

1 Kings Chapter 11 Continued

Verses 23-25: A second “adversary,” an Aramaean named “Rezon,” had survived David’s crushing defeat of the Aramaeans of “Zobah” and “Damascus.” He had managed to avoid “Solomon’s” later thrusts against Zobah” (2 Chron. 8:3-4), and still later had managed to make himself king of Damascus.

After David conquered Zobah (2 Sam. 8:3-8), Rezon and his men took Damascus and established the strong dynasty of Syrian kings that severely troubled Israel in the ninth century B.C. (15:18; 20:1).

1 Kings 11:23 "And God stirred him up [another] adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah:"

One from the north, as the other was from the south.

"Rezon, the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah": When David fought with him; and this man seeing the battle go against his master, and that he was like to be worsted, deserted him and fled (see 2 Sam. 8:3).

In the last lesson, we saw Hadad as an adversary. Now, we see Rezon. When David defeated Hadadezer, Rezon fled with some of the men and began again in Damascus. It was from here that he became an adversary to Solomon.

1 Kings 11:24 "And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them [of Zobah]: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus."

Perhaps some of the scattered forces of his master.

"And became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah". Some that escaped enlisted under this man, and lived by plunder the remainder of David's reign, and so in the reign of Solomon unto his old age, when his heart was turned away from God to idols, by his wives.

"And they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus": Rezon and his men went thither, not in David's time, for he put a garrison there (2 Sam. 8:6), but towards the close of Solomon's days, and when Hadad set up in Edom. Which gave him the hint to do the same at Damascus, of which he became king, and was the founder of that kingdom. After him there was a long race of kings there.

David had defeated Damascus, just before Rezon took over and set himself up as king.

1 Kings 11:25 "And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad [did]: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria."

Not all the days of his life (see 1 Kings 5:4), but all his days, from his first going into idolatry, to the end of his life.

"Beside the mischief that Hadad did": And which, whatever it was, was not done till this time. For either, when he got leave from Pharaoh to go into his country, he lay hid there, waiting an opportunity to seize upon it. Or by means of Pharaoh he got himself to be king of it, through the permission of Solomon, paying a tribute to him. But when Solomon was grown old, he revolted and refused to pay it, and rebelled against him, and gave him much trouble.

"And he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria": Not Hadad, but Rezon. He had an aversion to them, was a thorn in their side. And gave them much trouble, as well as had them in contempt, and bid them defiance, having made himself not only master of Damascus, but of all Syria.

Both Hadad and Rezon hated Israel, and particularly Solomon. Rezon ruled over Syria at the time he harassed Solomon.

Verses 26-40: "Jeroboam", one of Solomon's servants, led a revolt against Solomon's administration until his banishment to Egypt. Jeroboam's actions, which were consequences of Solomon's divided heart, led to the division of "the kingdom" of Israel (11:11-13; 12:2-19).

Ahijah" the prophet demonstrated this division by tearing his own "new garment" in 12 "pieces", giving 10 to Jeroboam and leaving Solomon with "one tribe", Judah (11:32). Judah and Benjamin were often regarded as one and referred to as Judah.

1 Kings 11:26 "And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name [was] Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up [his] hand against the king."

Solomon's third adversary was "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat," an Ephrathite with distinct leadership qualities (verses 27-28).

In contrast to Hadad and Rezon, who were external adversaries of Solomon, God raised up Jeroboam from a town in Ephraim as an internal adversary. Jeroboam was from Ephraim, the leading tribe of Israel's northern 10 tribes. He was a young man of talent and energy who, having been appointed by Solomon as leader over the building works around Jerusalem, rose to public notice.

This is the beginning of the fulfillment of the servant taking over the kingdom. Ephraim was always in opposition to Judah. We see that he was indeed, the servant of Solomon. The name "Jeroboam" means "whose people are many".

1 Kings 11:27 "And this [was] the cause that he lifted up [his] hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, [and] repaired the breaches of the city of David his father."

For “Millo (see the note on 2 Sam. 5:9). For the *corvee* (or forced labor; see the note on 5:13-14).

This was one of the cities that Solomon built, during the 20 years of building he did. It appears; he built a wall around the city to ward off invaders. Jeroboam was opposed to the building of the wall.

1 Kings 11:28 "And the man Jeroboam [was] a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph."

He was a man of great strength of body and great mental and emotional strength of mind.

"And Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious": In what he was set about in the above buildings and repairs.

"He made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph": the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, to be a prince or a deputy governor of them. Or rather to collect the king's tax from them, or the revenues of that part of the country (see Prov. 22:29).

“Charge” (forced labor; see note on 5:13).

It appears Solomon was unaware that Jeroboam was opposed to him, and made him ruler over the house of Joseph. He was industrious and a good fighter and Solomon thought he was loyal.

