

AHIJAH DENOUNCES JEROBOAM AND PROPHECIES THE DISPERSION

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 14:1-20

LESSON 294 **Senior Course**

MEMORY VERSE: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 14:1-20

¹ At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick.

² And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there *is* Ahijah the prophet, which told me that *I should be* king over this people.

³ And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child.

⁴ And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age.

⁵ And the LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he *is* sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself *to be* another *woman*.

⁶ And it was *so*, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself *to be* another? for I *am* sent to thee *with heavy tidings*.

⁷ Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel,

⁸ And rent the kingdom away from

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Attempted Deception

1. Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise to Ahijah to inquire about a sick son, I Kings 14:1, 2.
2. Jeroboam's wife went to the Prophet with a present in her hand, I Kings 14:3, 4.
3. The Lord told Ahijah that Jeroboam's wife was coming and put an answer into his mouth, I Kings 14:5, 6.

II God's Judgment upon Jeroboam

1. The Lord God had rent the kingdom of Israel away from the house of David and had exalted Jeroboam to the kingship, I Kings 14:7, 8.
2. Jeroboam had not followed God's commandments, but had done evil above all before him, I Kings 14:9.
3. God pronounced complete judgment against Jeroboam's house, I Kings 14:10, 11.
4. The sick child died, but Israel mourned for him and buried him, I Kings 14:12-14, 17, 18.

III Prophecy of Israel's Dispersion

1. The Children of Israel followed in the sins of Jeroboam; therefore God foretold their removal from their land, I Kings 14:15, 16.
2. Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, slept with his fathers, I Kings 14:19, 20.

NOTES:

"And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee" (I Kings 11:38). God had performed this word to Jeroboam in giving him the kingship over ten tribes of the Children of Israel, but Jeroboam had utterly refused to perform his part of the obligation. Now his son Abijah, probably the crown prince of Israel, was sick; and nothing could be done that would bring any healing. In spite of all efforts to save the lad, he grew steadily worse.

In Desperation

In his desperation, Jeroboam decided to send to the aged Prophet Ahijah who had given him the message that he would be king. Jeroboam was afraid to go to the Prophet in person, because he had not walked in the counsel of God, which the Prophet had given, and Jeroboam did not want to hear his sharp rebuke. Jeroboam's wife would be the proper one to go, he thought, for no one but the family should know of this secret mission. Although her son was sick unto death and the mother was really needed at home to nurse the child, yet this errand was of such importance she must be released from her duties to run to the Prophet. But she must not go as Jeroboam's wife — she

the house of David, and gave it thee: and *yet* thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that* only *which was* right in mine eyes;
⁹ But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

¹⁰ Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, *and* him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

¹¹ Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken *it*.

¹² Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: *and* when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die.

¹³ And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found *some* good thing toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

¹⁴ Moreover the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now.

¹⁵ For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the LORD to anger.

must disguise herself. If the people of Israel knew that the wife of Jeroboam was travelling to the Prophet of the Lord for advice they would know that in the hour of absolute need the gods of Jeroboam were miserable failures. Again, if she were recognized, Jeroboam feared the answer from God might not be favourable, because of Jeroboam's sins.

Oh, the folly of men! Can God look into the dark mystery of futurity, to tell whether a child might live or die, and not be able to know the identity of the inquiring person, even though that person were in disguise? God's knowledge goes far beyond the words of men, for He is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13).

Prayer

God is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God, especially when the prayers come to Him from the depths of a true and upright heart. Sinners coming to God can always be assured that the penitent's prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," when prayed with faith, will bring results. However, many times ungodly men have prayed to God with selfish desire, or unholy intent, or some other carnal purpose. The Bible records the answer to prayers of this type, and the lesson is written indelibly. If our prayers are not prayed with sincerity of heart and purpose, it is better that they be prayed not at all.

Jeroboam's sending to the Prophet was more or less a prayer, but it was insincere. He did not seek God's help in any way — he desired to know only if the child would live or die. Ahijah had said that the Lord would build a sure house in return for obedience. Jeroboam clung desperately to that forfeited hope, but all he could see on the road behind him was disobedience. Hezekiah had prayed sincerely when faced with death: "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (Isaiah 38:3). But Jeroboam tried to slide by without mentioning his past, for that sinful life was sure to condemn him. However, no sinner nor any sin will go unnoticed under the searching gaze of our righteous God.

Jeroboam had a great love for his son; and it seems unnatural that he did not realize that God was using this beloved child's sickness to call Jeroboam to repentance. If he had opened his heart in real contrition, asking the Prophet to help him pray through in this dilemma, no doubt God would have heard the prayers and restored the child as He had restored Jeroboam's hand on a previous occasion. But as a writer has said, most people would rather be told their fortune than their faults or their duty. Jeroboam's dark future could easily have been avoided had he but chosen to walk according to God's instructions. Two paths lie open to every person today: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14). Our eternal destiny is determined by the choice we make. Why not enter in at the strait gate to the way of life and sure success?

