

**I KINGS**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Kings chapter 12 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we concluded last time we saw the end of Solomon's forty year reign as king in Israel and now his son Rehoboam is the king. And this is not going to be a good thing. We are going to see brethren divided, the nation split into the Southern Kingdom of Judah under the reign of Rehoboam and the Northern Kingdom of Israel under the reign of Jeroboam. A nation that was united under king Saul, king David and king Solomon is going to divide and it will remain that way until they return home from their captivity! So with that said, let's begin reading in I Kings chapter 12, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**I KINGS 12****VERSE 1**

1. Solomon has died and his son Rehoboam goes to Shechem, about 20 miles to the north of Jerusalem, to be anointed as king over Israel. Keep in mind that Shechem was in the heart of the land and much history had taken place in this area. Remember that it was in Shechem that God told Abraham that his descendants would dwell in this land, Genesis 12:6. It is the place where Jacob first pitched his tent in the land of Canaan, after leaving his uncle Laban's house, Genesis 33:18-20. It was in Shechem that the children of Israel stood as some of the priests stood on Mount Gerizim and shouted the blessings of God for obedience, while the other priests stood on Mount Ebal and shouted out the cursing's for disobedience, Deuteronomy 27:11-26, 28:1-68, Joshua 8:30-35. It is where Joshua gave his farewell address to the nation, encouraging them to follow after the Lord, Joshua 24:1-28. And it is the place that David was anointed king over all of Israel, II Samuel 5:1-4. Shechem reminded the children of Israel that God has established this nation and they will stand in His strength, not because of their faithfulness, but because of God's! Thus, it just made sense that Rehoboam; the new king would go to Shechem to be anointed as their leader!

VERSES 2-5

1. As this celebration is going on Jeroboam returns from Egypt. We read about him back in I Kings 11:26-40 as God told him through a prophet, Ahijah, that he would rule over 10 of the 12 tribes in Israel, that there would be a divided kingdom. But Solomon caught wind of what was going on, even though this was the will of God, and he went after Jeroboam, so he fled to Egypt. Now that Solomon has died he returns to Israel and he has a huge following of people who are frustrated with the high taxes and forced labor and thus, at this celebration they, through Jeroboam, ask to have the taxes and this heavy labor force that Solomon has imposed, reduced. And as Rehoboam hears what they have to say he wants three days to think about it and then he will make his decision on this matter. It is wise to not rush to a decision, over react, act in haste, but to think it over, bring it before the Lord, seek counsel. But for Rehoboam, that is about as far as his wisdom will go, as we will see.

2. What I find interesting is that they are complaining about the taxes but there is nothing mentioned about spiritual issues. They were more concerned about their earthly comfort than with the kingdom of God. Don't get me wrong, the taxes were heavy upon the people, but the bigger issue was the apostasy that had entered the land and it does not seem to be an issue.

VERSES 6-7

1. Rehoboam does the right thing here, he consults the elders or counselors of Solomon, wise men and they tell him to ease up, that there is no need to burden these people any more. If you show them kindness they will serve you. This was good advice, but if the good advice is not acted upon, then the person is a fool. Let's see how Rehoboam responds to what these men had to say, their advice to him.

VERSES 8-11

1. Did you notice that even before Rehoboam heard anyone else, he rejected the advice that these elders gave him! Why did he do that? Because he didn't like it so he went shopping for advice that he wanted to hear and once he hears what he really wants to do, he will listen to that advice. I remember some 18 to 20 years ago back in Illinois, at the Calvary Chapel down there, after service someone from the church came up to me with a question. He just finished speaking with one of the other elders on the subject and he now is asking me the same question. What I basically told him was what the other elder said, and he moved on and as I watched he went around to the several elders asking the same question hoping that one of us would give him the response that he wanted to hear, but we didn't! Folks, that is an unwise and ungodly way to get counsel. It is better to have some trusted, mature Christians who will tell you what is right even when it is not what you want to hear!

2. It is as Paul warned Timothy about the days we are living in, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”** II Timothy 4:3-4. People don’t want what is right, they want what they want and that goes for spiritual issues also. Thus, they look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear, fairy tales that make them feel good but is going to bring destruction to their lives.

