

Message:

The time has come for Jeroboam to face his demise. The illness of one of his sons serves as the occasion of how he came to learn of his fate. Our passage opens with the news that Abijah, Jeroboam's son, possibly his oldest son, is ill. Seeking help, Jeroboam sends his wife to Shiloh, where she can seek a word from the prophet Ahijah. Our text reminds us that Ahijah is the prophet who first approached Jeroboam declaring that he would one day be king over the 10 tribes that have come to be known as the kingdom of Israel.

Before Jeroboam's wife heads off to see Ahijah, Jeroboam has her wear a disguise as well as to collect some goodies to offer to the prophet. We are told that Ahijah's eyesight is not what it used to be; Jeroboam must be hopeful that the disguise will prevent Ahijah from really knowing who has come to see him. The significance of the disguise may have something to do with the fact that since Jeroboam had not fully listened to the prophet (the part about seeking and obeying the Lord), there may be a chance of a more favorable outcome if Ahijah didn't know it was Jeroboam who was making the inquiry. The goodies' basket might just do the trick in either distracting or appeasing Ahijah.

Jeroboam's plan is foiled before his wife ever enters the room. The Lord had already warned Ahijah about his visitor. As she approaches the door, Ahijah simply says, *"Come in, wife of Jeroboam."* With that greeting, Ahijah simply passes on what he has received from the Lord, *"Because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over my people Israel and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, and yet you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart, doing only that which was right in my eyes, but you have done evil above all who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods and metal images, provoking me to anger, and have cast me behind your back, therefore behold, I will bring harm upon the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, both bond and free in Israel, and will burn up the house of Jeroboam, as a man burns up dung until it is all gone. Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat, for the LORD has spoken it"* (1 Kings 14:7-11).

First of all, Jeroboam doesn't seem too bright. He wants to approach Ahijah because, as a true prophet from God, he can discern the future; but I suppose it doesn't occur to him that if someone can decipher the future he can figure out a disguise. Jeroboam's future is not bright either. It is announced that Jeroboam's time as king has come to an end. Since he has never truly acknowledged the Lord's provision for him to be king through the prescribed manner of obedience to God, his reign is done.

Furthermore, the future for the entire house of Jeroboam isn't bright: all his males- his entire dynasty- will be destroyed. This judgment should not have come as a surprise. Ahijah had previously said to Jeroboam: *"And I will take you, and you shall reign over all that your soul desires, and you shall be king over Israel. And if you will listen to all that I command you, and will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, I will be with you and will build you a sure house, as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you"* (1 Kings 11:37-38). If Jeroboam had followed King David's manner of life, he would have enjoyed the promise given to David: an everlasting dynasty. Since the terms of that promise were not met, Jeroboam's dynasty will come to an end.

The house of Jeroboam's confirmation that they will come to an end is the imminent death of Jeroboam's ill son. Ahijah says to Jeroboam's wife: *"Arise therefore, go to your house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die"* (1 Kings 14:12). As odd as it may sound, Jeroboam's ill son will get the better part of the ordeal. He will be properly buried and mourned over. The other sons will face a much more tragic ending. But make no mistake about Ahijah's prophetic Word, when it reaches its completion, no one from the house of Jeroboam will be living, little lone ruling.

The prophet doesn't stop with Jeroboam and his descendants. The entire nation of Israel will face the consequences of Jeroboam's rebellion: *"Moreover, the LORD will raise up for himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam today. And henceforth, the LORD will strike Israel as a reed is shaken in the water, and root up Israel out of this good land that he gave to their fathers and scatter them beyond the Euphrates, because they have made their Asherim, provoking the LORD to anger. And he will give Israel up because of the*

sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned and made Israel to sin" (1 Kings 14:14-16). The entire Northern kingdom of Israel will face an ill-fated future because of Jeroboam's sin.

While Israel's demise won't come for another 180 years (half way through the Book of 2 Kings), they have already been put on notice that their destiny is tied to Jeroboam's destiny. Their demise is tethered to Jeroboam's demise and the reason for their demise is due to Jeroboam's disobedience.

One of the reasons that the Old Testament heavily stressed the careful obedience of the King was due, in part, to the fact that as the King goes, so goes the nation. The Lord had covenanted Himself with Israel and the King was the sole representative before the Lord on behalf of the people. The King's obedience or disobedience was the determiner of Israel being deemed obedient or disobedient. There was a solidarity between the King and the people; their fate lay in the character of their king.

