

Rehoboam

by Ken Baird

The sermon on Rehoboam highlights the dangers of rejecting wise counsel and the importance of obedience to God's word in leadership.

Duration: 30:50

Scripture: 1 Kings 12:5-8, 1 Kings 12:21-24

Topics: "Kings Of Israel", "Leadership Failure"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the kings of Israel and how they did not serve the Lord well. The speaker emphasizes that the Word of God preserves the mistakes of others for our learning and admonition. The sermon focuses on 1 Samuel chapter 8, where the Israelites asked Samuel to make them a king like other nations. The speaker highlights the failure of Samuel's sons as judges and the dissatisfaction of the elders with their leadership. The sermon raises the question of whether old men are always wise and young men always foolish.

Transcript

This Sunday is the beginning of a new quarter, and the lessons are on the kings of Israel. And just running down my card, which I picked up at the back of the chapel there, I see we're headed for a lot of disappointing experiences, because these kings did not serve the Lord very well. Now, I think the word of God is very faithful in preserving the faults and mistakes of others, for a very good reason.

We read in 1 Corinthians that these things were written for our learning and admonition, upon whom the end of the age hath come. And God preserves the mistakes of others, that we might not make those mistakes. And these kings are certainly not beyond fault.

Today we consider Rehoboam, and I'd like to read just a portion in the book of Ecclesiastes, which was almost prophetic in regard to this son, Rehoboam, the son of Solomon. In Ecclesiastes, you need not turn to it unless you want to. Chapter 2, verse 18, we read there, where he said, Yea, I hated all my labor which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that should be after me.

And who knoweth whether ye shall be a wise man or a fool? Yet shall ye have rule over all my labor wherein I have labored, and wherein I have showed myself wise unto the sun. This also is vanity. In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon, the king, records his philosophies that he has learned by experience in life.

And he has to say of most of those philosophies, Vanity, vanity, all is vanity. Now here he decries the striving and laboring all your life to lay up things, and you give them to somebody else, you bequeath them to somebody else. What are they going to do with them? All your labor.

It's a thought to think about. Do we labor to create a surplus of things in this life? For what purpose? To leave to somebody that will waste it and squander it? Now he didn't realize how he was really writing prophetically of his own son. And Rehoboam was that son.

And he was not a wise son. As a matter of fact, there are several mistakes, as long as we're looking at the mistakes of others. There were several failures involved in even Rehoboam.

Israel made a failure years before this. And had they made the failure, Rehoboam would not have had this responsibility. Because they wouldn't have had a king.

God would have been their king. Now, it's striking to me, and I couldn't help but think about it, when I read over this lesson, thinking about what we can say about it today for our prophet. In verse 4 of the 12th chapter of 1st Kings, we read there that the children of Israel said, as they came to Rehoboam, Thy father made our yoke grievous.

Now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father and his heavy yoke, which he put upon us, lighter. And we will serve thee. Now, this to me is striking.

They were complaining about their heavy service to the king. And my mind immediately went back to the time in Israel's history, when they came to Samuel, and they said to Samuel, Make us a king. We want to be like the nation.

Make us a king. Now they wanted to be like other nations, and Samuel was very grieved. This is all in the 8th chapter of 1st Samuel, and I think it would profit us to really look at it.

There's failure written all over the pages. 1st Samuel chapter 8. It came to pass when Samuel was old and made his sons judges over Israel. Now the name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abiah.

They were judges in Beersheba. And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after Lucre, and took bribes and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways.

Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, Give us a king and judges. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

Now Samuel's failure precipitated all this whole chain reaction. He didn't raise his sons like he should have. And he engaged in a bit of nepotism, and I used that word over the radio this morning.

As a matter of fact, we were talking about Samuel on the radio. Perhaps you've heard this before. But he made his sons judges.

And they didn't follow in his father's footsteps. Which teaches us that we do not transfer necessarily our spirituality unto our children. We're all individually related to God.

