

=KINGS OF THE BIBLE=

Lesson 4

Jeroboam

AIM: to teach my pupils the good and bad about Jeroboam.

POINT OF CONTACT: Review the lesson of last Sunday about Rehoboam and tell again the story of the cloth torn into twelve pieces, ten pieces given to Jeroboam and two to Rehoboam. This predicted the fact that someday Jeroboam would rule the ten tribes of Israel.

INTRODUCTION: Jeroboam was the king of the Northern Kingdom. You will recall from last Sunday's lesson that Rehoboam ruled the Southern Kingdom (the tribes of Judah and Benjamin), and the other ten tribes were ruled by Jeroboam. We turn our attention today from Rehoboam to Jeroboam.

I. JEROBOAM'S GOOD POINTS.

1. Jeroboam was successful in spite of the fact that he had no father. His father had been an official under Solomon named Nebat, but his mother, Zeruah, was a widow by the time Jeroboam was born. (I Kings 11:26) The fact that he was successful speaks well for his mother and speaks well for him. (Teacher, it should be stressed here that mothers who have to rear children alone should get the children around godly men so they can be influenced by these men. This is very important, especially for a boy, but it is also important for a girl. God places children in homes where there is a mother and a father because the child needs the influence of both male and female. Then you might stress to the children who live under such conditions that they find themselves some godly men whom they admire whom they can emulate and follow.)
2. Jeroboam worked hard. As a young man, he showed industry and ability. In fact, Solomon made him the overseer of some very important work. (I Kings 11:27, 28) It should be noted here that hard work is spiritual. Whatever job one has to do, he should do it well.
3. Jeroboam was called by God to do a work. One day as he was walking outside of Jerusalem, he was met by Ahijah, the prophet. Ahijah was wearing a new garment. He took the garment, tore it in twelve pieces, and gave ten to Jeroboam as a sign that Jeroboam was someday going to be king over ten of the twelve tribes. (Teacher, it should be noted here that God does call some to a special work. Perhaps the children should be asked if they have been called for some special work. If they have, they should definitely surrender and make public the call. Talk to them a while about our preacher boys and others called of God and how they should be listening for a call.)
4. Jeroboam was concerned about others. When Solomon heard that Jeroboam had been destined to become king of ten tribes, he sought to kill him. Jeroboam escaped to Egypt and there was protected by Shishak (I Kings 11:29-40). When he found that Solomon was dead and that ten tribes were assembling at Shechem to make Solomon's son, Rehoboam, king, he returned to attend the meeting. He became spokesman of the people and urged the lowering of the taxes and the alleviation of their burdens. He was willing to place himself in some danger for others. (Teacher, it should be stressed constantly that the way to live a happy life is to live for others. Selfishness never brings happiness.)
5. Jeroboam then became king. The ten tribes revolted because Rehoboam would not listen to the advice of the elders and lower the taxes. Jeroboam became king of the ten tribes. Upon becoming king, Jeroboam was advised by the prophet, Ahijah, to be true to Jehovah and that if he would, the crown should be permanently upon his family (I Kings 11:37, 38). So we have a man off to a good start. He certainly should make a good king, shouldn't he?

II. JEROBOAM'S BAD POINTS.

1. He could not stand success. Someone has said, "There are two things that test a person's character more than any other things. One is failure, and the other is success." Probably more people have stumbled because of being successful than because of being a failure. Jeroboam was a failure because he could not stand success.
2. He was a good follower, but not a good leader. He was a good second man, but not a good first man. There are many people who could do a great work for God if they were willing to be second, but they want to be first; consequently, they become a big fish in a little pond rather than a little fish in a big pond. They lose their chance to do something big because they must be first, even if they are smaller.
3. Jeroboam became jealous. Jeroboam was afraid that if the people went up to Jerusalem to worship, they would be won back to the house of David and would reject and slay him. He therefore established a center of worship at each of the two extremities of the kingdom—at Dan in the north and at Bethel in the south. Bear in mind, God had told the prophet to tell Jeroboam that he should remain true to Jehovah, but he became jealous and fearful of his kingdom. Jealousy is a green-eyed monster that has destroyed many a person. Let us learn to rejoice with those who rejoice and thank God for the successes of others.
4. He refused his pastor's advice. In many respects, Ahijah was Jeroboam's pastor. He had advised him and counseled with him, and as long as Jeroboam accepted the advice, he did well. Now he turns his back upon his pastor's advice, and in so doing, he becomes a failure.
5. He becomes guilty of wrong worship. He set up images. He even set up a golden calf in each of the two places mentioned before. (I Kings 12:26-30) You see, when people leave the true prophet of God, then they make a substitute. He made his own religion, and no one has a right to do that. He even had the people worship Jehovah under the image of the calf. He established heathen places of worship. He made priests of some Israelites who were not of the tribes of Levi. He started an idolatrous form of worship. When people leave the will of God and leave the prophet of God, they need something to salve their conscience. False religions is simply this: When a person refuses to obey the commandments of the Bible, he does not want to think that he is a heathen, so he makes his own rules and regulations, makes his own ideas about God; and in so doing, he becomes an idolater.

III. THE SAD RESULTS.

1. Jeroboam led Israel to sin. Also notice I Kings 15:26-34, and take note of what it says about Nadab, the son of Jeroboam. No one sins alone. We all have a scope of influence. We all influence someone else.
2. He caused Israel to suffer. See II Kings 17:16-18. The idolatry that he had established was one of the main causes which led to the ten tribes going to captivity in Assyria. The entire nation suffered because he suffered and because he sinned. Our sin causes others to suffer. (Teacher, ask the pupils to give examples of the types of sins that cause someone else to suffer. Such things could be listed as someone who drives while drunk could have an accident that would kill others; a drunkard father could beat others; someone who lives in adultery could break the heart of others; etc.)
3. He was stubborn. Read I Kings 13. Until his death, he did not repent. He would not admit his wrong.
4. Another sad thing that happened was that he had a son who died in his infancy. See I Kings 14:17.
5. Another said thing was that his son, Nadab, was his successor. Notice I Kings 14:20. He was an evil son, following in the footsteps of his father. This, of course, can be expected.