**REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM**

1 Kings 12:1-33

Key Verse 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.”

**Introduction**

 In the previous passages, God revealed His plan to divide the nation of Israel because Solomon did not obey the Lord wholeheartedly. Today’s passage shows how it was implemented after his death. Rehoboam tried to build his kingdom from the beginning of his reign. But the kingdom was divided according to God’s will. No matter what happened, God was in control as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. May the Lord help us to have a lesson through the failure of Rehoboam and continue to serve our true King, Jesus Christ.

1. Read verses 1-11. What did Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel ask Rehoboam? (1-4) How did the elders advise him? (5-7) What did Rehoboam do? (8-11)

1-1, Read verses 1-11.

 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[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9154a)] 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.” 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.’”

1-2, What did Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel ask Rehoboam? (1-4)

 ***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:***

* In the previous passage, Jeroboam was mentioned as one of 3 adversaries whom God had raised due to Solomon’s lack of repentance.
* He became a representative of all Israel here and the people let him speak to Rehoboam on their behalf.
* Rehoboam went to Shechem to be anointed as a new king. It is a bit strange for us to see a new king go there instead of having a ceremony of inauguration in Jerusalem. It was because northern tribes contend that a new king should listen to their requests first.

***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.”***

* They complained about how hard it was to serve Solomon so far. A heavy yoke on them might be a heavy tax.
* They asked him to lighten heavy yoke and harsh labor. Then they promised to serve him as a king.
* They jumped to the conclusion that they were mistreated by his father, Solomon. But it was not completely true because they were selected as officials instead of slaves with harsh labor like foreigners.
* When they lacked thankful hearts, they were filled with grudges against him. Now they wanted to make sure that his son may listen to them well.

1-3, How did the elders advise him? (5-7)

***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.***

* Rehoboam had 3 days to figure out how to reply. Then he turned to the elders for advice. They served his father Solomon during his lifetime. They must be wise elders who had good experiences. It was a good move to consult with them.

 ***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.”***

* Basically their advice for him was servant identity. They must have seen through what could be a great stumbling block in Rehoboam’s heart as a new king. He was young and must have had great zeal. But they advised him to become humble to identify himself as a servant to these people first like his father in ch 3.
* Then he was asked to serve them and give them a favorable answer by listening to them very well. Then they will always become his loyal servants.

1-4, What did Rehoboam do? (8-11)

***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.’”***

* Unfortunately he rejected the elder’s advice. Then he shopped around for a seemingly better one among his buddies. Their advice was the exact opposite of that from the elders.
* We can not find humility and compassion in their advice. He was asked to exercise his top down authority as a king over the people.
* It was a great mistake for him to reject the wisdom of the elders and to take thoughtless advice from young people whose hearts were proud.
1. Read verses 12-24. What did Rehoboam say to Jeroboam? (12-14) What was the author's comment about this event? (15) What happened among the Israelites? (16-20) What did Rehoboam decide to do? (21) What did God do to prevent a civil war in Israel? (22-24)

2-1, Read verses 12-24.

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.

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,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9170b)] 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.

21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered all Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand able young men—to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.

22 But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: 23 “Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah, to all Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, 24 ‘This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.’” So they obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered.

2-2, What did Rehoboam say to Jeroboam? (12-14)

***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.”***

* These verses may remind us of Ecclesiastes 2:18 and 19 in that Solomon worried about losing all he worked for under a foolish successor. “*Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.”*

2-3, What was the author's comment about this event? (15)

***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.***

* “This turn of events was from the Lord” indicates that God is in control. Although Rehoboam made a mistake in dealing with the critical demand from northern tribes, God still orchestrated all events for the purpose of fulfilling his word of promise as Jeroboam had been told about before.
* God managed this whole series of events, but He did not make Rehoboam do such an unwise action. Rather God left him alone and allowed him to make the critical errors his sinful heart wanted to make.

2-4, What happened among the Israelites? (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,[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9170b)***] 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.***

* Rehoboam could or should have reconciled with them when he had a chance to do so. But he aggravated the situation by sending Adoniram who was in charge of forced labor. He was notorious for harsh labor.

***1 King 5:13-14*** reads,

 “*King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel—thirty thousand men. He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor.”*

* As a result all the Israelites made Jeroboam a king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David.

2-5, What did Rehoboam decide to do? (21)

***21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered all Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand able young men—to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.***

* It was about to break a civil war. 10 northern tribes and 2 tribes were divided firmly from now on.
* As a matter of fact, their animosity has been built for a long time, especially since the time of Absalom’s rebellion in 2 Samuel 19 and 20.
* David and Solomon were able to serve them with godly wisdom. But now Rehoboam were not able to embrace 10 northern tribes due to his folly.

2-6, What did God do to prevent a civil war in Israel? (22-24)

***22 But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: 23 “Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah, to all Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, 24 ‘This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.’” So they obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered.***

* Thanks to God’s intervention through the man of God, the prophecy of Ahijah in [1 Kings 11:29-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/1kings/11/29-39/s_302029) was fulfilled. At the time the prophecy was made, it seemed very unlikely, but God's word through His prophet was fulfilled.
* Rehoboam listened to God's word through Shemaiah the man of God. This man appears once here but he carried God’s word to save many lives. Praise God who is merciful!

### Read verses 25-33. How did Jeroboam plan to prevent the people from returning to Rehoboam? (25-30) What else did he do? (31-33) What can we learn from this passage?

### 3-1, Read verses 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.[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9177c)]

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.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Kings+12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-9182d)]

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.

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### 3-2, How did Jeroboam plan to prevent the people from returning to Rehoboam? (25-30)

***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.***

* From a political view, Jeroboam’s plan seems to be legitimate. But God told him that he would be blessed if he followed God’s commands rather than changing them to his own convenience.

**1 Kings 11:37-38 reads,**

 “However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel.If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you.”

### 3-3, What else did he do? (31-33)

***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.***

### He tried to solidify his new kingdom by implementing his own wicked ways to build up high places and establish the wrong festivals(8th month instead of 7th month).

* Even he designated his own prophets from all sorts of people, meaning that they were not Levites as God had directed earlier.
* When we do not fear God and His commands, we are inevitably manufacturing our own religion like him. May the Lord have mercy on us so that we may honor you according to your ways in the Bible.

### 3-4, What can we learn from this passage?

**Conclusion**

 The blessed nation of Israel was divided. Solomon, Rehobam, and Jeroboam were three men who contributed to the division of the kingdom. But God was in ultimate control as the Sovereign Lord always. During this painful time of division, we see from the parallel book, 2 Chronicles, that loyal people of God moved down to the southern kingdom in order to avoid idol worship in the newly established northern kingdom under Jeroboam. Alway there are remnants of God who can sustain God’s kingdom regardless of the situation. Praise the Lord who guides us in our times to seek His kingdom and His righteousness continually. Amen. **One word: God fulfills His word!**