Implications:

Two examples of skewed faith: superstitious presumptuousness and resigned passivity (both examples untether faith from its companion: repentance). Both Jeroboam and his wife give us some examples of what faith in the Lord does not look like. First, Jeroboam's attempt to reach out to Ahijah for help on behalf of his son, is not the same as true faith. Jeroboam has turned a deaf ear to the prophets, but now that he wants something, he thinks that he may somehow weasel a positive pronouncement out of the prophet so that his son recovers. Jeroboam wants a relationship with the Lord on his own terms: a God who will keep his life pleasant and happy without all the demands of loyalty. Jeroboam wants to approach God on his own terms: not through dependence and obedience, but through disguises and gifts.

How often do we ignore God until the bottom drops out of life? Such a lifestyle is not a portrait of true faith. Yes, God is our help; He is the one that we are to run to in our time of troubles; but genuine faith in the Lord is reliance upon Him to set the course and direction of entire life, not simply during the emergencies of life. Genuine faith does seek the Lord for help; but it also submits to the Lord's rule.

Jeroboam's wife gives us a negative example of faith. Her resigned passivity is not the same as true faith. When she is told that her son will be dead by the time she returns home, she just returns home. Her response is unhealthily passive. Contrast her passive response with that of King David when he was told that his son would die. We are told in 2 Samuel 12:16, "*David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat with them.*" After the child did die, David was asked why he did what he did. 2 Samuel 12:22 states David's explanation: "*While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, 'Who knows whether the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?'*"

David, unlike Jeroboam's wife understood faith, because David, unlike Jeroboam's wife understood God. He embodied what Hebrews 11:6 says about faith: "*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*" Faith is confidence in God-confidence that He is good and that He invites us to call upon Him and seek Him. Faith never resigns itself to turn from seeking God to act on one's behalf. Faith does accept what occurs and what is beyond our control, but faith never resigns itself to cease from appealing to the Throne of Grace. The reason faith is not the same a resignation is that faith is always wedded to repentance. When the note of judgment came to David, he repented and sought the Lord; when the note of judgment came to Jeroboam's wife (and Jeroboam), they just dug in and took the hit.

The conjoined destinies of Jeroboam and the Kingdom of Israel illustrate an important Biblical truth. God deals with us on the basis of who is our representative head. No, our representative head is not Jeroboam. But before we are tempted to express relief that our destiny is not joined to Jeroboam, the Bible does notify us that the representative head through whom God does deal with us is Adam. Romans 5 says things like, "*sin can into the world because of one man, and death through sin, and do death spread to all men,*" and "*because of one man's trespass, death reigned through one man,*" and "*one trespass led to condemnation for all men,*" and "*by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners.*" Each of us begin life with Adam as our representative head; his life is our life, his destiny is our destiny.

However, while the first part of 1 Corinthians 15:22 says, “*For as in Adam all die,*” the second half declares, “*so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*” The sad tragedy of being condemned before God on the basis of our union with Adam is graciously and wonderfully reversed through union the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 1:6 says that God, “*has blessed us in the beloved.*” Faith is the instrument of God’s grace that unites us to the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ is now our representative head-the Father now deals with us on the basis of His dealing with the His beloved Son, “*in whom He is well-pleased.*” [1 Kings 14:13 refers to Jeroboam’s son, who is about to die, as being one with whom the Lord was pleased. If God was pleased with him, why is he dying? He is a picture of Christ.]

The tethered fate of Jeroboam and Israel is a picture of humanities solidarity with Adam. But it is also a picture of the believer’s solidarity with Christ. The contrast between the sphere or realm one is in, could not be more opposite. Notice the difference it makes whether one is still in the domain of Adam or if one is in the domain of Christ:

- Enmity with God or Peace with God.
- Guilty or No Condemnation.
- Dead in sin or Dead to sin.
- Estranged from God or Alive to God.
- Under the Law or Dead to the Law.
- Objects of wrath or Declared Righteous.
- Slaves to Sin or Slave to Righteousness.
- Unable to Perform Any Meritorious Works or A Workmanship Crafted for Good Works
- Deserving of all Curses or Benefactor of all Blessings.
- Under rule of Satan or Under Rule of Christ.
- In Kingdom of Darkness or In Kingdom of Light.
- Never at Rest or Seated with Christ.
- Captive of World or Crucified to World.
- Child of Devil or Child of God.
- Alienated from One Another or Joined Together as One People.
- Controlled by Flesh or Indwelt by Spirit.
- Eternal Torment or Eternal Life.

Our lives and our futures are tethered to who is our representative head. Whose realm or sphere we exist in will reveal how we can presently size ourselves up as well as the basis for our future hope. Colossians 3:3-4 states: “*For you have died, and you life is hidden with Christ in Gd. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*” We have all that Christ has achieved; we shall become all that Christ is.