
History and Prophecy

Part 1

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Some Time I go, I began to speak a little bit on the subject of prophecy, and when I did so one of the gentlemen in the congregation ask me about the way to go about studying prophecy and how to start. I've been around for long time, but I had forgotten how I got started in my own study of prophecy. I had done some sermons on the subject of prophecy and the study of prophecy and how to get going in the study of prophecy. I pointed out that history is really the foundation for understanding prophecy, but without a sense of history, prophecy can almost be nonsense.

If you open your Bible to some prophet in the middle of Isaiah, or Jeremiah or Ezekiel or Hosea or Micah, and simply begin to read, you may make a little bit of sense out of it. Some of the things you read there, a statement like you had broken my statutes and my Commandments and my laws, therefore, you are going into captivity, does make sense. You can grasp that. You can cope with it. But as a matter of fact, to really get a feeling for what the prophecy is about, who it is directed to, and what end time application that prophecy may have, if you don't have a sense of history, you are going to be somewhat in the dark.

Prophecy was not given in a vacuum. It does not just hang in midair. If we are going to take a prophecy and begin to speculate or assign meanings to symbols arbitrarily, well then, your guess is as good as mine, as to what a prophecy may mean.

If we read it, and we look at the symbols or the technicalities of the wording of the prophet, and I say the prophet meant this or that or the other thing, and you say, I don't he did, he meant something else. Your argument is as good as mine and mine is as good as yours. We can all talk from now until the Lord comes back about what this prophecy means.

We can see beasts, or we can see leopards and lions. We can see different things introduced into the prophetic writings. We can say, I think this is this or I think that it is the other thing. Someone suggested that Ezekiel's prophecy of the dry bones represented the United States. Someone else thought that it meant something entirely different. They all had their ideas. The problem was, they were taking a prophecy completely out of its historical setting, out of the situation in which it existed, giving no attention to the history around it at all, and therefore really understanding nothing about what the prophet himself was saying.

Prophecy was not given in a vacuum. It was relevant when it was given. It was timely when it was given, and it also had a future application. I have read many times before but will remind you again of Isaiah 41 verse 22, where Isaiah says challenging the false god: "Let them show us what is going to happen, let them show us the former things, what they may be, that we may study them. Consider them to understand the latter end thereof." In other words, the historical setting of a prophecy, the historical fulfillment of a prophecy, it is highly relevant to what is going to happen in the future. Now there's nothing really unusual about that. How many of you have ever heard the expression that "history repeats itself"? You all have heard that before, it is an axiom, people basically believe that history repeats itself and indeed it does, it does so for cogent reasons.

You Need a Grasp of History

A study of Biblical history is absolutely essential for a student of prophecy. If you want to understand it and you want to flip open Isaiah, Jeremiah or Ezekiel and read through them and grasp what it is you're reading, it is absolutely essential that you have a grasp of the history of the Old Testament, and the events that took place. If you are going to understand what has happened leading up to the present day, if you going to understand what is going on right now, if you're going to understand what's going to be happening in the next several years, you need a grasp of history. You need a grasp of Biblical history. You need a grasp of European history to some extent. You need a grasp of American history, a sense of the flow of events in order to place, a prophet both historically and futuristically in some kind of structure.

How then would you approach the study of history? Most of us in school think in terms of recall, back to our classes of history, as I had to memorize certain dates. That's the thing where you are supposed to remember "1492 is when Columbus sailed the ocean blue". That is one of the ways we got into our mind the year that Columbus discovered America, and a slightly lesser number of us, remember that it was in October of that year, was it not, that he finally discovered the United States or discovered the North American continent.

Even then I don't think it was actually the North American continent, as such, that he landed on that year.

