

Jeroboam

Jeroboam was an Ephraimite, son of Nebat from Zeredah and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

1 Kings 11:28 [New King James] *“The man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him the officer over all the labour force of the house of Joseph.”*

Jeroboam’s natural leadership skills attracted the attention of King Solomon.

God contacted Jeroboam through the prophet Ahijah who told him certain things about how God would be using him in the future to punish Solomon who had allowed his many foreign wives to turn him away from worshipping the true Creator God, [1 Kings 11:1-13].

1 Kings 11:29-39 [New King James] *“Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. And he said to Jeroboam, ‘Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: “Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My statutes and My judgments, as did his father David. However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son’s hand and give it to you, ten tribes. And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do what is right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then I will be with you and build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.”’”*

This was a clear message from God with clear warning that for Jeroboam to inherit the ten tribes of Israel he would have to obey and worship the true God as King David did.

When Solomon heard of this prophecy he tried to kill Jeroboam but he fled to Egypt until the death of Solomon, [1 Kings 11:40].

When Rehoboam, Solomon’s heir, took the throne, Jeroboam returned and represented the people who had lived under the oppressive rule of Solomon.

1 Kings 12:1-4 [New King James] *“And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was still in Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.’”*

The complaint of the people was presented to the new king, Rehoboam.

1 Kings 12:5-15 [New King James] *“So he said to them, ‘Depart for three days, then come back to me.’ And the people departed. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father*

Solomon while he still lived, and he said, 'How do you advise me to answer these people?' And they spoke to him, saying, 'If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.' But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. And he said to them, 'What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, "Lighten the yoke which your father put on us"?' Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, 'Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, "Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on us," thus you shall say to them: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!"' So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, 'Come back to me the third day.' Then the king answered the people roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, 'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!' So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the LORD, that He might fulfil His word, which the LORD had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat."

Rehoboam took the poor advice of his own young inexperienced generation as God expected and prompted, so that what He had prophesied through Ahijah would be fulfilled.

The Christian Bible has many clear warnings given to people in different generations that were ignored by the people receiving them.

Their disobedience was not because they did not understand the message, rather it grew out of stubborn selfishness.

Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam were examples of this all-too-human trait.

Only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to David's dynasty and Rehoboam, the other ten tribes made Jeroboam king, [1 Kings 12:16-19].

Jeroboam rather than seeing this fulfilment of God's promise as motivation to obey the true Creator God, Jeroboam led his kingdom away from the true Creator God, ignoring the warning he had received of this action, that his family would eventually be wiped out.

Jeroboam also set in motion events that would lead to the enslavement of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Rehoboam's attempt to stop this rebellion of the ten tribes failed and he returned to Jerusalem with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, [1 Kings 12:22-24].

1 Kings 12:25-33 [New King James] *"Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.' Therefore the king asked advice, made two calves of gold, and said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!' And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan. He made shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi. Jeroboam ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the feast that was in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had devised in his own heart. And he ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense."*

In fear of the people returning to Jerusalem to worship the God they knew, Jeroboam, ignoring God's warning, set up alternative pagan sites where the people could worship.

Sin's consequences are guaranteed in God's Word, the Christian Bible, but the timing of the consequences is hard to predict. Such a delay may make us assume we have got away with the disobedience, [Ecclesiastes 8:11].

We all have God's warning about the consequences of sin, what sin is and how we can avoid the deadly consequences that sin will eventually bring, in the lives of many people recorded for us in God's Word, the Christian Bible.

Please do not ignore this warning and confront, confess to God and seek His forgiveness of any sins we may have as they are clearly shown to us.