

1 Kings Ch 12-13

Ch 11 records the downfall of Solomon, the fact that he left His 1st love relationship with the Lord because he clung to his unbelieving wives in love rather than the Lord. And he didn't holdfast to the Word of God as did his father David and Because of that God told him that the kingdom would be torn from his house and given to his servant. But even in His discipline God was gracious to him and didn't take the kingdom from him in his life, not because of anything Solomon was, but because of the integrity of David's heart, God was gracious to Solomon. But He said, "I'm going to tear the kingdom out of the hand of your son." and We'll see that God didn't waste anytime in fulfilling that word when Rehoboam ascended into throne of his dad. Well, vs 43 of Ch 11 records (read).

Vs1-5

You recall from ch 11 that once Ahijah told Jeroboam that he was going to be the next king that it seemed as though he began to take the matters into his own hands in order to make that happen rather than wait upon the Lord to bring it to pass. Now politically speaking that's called treason, and so Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam and so he fled to Egypt to seek refuge. However now that Solomon is dead, (no doubt spies got word of that to him) he comes back as the spearhead for the nation to approach Rehoboam regarding the heavy taxation of his dad. Now in all fairness with the way *this* ch lays out, it almost looks like Solomon caught wind of what was taking place in Jeroboam's life and simply sought to extinguish him even though God had said he was to be the next king over the majority of Israel. Because it's difficult to imagine being convicted of treason and then coming back to stand before Solomon's son to negotiate on the behalf of the nation, so there's a bit of ambiguity there, but I'm not sure that that particular detail is of the utmost importance. The bottom line right now is that Rehoboam is fresh on the throne, and on the behalf of the nation Jeroboam comes to him and says, "Look, your dad was hardcore. He had all these government offices he was building, various projects he was pursuing, foreign relations he was handling, and all that meant was more taxes for us and I'm going to be honest, we're sick of it. Now if you'll lighten the work load a bit, and give *us* this request, then we'll give *you* our allegiance." and Rehoboam said, "Listen, I'm going to need to think this over for a few days and so come back in 3 days and I'll tell you what I've decided."

Vs6-7

"King, the key to greatness is found through servanthood." Now that sounds strangely familiar doesn't it? These guys were way ahead of the game, they stood before Solomon and counseled with Solomon all the days of his life, so needless to say they had a heightened measure of wisdom themselves. These are the guys that of whom the Queen of Sheba said when she was speaking to Solomon, "Blessed are these men who stand before you and hear your wisdom continually!" and Now Rehoboam has this critical decision to make right at the forefront of his reign and so he seeks out counsel, and these guys are reiterating the principals they learned from his dad. Prov 15:1 "*A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.*" "Listen Rehoboam, now's not the time to prove how powerful you are, you're fresh on the scene and these people need to know that you're for them, not against them. So *do* this, serve them *in* this, and they'll take care of you all the days of your life."

They're in essence saying, "You need to humble yourself here and do as they say." It's that, "The way up, is down" principle, exaltation through humiliation, if you want to be great in the kingdom Rehoboam then you need to become the servant of all of these people in this. And that's what I mean when I say that these guys are way ahead of the game because about 1,000 yrs or so later Jesus would come on the scene and teach this same thing to *His* disciples, to you and to me.

And it's a mind blowing revelation because who by natural reasoning thinks that the way I'll be able to demonstrate how great I am is by serving those around me, placing their needs above my own? That's just not the way we think, we think, if you're someone great, you have a lot of authority and you show it, you're able to lord over people, impress your will upon them and they in turn respond to that and do that or else there are penalties, and that's the way it works in the world. But Jesus said, "*Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" Mark 10:43-45 The point there being that if Jesus, the King of kings, the King of the universe humbled Himself to be the servant of all, not coming to be served but to serve, how much more does that principle apply to you and me? Through laying down His life, Jesus became the servant of His own Kingdom, and because He was willing to do that God gave Him the position that's exalted above everyone else. Paul tells us that even though Jesus was completely equal to God in everyway yet He still, "*...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,*" Phil 2:7-9

And so we have this premise woven throughout the pages of pages of scripture that teaches us that God honors humility, and that if we'll lower ourselves, He'll raise us up, but if we exalt ourselves, He'll bring us low. So this is real solid, godly advice that these men are giving to Rehoboam. It's peaceable, willing to yield, and full of good fruit, and that's what James told us about godly wisdom. He said, "*...the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*" James 3:17-18 and These guys are encouraging Rehoboam to act peaceably towards the nations request, the bible says, "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*" Rom 12:18 Of course Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." and This was very much a situation that Rehoboam could've humbled himself and simply maintained peace.