3. Now Rehoboam turns to his close friends, those he grew up with and they were not young, maybe 30 or 40 years old but they were not going to tell Rehoboam what he needed to hear but what he wanted to hear! They told him to tighten his grip on the people even more than his father Solomon had done. If Solomon’s burden was like a leather whip, yours needs to be like a scourge or a whip that has multiple leather tails with barbed points or metal spikes attached to them. In fact, in the King James Version it reads “scorpions.” In other words, the taxes, the forced labor that Rehoboam places upon the people will be as painful as that of a scorpion sting. It was leadership by intimidation and it was not something that his father Solomon did!

VERSES 12-14

1. So on the third day Jeroboam and the people return to hear what their new king has to say and what the king tells them is not what they wanted to hear. He blasted them and told them that what my father brought upon them was like a love tap and what I am going to bring upon you will be like the sting of a scorpion! He listened to the counsel of the young men, his friends instead of the counsel of the elders, those who served king Solomon and that was truly foolish. And don't think that he was that young, according to what we are told in I Kings 14:21, he was 41 years old! And yet, by his actions, he was acting like a child!

VERSE 15

1. Now as you read this verse you can come to the conclusion that it is not Rehoboam's fault for his foolish actions, for God had planned it all along. **WRONG!** Yes God was judging the nation, dividing the kingdom because of Solomon's idolatry, but that does not negate what Rehoboam did. God just left Rehoboam alone and allowed him to make the critical errors his sinful heart wanted to make and God knew what would take place. You see, God is sovereign and yet the Bible also teaches that we have a responsibility. The sovereignty of God and man's responsibility are diametrically opposed, and even though I may not have a full understanding how they work together, yet God speaks of both in His Word, and I believe it and teach it. We have a responsibility to act according to God's Word and yet God has a plan, His sovereignty that comes shining through.

This is also seen in the life of Judas, who betrayed Jesus and yet, the Bible tells us that this would happen, that His closest friend would betray Jesus, we are told the cost of the betrayal and-so-on, so was it really Judas' fault, can he be held accountable for doing this? Absolutely, he had a choice to make and before the foundations of the world, the Lord knew what he would do!

Spurgeon sums it up for us like this, "Notice also, dear friends, that God is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon's sin and Rehoboam's folly; yet God was in it: 'This thing is from me, saith the Lord.' God had nothing to do with the sin or the folly, but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, God was in it all."

#### VERSES 16-19

1. By the words of Rehoboam, the 10 tribes of Israel see no future with the kings that came from the dynasty of David. Thus, they broke their ties with Judah and departed to their own tents. And this division of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah continued on until the people returned from their Babylonian captivity! So much for this coronation celebration for Rehoboam!

2. Remember that Rehoboam said that they were going to be taxed even more and thus, in this rebellion he is going to stick it to them and he sends his enforcer, Adoram to collect the taxes from these people who are trying to secede or break away from the nation or separate themselves from Judah and the dynasty of David. And Adoram was a tough dude, he was over the forced labor in I Kings 4:6 and 5:14 and thus, Rehoboam sends him out. Well, the people are not going to have anything to do with these taxes if they have separated themselves from the kingdom and thus, they stone Adoram to death! I guess they had enough of taxes! Then, as Rehoboam hears of this, the light goes on and he finally sees that these people mean business and he high-tails it out of there and returns to Jerusalem, about 20 miles south of Shechem.

#### VERSES 20-24

1. Keep in mind that the tribe of Benjamin was a small tribe and assimilated into the tribe of Judah, that is why it is not mentioned at times as being a part of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. But Judah and Benjamin, these two tribes, make Rehoboam king, and once that is accomplished he gathers 180,000 men to go and fight against the other 10 tribes who have rebelled against his authority. Civil war was about to break out, but God steps in and tells Shemaiah to speak to Rehoboam and tell him not to go to war against his brethren. This judgment was from the Lord and Rehoboam listens to the words of Shemaiah, and returned to Jerusalem. And so the nation was now divided with Israel to the north and they will be called Israel or the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Judah to the south and they will be called Judah or the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Just keep that in mind when we read of Israel and Judah, who they are speaking of.