We all start out to memorize dates and then promptly forget all the dates except those that are absolutely important that occur again and again along the way. One of the reasons most of us remember 1492, in October, is because of the celebration of Columbus Day year after year after year. It is the repeated observation of the day which underlines in our minds the dates. It is difficult to remember the sequence of the presidents of the United States or try to remember the sequence of the Kings of France. We do know that Louis XV followed Louis XIV but as far as that is concerned, trying to figure out in England the Henrys or the Edwards or the Georges, which of them were first or to know their order, you know their number, but where the Georges fell in relation to the Henrys and all of the rest of them, do you know? If you are a careful student of history, you may.

Outline of Old Testament History

The first step in the approach of any study of history is to outline it, to break it into its parts. Old Testament history breaks up fairly nicely into seven parts, and I hope that you have your Bible with you and that you have a pen, so you can jot down some notes, because you may want to refer back to some of these things in the process of time. I think this will prove to be interesting to you.

The first and the most obvious period of Biblical history is the Patriarchal Period. It is the period from Adam until the Egyptian captivity, and actually the end of Patriarchal Period would be difficult to define in terms of a date. Dates at that age of antiquity would be very iffy in any case but essentially it is from Adam to when the last of the twelve sons of Jacob died, sometime in the Egyptian captivity. This would be the Patriarchal Period.

It is followed roughly by the Mosaic Period. This is the period of time leading up to the calling of Moses. Moses was used by God in leading the children of Israel out of captivity. It includes the period of Joshua, as well, because Joshua was called up in front of the people by Moses. Moses himself laid his hands on him. Moses placed some of his glory upon Joshua and Joshua's ministry was in every sense of the word an extension of the Ministry of Moses. So, the Mosaic Period runs through the book of Exodus all the way through Joshua to put it in general terms.

The third period follows with the period of the Judges, which includes in your Bible, the book of Judges and also First Samuel, because the period of the Judges extended on up until the time of Saul was anointed king over Israel.

Then the period of Judges is followed by the Period of the Monarchy, or some might call it the period of the United Kingdom. This is the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, the time of United Monarchy or the United Kingdom.

Next is the period of the Divided Kingdom. This runs from the death of Solomon until the captivity of Israel. It is called the Divided Kingdom because on the death of Solomon, if you recall, the Kingdom of Israel was divided into two parts. One, the ten northern tribes headquartered in Samaria, and the other, the southern tribes of Judah with Benjamin and Levi headquartered in Jerusalem. The Divided Kingdom started with Rehoboam and Jeroboam and continued to the captivity.

The sixth period is the Period of captivity. The two primary Biblical books of this period are Ezekiel and Daniel. There are other writings that have to do with it, but it's primarily Ezekiel and Daniel.

Finally, the seventh period is what we would call the Post Captivity or the time of return when Ezra and Nehemiah wrote their books of the Bible and some of the minor prophets, in fact the last of the minor prophets were written during this post captivity period. So, you at least have this broad outline of Biblical history that you can at least start fitting some things into that you might be talking about. But when the time comes to start studying prophecy, you will find that your only concern will be with the last three of these periods, because comparatively little prophecy is preserved for us from the first four of these periods.

Prophets in the Old Testament

In fact, only seven men in this period of time, if my memory serves me correctly, are actually named as prophets during the first four divisions of Israel's history. They are Abraham, Aaron, Moses, Gideon, Samuel, Gad and Nathan.

Of course, we have none of their writings available to us at all, and relatively little of what they had to say as prophets. These men are not insignificant, I might add, they are not to be called insignificant men, but their significance is not as a prophet in the strict sense of the word. Now we all know that Abraham was a prophet, but we don't really think of him in terms of prophecy or a prophet, we think of him as a patriarch, a man of God, a leader of his people, as a friend of God. We could name all sorts of ideas that we have about Abraham.

When we think of a prophet, we think in terms of some fellow who was going about his business tending his flock or doing whatever he is doing, or working as a silversmith, and all of a sudden, he gets this far off look in his eye, and he is caught away in a vision. and people around him say, "What's the matter with him?" And yet he is gone, then he comes back and says, "The Lord spoke to me, I was carried away in a vision and He said thus and thus." So, this is our idea of the strict sense of what a prophet is. In the broad sense of the word, a prophet is a man inspired of God. He may be inspired to preach, inspired to write or he may be inspired to walk up and look somebody in the face and tell him off. Because on occasion that is precisely the job that the prophet did.