These boys did not go on. They took bribes. And because of their failure, Israel asked for a king.

Now it's interesting to me that Samuel and David and there's another in the line here, Adonijah. They all failed. Samuel was not a good father.

David was not a good father. He didn't attend to raising his family. Adonijah later raised up against Solomon when Solomon was made king.

Or before Solomon was made king. Actually the rebellion was in progress. And it says in the scripture that David never crossed Adonijah.

He never brought Adonijah on the carpet and said, son, why are you doing this? He let that boy grow up without correction. And it ended up in failure. Samuel was not a good father.

Let's face it. Now we think of Samuel as being a wonderful character. He was.

But he was too busy to raise his sons. And David was too busy to raise his sons. And I'll tell you, failure resulted.

Now because of Samuel's failure and because of the failure of his two sons, Israel asked for a king. Samuel was grieved. Because he wanted them related to the Lord as their leader and not to a king like the other nations.

And verse 7 of that 8th chapter of 1 Samuel, And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Now if indeed the children of Israel had not requested a king, Greoboam wouldn't have even gotten into trouble. He wouldn't have been the king.

The Lord would have been their king. Samuel went to the children of Israel and he objected. And we read farther down in this chapter, verse 10, And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them for himself to his chariots and to be his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariot. Now you know that son of yours, Samuel told the children of Israel, You know that son of yours that you want to follow along in your footsteps reigning and ruling and using rather, not reigning or ruling particularly, but ordering the inheritance that the Lord gave you, this wonderful inheritance.

You want your son to continue on? He's not going to be able to do that. He's going to be working for Solomon. That should have made them stop and think, wouldn't you think? He says, Your sons, He'll take your sons and appoint them for himself.

They won't continue on in your name. They won't continue on on your property, on your inheritance. They'll be working for Solomon.

He'll appoint them for himself and his chariots and his horsemen, and some shall run before his chariot. And he will appoint him captains over thousands and captains over fifty, and he will set them to his ground to reap his harvest and to make his instruments of war and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries and to be cooks and to be bakers and he will take your fields, your vineyards, your oliveyards, even the best of them and give them to his servants.

And he will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and to his servants. And he will take your men servants and your maid servants and your goodliest among goodliest young men and your asses and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep.

He shall be his servant. Now this was beyond the tenth that went to the Lord to tithe. This makes it two tenths.

He warned them. So what do we see in our chapter? They're complaining. They were warned.

They're complaining about the heavy yoke of the service that Solomon imposed upon them. And he was, ordinarily you would relate Solomon, or you would say of Solomon that he was a good king. And here it comes up.

Here it surfaces. We're not told of during the reign of Solomon. But here it surfaces.

He was severe on the people. He did exactly what Samuel said their king would do. And who's complaining? The children of Israel.

The very ones that rejected the council of Samuel. They are now at last complaining. It turned out just exactly like that Samuel said that it would.

Now, Solomon had some failures. I think one of his chief failures is recorded in the chapter just prior to this. 1 Kings chapter 11.

But King Solomon loved many strange women together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zedonians, and Hittites, 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 God. Solomon played unto these in love. And he had 700 wives, princes, and 300 concubines.

That makes a thousand. And his wives turned away his heart. What a status symbol.

A thousand wives. Cadillac would be cheaper. If you want a status symbol.

A thousand of them. This is appalling. As far as I'm concerned.

I can't understand. But, we go on down and read that it came to pass when Solomon was old that his wife turned away his heart after her God and his heart was not perfect, but with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father, as was the heart of David his father. He forsook the scriptures.

Now, we can't do this because our time is slipping away. But, if we were to go back to the book of Deuteronomy, there were specific instructions of the king when he came along. And God anticipated that they were going to demand a king sometime.

They wanted status. They wanted a place among the nations. He said that that king should make a copy of the word of God and read it diligently.