2. Now let me give you some background information about these two kingdoms. We will cover them in greater detail as we go through I & II Kings, but let me give you some basic information regarding these two kingdoms.

First of all, Israel, or the Northern Kingdom, out of its 19 kings, none were good. In fact, they seemed to get worse with each succeeding king. From Jeroboam on they were into idolatry and some 250 to 300 years down the road God was going to bring judgment upon them by the hands of the Assyrians. And so in 721 B.C. they were taken into captivity.

Judah, or the Southern Kingdom, out of the 20 kings they had, 8 were good and brought reform to the nation. But they too would fall into idolatry and about 115 years after the Northern Kingdom went into captivity, the Southern Kingdom fell at the hands of the Babylonians. So this first siege took place in 606 BC, and it was during this time that Nebuchadnezzar found out that his father, Nabopolassar the king had died, and Nebuchadnezzar was going to return to Babylon as the new king of this nation. But before he returned home he took some of the nobles and some of the temple treasures with him. In this siege we see Daniel and his three friends taken captive. Then in 597 BC, during the second siege upon Jerusalem, Ezekiel was taken captive along with some 10,000 others. And then finally, in 586 BC the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, taking the rest of the people captive to Babylon, except for some of the sick, the weak, the elderly, they remained in the land and they were in captivity for 70 years!

Then in 536 B.C., under the reign of Cyrus, he allowed some of the Jews to go back to Jerusalem and with this return there were members from all 12 tribes in Israel and the nation was rebuilt. Back in 70 A. D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem once again and the Jews were dispersed, they were no longer a nation. Then on May 14, 1948, Israel once again became a nation. And they debated if they should be two separate kingdoms and they decided that they should no longer be two nations, but one nation, according to what God had said in Ezekiel 37:21-22. We read “**Then say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: Surely I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again.’**” That is where we are at today, the nation is reborn, a united kingdom and one day, in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ will return to set up His Kingdom and rule and reign from the throne of David, just as the Scriptures tell us!

3. Now, what about this prophet, Shemaiah, how come we don't see God speaking through people like that today? We do, it is that people are not listening or those who are to be speaking are not doing what God has desired them to do. Listen to what Spurgeon has to say regarding this. We are told, "Here is one Shemaiah, - some of you never heard of him before, perhaps you will never hear of him again; he appears once in this history, and then he vanishes; he comes, and he goes, - only fancy this one man constraining to peace a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, warriors ready to fight against the house of Israel, by giving to them in very plain, unpolished words, the simple command of God . . . Why have we not such power? Peradventure, brethren, we do not always speak in the name of the Lord, or speak God's Word as God's Word. If we are simply tellers out of our own thoughts, why should men mind us?" It is as Paul told Timothy, **"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching."** II Timothy 4:2. Thus, as we speak forth the Words of God, we are telling the people what God desires but if we refuse to speak God's Word, then we are giving people what is in our heart, the philosophy of this world, which is empty!

VERSE 25

1. Jeroboam is now the king of the 10 tribes in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Shechem is the capital of this new kingdom! Now, in what Jeroboam is doing, is this of God, will God bless it? Yes, and here is the thing, back in I Kings 11:38 we are told as the prophet Ahijah tells Jeroboam, **“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.”** The problem for Jeroboam is that he is not going to walk in the ways of the Lord, as we will see as we read on, but God did want to bless him, but he needed to walk in obedience and as we will see, he is not going to do that!

VERSES 26-29

1. Jeroboam has a problem, the temple is in Jerusalem, and since they have separated themselves from Judah, they have no place to worship God at. And he came to the conclusion that his own people may rebel against him, kill him, and rejoin their allegiance with Rehoboam. He did not want them traveling to Judah to worship at the temple and be influenced to separate from Jeroboam. He had a good point; the problem was that his actions would go against God’s command. Secondly, he was not a man of faith. God told him that if he walked in the ways of God, that he would be blessed. The people would not rise up against him. If he followed after God, the people would follow after him. How often do we ignore the Words of God because of the situation we are in? That is obviously wrong.

