

### Plan and Purpose Bible Lesson #III-37—I Kings 9-15; II Chron. 8-13

According to I Kings 9 and II Chron. 8 King Solomon spent the first 20 years of his 40 year reign building the temple and his own house. He was a builder. When he had finished with the temple and his own house, he built several cities. Some of these cities were for storage of food stuff, some were for defense called chariot cities and others apparently built along trade routes to facilitate trade. He and Hiram joined forces and sent a combined navy from the Gulf of Aqaba to Ophir from where they brought back gold, precious stones and almug (or alium) trees. We don't know for sure where Ophir was, but the most likely place is probably a location in India that is 60 miles north of current day Bombay. It took three years, or possibly one full year and parts of two other years, to make a round trip. We're told in I Kings that they brought back 420 talents of gold, II Chron. gives the amount as 450 talents. According to my Bible Dictionary, a talent was 66 pounds 2.2 ounces. 420 talents would be 27,778.80 lbs.

While gold and silver are greatly desired today as a measurement of wealth, II Chron. 9:27 tells us, **“And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the low plains in abundance.”** Verse 13 tells us that the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents, or 44,049.24 lbs.

I Kings 10 and II Chron. 9 relates the story of the Queen of Sheba coming to Solomon to see for herself if what she had heard of his wisdom was actually true. (Read II Chron. 9:1-9) Again, it is not known for sure where Sheba was, but it is generally accepted that it was in southern Arabia, most likely what is today Yemen geographically. If you recall when we discussed the fact that Moses' wife was called an Ethiopian, we determined that Ethiopia of that day was basically Arabia. The New Bible Dictionary says of her, *“This queen is enshrined in Ethiopian legends...as the Queen of Ethiopia, who bore by Solomon the first king of Ethiopia. This legend reflects the close tie which existed in antiquity between S. Arabia and E. Africa, which Josephus also notes when he calls this ruler ‘Queen of Egypt and Ethiopia. Arabian legends remember her as Billqis.”* If this is the true location, her trip would have been about 1200 miles one way.

Up to this point, the only wife of Solomon mentioned is the daughter of the Pharaoh who Solomon built a special part of his house for. However, I Kings 11 tells us of Solomon's one failing, a failing that brought a judgment from God on Solomon. (Read I Kings 11:1-13) It is important that we remember this judgment from God as we continue our story.

It is relatively easy to look back from our perspective and see how God works to bring his plan, the promises to Abraham, to fruition, yet it is somewhat difficult to understand that God in His sovereignty causes things to happen that His plan is fulfilled. As we look at the big picture, God is getting ready to divide His Kingdom, Israel, so that one division will end up in captivity that will give God lawful cause to redeem them through His Son Jesus Christ that He in turn can redeem the whole world. All of this is in answer to His promises to Abraham.

As we continue to read in I Kings 11, we read that God stirred up a couple of adversaries to Solomon, one from Edom, Hadad, and one from Zobah, Rezon. We're told that they were adversaries of Solomon all of Solomon's life.

Starting with verse 26 we also find an adversary from within Israel. (Read I Kings 11:26-40)

Finally we are told that Solomon died and slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father. Rehoboam, his son, then reigned in his stead.

(Read I Kings 12:1-24) So we see that though Solomon had basically caused this division, the division is part of God's plan. The kingdom of Israel is now two kingdoms with Rehoboam, son of Solomon ruling over Judah and Benjamin and Jeroboam ruling over the other ten tribes with the tribe of Levi divided between them.

Jeroboam then makes a major mistake. (Read I Kings 12:26-33) Because Jeroboam had done this, God sent a man out of Judah to condemn what Jeroboam was doing. (Read I Kings 13:1-10) The fulfillment of the prophecy of this man of God is found in II Kings 23 which we will study later.

As we try to look at both the books of the Kings and that of II Chronicles I might point out that both have basically the same story except that the books of the Kings relates more of what is happening in Israel as well as Judah while II Chronicles deals primarily the kings of Judah, the descendants of David. So we will follow the books of the Kings the most closely so that we get the complete story. However, on the chart of the kings that I have prepared, I have relied on the timing as given in II Chronicles as I believe it to be the most accurate.

To continue our story, the man of God from Judah returned another way after refusing to eat with King Jeroboam. A strange thing then happened that I am not sure why God brought it about. (Read II Kings 13:11-32)

Jeroboam then made priests of lower level people to his altar and to the golden calves that he had set up in Israel and cast out the Levites and the Levitical priests. As a result, many of the priests and Levites that he had cast out went to Judah. What Jeroboam did in making the golden calves and the altar determined that his house would be cut off the face of the earth.

It is hard to emphasize enough the importance of what has happened here, yet many preachers aren't even aware of it and certainly most people are not cognizant of it. While there were some individuals from Israel in Judah and vice versa, the division of the kingdom of Israel into two separate kingdoms has had significant effect on world history from that time until now. As we continue to study the Bible, with the exception of when the various authors of Scripture are either referring to Israel before this division or are speaking of the time after the return of Christ, when the term Israel, Ephraim, or Northern Kingdom is used, the author is speaking of this northern 10 tribed kingdom of Israel. When the term Judah or the Southern Kingdom is used, it is referring to the 2 tribed kingdom of Judah. The various authors do not use these terms interchangeably. The two kingdoms have separate destinies. One, the kingdom of Israel, has the birthright while the other, the kingdom of Judah, has the dominion part of the blessings that Jacob gave to his sons before his death. As such, Judah has the responsibility to bring forth the Messiah, the King of Kings. The other, Israel, has the responsibility to bring forth the kingdom. From this point on, though sometimes it will be difficult to determine just what they are supposed to do, we will see that they are to go separate ways to accomplish their assigned tasks and they do not come back together until Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, establishes His kingdom on the earth.