I'm going to be talking about prophets here more in terms of the man who gives a message from God and delivers it to somebody else, and we just really don't think of Abraham and Aaron in that sense of the word. We think of Moses that way, but not in the sense of foretelling the future. There is a little bit of prophecy in Moses' writings as far as foretelling the future, but we think of Moses as the law giver. Gideon, we think of as a commander of an army, and yet he is referred to indirectly as a prophet. Samuel is referred to as a prophet and we do know that he had a vision from God about what was to happen. We think of him far more as a powerful influence on the general way of daily life of the Israelites during his time of life

Gad and Nathan, we really know very little about their works and their writings. They were messengers in a sense for the short-term, for the here and now. They were given messages of interpretation, of explanation, of commands and immediate rebuke, rather than someone who sits down and is given a vision of the future to convey to someone else.

Watershed in Israel's History

The death of Solomon was a watershed in the history of Israel. It was one of the critical periods of time. Everything from the death of Solomon on, changed. A whole new breed of prophets comes on the scene and they are heralded by a man named Ahijah. He was on the scene before Abraham's death and so I might have listed him with the other group of prophets, but he is different from the other prophets, because for the first time, we have a man who comes along who is beginning to foretell the future of what's going to happen in the year and months ahead, and in a sense that is quite relevant to the history of the time and indirectly is going to be relevant

to history for generations to come, and even down toward the very end time, although you would not immediately realize it in reading through Ahijah's prophecies.

The stage is set in the 11th chapter of First Kings and I want you to turn back there with me. Now as you read along in this, and I hope that you may want to do some study on this at home on your own.

Draw a Chart

I would suggest that every time you come across a chronological reference of some sort in your Bible that you mark it in some way that you can spot it and come back to it at a later time. You can get a book, there are any number of Biblical reference books, or handbooks, or encyclopedias that will give you Old Testament chronologies. They will even draw you charts that will give you approximate dates and times. The problem you're going up against when you do this, or when you look at those, is it's going to be a lot like it was for you back in school when you were required to memorize the dates of certain presidents that were in office. You look at it and it says that it was in 562 B.C., or this was in 95 B.C., and you look at these dates and they mean absolutely nothing to you.

What will mean something to you is that if you mark these chronological references, as you come to them, then they will always be, or almost always be, some reference to what year it is, often the reign of a certain king. But if you actually do these yourself, you actually get yourself a piece of graph paper, if necessary, and take a pencil and begin to mark on this piece of graph paper in some system that you devise, a chronology of the kings of Israel and Judah, you will, as you put these down and see them developed with the point of your own pencil, you will have a feeling for the relationship of events that take place in the two kingdoms and for the times in which they occur. Then when you go into the prophets and the prophet says that this was in the fifty second year of king Uzziah or it was the year that king Uzziah died, you open your piece of paper, which you should keep in your Bible for your study, and you look for king Uzziah and find the year that he died, and then you will have a feeling for where this man is when he says in the year that king Uzziah died, I had a vision from the Lord and the vision of the Lord was.

You can place that date in some sort of meaningful context for yourself. It is very important, far more important, I think, than many of us often realize, to pay attention to those references and to notice where the prophets were geographically. Where exactly on the face of God's green earth were their feet when they stood and told these things to these people was, he in Jerusalem? Was he in Samaria? Was he running around in the fields of Tekoa and where in the world is Tekoa? To whom was he speaking? To whom did God give him the message for? Why was he given the message? There are so many of these things in the historical sense, that will suddenly open up your eyes to understanding how it might be in the latter end thereof.

When I taught Old Testament Survey, I used to give a term paper project to the students, it was a requirement that they were to turn in for my perusal at the end of the year. Each of them was required to maintain, independently, a chronological chart of the events of the Old Testament as they went through it. They were required to mark in their Bible each of the chronological references as they came to them as read through the Old Testament and they were then to move

those over onto a piece of graph paper so that it would relate to them what other things were going on.

