

The Kingdom of God

Lesson 9: The Decline of the Kingdom

I. Introduction

- a. God's original design and intention was for Israel to be **different**, not like the other political systems of the world.
- b. Therefore, the fundamental error of Israel was not in her choice of the monarchical **form of government**, but rather, that she had chosen to be like the other nations and in so doing had rejected Jehovah as king.
- c. In spite of this fact, God used Israel's sinful desire to **accomplish** His kingdom purpose, which was to establish the line of David in the house of Judah. Gen 49:10 *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. KJV*
- d. The errors of Israel and the historical events recorded in scripture under the reign of the first three kings of Israel have lessons to teach us on human government that are apparently **never learned**.
- e. Through our study of this period, especially the kingdom under Solomon, we can identify the ingredients of destruction which brought about the decline of the visible earthly kingdom and, which, are **today** operative in the political systems of our world.

II. Solomon's Personal Failure

- a. Solomon, who had virtually everything going for him as he succeeded David to the throne of Israel, had been **forewarned** by Jehovah that his reign was conditional. 2 Sam 7:13-14 *He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:KJV*
- b. Moses under the constitution of Israel, listed three simple and straightforward rules for Israel's king. Solomon failed each of these **three** divine rules. Deut 17:14-17
 1. First, he multiplied **military forces** of a kind specifically forbidden in the law of God, gathering together chariots and horsemen and horses brought out of Egypt. 1 Kings 10:26 *And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.KJV*
 2. Second, Solomon loved many **foreign** women and had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. 1 Kings 11:1-2 *But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love.KJV*
 3. Third, he piled up **silver and gold**, until silver became worthless in Jerusalem and even the vessels of his own house of Lebanon were ordered made of pure gold. 1 Kings 10:21 *And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon.KJV*
 4. Accompanying this great worldly power and wealth, Solomon experienced a spiritual decline and finally fell into religious **apostasy**. 1 Kings 11:4 *For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: KJV*
- c. Departure from the instruction of God also meant that other problems emerged. Economic problems began to mount as the need for **manpower** increased in order to keep Israel's economic engine running.
 1. Although military service was restricted to Israelis, non-Israelis were pressed into continual **bond service**. 1 Kings 9:21 *Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day.KJV*
 2. Solomon conscripted **30,000** men out of all Israel who were forced to labor in Lebanon one month out of every three.
 3. Solomon became dependent upon business dealings with the surrounding kings. In one such case he is thought to have **mortgaged** 20 cities in the land of Galilee to King Hiram of Tyre.
- d. The constant drain on Israel's economic resources and manpower stirred up **enemies** and discontent among the people. It is little wonder that his son met with rebellion upon his ascension to the throne. 1 Kings 12:16 *So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. KJV*
- e. No king before or since came with greater promise than Solomon. But in the end he **failed**; shorn of his strength, bereft of glory, with his heart turned away from Jehovah, and the anger of God kindled against him.

III. Rupture of the Nation

- a. While the Temple was important symbolically for uniting Israel, only true religion could forge a bond capable of holding the tribes together; but through the apostasy of Solomon God eventually **severed** that bond. 1 Kings 11:11 *I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. KJV*
- b. Outwardly, the split of the ten tribes from Judah was a hostile reaction to the **burdens** imposed by Rehoboam who thought he could rule the nation with an iron fist. 1 Kings 12:14-15 *And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you*

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with scorpions.15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.KJV

- c. However, above and beyond all the political intrigue and force of armies, the move to secede was brought about by the **providence** of God. 1 Kings 12:24 *Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. KJV*
- d. In spite of the catastrophic division of the tribes, it did not bring about an end to the mediatorial kingdom in Old Testament history nor did it **annul** the promise of God to perpetuate His kingdom through Israel. 1 Kings 11:13 *but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen. KJV*

IV. Political Science Lessons

- a. Scripture demonstrates that as long as sinful man contrives to govern his fellows or man desires to be governed, there will be no **perfect system** of government on earth.
- b. In the final analysis, a key **distinction** between various forms of government is the price people have had to pay for the benefits deriving from that form of government.
- c. Even though God had forewarned Israel of **nine** costs that would be borne as a byproduct of having governments under sinful men, He gave Israel that for which it had asked.
 1. The growth of government **bureaucracy**. 1 Sam 8:11 *This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.KJV*
 2. Job-creation for the sake of government **expansion** increases the number of people who are then dependent upon the government. 1 Sam 8:12 *And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; KJV*
 3. Removal of labor from productive employment in the **communities** from which they come which creates scarcity of labor where it is most needed. 1 Sam 8:13, 16 *And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. KJV*
 4. The state is only interested in its own support and perpetuation, thus, the energies of the state are primarily devoted to the **maintenance** of the government. 1 Sam 8:12 *and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. KJV*
 5. To support all its programs and promises the government spends money not on what people want, but on what the bureaucrats think is good for the people. To do so, it must create burdensome **taxation**. 1 Sam 8:17 *He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. KJV*
 6. Property **confiscation**. This is a logical progression when the government is no longer satisfied with a tax on production, they begin to take over the basic sources of wealth. 1 Sam 8:14 *And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. KJV*
 7. **Corruption**. A large share of government income always finds its way into the hands of the partisans of the ruling party who talk of striving for the “*public good*” but whose real purpose is to keep themselves in power.1 Sam 8:15 *And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.*
 8. **Totalitarian** control The end of the vicious cycle is reached only when all the people exist and work only for the state, thus, swallowing up the very citizens who clamored for its creation. 1 Sam 8:17 *and ye shall be his servants. KJV*
 9. Intolerable **oppression** is the end result. The oppression will have been brought about not by some external force or conquering army, but by the very government that the people have chosen. 1 Sam 8:18 *And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. KJV*

V. Application

- a. Do you desire things or changes in personal situations which, if God gave you your heart’s desire would likely be something that you would not want after all?
- b. Are you willing to abandon your personal desires in favor of God’s desires for you?
- c. What keeps you from wanting what God wants for you?

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- b. Outwardly, the split of the ten tribes from Judah was a hostile reaction to the _____ imposed by Rehoboam who thought he could rule the nation with an iron fist. 1 Kings 12:14-15 *And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. 15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. KJV*
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