In fact, what Jeroboam did was very foolish. The words of Jeroboam, “It literally says, ‘Therefore the king took counsel of *himself*.’” (Dilday). “The phrase discovers the fountain of his error, that he did not consult with God, who had given him the kingdom; as in all reason, and justice, and gratitude he should have done.” (Poole). May we heed the words of Solomon in Proverbs 3:5-7, “**Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.**” May we do that, trust in the Lord, rest upon Him, acknowledge Him so that he may direct us in our daily walk and not lean upon our own understanding of the situation, because if we refuse to listen, we will make foolish decisions as Jeroboam did!

2. Now what did he do that was so wrong? Instead of obeying God, he sets up these calves of gold, one in Bethel, which is located just north of Jerusalem in the southern part of the kingdom, and one in Dan, in the northern part of the kingdom. Thus, the people would not have to go to the temple to worship God for in the Northern Kingdom Jeroboam set up this golden calf in the northern part of the land and the southern part of the land. These calves were to represent God before the people. Remember that Aaron did the same while Moses was up on Mount Sinai. They were not worshiping another god, but it was *FALSE* worship!

It is as Spurgeon said, “Men are willing to worship God if they are allowed to have a ritual and symbols which they have themselves devised.” How often today people pervert the worship of God because they are worshiping him according to the way they want and Jeroboam is going to find out that God will not accept that kind of worship and will hold the person, the nation accountable who does worship Him outside of Spirit and truth!

3. You see, when people lose the consciousness of God, they use idols or symbols to represent God to them. But God is everywhere and we do not need symbols or idols to represent God to us. Even David made this point in Psalm 139:7-12, **“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me,’ even the night shall be light about me; indeed the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.”** But tragically today we see people worship God with labyrinths, candles, incense, statues, icons, chanting, silence, nature and-so-on, and God does not accept that kind of worship! If you don’t believe that this was wrong, listen to what we are told in the following verses!

VERSES 30-33

1. Not only did Jeroboam think about doing this, but he did it and the people loved it. He had these worship centers in Dan and Bethel but he also had many other worship places, the high places so that they could worship God, making it as convenient as possible for them! We do the same today. We would not call them high places but we do make it as convenient or as easy as possible for people. We have drive-in services, short services that will get you in and out so you don't mess up your day. We also have services that will not offend you nor will they convict you. And the list can go on but I think you see what I mean, we have not learned the lesson from God's Word!

Not only that but Jeroboam made whoever wanted to be a priest a priest, ignoring God's Word that it is from the tribe of Levi that were to be the priests. Now the legitimate priests, those from the tribe of Levi had enough of what was going on and we are told in II Chronicles 11:13-17, "**And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him. For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the Lord. Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made. And after the Levites left, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.**"

So the true believers you might say returned to Jerusalem, including the priests because Jeroboam rejected them because they rejected the idolatry that he was bringing to the Northern Kingdom! And God did bless Judah because their king, Rehoboam walked in the ways of the Lord for three years!

2. Jeroboam was very sincere in his worship, even making his own feast days, but he was sincerely wrong in his actions. On the 15th day of the 7th month was the feast of Tabernacles. But Jeroboam does not celebrate that feast, out of his own heart he comes up with another feast on the 15th day of the 8th month. He had gone outside the Word of God and developed his own form of religious worship, but God does not accept that. Listen to what Paul has to say in Romans 10:2-3. He says, **“For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.”**

We see this even today as religious people; people involved in cults have a zeal for God without knowledge. And this zeal for God is seen as they try to work their way into heaven by doing this and doing that, but you will never enter in by works, only by faith! Our knowledge comes as the Word of God, illuminated by the Spirit of God enables us to walk in holiness before God.

You see, as sincere and devoted as people are to their faith, outside of Christ it is meaningless, you can't do anything that He will accept apart from Him. You see, I can be very sincere and show my devotion to what I believe by driving my car across a bridge, even though the sign says, "**BRIDGE OUT!**" And yet, all that sincerity and devotion will leave me crashing upon the rocks below, it won't save me and the same is true for those that reject Jesus and try to enter in another way!

