



LESSON 3 JEROBOAM'S FAILED DYNASTY

We are first introduced to Jeroboam in 1Kings 11 following the Lord's pronouncement that the kingdom, save one tribe, would be torn away from Solomon's house and given to another (vss. 11-13). We then read how Jeroboam, an Ephraimite whom Solomon had exalted to a position of prominence, re-

Israel	Judah
Jeroboam 931-910	Rehoboam 931-913
Nadab 910-909	Abijah 913-911
Baasha 909-886	Asa 911-870
Elah 886-885	
Zimri 885	
Omri 885-874	
Ahab 874-853	Jehoshaphat 873-848
Ahaziah 853-852	
Joram 852-841	Jehoram 848-841
Jehu 841-814	Ahaziah 841
	Athaliah 841-835
Jehoahaz 814-798	Joash 835-796
Jehoash 798-782	Amaziah 796-767
Jeroboam II 793-753	Uzziah 792-740
Zechariah 753	
Shallum 752	
Menahem 752-742	Jotham 750-731
Pekahiah 742-740	
Pekah 752-732	Ahaz 735-715
Hoshea 732-722	Hezekiah 729-686
	Manasseh 696-642
	Amon 642-640
	Josiah 640-609
	Jehoahaz 609
	Jehoiakim 608-598
	Jehoiachin 598-597
	Zedekiah 597-586

belled against the king. He rebelled because they Lord revealed to him that He was giving Jeroboam the rule over 10 tribes (vss. 29-37). Jeroboam was forced to flee to Egypt until Solomon died, but he returned when Rehoboam assumed the throne. Once the northern tribes broke away from Rehoboam's oppressive reign, they made Jeroboam their king (1Kings 12.20).

Significantly, the Lord promised Jeroboam that "if you listen to all that I command you and walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight by observing My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build you an enduring house as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you" (1Kings 11.38). Tragically for the king, his house and all of Israel, Jeroboam did not remain faithful the Lord. His house would not endure, his dynasty would fail... and ultimately so would the kingdom of Israel.

Jeroboam's Failure (1Kings 12.25-33)

As we will see, Jeroboam sought to legitimize his reign by associating himself with locations steeped in Israelite history and by casting himself as a modern-day Aaron. However, such moves did not solidify his kingdom, rather they

brought about its demise. Jeroboam's security should have been found in trusting God's promise (1Kings 11.38), but the king failed to do so, trusting rather in

his own abilities to garner the people's loyalty. Jeroboam may have succeeded in keeping the people's loyalty, but he failed to secure the promise of God.

Notes from the text

- » Penuel & Shechem (vs. 25). Both sites were associated with Jacob, Penuel being where Jacob wrestled with the Lord (Genesis 32) and Shechem being where Jacob first settled once he returned from Laban's house (Genesis 33.18-20). Having dual capitals (Penuel was on the eastern side of the Jordan River) would allow Jeroboam to forge close ties with tribes on both sides of the Jordan.
- » Jeroboam's fear (vss. 26-27). Note the king's complete failure to trust the Lord's promise (1Kings 11.37-38), fearing that the splendor of the Temple would draw the people away from him.
- » The golden calves (vs. 28). First, note that Jeroboam took counsel on what he should do, placing his trust in the wisdom of men rather than in God. There is some debate over whether the golden calves were meant to represent the Lord or were intended to be pedestals for the Lord (like the ark of the covenant). His statement that "these are your gods..." would indicate that these calves represented Jehovah and were a clear violation of the covenant (Exodus 20.2-6). Jeroboam's statement was an exact repetition of Aaron's statement and a source of the Lord's displeasure (Exodus 32.4,8). In choosing calves, Jeroboam could have been drawing on both the Exodus and on Canaanite religion, as both El and Baal were represented by bulls.
- » Dan & Bethel (vs. 29). These sites had both geographic and historical significance. Bethel lay just north of the border with Judah and was a site closely associated with Jacob (see Genesis 28.10-22; 35.6-7). Dan was in the far north of Israel, near the foot of Mount Hermon. In the days of the judges the tribe of Dan relocated here, taking with them Jonathan, grandson of Moses, to serve as their priest (see Judges 18.30-31).
- » Ramifications (vs. 30). This sin would result in the fall of Jeroboam's dynasty (1Kings 13.34) and with the destruction of the kingdom (2Kings 17.21).
- » New priesthood (vs. 31). Jeroboam's move may have been motivated



by the Levites siding with Moses (Exodus 32.26), recognizing that this tribe would not approve of Jeroboam's new worship program. Ultimately, the Levites and other faithful Israelites would relocate to the southern kingdom of Judah (see 2Chronicles 11.14-17).



Excavations of Sanctuary at Dan

Significantly, Jeroboam seemed to have given himself the role of high-priest (note his going up to the altar in vss. 32-33; 13.1), casting himself as a modern-day Aaron. "Several scholars have pointed out parallels between Aaron in Exodus 32 and Leviticus 10 with Jeroboam in 1 Kings 12. Both Aaron and Jeroboam constructed gold-

en calves on the advice of the people (Exod. 32:1-4; 1 Kings 12:28a); both used the same presentation formula; both Aaron and Jeroboam had two sons with essentially the same names: Nadab and Abihu/Abijah (Lev. 10; 1 Kings 14:1, 20); and both used the occasion for the celebration of a festival." (Walter Kaiser, A History of Israel. Page 306).

- » New festival (vs. 32). This was one month after the authorized Feast of Tabernacles (Leviticus 23.33-34). Some liken this new festival to the feast proclaimed by Aaron following the making of his golden calf (Exodus 32.5-6).