And one other thing we note about these counselors is that regardless of how the king felt about what they said, they were faithful to give him wise counsel. The bible tells us, "*Faithful are the wounds of a friend,*" Prov 27:6 So, "King you might not like this, but these guys are right, and you need to just humble yourself and give them what they're requesting. It's one small act of favor *towards* them for a lifetime of allegiance *from* them."

Vs8-11

Unfortunately what we see here is something that's very common in the body of Christ today as well. People need wisdom in a situation, so they seek out counsel, but when they get the godly advise they need, they don't like it and so they find someone else who'll tell them what they want to hear. And you'll run across these people from time to time, they're the only one's who have a line on what's right and until you see it their way, you're messed up. And they'll go from one person, to the next, to the next, and the only ones who are hearing from the Lord are the ones who see it just like they do. I'm aware of a situation right now where a certain person has a real beef with the way we do things around here, (they don't fellowship here) but they've contacted Dave about me, (who's the MO go to guy regarding Calvary affiliate stuff) of course he doesn't agree with them. So they contacted Bill Goodrich about me who's a regional go to guy regarding affiliation stuff, and he doesn't agree with them either, and they are convinced that *we're all* messed up, and they're seeing crystal clear. And so they reject the counsel that we've all encouraged them with and are praying that one day Calvary Chapel will have a Spirit filled individual who oversees these matters in this region who'll finally see it the way they see it.

You see they're asking for a judgment, but when it doesn't come the way they desire it, they go to someone else, and until they find someone who'll see it the way they do, they'll reject everyone else's input. And that's what Rehoboam did here, he went to some wise/faithful fellas and didn't like what they had to say. So he found some "Yes men" who would tell him what he wanted to hear, and he said, "that sounds like good advise to me." But what's the point in seeking counsel if all you're going to do in reality is seek out people to tell you what you want to hear? All it does is somehow justify you in your own mind regarding your position. Rehoboam didn't want to hear about humbling himself, saying they were right, and show himself soft. So he went to his high school buddies, guys who would stroke his ego, tell him he was in charge and they needed to know that he wasn't going to be pushed around. And as a matter of fact, because you dared to have the audacity to even ask, my little finger will be bigger than my dad's waist, you only thought you had it rough! The bible says, *He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.*" Prov 13:20 Rehoboam could've exercised wisdom here, but he chose the companionship of fools.

Vs12-15

This is something we point out often, God always fulfills His word. Just as sure as He says it, it's coming to pass. And God had said that the kingdom would be torn from Solomon's house except for one tribe and that's exactly what happened. Sunday after church Julie was talking to the nursery workers and children's ministry people about the need to give the word of God to even the tinies, and she pointed out how the Lord's name is above every name yet the bible says regarding God's Word, "*For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.*" Ps 138:2 Now does God have a sense of humor?

I think He does, but not when it comes to His Word, He doesn't joke around about that, if He says it, He'll do it, and this turn of events was from the Lord because He'd given His word to Solomon and Jeroboam regarding the kingdom.

Vs16-17

And this is the breaking point for the nation of Israel, they would never again really be a united nation until 1948. The Northern Kingdom of Israel would go from bad to worse falling into idolatry and being carried off into captivity by Assyria. The Southern Kingdom of Judah would eventually fall as well, but they lasted longer until they fell to Babylon. Israel never had one good king, Judah had about 8 altogether out of 20. But all 19 kings of Israel were bad, and it's during these years of the kings that most of the prophets will surface, but even at the time of Christ there were sharp divisions between the Jews and the Samaritans, and the Jews never would really accept the Samaritans because they couldn't prove their genealogy. But in Ezek 37 after he had the vision of dry bones, and God granting them life again, and telling them the meaning. That God would give Israel life again and that the Spirit would be upon them once more, Ezekiel prophesied according to the Word of the Lord that the nation would become one again, and He took one stick and he wrote Joseph's name on it, and another stick and he wrote Judah's name on it. And then he held both sticks in one hand and said, "*Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.'*" Ezek 37:21-22 and Of course the rebirth of the nation took place in 1948, and they'll never be a divided nation again, but this is where it all began, with Rehoboam's refusal to accommodate the needs of the people that God's Word might be fulfilled to Solomon.

Vs18

He sought to impose his rule upon them anyway, and so they killed the taxman. Rehoboam looked at that and said, "Man these guys are serious, and so he fled for his life."

