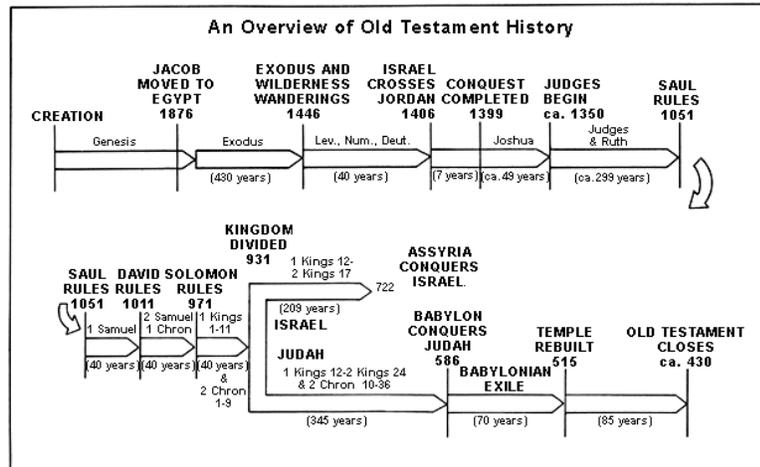


Lessons from Old Testament Biblical History and Characters - Kingdom Divided + Rehoboam and "Counsel"



The Divided Monarchy

The history of this period in Israel’s history is recorded in terms of the **kings**, their actions and a summary of God’s judgment both of what they did and did not do, and His assessment of their **heart**. When you read and meditate on the historical narratives of 1 & 2 Kings and 1 & 2 Chronicles keep in mind the following:

- The historical narratives of the Bible record what **did** happen, not necessarily what **should** happen or what God **wants** to happen.
- When we do find God’s assessment of someone or something (for example His judgment of the kings, or God’s judgment announced through the prophets) we should take note, for God is communicating His **mind** (what He thinks about something) and His **desires** (what He wants). His mind and His desires are part of His **unchangeable** character and do not change with the passing of time or differences in culture. **It is in what God thinks about what happened that we find instruction and application for our own life.**

An Overview:

- The nation is divided into two: Israel - north, ten tribes. Judah - south, two tribes.
- Tribal jealousy and conflict existed from the time of the Judges
- The history is recorded in terms of the kings and God’s judgment of their actions and heart.
 Israel: Number of “good” kings: **0/19** Judah: Number of “good” kings: **8/19**
- 1 & 2 Kings: Written from a **political** perspective
- 1 & 2 Chronicles: Written from a **“religious”** perspective (focus on Judah, line of David, temple, priesthood)
- As a nation there is **spiritual decline** with some periods of **revival** in Judah.
- God warns and announced judgment through His **prophets**.
 Beginning prior to Israel’s captivity: Elijah, Elisha, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.
 Beginning prior to Judah’s captivity: Nahum, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk

All within His **plan** and sovereignty, **God** divides the nation.

- The Sins of **Solomon**, 1 Kings 11:11-13; 28-37
- The division is God’s **work** – namely His judgment. cp. 1 Kings 12:15, 24
- **Rehoboam** succeeds his father, Solomon, 1 Kings 11:43
- **Jeroboam** chosen as leader of the ten northern tribes. 1 Kings 11:26-40; 12:2, 16-20

Note: We have this biblical revelation why God is dividing the nation. Without this revelation, how would we know if what happened was a blessing or His judgment? From whose perspective would we make that judgment? Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam might have cause to claim God’s blessing, but neither one was right with God. A thought: Christians today often are sometimes overcome with nationalistic fervor, claiming God has blessed a particular country... but how do we know it is not His judgment?

The immediate cause of the divide was the folly of Rehoboam. 1 Kings 12:1-19

The historical incident with Rehoboam gives us an opportunity to consider some principles related to **seeking** and **receiving counsel**, and determining God's will in my choices.

Counsel: God using other people to help us to discern **His will**. Biblical counsel connects Scriptural (spiritual) truth to whatever question you have or choice you need to make. The role of a counselor is to **teach/instruct** in the **path** of judgment (how to decide, what to look for)(knowledge: information), and show the **way of understanding** (discernment between right and wrong), **Isaiah 40:13-14** - not just to tell you their opinion or what they think you should do. (why would we seek spiritual counsel from those who demonstrate they do not know the path or way?)

Seeking Counsel

- Proverbs 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; 24:6; 27:9
- We need to take the initiative to **seek** after counsel. Don't expect counsel to come to you. Counsel, coming to you, without your seeking or desiring, is called rebuke, admonition, or exhortation. Counsel which is sought after is better received.
- Our desire in seeking biblical counsel should be to do what is right in accordance to the **Word**, to follow and be in God's will for my life. God's specific will for me will always be found within the boundaries of His revealed will in His Word. Without this purpose or direction, we will fall into some flawed (unbiblical) thinking:

We seek counsel to support a decision **already** made, or to justify what we **want** to do. This is the error of Rehoboam. He rejected the counsel of the old men before he even sought the counsel of his peers, 1 Kings 12:8. The young men told him what he wanted to hear. We can get what we want by choosing counsel that agrees with what we want. It is a better path to seek counsel from people who are willing to go against our leanings or desires.

We think counsel is "majority" rule. If I can get more to agree with me than to disagree, then the majority is "God's Will?"

- We should seek a **multitude** of counselors.
Seek counsel from those who are more **mature** and/or biblically **wise**. Seek different perspectives.

Seek "**biblical**" or "**spiritual**" counselors. Psalm 1:1. You are ultimately seeking God's will; the unsaved or unspiritual (those who are not following God's revealed will) will be unable to lead you in that direction, cp. **Isaiah 30:1**. Counsel from the unsaved or unspiritual can be of some value, but it is limited to the reception of information and knowledge they have. Where is the wisdom in seeking **God's will** from someone who is not in or seeking God's will themselves?

Seek counsel from those who are in **authority** over you and or who are charged with watching over your soul. Weight should be given to those God has sovereignly placed in your life.
- Seeking counsel is fruitless if your mind is already made up.
We can **deceive** ourselves and be deceived by others.
We can have "**blind spots**", things that we can't see, or that we have not thought of.
We can be "**too close**" to see things with the right, or biblical perspective.
We may not know the Scriptures, or those that **apply** to the decision I need to make.

Evaluating Counsel

- All counsel needs to be **evaluated** or **weighed**. Counsellors do not make the decision for you, that responsibility is yours. You have the responsibility to evaluate all counsel against the standard of God's Word. Remember: God will not be leading you contrary to how He has already led you in His written Word. Proverbs 3:5; 12:15
- Be willing to **think** and **rethink**.