The Lord's Judgment Against False Worship (1Kings 13.1-10)

The Lord would bring judgment on the house of Jeroboam as a result of his unfaithfulness, but first He pronounced judgment on the false worship instituted by the king; false worship that was a snare to all of Israel. We also see in this account the importance of God's prophets, spokesmen He used to convey warnings to His people. God had previously used a prophet to reveal to Jeroboam that he would be king over 10 tribes (1Kings 11.29ff). The importance of God's prophets faithfully giving His messages and adhering to His word is emphasized in this encounter and in the events immediately following.

Notes from the text:

- » Josiah (vs. 2). Fulfilled in 2Kings 23.15-16. This would occur approximately 300 years in the future. The cause of so much sin in Israel would be utterly defiled.
- » The sign (vs. 3). An event occurring in the distant future wouldn't mean

much to Jeroboam or given reason to believe the words of this “man of God”. Thus, an immediate sign was given, a sign which would profane Jeroboam’s “offerings”.

- » Jeroboam healed (vs. 6). This passage not only demonstrates the Lord’s mercy, but should have impressed upon Jeroboam that his religious innovations were not resulting in the Lord’s favor, but His condemnation.
- » Jeroboam’s invitation (vs. 7). The invitation could have been basic hospitality, but was more likely an invitation to friendship; an effort by Jeroboam to curry the favor of this man of God. The Lord’s instructions to the man of God (vss. 8-9) show the utter hostility existing between God and the king.
- » Jeroboam’s obstinance (vss. 33-34). Even though the man of God’s sign had come to pass and the king himself had been afflicted, it did not result in a revival of faithfulness. Rather, Jeroboam’s house would be destroyed!

The Lord’s Judgment Against His Prophet (1Kings 13.11-32)

The Lord had pronounced judgment on Jeroboam’s false religion by a “man of God”, but what would occur when the “man of God” failed to heed the Lord’s word? In subsequent years Israel and Judah would frequently reject the true men of God for “prophets” of their own choosing. This encounter would emphasize the difference between the “true” and the “false”, showing why it was so important to heed God’s revealed will.

Notes from the text:

- » The old prophet (vs. 11). Note that this “prophet” had not relocated to Judah (see 2Chron. 11.15-16) and thus gives indication that his alliance was not to Jehovah. Furthermore, he is referred to as “prophet” in contrast to the “man of God”.
- » The old prophet’s offer (vs. 15). The shared meal could have suggested an alliance between the two prophets.
- » The lie (vss. 18-19). The Lord had given the man of God a sign to confirm that his message to Jeroboam was true (vs. 3). No sign is provided, or requested, to establish that this was in fact a message from the Lord. The punishment which followed would be a warning to all Israel, including God’s spokesmen, that they needed to be very careful to follow the Lord’s revealed will.
- » Lion and the donkey (vs. 24). The presence of both animals, serenely standing together, would show all that the Lord had brought this about.
- » The grave (vs. 31). Still known during the days of Josiah (see 2Kings 23.17-18).

The Lord's Judgment Against Jeroboam's House (1Kings 14.1-20; 15.25-31).

Covenant faithfulness would have resulted in an enduring house for Jeroboam (1Kings 11.37-38), but as we've already seen the king rejected the Lord's will and chose his own course. This would result in a violent and bloody end for his house, paving the way for future upheaval in the kingdom.

Notes from the text:

- » Shiloh (vs. 2). Location of the Tabernacle following the conquest (see Joshua 18.1).
- » Ahijah (vs. 2). The same prophet who revealed to Jeroboam that he would be king (1Kings 11.29ff).
- » Jeroboam's gifts (vs. 3). These would have been presented in the hope that it would result in a favorable report. Jeroboam was treating God's prophet like the priests and prophets of Canaanite deities.
- » The Lord's message (vss. 7-10). Contrast with the promise made in 1Kings 11.37-38. Faithfulness results in promises fulfilled; unfaithfulness results in a curse (see Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28).
- » Bodies eaten by dogs and birds (vs. 11). "No punishment could be greater than to be consumed by roaming dogs and fowl. Some rulers enforced their treaties by threatening disloyal subjects with just such a fate. The Assyrian king Esarhaddon employed this threat in one of his treaties." (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Background Commentary).
- » Affect on Israel (vss. 15-16). Jeroboam's unfaithfulness would result in instability for Israel (like a reed shaken in the water). It would be less than 200 years before Israel was taken away from the promised land (see 2Kings 17).
- » Tirzah (vs. 17). Jeroboam's new capital was noted for its beauty (see Song of Solomon 6.4) but the move likely speaks to difficulties in the kingdom. When Shishak invaded in 925 B.C. (see 1Kings 14.25) he lists both Shechem and Penuel as cities he defeated.
- » War with Judah (vs. 19). One such war occurred when Abijah was reigning in Judah (see 2Chronicles 13.1-20).
- » Destruction of Jeroboam's house (1Kings 15.25-31). The Lord's words came to pass as Nadab was warring with the Philistines.

Takeaways...

1. Trust the Lord's promise and you won't be consumed with worry about

what could happen. This was Jeroboam's failure; the Lord had promised to establish his house if he kept the covenant (1Kings 11.37-38), but the king failed to trust the Lord and became consumed with what COULD happen (1Kings 12.26). Let us be those who confidently say, "In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 56.11).

2. Be guided by revelation you know comes from the Lord. The man of God had been told by the Lord not to eat or drink and to go back home by a different route (1Kings 13.17), but he decided to follow a different "revelation", one he didn't confirm came from the Lord (vs. 18). We have received God's will through His chosen messengers (cf. John 14.26; 15.26; 16.13), we must not rely on our own feelings, counsel or different teachings... even if they would seem to come from heaven (Galatians 1.6-8).