He should not multiply wives. He should not multiply horses. To him.

He should not do those things. Solomon did it. He went against the word of God.

What do you say about this? Wouldn't you think that they could learn a lesson? Well, you and I have their failure right spread out before us. Can we learn a lesson? Or do we have to learn the hard way? You know, there are two ways to learn. One is to learn through the mistakes of others.

Or, there is a more positive way, simply to follow the directions of the Lord. Or the other is to learn by experience. And these people had to learn by experience.

So, here they are. Who is it that is complaining now to Rehoboam, your father really made it hard for us? Samuel told him that's what would happen. Well, that's the one.

They failed. Solomon rejected the Lord's advice. He didn't read in the word of God.

He did marry strange wives. He did multiply horses. Silver and gold and all the rest of it.

All that he wasn't supposed to do. So, he reached the consequences. Now, he lost Israel.

Eventually, they lost that king that they requested. They got Saul. They wanted a king and they got Saul.

They lost him. Solomon wanted all these strange things. He rejected the Lord's advice.

And he lost his peace. The Lord raised up adversaries to him. Jeroboam was one of them.

Ahijah, the prophet Ahijah. Really, in the case of Jeroboam, he anointed him to be the king. And Solomon heard about it.

And Jeroboam had to flee for his life, incidentally. And he raised up other adversaries to him. He lost his peace.

Because he disobeyed the Lord. Now, we come down to Rehoboam's failure. And we've got to talk about it.

Because he continued the heavy oppression of his father. Now, he calls for advice in chapter 12. And he consults, first of all, with the old men.

After they came and complained, he says in verse 5 of our chapter, Depart yet for three days. Then come again to me. And the people departed.

And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon, his father, while he yet lived. And said, How do ye advise that I shall answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words unto them, then will they be thy servants for ever. But he forsook the counsel of the old men.

Israel forsook Solomon's counsel. Solomon forsook the Lord's counsel. Now here we have another man forsaking the counsel of the older men.

And certainly, age should give us experience, and experience should be helpful in plotting the life. Now, he forsook the counsel of the old men. He didn't want to hear what they had to say.

Which they had given him and consulted with the young men that had grown up with him, his peers, and which stood before him. They seemed to be of one mind in their thinking. And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people? Who have spoken unto me, saying, Make the yoke of

my father, which thy father did put upon thee later.

And the young men that were grown up with him had spoken to him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people, that speak unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but makest thou it lighter unto us. Thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loin. The young men said when he asked them how he should answer the people, they told him something like this, A king is a king is a king.

Be a king. Rule. That's what they want.

It isn't what they wanted. Now, one has to ask the question, Are old men always wise, and young men always foolish? No. That's not the case.

That is not the case. But there is something to be said for experience. These older men knew exactly how the people would react.

They gave Rehoboam wonderful advice. You serve this people, and they'll serve you forever. It was really wonderful advice.

Now, why did the young men act as they did? Why did they tell Rehoboam, in effect, A king is a king is a king. Be a king. And they'll respect you.

Why did they do that? I think probably, first of all, because they were young and inexperienced. They didn't know human psychology as well as these older men did. These young men had ambition.

Now, Rehoboam was disposed to accept their advice before they ever gave it. They were his peers. They were the men that he ran with.

The young men that grew up with him, as the scripture says. And he knew, I think, before they asked how they would react. Well, they gave him the advice they wanted to hear.

You know, in this matter of looking for advice, we ought to be unprejudiced when we ask for it. Have you ever noticed that when people ask for advice, what they really want is for you to confirm the thoughts that they already have. And if you give, if you confirm the thoughts and the philosophies that they already have, they think it's good advice.

All Rehoboam wanted was to have his philosophies confirmed. The young men did it, so he followed their advice. We should be very, very careful when we ask for advice from anybody.

As a matter of fact, we've got the word of God. The best advice that can possibly be given. We've got it.