Let me give you this example and you will see what I mean when I say people love to make up their own religion that fits them and is contrary to God. Listen to what Robert Bellah, author of the sociological study of American life called *The Habits of the Heart* had to say. Bellah says that America has been infected with a virulent virus that he calls "radical individualism." It affects every area of life. People make up their own rules for everything, entirely apart from other people, and as a result they sometimes do terrible things to others. This "radical individualism" is particularly noticeable in religion.

According to a *USA Today* survey, of the 56 percent of Americans who attend church, 46 percent do so because "it is good for you" (that is, "good for *me*"), and 26 percent go because it is where they hope to find "peace of mind and spiritual well-being." Truth—that is, specific doctrine—does not seem important to these people.

Robert Bellah and his colleagues interviewed a young nurse named Sheila Larson, whom they described as representing many Americans' experience and views on religion. Speaking about her own faith and how it operated in her life, she said: "I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It is 'Sheilaism.' Just my own little voice." This "pick-and-choose-as-I-go-along-according-to-my-inner-voice" approach is the modern version of Jeroboam's religion - and in opposition to the *revealed* religion of the Bible.

### **I KINGS 13**

#### **VERSES 1-3**

1. Why did this prophet of God come from Judah to the Northern Kingdom? Because, as it would seem, they did not have a prophet of God in the Northern Kingdom, all the true believers moved back down to Judah! It is as Knapp said, "If Jeroboam would not have Jehovah's priests, God sends his prophet into his land." Thus, as this prophet of God comes before Jeroboam he pronounces judgment upon this place, this altar, for their idolatrous ways. And this is amazing because some 340 years before this prophecy came to pass, God names the man who would bring forth this judgment, Josiah, who was from the Southern Kingdom.

In II Kings chapter 23, we read starting in verse 15, **“Moreover the altar that was at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place and crushed it to powder, and burned the wooden image. As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that were there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned them on the altar, and defiled it according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.”** II Kings 23:15-16. The sign that this was of God was that the altar would split apart causing the ashes to fall to the ground. Did this come to pass, this splitting of the altar and the ashes falling to the ground? Let’s read on and see.

#### VERSES 4-5

1. As you can well imagine, Jeroboam did not appreciate what this prophet had to say and calls for his arrest as he points his finger of authority at him. But his authority is meaningless before God and it withers away, it just froze in that position. And just as the prophet had said, the altar splits in two!

VERSE 6

1. Jeroboam is living in rebellion against God, and thus suffers the consequences for that rebellion. When that happens he goes to the man of God and asks for prayer. He does not speak of the Lord as his God but the God of this prophet, which tells me he did not have a relationship with God. How many people do that today. They are living contrary to the way God has said, and yet when everything falls apart around them, they are asking for prayer, not for repentance of their sin, just that the consequences would be removed! That was Jeroboam; there was no true repentance on his part. How do I know that? Because when you look at his life, it is clear that he did not return to the Lord!

VERSES 7-10

1. You have to understand the culture to see what Jeroboam was doing here. If you ate with someone, you were one with that person, in fellowship and agreement with them. Thus, Jeroboam wanted this prophet to eat with him showing that his words were of no meaning and they were in agreement with each other. In other words, he would be condoning Jeroboam's actions instead of rebuking him. So this prophet refuses to eat with him. Now, if there was repentance on Jeroboam's part, I believe God would have allowed him to eat with Jeroboam, but there wasn't and thus, this prophet went away! He obeyed the Words of God instead of the words of men!

2. Paul, In I Corinthians chapter 5, is saying the same thing. We are not to fellowship with brothers or sisters in the Lord that are living in sin and refuse to repent, to change their ways. If we did we would be saying that we were in agreement with what they were doing or condoning what they were doing. Yes it is difficult but it is what needs to be done if we love them and want them to repent and return to the Lord!

