

1 Kings 12

The Revolt Against Rehoboam

¹ And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. ² 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), ³ that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, ⁴ “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 Lord Jesus says: "for my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30)
- The people are asking for something good! Maybe they couldn't talk to Solomon in his old age, and in his political environment. They aren't coming in with a revolt or a protest, but with a request; with an intention to serve him as their king.
- Some people think that if they appease anyone, then they'll be over you or they'll run you... the request of the people is not wrong unless it is against the command of God
- If someone asks something of you and you say "okay" or "of course" (min 3enaya) does that show weakness? Definitely not!
- King Rehoboam will seek the advice of the elders and the advice of his friends.

⁵ So he said to them, “Depart *for* three days, then come back to me.” And the people departed.

- So far, he has acted wisely - he isn't going to make a big decision on the spot... to take time and study the situation is wisdom. I'll get back to you, let me think and let you know, let me pray about it, etc.

⁶ 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?”

- So far, he has acted wisely - asking the elders and the wise men is good!

⁷ 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.”

- Wisdom!
- If you serve the people, they will serve you. If you love them, they will love you. If you put yourself under them, they will raise you to be over them.
 - The Lord Jesus said the same: "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave" (Matthew 20:26-27)

- "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:4)
- "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be [c]humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:8)
- "So the last will be first, and the first last." (Matthew 20:16)
- This is an important message for servants
 - Our service is not top-down
 - St Mary said: "He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, And exalted *the* lowly." (Luke 1:52)
 - The Lord Jesus Christ, King of Glory, sat at the feet of His disciples and washed their feet
 - Whoever takes the service as authority, title and glory - people's hearts are closed to him. Whoever takes his service as washing the people's feet, putting himself under them, the people's hearts are opened to him and they follow him
 - The servant should examine himself - am I before them or after them? Am I above them, or am I below them? Am I enduring them, or are they enduring me? Am I serving them or am I expecting them to serve me?
- This advice was a prophecy about the King of Kings
 - "but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men." (Philippians 2:7)
- Rehoboam did not like this advice - how could I, a king, be a servant? Did I become king just so I could be a servant?
 - Some people cannot withstand a WORD
 - King Saul could not stand the words sung about King David - Saul has slain his thousands and David his myriads
 - Although he started with wisdom of waiting to make a decision, and the wisdom of seeking the advice of the elders, he fell
 - (Notice that he rejected the advice of the elders BEFORE consulting the young men)

⁸ 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. ⁹ 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?'"

¹⁰ 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!

¹¹ 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!' "

- The words of youth who have no experience, no responsibility, no maturity, no wisdom, no purpose, "fighting words", etc. Are these words even realistic? Can you compare yourself to the great King Solomon? That the world admired? Will you compare yourself to him on day 1 of your kingship?
- Pride is the enemy of wisdom, and cultivating the virtue of humility brings with it wisdom

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." ¹³ Then the king answered the people ^[c]roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; ¹⁴ 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 ^[d]scourges!" ¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from the Lord, that He might fulfill His word, which the Lord had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

¹⁶ Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
 To your tents, O Israel!
 Now, see to your own house, O David!"

So Israel departed to their tents. ¹⁷ But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

¹⁸ Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

²⁰ Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

²¹ And when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. ²² But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ²³ "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, ²⁴ 'Thus says the Lord: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they obeyed the word of the Lord, and turned back, according to the word of the Lord.

Jeroboam's Gold Calves

²⁵ Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built Penuel. ²⁶ And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: ²⁷ 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.”

²⁸ 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!” ²⁹ And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. ³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. ³¹ He made ^[r]shrines on the high places, and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

³² 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. ³³ 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 ^[h]ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and burned incense.

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