

JTB IX. THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

(From the division under Rehoboam to the Babylonian Exile, 931-586 B.C.)

The Division of the Israelite Nation

(1Kings 11:14 - 13:34)

(1) The division of the kingdom was God's punishment on Solomon's sin (11:11 -13)

(2) God raised up adversaries to Solomon (11:14-25)

(3) Jeroboam was offered the northern 10 tribes if he would obey the covenant with YHWH (11:26-40). However, he foolishly feared political reunification because of the central worship site at Jerusalem, so he tried to strengthen his position by inventing a more "convenient" false religion (12:25-33). Sadly, NOT all "religion" is a matter of sincere conviction and truth!

(4) The promised division of the kingdom took place by means of Solomon's son, Rehoboam, acting foolishly toward the ten northern tribes (12:1-24). God can even use the foolishness of men who fail to recognize good advice to accomplish His will.

(5) An unnamed prophet is sent to prophesy against Jeroboam's false religion and foretell Josiah's eventual reformation movement (13:1-10). What happened to the prophet underscores a solid principle of God's workings - God will NOT contradict His own revelation (1Kings 13:11-34)!

The Divided Kingdoms: Israel & Judah

(1Kings 12 - 2Kings 25; 2Chronicles 10-36)

(1) "Israel" was the name of the northern kingdom (10 tribes) and it declined steadily under five dynasties, nineteen bad kings, and continual idolatry until the prophesied destruction (1Kings 14:15) came in 722/721 B.C. at the hands of Assyria (2Kings 17).

(2) "Judah" included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and it tended to decline between occasional good, reformer kings (Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat) of David's lineage from 930-586 B.C. Although the Babylonian presence in Judah began in 609 B.C., continued rebellion brought the Babylonian army into Judah several times, with Jerusalem and Solomon's Temple being destroyed in 586 B.C. Most of the people were taken to Babylon in exile.

Lessons from the Divided Kingdom Period

(1) God sent prophets during the period of apostasy and decline to turn the people back. Most of the writing Prophets (except for Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi) and a good number of non-writing prophets were sent to the Israelites during the divided kingdom time. Sadly, their warnings were generally rejected and they were mistreated (2Chronicles 36:15-16; Matthew 5:11-12; Acts 7:52; 1Thessalonians 2:14-15).

(2) God uses nations and also disciplines them in carrying out His international plan (Isaiah 10:5-19,24,25; 12:17; Jeremiah 25:1-14)

(3) God continued to work with rebellious Israel because of His faithfulness to His covenant promises to: {a} the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) to bring Messiah out of their lineage (Genesis 12:3; 26:1-4; 28:10-14; Deuteronomy 4:37; 7:7,8; 9:5; 10:15; 2Kings 13:23; Romans 11:28) and {b} to David (2Samuel 7:8-16; 1Kings 11:12,13,32,34,36; 2Kings 8:19). Jesus' genealogy demonstrates this (Matthew 1:1-17). Three times the Messianic lineage was down to one male descendant of David: Jehoram (2Chronicles 21:4), Joash (2Kings 11:1-3), and Hezekiah (2Kings 18-20:6,18). However, God is faithful and intervened, according to His promises, to keep the Messianic lineage intact and bring forth One of David's lineage to redeem all nations (Acts 2:22-23).

(4) Ignorance of Scripture allows people to accept corruptions that "sound biblical" (1Kings 12:28; cf. Exodus 32:4,8), as well as abandoning the true God and His covenant completely

(5) Religious error, with time, becomes "sacred tradition" if not evaluated in the light of Scripture (1Kings 12:26-33; 2Kings 17:22-23; cf. 2Kings 18:4)

(6) Man, left to himself, doesn't get better, but declines into greater evil (1Kings 16:25,30,33; 2Kings 16:3; 21:3-7; cf. Genesis 6:5; Ecclesiastes 7:29)

(7) Righteous leaders cannot effectively "legislate" long-term righteousness in a nation when the people prefer worldly wealth and security

(8) The faithful have always lived in the hope and strength of the unseen, trusting that God will bring to pass what He promises (2Kings 6:15-19)

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