

Division in the Kingdom

Quote: "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Proverbs 16:7

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Proverbs 16:25

Bible Marking

The Man Jeroboam

Jeroboam the Son of Nebat Who Made Israel to Sin

Mark above & below 1 Kg 12-13

Jeroboam means: 'The people will contend'. From a root word meaning 'to toss, or grapple' - figuratively to wrangle or hold a controversy.

Father: Nebat - means 'regard'. From a root word meaning 'to scan', or 'look intently'. Therefore by implication 'to regard with pleasure'.

Mother: Zeruah - means 'leprous'.

Birth Place: Zereda (means 'to pierce or puncture'). Therefore an Ephraimite (1 Kg 11:28).

Length of reign: 22 years (1 Kg 14:20) - BC 931-910.

Contemporary kings: Rehoboam (BC 931-914), Abijah (BC 913-911), Asa (BC 911-871).

Jeroboam's policy: Was to widen the breach between the two kingdoms and sever the links that held them together. To that end he discouraged his subjects from going to the Temple. He elevated common people as priests, set himself up as High Priest, and reestablished the Calf worship that came from Egypt, setting it up in the name of Yahweh. He did this because he feared the people would return to the house of David when they went down to Jerusalem to worship. Instead of faithfully putting his trust in God, he provided a fleshly solution, and failed.

His legacy: Jeroboam became known as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin" (occurs at least 13 times). The sin of Jeroboam was not merely idolatry (Solomon and Rehoboam were both guilty of that) but compromise for the sake of expediency. Rather than openly opposing Divine worship, he perverted it, superimposing pagan principles upon it. The early Christian Communities became guilty of the same sin. Many of the festivals, sabbaths, sacrifices etc of the Law appear to have continued but in a corrupted form (Hos 2:11; 6:6; 8:13; 9:4), while the people were deterred from worshipping at Jerusalem (Deut 12:11). Jeroboam believed that the end justified the means (Rom 3:8), and people who were spiritually lazy and indifferent to Divine requirements were easily tempted into the personal ease of Jeroboam's worship.

Thus Jeroboam goes down in history as the man who initiated a religious system in Israel which finally destroyed it (2 Kg 17:21-23).

Bible Marking

1 Kings 12

1 Kings 12:4 - "Thy father made our yoke grievous" - ie. Israel complained of two things - excessively laborious service, and a heavy taxation. Samuel had warned of this and Israel had accepted it (1 Sam 8:10-20). Now it was too great (see 1 Kg 4:7,20-25; 9:15,22-23).

"make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." - this was a reasonable demand, cleverly put forward by Jeroboam. If Rehoboam refused, he appeared a tyrant. If he accepted, the people would thank Jeroboam, and his position in the eyes of the people would be enhanced.

1 Kings 12:5 - "three days" - an unwise move. It gave time for the revolt to grow. Rehoboam should have known the mood of the nation when he came to Shechem.

1 Kings 12:6 - "old men" - Heb 'zeqenim' - refers to age and status. ie. Solomon's advisers. They understood the times.

1 Kings 12:7 - A principle endorsed by Christ - See [Lk 22:26](#).

"and speak good words to them" - [2 Chron 10:7](#) adds "and please them". Sound advice considering the mood of the people.

1 Kings 12:8 - **"the young men that were grown up with him"** - Rehoboam's companions would have known nothing but luxury and ease.

1 Kings 12:11 - **"scorpions"** - a whip with lashes loaded with leather bags stuffed with sand, and having metal spikes mounted on it.

1 Kings 12:15 - **"for the cause was from the LORD"** - Roth - "for there had come about a turn from Yahweh". Heb 'cibbah' = a (providential) turn (of affairs). In [2 Chron 10:15](#) the word for "cause" is 'necibbah' = an environment, ie a circumstance. Yahweh was using the folly of men change the circumstances and turn events to fulfill His purpose.

1 Kings 12:16 - **"what portion have we in David"** - Words quoted from [2 Samuel 20:1](#) (the revolt of Sheba). It appears that an undercurrent of opposition had begun in the days of King David, and had been allowed to grow, until division resulted. Such division rarely occurs overnight.