Vs19-24

He didn't listen the 1st time and it cost him, and even though it was in his mind to form a military reserve quickly, and restore the nation by force, when the man of God said, you better back off because God has said this thing is from Me, to his credit he listened. And believe me when I say it's to all our credit when we listen, and take heed to God's Word.

Vs25-33

Look at vs26 (read). The bible says, "*He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,*" Prov 28:26 Why? Because, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked;*" Jer 17:9 and Again, "*There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*" Prov 14:12 and That's the snare that Jeroboam fell into, trusting in his own heart, following after the way that seemed right to Him, rather than seeing what God's Word had to say and doing accordingly. And in reality all this stemmed from the fact that he had no confidence in the call of God upon His life.

God had told him in ch 11 there in vs 38 that it was *Him* who was making him ruler over Israel and that if he would just walk in His ways and do what was right in His sight, keep His commandments and statutes like David did, then He would build him an enduring house. That was God's promise and His call upon his life, but he didn't trust the Lord in it, all he could think was, "Man when these people head to Jerusalem to go to the feasts and they see what's happening there, they'll want to get back on board with Rehoboam and as a peace offering they'll give him my head. So I've got to devise something that keeps them from wanting to go there, so that they'll be content being here." and So he has these couple of calves made, and says, "These are the gods that brought you up out of Egypt, you don't need to go to Jerusalem to worship, you can just go to Dan, or to Bethel which ever is more convenient and worship the Lord there." and So the whole time he's offering liberty and convenience, in reality he's enslaving them to idolatry. It's 2 Peter 2:19, "*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption;*" and it wasn't that he was saying that those calves were literally God. He was saying these represent God, so you can worship here rather than go to Jerusalem.

But they were told in the law to make no graven images of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea, they weren't to bow down to them or serve them. And yet that's what Jeroboam is doing here, and you can't help but take note of what happened there in the Exodus and how Aaron did something similar to this and how 3,000 people died as the result of their idolatry. Of course the worship of the calf was an Egyptian practice, which is where they came out of in the Exodus, and it's where Jeroboam has been staying for a while since he fled for his life. But anytime you place an object of some kind *before* you, to represent the Lord *to* you, inevitably it'll turn to idolatry, and that's what happened.

And with churches we see that because people/pastors lack confidence in God's calling upon *their* lives, they come up with all kinds of programs, and marketing strategies to keep people in their pews. Because they're afraid that if they go to another church, or hear some other pastor, they might leave their church and go to that one. But if God has called you to a certain platform, you have to trust Him in that, it's tragic thing to me anytime someone leaves this fellowship. But I'm not going to make a couple of "golden calves" to keep people around. If this is a work of God, He'll continue to establish it, if it's not, the sooner it folds the better so that we can all go where He'd have us to be. Now I'm confident it's of God, so why worry about what someone else has going on, let's be true to what God has going on here and simply trust Him to keep it.

Jeroboam didn't do that, he went after the way that seemed right in his own eyes, tried to parrot what was going on in Judah by means of idolatry, and just picked a month to parallel the feast of Tabernacles as he felt the need. Rather than obeying God's Word, and unfortunately it doesn't matter how we *feel* about anything, if what's going on in our hearts doesn't line up with God's Word, we're to discard what's in our heart and obey God's Word. And because he didn't do it, it'll be a snare to him, just as it would be for any of us. And God had warned them in Num 15:39 about being careful to remember and obey His Word lest they follow after the harlotry of their own heart.

Now, Ch 13 is a very interesting ch, and we'll read through it mostly, but there are some things that we need to pick up on the way, so lets quickly go through this.

Vs1-6

So this is an amazing chain of events that's taking place. And we don't even get to know the name of this man of God, but we notice that he comes up from Judah (rather than Israel, the idea being that what's taking place in Israel has no remnant of godliness). And even though Jeroboam is standing right by the altar, the man of God blows him off like it's more profitable to talk to the altar than to Jeroboam's hard hear. And he's crying out against the altar because it's the center of the embodiment of this idolatry. And it's one of the most amazing prophecies in scripture in regards to detail because he even gives the name of the man that'll destroy the wicked works of Jeroboam some 300 yrs before he's born. And you can read of him in 2nd Kings 22, but the Lord was really using this guy in a unique and powerful way. And when Jeroboam heard what this guy had to say, he stretched out his hand, which is the symbol of his authority, and said, "Arrest that guy." He was going to have him executed, but before he could even get his hand back it withered right there on the spot, and either froze in it's position, or fell limp, the point being he didn't have the strength in it to pull it back of his own volition. And of course the Lord was displaying the fact that He was in authority over Jeroboam and He could paralyze Jeroboam's authority and render him powerless anytime He felt the need. God placed him there and God could remove him. And what's even more amazing is that Jeroboam asked the man to pray for him that God would restore his hand and the man did, and God did!

