 13:1-10

¹ By the word of the Lord a man of God came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. ² By the word of the Lord he cried out against the altar: "Altar, altar! This is what the Lord 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 make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on you.'" ³ That same day the man of God gave a sign: "This is the sign the Lord has declared: The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it will be poured out."

⁴ When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, "Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back. ⁵ Also, the altar was split apart and its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the Lord.

⁶ Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the Lord your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the Lord, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before. ⁷ The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me for a meal, and I will give you a gift." ⁸ But the man of God answered the king, "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. ⁹ For I was commanded by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.'" ¹⁰ So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.

So we see that Jeroboam has, by verse 6, completely dismissed the Lord as his God.

1 Kings 13:11-19

¹¹ Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king.

¹² Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. ¹³ So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it ¹⁴ and rode after the man of God. He

found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?" "I am," he replied. ¹⁵ So the prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat." ¹⁶ The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. ¹⁷ I have been told by the word of the Lord: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.'" ¹⁸ The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the Lord: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (But he was lying to him.) ¹⁹ So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

A tough section of scripture with a tough lesson - here a prophet of God lies to a man of God. What is going on?

1 Kings 13:20-26

²⁰ While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. ²¹ He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the Lord says: 'You have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. ²² You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors.'" ²³ When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. ²⁴ As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was left lying on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. ²⁵ Some people who passed by saw the body lying there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived.

²⁶ When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who defied the word of the Lord. The Lord has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the Lord had warned him."

So, regardless of the actions of the prophet, the man of God had was responsible for his own choice. What do you think is the significance of the lion and the donkey standing beside the body?

1 Kings 13:27-34

²⁷ The prophet said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me," and they did so. ²⁸ Then he went out and found the body lying on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. ²⁹ So the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him. ³⁰ Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, "Alas, my brother!"

³¹ After burying him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. ³² For the message he declared by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines on the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true."

³³ 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. ³⁴ This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.

A man of God, a prophet of God and a king - Is this about grace for the repentant sinner and judgment for the one who turns his back on the Lord?