

The Story: Chapter 14 A Kingdom Torn in Two

Review of where we are:

TIMELINE

- So, David was the King of Israel
- He dies and his son Solomon took over as King.
- Solomon was known as the wisest King in history but made some bad decisions in the relationship department.

- Last time we talked we were looking at Solomon and God was dealing with him about his sin.

I Kings 11:9-13

⁹The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord's command. ¹¹So the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. ¹²Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

The section of The Story in chapter 14 is actually about what happened after this conversation that God had with Solomon.

God tells Solomon that He will rip the Nation of Israel away from his son once he becomes King.

- So, Rehoboam, Solomon's son, becomes King of Israel.
- The people rebel under his leadership and they choose to make Jeroboam their King.
- God leaves the nation of Judah with one tribe, the Benjamites.
- The other 10 tribes go with Jeroboam and move north.
- The two groups split: the Northern Kingdom becomes the Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom becomes the Kingdom of Judah.

-- And we know that God only left Rehoboam with Judah and Benjamin because He had promised that the Messiah would come out of the house of David.

Now, I'm not going to speak today like God is speaking to us in this passage.

- He's not. He's dealing with the people of Israel and their MANY problems.

However, there are some truths that we can learn from this passage that I believe will help us today.

Here's where they were:

Solomon had taken his eyes off of God and had put his priorities in other places and started worshiping other gods.

Question for us: Is there any place that God has been showing you as part of this fast, or your time with Him, that you have taken your eyes off of Him or turned and started worshiping other gods?

Today: There are some things that are true every time we turn our focus away from God:

- And getting those things back in line is one of the main reasons we fast!

When you've turned away from God...

1. There is always a separation!

- For them it was the entire nation
- For us, it starts with a separation from God.
- Then leads into all kinds of separation...

2. You will start to listen to the wrong people

The people of Israel came to Rehoboam and asked him if he would lighten the load that his father, Solomon, had placed on them. He consulted his elders and they gave him some great advice. They said, "If you'll give a little on this and serve them now, they will serve you forever."

But, he decided to listen to the younger men that had grown up with him. Here is their response:

I Kings 12:10-11

¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him replied, “Tell these people who have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter’—tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist.

¹¹ My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.

3. Your focus will wander from the one true God.

I Kings 12:26-30

²⁶ Jeroboam thought to himself, “The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. ²⁷ If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.”

²⁸ After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” ²⁹ One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. ³⁰ And this thing became a sin; the people went even as far as Dan to worship the one there.

He formed two calves out of gold and told the people that these are their new gods.

- He did this so that the people wouldn't be traveling into Judah, a part of the Southern Kingdom, to worship in Jerusalem.

For us: I'm not saying that you are going to go out and build yourself a new version of a god and start to worship it.

BUT, I am saying that, “When we separate ourselves from the fellowship of God, we will find ourselves putting too much of our focus on other things.”

And look at verse 30 again:

³⁰ And this thing became a sin;

Anything that we allow to take the place of “top focus” in our lives, other than God, becomes a sin to us!

Many of us would have to say that this is where we stand today!

- We have wandered away from our fellowship with God.
- There has been a division in our lives.
- We have started getting our wisdom from places other than God.
- And, we've even started worshiping some things that should never be worshiped.

Here's where we are today...

4. Full Repentance is the only way home.

Jeroboam could not do this:

I Kings 13:33

³³ Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people.

But, in the lower Kingdom of Judah we see a King come along that helps us understand what repentance really looks like:

I Kings 15:11-13

¹¹ Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his father David had done. ¹² He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made. ¹³ He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

Repentance: "Turning away from where you're headed and turning back to God"

Acts 3:19

¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

Aren't those "times of refreshing" exactly what we're looking for on day 14 of this 21 day fast?

They lived as a separated people for over 500 years.

How long are you going to live in separation from the fellowship and the presence of God?

I John 1:9

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Repent of our sins!