Talk about grace, I'd think you'd find yourself on your face repenting, but again signs, wonders, and mystical/miraculous experiences don't guarantee a lasting persuasion of the heart. Or even an accurate persuasion of the heart, in Acts ch 14 when the people saw a man healed by the word through Paul they thought he and Barnabas were gods come to visit them, Zeus and Hermes. We'd like to see Jeroboam fall broken in repentance here, but instead he just asks the man of God to come over to his place for a soda.

Vs7-9

Jeroboam had been fairly well humiliated there before the nation, that was no small thing. And so had he consented and gone, home with him it would've somehow seemed to make things seem less severe than they were and so the man of God says, no way, I'm not taking part in anything you put your hand to (no pun intended). Unlike you I've got to remain obedient to God's Word. Eph 5:11 says, "...*have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.*" and So this man of God says, "I'm not fellowshiping with you, I'm here to expose your wicked works." and He leaves.

Vs10-19

Few things quickly, we should note that this old prophet was living in Bethel, the headquarters of compromise, 2nd Chronicles 11 tells us that when all this was coming down, the Levites left Israel and went to Judah.

They weren't going to endorse Jeroboam by sticking around, but here this guy is right in the heart of it, and his kids were there at the altar when this took place, so that should tell us something about his character. But we also note that just because God uses your life in a powerful and profound way, that doesn't make you impervious to deception. This young man of God bought the lie because it was another "believer" who was talking to him. But he should've been skeptical by the very fact of where this guy was at, and how he was living, Paul said, "...note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple." Rom 16:17-18

This guy was deceived because he didn't suspect another "believer" to lie to him, why did this guy lie? I don't know, perhaps he was jealous of this young kid's ministry, perhaps he was embarrassed of where he was at, or that he wasn't in line with what God had told this young man of God and so he made something up real quick to cover his tracks. Why do any of us lie? We're embarrassed, or jealous, or ashamed, and so we try to embellish the situation or make ourselves out to be in a position of spirituality that in reality we're not. But here's the deal, God will never under any circumstances contradict Himself. The man of God, had the sure Word of God given to him, and regardless of what anyone says, or seeks to persuade you in, if it's out the parameters of the revealed *Word* of God, then it's not a *Word from* God.

Vs20-24

Our obedience to God's Word is literally a matter of life and death, even though this guy had lied to the young guy, it didn't justify his disobedience. Why did God use that man after he lied like that? The same reason He'll use you and me after we do what we do, it's called grace.

Vs25-32

2 Things #1 we should learn that our actions in leading people astray can have dire consequences upon their lives. This man for whatever reason lied to this man of God, and because he trusted him it cost him his life. Now obviously he should've trusted God's Word over this other fellow, but I'm trying to tell you that when people place an element of trust in you, be careful that you respect that, and don't take advantage of that, lest it destroy their lives and you're left with the grief of bearing that responsibility. 2^{ndly} To whom much is given, much is required, this young man of God had amazing potential, God was using Him powerfully, He was using Him publicly, and because of that the measure of his accountability was much higher, than even the other prophet who blew it privately. You see he'd pronounced judgment upon Jeroboam for not being obedient to God's Word, and then what did he do, he disobeyed God's Word. Before he even got out of Bethel he was eating and drinking with someone else. And because he was serving in a high profile manner, he was dealt with in a high profile manner. The lesson is clear, consistent/complete obedience to God's revealed word is paramount over anything else. It doesn't matter who they are, or what they say, if it's not consistent with what's written in God's Word, it's not from the Lord, and we're not to entertain it, or give heed to it.

Vs33-34

Rather than receive the reality of the need to obey God's Word, he thought, "Well, that guys out of the way, so I'll carry on." and Rather than repent, he repeated his ways, and it'll lead to the destruction of his house as well. You guys we have an adversary, (Satan) the roaring lion whose just waiting to pounce on any of you just as soon as you stray ever so slightly from the narrow path of the Word of God. Pay attention to it, don't deviate from it, and walk in the reality of it.