Now, the time came. The people came back. And Rehoboam first took the counsel of the old men.

And he fulfilled the counsel of the young men, and he told them just exactly how it was. And so as a consequence, in verse 16 we read, 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 from the son of Jesse. To your tent stole Israel.

Now see, to thine own house David. So Israel departed under their tent. But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then Rehoboam sent Adoram, or Adoram, whichever you prefer, who was over the tributes. And Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore Rehoboam, a message incidentally, Rehoboam made speed to get him to his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day. Now, the seeds for all of this were laid in Solomon's reign. Solomon knew before he even died that Jeroboam was going to take over.

He was going to take ten tribes. Oh, the awful mistake of Solomon. Now, isn't it amazing that he is spoken of, his wisdom is extolled in the scripture? He fell on his strongest point.

His strongest point was wisdom. And he acted like a fool. He says in that book of Ecclesiastes, Better is a poor and a wise child than an old king that will no longer be admonished.

Solomon made a mistake. And here it is spread out over all the pages of the scriptures so you and I won't make the mistake. He didn't obey the Lord.

He went against the explicit instructions that are given in Deuteronomy about when the king came along. He rejected them. You know, you and I have to learn the lesson over and over again.

I have to learn the lesson over and over again. But the best way you can have a peaceful, successful, fulfilling life is to obey the scriptures. Just simply obey the scriptures.

And do what God wants you to do. He knows that. And here we have these people, time after time, just a chain reaction, if you please.

A chain reaction showing what it means to reject wise counsel. Those men, those older men, were directed to the Lord. I'm sure.

In their counsel to Rehoboam. And he rejected it. They were the people of experience.

They knew how the people would react. Now, whatever you can say about the wickedness of Rehoboam and about his oppression, you're going to have to give him credit for one thing. I think we should give credit where credit is due.

Look down, please, at, well, verse 21. Begin at verse 21. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin and a hundred and four score thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

The word of God came unto Shemaiah, the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah. And unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the remnant of the people, saying, 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.

And they hearkened, therefore, to the word of the Lord, and they returned to depart according to the word of the Lord. Thank God he did not raise this civil war to get his kingdom back. Because had he raised it, I think he would have been defeated.

Thousands of lives were saved because Rehoboam at last apparently believed that it is best to obey the Lord. Now you and I, you and I have lessons to learn from this. Now, to go back now to Solomon.

I'm sorry, to Samuel. To go back to Samuel. Samuel told those people that their choice was going to be irreversible.

Did you notice that when we read in the eighth chapter of 1 Samuel? I think I'd like to point that out. It's a solemn thing, really. Let's see, where did I see that? He will point.

Oh, he says in 1 Samuel 8, verse 18. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your kin, which he shall have chosen you, and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Their choice was irreversible.

Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel. And they said, nay, we will have a king. And I was thinking of verse 18.

Their choice was irreversible. They couldn't do a thing about it. He said, now you're going to come to me and you're going to complain and I'm not going to do a thing about it.

Your choice is irreversible. You know, I don't like irreversible choices. I like to have an option, don't you? I don't like irreversible choices.

I was thinking of one, and I won't have time to even dwell on it, and I don't think I need to particularly. But I'm going to mention one. That is this.

When people marry, they make an irreversible choice. As far as God is concerned. They, sometimes in this day and age, try to reverse it.

I would say that young people need to be very, very careful. For when that choice is made, it's for keeps. It's irreversible.

You and I need to remember these lessons. This is a solemn lesson. It gets right to us where we live.

I just, I almost hate to preach it. What am I supposed to do? Gloss over it? No. Doing things God's way is best.

May the Lord help us to remember it. And then we won't have these drastic experiences. Father, we do give thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus for the word of God and for preserving these mistakes for our learning and admonition.

Lord, help us to be submissive to thee, doing thy will, that we might indeed live peaceful and rewarding lives. This we ask as we give thanks in our Savior's name. Amen.

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