Verses 29-31: “Although “the prophet Ahijah” predicted the division of the “kingdom” (verses 35, 37), and Jeroboam’s kingship over the northern “ten” tribes, he would later pronounce judgment against the house of Jeroboam (14:2-16).

1 Kings 11:29 "And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two [were] alone in the field:"

“Ahijah the Shilonite”: Ahijah was a prophet of the Lord who lived in Shiloh, a town in Ephraim about 20 miles north of Jerusalem (see note on 1 Sam. 1:3).

Verses 30-32: Here is a monumental prophecy that because of Solomon’s sins the kingdom would be divided and Jeroboam would rule in the northern area (verses 35-37).

1 Kings 11:30 "And Ahijah caught the new garment that [was] on him, and rent it [in] twelve pieces:"

This looks as if it was Jeroboam's garment, having got a new one to appear before the king in; though the sense may be this, that the prophet took hold of his own garment that was upon himself.

"And rent it in twelve pieces": As symbolical of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jeroboam had on his new garment, denoting his elevated office that Solomon had given him. It appears that the prophet, Nathan, is dead at this time and Ahijah becomes active as a prophet. We know that the twelve pieces of the garment symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel. "Him" being torn apart symbolizes the separation of the tribes into fragments.

1 Kings 11:31 "And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee:"

Of the twelve, an emblem of the ten tribes he was to have.

"For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon": That is, out of his family.

"And will give ten tribes unto thee": To rule over.

The ten tribes are all, except Judah and Benjamin. The ten pieces that he takes shows that the ten tribes will be in the hands of Jeroboam. Solomon had offended God, and God will take the kingdom from him.

1 Kings 11:32 "(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:)"

"One tribe": (verses 13, 36), probably means Judah plus one other. That second tribe has been variously understood as either Benjamin or Simeon (see the note on 12:20).

The one tribe he is speaking of is Judah, where the city of Jerusalem is and the tribe that Jesus will be from. Benjamin and Judah both control Jerusalem, so that is why they both make up the tribe of Judah. The only reason that God had spared Judah, is because of His love for David. He also wanted to spare Jerusalem, the holy city.

1 Kings 11:33 "Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do [that which is] right in mine eyes, and [to keep] my statutes and my judgments, as [did] David his father."

My worship (as the Targum), both Solomon and the children of Israel following this example; which is not to be wondered at, considering how prone they always were to idolatry.

"And have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon": Of which are their deities (see 1 Kings 11:5, 11:7).

"And have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father": The several laws of God relating to religious worship especially, which David was a strict observer of; and therefore Solomon, having such a pattern before him, was the more blameworthy.

(See notes on 11:5, 7).

One of the reasons the prophet mentions this again, is to remind Jeroboam that they had better not fall into this same evil sin. God still loves David and reminds them that David never stopped loving God.

1 Kings 11:34 "Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes:"

Not any part of it (1 Kings 11:12).

"But I will make him prince all the days of his life": That is, he shall continue to hold the government of all the tribes so long as he lives.

"For David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes" (see 1 Kings 11:12)). Or was well pleased with, as the Targum. For keeping the commands of God from right principles, and with right views, is well pleasing to him.

Solomon would remain prince as long as he lived, because God was showing favor to David. As we said before, David sinned but he never stopped wanting to be obedient to God in his heart.

1 Kings 11:35 "But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, [even] ten tribes."

All but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

"And will give it unto thee, even ten tribes": Signified by ten pieces of the rent garment he had given him (1 Kings 11:31).

1 Kings 11:36 "And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there."

"Have a light always before me": A lighted lamp represented the life of an individual (Job 18:6; Psalm 132:17). God promised that from the tribe of Judah, David would continue to have descendants ruling in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 21:17; 1 Kings 15:4; 2 Kings 8:19).

Davidic kings were to shine as a “lamp” among the nations. Similarly (Revelation Chapter 1), speaks of the lampstands representing the church and her shining witness to the world (Matt. 5:14-16).

The light spoken of was more like a coal at this point. The Light of all the world will come through the tribe of Judah in just a few years. Jesus is the Light of the world. God never breaks his covenant.

1 Kings 11:37 "And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel."

From the low estate in which he was, to being king.

"And thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth": He being ambitious of the kingdom, and having already formed in his mind some designs upon it.

"And shall be king over Israel": The ten tribes.

At the time this verse is speaking of, there were no more twelve tribes of Israel. There were ten tribes of Israel and two of Judah. Jeroboam had desired to be king of Israel. Now, he will have his wish.

Verses 38-39: Although Jeroboam is given a great opportunity to have a strong kingdom and good success if he would but serve the Lord. Nevertheless, he was informed beforehand that his kingdom, which he would found, would not last forever. God would remain true to the Davidic covenant. Although the “house” of David must be punished when it is disobedient, it will ultimately reign (Gen. 49:10), through that One to whom the kingdom belongs.