### VERSES 11-19

1. Was the old prophet a man of God? I believe so but even a man of God can depart from the ways of God as this prophet did. This old prophet gets this other prophet to compromise what God had told him to do by lying to him. Let me say this, if God has convicted your heart in a certain area, don't let someone else convince you otherwise. Pray about it and if God wants you to do something else, He will speak to your heart about it. And please understand that God is not going to contradict Himself! F. B. Meyer wrote this, "When we have received a direct command fresh from the lips of Christ, we must act on it, and not be turned aside by a different suggestion, made to us through the lips of professing Christians . . . Deal with God at first-hand." And G. Campbell Morgan wrote, "God never contradicts Himself in His dealings with His servants. Let us be true to His commands, refusing to be deflected from the path of obedience, even by an angel from heaven." Keep in mind that the demons can transform themselves into angels of light and thus, God's Word needs to be our guidebook in all that we do!

VERSES 20-22

1. This old prophet who lied now hears from God and the words he hears are judgment upon this young prophet who disobeyed the Lord! His body will lie away from his family and it was a disgrace to be buried away from your own family and among strangers!

There are consequences for disobedience as this young prophet found out. Adam Clarke said this regarding what took place here, “By permitting himself to be seduced by the old prophet, when he should have acted only on the expressly declared counsel of God, he committed *the sin unto death* [1 John 5:16-17]; that is, such a sin as God will punish with the death of the body, while he extends mercy to his soul.” We need to heed the Words of God, be obedient to Him; it is what is best for our lives!

VERSES 23-28

1. There were lions in Palestine at least until the 13th century A. D. And as this prophet leaves, a lion attacks him and kills him. But there is something strange about all this, a lion would not only kill his prey, but he would eat it also. And the donkey that was standing there, he would have for dessert. But here we see the judgment of God upon this prophet, as evidenced by this lion just watching over the body.

VERSES 29-32

1. Now what can we learn from all this? It is not a very encouraging section when you think about it. This man of God obeyed the Lord in speaking to Jeroboam but then disobeyed the Lord later on by going to this old prophet's house. And when you think about it, is that fair? Yes it is fair because God already said not to go there and thus, what we see here are a couple of important spiritual principles. First of all, the more you receive from God, the more is required of you. This prophet had received much from the Lord and thus God dealt with him more severely.

Secondly, God never changes His mind and it doesn't matter if an angel from heaven told you something or not. If it is contrary to God's Word, then it is not of God. Listen to what Isaiah is told in Isaiah 8:19-20. We read "**And when they say to you, 'Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,' should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.**"

We as Christians better heed the warnings of God and listen to what He has to say. We must be obedient to His Word, rather than to what man has to say. You are responsible to listen and obey God's Word, for there are consequences for our disobedience. There are many people who claim to be speaking for God and yet, what they have to say is contrary to what God has said in His Word! May we listen to God as He speaks to us by His Word empowered by His Spirit!

VERSES 33-34

1. For a man that God gave such potential to be blessed, he fell far short and lead the nation into idolatry, from which they would never recover from. He did what was right in his own eyes, and even though he was sincere, he was wrong! In fact, at the end of this kingdom, the Northern Kingdom of Israel, listen to what God had to say about it and the reason for its fall. In II Kings 17:21-23 we are told, **“For He tore Israel from the house of David, and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the Lord, and made them commit a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.”** He led the nation away from God and they never returned to God until after the captivity!

2. Let me close this evening with these words from J. Vernon McGee. He wrote,

My Christian friend, many believers are supporting organizations that they are not sure are sound. If you don't know whether or not a ministry is giving out the Word of God, you ought to check into it. It is important, and God will hold you responsible for how you invest your money. These are evil days in which we live. They were evil days during the time of Jeroboam, and this prophet was not about to stay and have lunch with the king. He refused to become involved with him.

However, in the next several verses we find that he was deceived by another prophet into disobeying the Lord and suffered the sad consequences. Although he was wary of association with an idolatrous king, he was deceived by a man who claimed to have counter directions from God. My friend, when the church of God today gets involved in the things of the world and makes all kinds of compromises, it is a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God. We are living in days that are much like Jeroboam's, and we need to exercise the same caution and discernment that was needed then by God's man.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. II, p. 276

May we learn our lessons that God is teaching us and walk in His ways, for it is what is best for our lives!