

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

July 16

MONDAY

Jeroboam asked the soon-to-be-crowned king, Rehoboam, if he would agree to lighten taxes and make life easier for the people. Life under Solomon had not been easy.

Rehoboam asked for three days to consult with his advisors - men who had advised Solomon in days past. They advised him to agree, pre-dicting that if he did so, the people would willingly serve him always.

READ: I Kings 12:4-7

Isn't it amazing that the people are most upset about taxes such, but they say not a word about the idolatry of Solomon. That he had led a nation from God to idols escapes them. Their hearts were not there. How easy is it for all of us to miss what's really important? A great challenge of life is to keep sight of what really matters. Sure, the economy is horrible, politics are rotten, corruption is everywhere, and your job may be uncertain, but what really matters is your heart. Are you trusting God fully? Have you given yourself to love and serve Him? Are you following the Lord as David did? That's what matters!

TUESDAY

Rejecting the advice of the advisors from his father's regime, Rehoboam instead turns to his friends. They advise him to refuse the peoples' request to lighten the load and lower taxes, and urge him to make it clear that as king, he will do whatever he pleases, including more servitude and higher taxes.

READ: I Kings 12:8-11

What a poor decision - to listen to his friends - friends who are thinking how pleasant life will be to live as buddies of the king. Their only thought is for themselves and their own pleasure and ease. What advice we take speaks volumes about each one of us. There are a million voices out there, telling us this and that: Oprah, Dr. Phil, Judge Judy, Dear Abby, political leaders, your neighbors and friends, and others. Many others. Choose well. Listen to the advice that starts with the words, "Thus saith the Lord." That's my advice.

WEDNESDAY

When Jeroboam and his men returned for Rehoboam's answer, they heard his harsh reply - that under him, the yoke would be heavier, and that instead of using whips, he would enforce his will upon them using scorpions!

READ: I Kings 12:12-15

Verse 15 says that what Rehoboam did "was a turn of events from the Lord." In other words, it happened that way because God saw to it that it happened that way. Rehoboam is not aware of God's control - indeed, he seems to have no spiritual discernment at all. He makes his own choice for his own reasons. But behind it all stands God who is working out his eternal purpose-es! How great is that to remember today in our lives! What happens today is

very much a "turn of events from the Lord!" What a blessedness it is to live this day knowing that God is in control!

THURSDAY

Hearing Rehoboam's reply, most of the people with Jeroboam went home saying that they would not follow this new king. Only those people who lived in Judah remained loyal to Rehoboam, for he was one of their own.

READ: I Kings 12:16-17

We see hostility directed not only towards Rehoboam, but to his grandfather, David, too. They speak despairingly of him and disregard the great things he had done for Israel. The better choice would have been to return to the faith of David and seek to pattern their lives after his. It's best to speak well of those whom God has chosen to honor. The people who walked away from Rehoboam were wrong in several ways, and reflecting their anger towards David is one of them. Lord, guard my heart from anger today!

FRIDAY

Rehoboam's first act is to order Adoram to muster the people into a labor force. Trying to do that, Adoram is stoned to death. His death alerts Rehoboam to his own danger, and he flees. The ten tribes of Israel, in rebellion against the family line of David, appoint Jeroboam to be king over them.

READ: I Kings 12:18-20

One day, Rehoboam, proud and arrogant, bragged of how he will have his way with the nation. The next day, he's sneaking back to Jerusalem, afraid of his own shadow. Such will be the story for all who resist God. They will one day slink away from His presence, totally ashamed and humiliated. But the one who humbles himself before the Lord will be honored and exalted. His name will be whispered among the angels! "This child, has glorified the Father, and now God will lift him up as a trophy of His grace," they will say!

SATURDAY

As soon as he returns to Jerusalem, Rehoboam assembles the troops to go and fight against the rebelling ten tribes. But through Shemaiah, God tells the people not to fight against them for they are brothers. So everyone went home.

READ: I Kings 12:21-24

Matthew Henry writes: "These two considerations should reconcile us to our losses and troubles, that God is the author of them, and our brethren are the instruments of them; let us not therefore meditate revenge." Do you get his point? Knowing that God is in charge, and realizing that we are dealing with brothers in the faith, we should be reconciled to our troubles. That is, we should accept them without anger or thoughts of retaliation or revenge. We should leave those things to God.