1 Kings 11:38 "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."

“If thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee”: The Lord gave to Jeroboam the same promise that He had made to David, an enduring royal dynasty over Israel, the 10 northern tribes, if he obeyed God’s law. The Lord imposed on Jeroboam the same conditions for his kingship that He had imposed on David (2:3-4; 3:14).

Jeroboam had a chance to be great and be over the ten tribes of Israel. God had offered him the same thing He offered Solomon. God wants him to keep his commandments. God offered him the opportunity to be a king with a sure house.

1 Kings 11:39 "And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever."

“But not for ever”: This statement implied that the kingdom’s division was not to be permanent and that David’s house would ultimately rule all the tribes of Israel again (Ezek. 37:15-28).

The chastisement that the LORD sends on Solomon will not be forever. In Jesus Christ, the everlasting kingdom will be set up.

1 Kings 11:40 "Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."

“Sought ... to kill Jeroboam”: Though the prophecy was private (verse 29), the king heard about it and Jeroboam became a marked man, guilty in Solomon’s eyes of rebellion and worthy of the death penalty.

“Shishak”: Shishak was the founder of the 22nd dynasty in Egypt. He reigned 945-924 B.C. He invaded Judah during the reign of Rehoboam (14:25-26).

“Jeroboam” probably attempted to hasten the implementation of the prophecy, thus incurring Solomon’s wrath.

“Shishak”: was Pharaoh Sheshonq I (945-924 B.C.), of Egypt’s Twenty second Dynasty (see the note on 14:25-26).

It would be impossible for Solomon not to find out about this. Solomon would try to kill Jeroboam so that he would not take over as king of Israel. Solomon is still very powerful at this time. Jeroboam runs to Egypt for safety. Shishak gives refuge to Jeroboam. Jeroboam remains in Egypt until Solomon dies.

1 Kings 11:41 "And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, [are] they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?"

Either written by himself, as Kimchi suggests, though not in being; or by some chronologer or historiographer employed by him in writing the most memorable things that happened in his reign. Or by several prophets (as in 2 Chronicles 9:29), out of which the inspired writer of this book took what he was directed to by the Lord to be transmitted to future ages.

2 Chron. 9:29 "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, [are] they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?"

These books are unknown for the Christian. We will not assume things we are not sure of.

1 Kings 11:42 "And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel [was] forty years."

“Forty years”: 971-931 B.C.

The number "40" symbolizes a time of testing. I will not make any assumptions, but it is interesting to me that Saul reigned 40 years, David reigned 40 years, and Solomon reigned 40 years. The 40 year reign of Solomon was one of the most spectacular of all history. Riches, fame, and worldly wisdom do not put you in right standing with God. All He ever wanted was for His people to love Him, and keep His commandments.

1 Kings 11:43 "And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead."

Died as they did.

"And was buried in the city of David his father": Not in Bethlehem, but Zion (1 Kings 2:10).

"And Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead": Of whom more in the following chapter. Though nothing is said of Solomon's repentance, there is no doubt but he was a good man, repented of his sins, and was saved": As may be concluded from the commendations of him after his death (2 Chron. 11:17). From the promise of God that he made, that his mercy should not depart from him, though he chastised him (2 Sam. 7:14), and from his being an inspired writer, who were all holy men (2 Peter 1:20). Especially from his writing the book of Ecclesiastes after his fall that contains a full acknowledgment of all his evils, a recantation of them, and repentance for them.

We are not told exactly how old Solomon was, when he died. I do not believe he lived to be very old however. We do not hear of him dying in his old age. He was buried in a tomb of honor with his father David in Jerusalem. Rehoboam ruled over Judah and Benjamin which was called Judah.

1 Kings Chapter 11 Continued Questions

1. Who was the adversary God stirred up, mentioned in verse 23?
2. Where did he reign?
3. How long was he an adversary of Israel?
4. Jeroboam the son of _____.
5. What tribe was he from?
6. Why was he an enemy of Solomon?
7. What kind of man was Jeroboam?
8. How many years was Solomon building?
9. What prophet searched out Jeroboam?

10. What did he do with Jeroboam's new garment?
11. How many pieces would Jeroboam take?
12. Why was the tribe of Judah saved out separately?
13. What was God so angry with them about?
14. Why would Solomon remain prince for as long as he lived?
15. What would David always have in Jerusalem?
16. What promise did the LORD make to Jeroboam?
17. In _____, the everlasting kingdom will be set up.
18. Where are the rest of the acts of Solomon written?
19. How long did Solomon reign?
20. Where did he reign?
21. What does the number "40" symbolize?
22. How long did Saul reign?
23. How long did David reign?
24. Where was Solomon buried?