

Exegetical Notes – 1 Kings 12:16-24

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1 Kings 12:16-24

Verses 16-17

¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

***“What share do we have in David,
what part in Jesse’s son?***

To your tents, Israel!

Look after your own house, David!”

So the Israelites went home. ¹⁷ But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

- When the people of the northern tribes of Israel heard that Rehoboam would not consider their request but would, instead, increase their burden from the government (see 1 Kings 12:1-15), they declared themselves independent of his rule. They went home, declaring that they were no longer submitting to the rule David’s heirs.
- Some people from the northern tribes had settled in the territory belonging to Judah which remained loyal to Rehoboam. These people still lived under Rehoboam’s authority.

Verses 18-19

¹⁸ King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

- Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, the man who Solomon had placed in charge of forced labor in Israel. But the people of the northern tribes stoned Adoniram to death.
- Realizing the danger he was in from the people, Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem.

- So the nation of Israel became two nations. The 10 northern tribes retained the name Israel, for the northern kingdom, and the tribe of Judah, the one tribe which remained loyal to Rehoboam, was called Judah.

Verse 20

²⁰ When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David.

- The northern tribes, now Israel, anointed Jeroboam as their rightful king.

Verse 21

²¹ When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered all Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand able young men—to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.

- Rehoboam, now king of Judah, assembled his army to go reclaim the territory belonging to the 10 rebellious tribes.

Verses 22-24

²² But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: ²³ “Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah, to all Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, ²⁴ ‘This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.’” So they obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered.

- God spoke through the prophet Shemaiah that God would not support Judah in a war against Israel. So the nation of Judah did not go to war against Israel as Rehoboam had ordered.
- Thus, the kingdom of David was divided. Jeroboam was king of the northern tribes and Rehoboam was king of Judah.

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