

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 11:29-43

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1 Kings 11:29-43

Verses 29-33

²⁹ About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, ³⁰ and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. ³¹ Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. ³² But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. ³³ I will do this because they have forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molek the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in obedience to me, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my decrees and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

- Jeroboam was the young man Solomon had put in charge of the forced labor from the house of Joseph (see 1 Kings 11:28). One day, at the end of Solomon's reign, as he was leaving the city of Jerusalem, he had an encounter with Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh. Jeroboam knew that the people of the kingdom were growing uncomfortable with Solomon.
- Somewhere on his journey, Jeroboam ran into Ahijah, a prophet from Shiloh who was wearing a new robe.
- The encounter between these two men was entirely private. There were no witnesses to it.
- Ahijah took hold of his new robe and ripped it into twelve pieces. He instructed Jeroboam to take ten pieces for himself. Ahijah was acting out the message which God had given him for Jeroboam. He explained that God was going to remove the kingdom from Solomon because Solomon had forsaken God. God was going to give ten parts of the kingdom to Jeroboam to rule. To honor David, God would give one part of the kingdom to the descendants of Solomon to rule.

- The math becomes confusing here. Ten of the twelve parts of the kingdom go to Jeroboam. One part goes to Solomon's descendants to honor David. That leaves one part unaccounted for. That part is the tribe of Levi, the priestly tribe that had no inheritance in the division of the land. So one tribe, Levi, was not included in the distribution of the kingdom.

Verses 34-36

³⁴ ***“But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who obeyed my commands and decrees. ³⁵ I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes. ³⁶ I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.***

- The division of the kingdom did not occur until after Solomon's death. But after Solomon's death, his heirs would receive only the territory of Judah, which is where Jerusalem was located.

Verses 37-40

³⁷ ***However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. ³⁸ If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. ³⁹ I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.”***

⁴⁰ ***Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.***

- YHWH promised that if Jeroboam was faithful to Him and kept His laws, he would establish Jeroboam as the king of Israel, the twelve tribes minus Judah and Levi forever.
- YHWH would humble the descendants of David for a time. But Jesus, the King of Kings, would come from David's line and He will rule forever and ever.
- Apparently, Solomon sensed that Jeroboam was a threat to him and attempted to kill him. But Jeroboam escaped to Egypt where he remained until Solomon's death.

Verses 41-43

⁴¹ As for the other events of Solomon's reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon? ⁴² Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. ⁴³ Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

- Solomon reigned as king for 40 years and when he died Rehoboam, his first son, assumed that he was king of his father's kingdom. Rehoboam was unaware of God's intention to remove the kingdom from Solomon's family.

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