Folly of Man's Wisdom

Jeroboam had a mind and plans of his own to make his kingdom sure and successful. He could not see the value of faith in the living God who gave the people of Israel into his hand, but earthly wisdom dictated that trust be put in objects of sight and

¹⁶ And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.

¹⁷ And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: *and* when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;

¹⁸ And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

¹⁹ And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he reigned, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

²⁰ And the days which Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead

strength. Among the first acts of his reign, Jeroboam converted the cities of Shechem and Peniel into strongholds. He felt more secure within walls than he did in trusting the strength of Jehovah, not having learned the truth that it is safer in the open field trusting in God's power than in the combined strength of all the strongholds the world has ever known. Jeroboam desired to make his kingdom strong, so he turned aside from the counsel of the everlasting God and put his trust in cities of perishable materials. Now, when Jeroboam needed help desperately, no help from God was available.

The people of the world are still doing just as foolishly. They are seeking in every channel conceivable, except the right channel, for success, happiness, health, and longevity. God has clearly spoken: "He that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (I Peter 3:10-12). This is the way of the Cross, the Christian way, the pathway of Jesus Christ – the road to Glory. Jesus came to earth that men might have life, and "that they might have it more abundantly"; but how few are willing to travel in that road that brings true earthly joy and eternal life, the beauty and bliss of which cannot be described with the words of mortality!

Heavy Tidings

The wife of Jeroboam came to Ahijah the Prophet in her disguise. Not one person in all the land recognized the queen; and Ahijah would not have detected her either, for his advanced age had impaired his eyesight; but the Lord told Ahijah that the woman was coming even before she arrived at the door. As soon as her footsteps were heard, Ahijah called out, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? For I am sent to thee with heavy tidings."

More persons than one have fooled their fellow men with a glossed-over exterior show of religion. They have disguised their actions when among men until the world has called them Christians. Many people can talk about the Bible and Biblical subjects as fluently as a theologian. There are multitudes of people in the world who pose as children of God, yet they have never been born into the family of God through the all-essential new birth, of which Jesus taught Nicodemus. (See John 3:1-21.) God sees through the thin veil of disguise — He looks not at the outward appearance but looks at the heart. If the Blood of Jesus Christ has been applied, all is well; but if the Blood is not there, heavy tidings are sure to ring in their ears. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41).

Ahijah told the wife of Jeroboam exactly what would come to pass. His message was not long, but it told the end of Jeroboam's kingship and family. The sick son would die the very moment that his mother entered her city. Some good toward the Lord God of Israel had been found in the heart of the lad; therefore, God caused the people to lament his death and bury him decently; but all the remaining members of Jeroboam's family met with untimely deaths and had no burials at all. This whole tragedy stemmed from Jeroboam's sins and rebellion against God. The truth bears repeating: individuals, families, and nations are ruined by sin if they deliberately persist in it.

Influenced?

The Word of the Lord by the mouth of Ahijah included more

than the judgment of Jeroboam's house. The Children of Israel's sins came in remembrance before God at the same time. Jeroboam had set up the golden calves, but the Children of Israel had willingly followed the easier way, even though they knew that they were breaking the commandment of God by so doing. Ahijah was one of the first of a long line of prophets to tell of the dispersion of Israel because of these sins. The Children of Israel were no longer to know any peace, but were to be as the reed shaken in the water — always in turmoil, always swaying back and forth. Finally they were to be scattered beyond the river. The mouth of the Lord had spoken it; and in the years that followed, the prophecy was fulfilled to the very letter.

The Children of Israel probably blamed Jeroboam for their condition. Had he not influenced them to sin? But who had followed in that sin? God laid the charge of sin directly to the guilty ones. Thousands upon thousands of excuses for sin are rehearsed every day. Some people blame one thing for their sin, and others blame something else. The responsibility cannot be shifted. The Blood of Jesus Christ has provided a remedy for every individual's sins, and God provides power to the earnest follower to live above sin. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne" (Revelation 3:21).

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Jeroboam so much concerned about his son's illness?
2. Why did Jeroboam's wife disguise herself when she went to the Prophet of the Lord?
3. Did the disguise deceive the Prophet?
4. Who answered Jeroboam, the Prophet or the Lord?
5. What terrible judgments were included in the answer?
6. Why were these judgments pronounced against Jeroboam and his house?
7. What reward was given to Abijah for the good thing found in him?
8. How did the Children of Israel fare in their sin against the Lord?
9. How soon did the word of the Lord spoken through the Prophet come to pass?