SHECHEM: place of decision making in Israel's history:

- Abram built an altar and Yahweh promised him the land ([Gen 12:6-7](#)).
- Jacob hid idols here ([Gen 35:4](#)).
- A city of refuge ([Josh 20:7](#)).
- Blessings and cursings of the Law were declared here ([Josh 8:30-35](#)).
- Joshua's final exhortation to chose whom Israel would serve was here ([Josh 24:1](#)).
- Rehoboam rejected by the northern tribes ([1 Kg 12:1-17](#)).
- While he reigned here, Jeroboam chose build two calves for Israel to worship ([1 Kg 12:25-28](#)).

Mark on the first page of 1 Kg 12

1 Kings 12 - Accession of Rehoboam - National Division

Vv1-5 - Jeroboam Petitions Rehoboam at Shechem

Vv6-11 - Divided Counsel among Rehoboam's Advisers

Vv12-15 - Rehoboam's Foolish reply to the people

Vv16-17 - Revolt of the ten tribes

Vv18-20 - Adoram Stoned

Vv21-24 - Rehoboam refused permission to invade Israel

Vv25-33 - Jeroboam's reign and apostate worship

Mark the chapter breakdown in 1 Kg 12

1 Kings 12:25 - **"Then Jeroboam built Shechem"** - His first capital. The idea is that he "fortified and strengthened Shechem as a fortress". In building of Shechem and Peniel, Jeroboam showed his lack of faith in Yahweh to guarantee his kingdom as He had promised in [1 Kg 11:38](#).

1 Kings 12:27 - **"if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of Yahweh"** - In his heart he did not trust the promise Yahweh had given him ([Prov 23:7](#)). Yahweh required Israel to worship Him in Jerusalem ([Deut 12:5-14](#)), even Jeroboam was required to go up to Jerusalem 3 times in a year ([Deut 16:16](#)).

1 Kings 12:28 - **"the king took counsel"** - Heb "yaats" - means to deliberate or resolve. He did so with himself, and failed to seek Yahweh. see [Prov 16:25](#).

"made two calves of gold" - An Egyptian god - the god Apis. Jeroboam had been in Egypt, and it's idolatry had rubbed off on him (Note the emphasis on Jeroboam's association with Egypt - [1 Kg 11:40 3x, 12:2; 2 Chron 10:2](#)). Jeroboam followed the error of Israel when

Aaron made the golden calf in the wilderness ([Exod 32:4](#)). In doing so, the first two commandments were broken ([Exod 20:4-5](#)).

"It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem" - The flesh naturally thinks that the divine requirements are "too much". We are called to a life of sacrifice.

1 Kings 12:29 - **"he set one in Bethel"** - on the southern boundary of the northern kingdom. Israelites from the north would have to go right past Bethel to go to the temple in Jerusalem.

"and the other put he in Dan" - an area in which apostasy flourished already ([Jud 18:30](#)). [V30](#) indicates that the people preferred to go to Dan to worship above all other options. Thus many travelled much further, and over much more difficult terrain than if they had gone to Jerusalem. The flesh will go to almost any lengths to satisfy it's desires.

1 Kings 12:31 - **"And he made an house of high places"** - built to divert the attention of the people from the temple in Jerusalem. Solomon has been judged for this ([1Kg 11:7,33](#)) - judgments which had brought Jeroboam into the position of king. He should have heeded the lesson of Solomon's failure.

"made priests of the lowest of the people" - ie. no qualifications were necessary - see [Mal 2:7](#). The result was that the Levites moved south, leaving the northern tribes devoid of what spiritual guidance was left ([2 Chron 11:13-16](#)).

1 Kings 12:32 - **“and he offered upon the altar”** - ie. he made himself the high priest of this new system of worship.

1 Kings 12:33 - **“which he had devised of his own heart”** - “devised” = to invent. Note the emphasis on “he” or “his” in **vv29-33** (13 times - **colour these red**). Jeroboam’s rebellion against Yahweh was devised out of his own heart (**Mk 7:21-23**).

How did such blatant watering down and disregard of the Divine commandments occur (**Exod 20:4-5**)?

1. Lack of faith (demonstrated here in **1 Kg 12:26-27**).
2. Fleshly reasoning upon plausible, but wrong ideas (demonstrated in **1 Kg 12:28**).
3. Influence of the world - in this case Egypt.

Mark above or below 1 Kg 12

References:

- Story of the Bible Vol 3 p 165-169
- Theological Word book of the Old Testament (TWOT)
- Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance
- The Kings of Israel and Judah - Bro J Cowie Chapters on Rehoboam and Jeroboam