The first fulfillment of God's judgment on Jeroboam is found in I Kings 14:1-20 (Read).

We want to try to keep up with both kingdoms at the same time as best we can. In II Chron. 11 we're told that Rehoboam married 18 wives and had 60 concubines. However, his favorite wife was Maachah, the daughter of Absalom who bore him 4 sons, the oldest of which was Abijah whom Rehoboam made the chief ruler among his brethren as it was Rehoboam's intent to make him king.

Chapter 12 tells us that in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem because the kingdom of Judah had transgressed against the LORD. He took several of the fortified cities of Judah and headed toward Jerusalem. God sent Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah to tell them that the reason Shishak had come up against them was because they had forsaken the LORD. Upon hearing this, the king and his princes humbled themselves before the LORD. Because they humbled themselves, God promised that He would not allow Shishak to destroy them, but they would still be Shishak's servants **"that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."** (II Chron. 12:8) So Shishak returned to Egypt, but he took with him much of the gold that Solomon had used in building the temple and the things in it.

Rehoboam reigned 17 years in Jerusalem. We're told that he did evil in the sight of God, **"because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD."** (II Chron. 12:14) Then we're told that Rehoboam slept with his fathers and Abijah his son reigned in his stead.

Abijah began his reign in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam and he reigned 3 years. As with Rehoboam, there continued to be wars between Jeroboam and Abijah. We're told in II Chron. 13 that Jeroboam brought 800,000 chosen men against Abijah's 400,000 chosen men. (Read II Chron. 13:4-12) Jeroboam tried to ambush Abijah by sending part of his army to come up behind the men of Judah as well as in front of them. Because the men of Judah relied on God, God smote the men of Israel before Abijah so that 500,000 men of Israel fell before Abijah and he captured several cities of Israel as he pursued after the men of Israel. Jeroboam never recovered his strength after this battle and he died after reigning in Israel for 22 years.

Though we see that Abijah relied on God for this battle against Jeroboam, we're told in I Kings 15:3, **"And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father."** However, we see the unconditional promise that God made to David come into play. Vs 4 tells us, **"Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem."**

Abijah died and his son, Asa, began to reign in Jerusalem in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Jeroboam and Asa reigned for 41 years in Jerusalem. II Chron. 14 tells us that the land was quiet for 10 years after Asa came to the throne and that Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. He took away the altars to strange gods, broke down their images and cut down the groves. He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to do the law and the commandment.

He had an army of 780,000 men. Zerah of Ethiopia came up against him with 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots. When Asa took his army out against Zerah he cried to the LORD for help and God heard his cry and smote the Ethiopians before Asa and the Ethiopians fled. Asa and his army pursued after them and took very much spoil. As they returned from the battle, the Spirit of God came upon Azariah, the son of Oded the prophet and he met Asa and told him that the LORD would be with him so long as he was with the LORD. Upon hearing this Asa renewed his efforts to rid the land of idols, and offered an offering of the spoil that they had brought back from pursuing the Ethiopians. The people of Judah entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul. Whosoever would not do this was to be put to death. Asa even removed his mother from being queen because she had made an idol in a grove. The people then lived in peace until in the 36<sup>th</sup> year of Asa's reign, Baasha, king of Israel came up against Judah and started the construction of the city of Ramah with the intent that they would be able to stop anyone from going out or coming in to Asa, king

of Judah. I think there may be a translation error in that I believe it should be the 26<sup>th</sup> year of Asa that Baasha came against Judah.

Before going on with our story, we need to back up to see what happened in Israel when Jeroboam died. 1 Kings 15 tells us that Nadab, the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of Asa, king of Judah. He walked in the evil ways of his father and in his sin, he made Israel to sin. Baasha, from the tribe of Issachar, conspired against him and killed him while Israel was laying siege against Gibbethon and reigned in the stead of Nadab. Baasha then killed all the men of the house of Jeroboam. Baasha began to reign over Israel in the third year of Asa, king of Judah, so Nadab reigned about 2 years. Baasha was evil in the sight of the LORD and he reigned 24 years. When Baasha came against Judah, Asa sent silver and gold to Benhadad, king of Syria and asked him to help him against Israel. Benhadad agreed and sent his armies against Israel and smote several cities in Israel which caused Baasha, when he heard it, to stop building Ramah and let the work cease. Asa and the men of Judah then went and carried away the stone and timber that Baasha had been building Ramah with and built two other cities with it.

At that time, Hanani, the seer came to Asa and told him that because he had relied on the king of Syria rather than God, as he did against the Ethiopians, he would continue to have wars the rest of his life. This made Asa very angry and he put Hanani in prison and oppressed some of the people. In the 39<sup>th</sup> year of his reign he was diseased in his feet and even though the disease got much worse, he refused to go to God about it, but rather went to the physicians. He then died two years later in his 41<sup>st</sup> year of his reign and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

We again need to back up to see what happened in Israel during this time, but we need to spend some time on it so we will take that up in our next lesson. JRL