Now I did this for more than one reason. One of the reasons that I did it was to give them some sort of historical sense, to help them get some sort of perspective on what was actually going on and how these things related to things going on in other parts of the world at the same time.

Accurate Chronology Impossible

But I also wanted them to realize that as they went along, that the construction of an authoritative accurate chronology of the Old Testament is absolutely impossible, that cannot be done. That was impressed upon their minds when they got through and turned their papers in, then they all believed me when I told them that it was not possible. There are too many vagaries of the way people reckon time, of whether or not they count the year from the day that the king actually took office, or from the beginning of the calendar year before he took office, or the beginning of the calendar year after he took office.

There is a question of whether a king was anointed before the death of another king and whether their reigns are to be as considered overlapping or whether they are pulled out end to end and thereby making the time seem longer than it actually was; or whether, in some cases, there was actually a space of time between kings and there was an interregnum, or a person, who was not king who more or less controlled, while we waited for the next king to come into office and therefore the time seemed shorter than it otherwise would've been, because the time of the king's reign is all that is reckoned.

So, you then have all these vagaries of the methods of counting from autumn or counting from spring, of including a whole year as any part of a year of a king's reign, of deleting part of a king's reign, to go forward to the end of the year. You have some differences in the writer of Kings and the writer of Chronicles, and how to actually interpret these things. I also think that you have some differentiation in the sources from which the writer of Kings was drawing his information. One of the sources used one form for reckoning and another of his sources used a different form of reckoning. Since he was no better than his sources, all that he could record was what was there.

I don't mean to suggest in any way, that the chronological records, that you will notice as you study this, are inaccurate or wrong, they are not, but they are using a different set of standards from what other people are using to reckon their chronology by and neither of them is using a system with which you are familiar or comfortable or know what to do with.

So, you don't need to worry about it from the standpoint of accuracy or of real clear analysis, only from a general sense of position in time and the relationship to the other events going on in the world at the same time. That's the only purpose to be served, by laying out such a chronology or by making these historical references, and also to get a feeling for the passage of time, and exactly how much time did pass. For example, how long do you think the ten northern tribes existed as a separate nation? What was the total period of time of their existence as a people?

You may have general feeling for it. It was something in the neighborhood of 230 years as a nation.

I couldn't help but feel a little funny when we passed our two hundredth birthday as a nation heading on toward the same period of time that they were in, for the last 30 years and that was back in 1976 when we, the United States of America, passed that birthday. One is led to wonder, could there be a parallel with the 230 years of their existence or approximately 230 years in our existence as a people and as a separate nation?

These questions will occur to you as you begin to notice the events, I say questions, notice that I didn't say these answers will occur to you, because they are not answering, they are questions.

Important Historical Events

First Kings the 11th chapter as I said is kind of a watershed point. It helps us to understand an awful lot of historical events that take place in subsequent years, as we understand what happens here as a certain change begins to take place in the whole structure, the whole direction of these people.

First Kings 11:1: "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, You 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 women in love."

Now this is very interesting because this is not a specific prohibition of interracial marriage. It is a prohibition of international marriage with specific nations for a specific reason. The reason is religious, and the nations are those that are closest to Israel in geographical proximity. Other nations way far off are not mentioned. One would have to presume that their gods were different and if their complete worship were different, that there would be a distinction again drawn by God that they were not to marry into these other nations.

Verse 3: "And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart." That boggles the mind. It absolutely boggles the mind. How many children do you suppose that he had? I got to thinking about this when I was looking at it.

Haile Selassie, the emperor of Egypt, claimed to be a descendent of King Solomon, I guess through the queen of Sheba. When I thought about this for a moment, BIG DEAL, half of the world could be descended from Solomon. If you sit down and take one thousand offspring and establish some sort of parameters for the passage of time, and each of them being the progenitor of a certain number of children, you know so many sons were born to these wives and so many daughters, granted, but if you only take the sons and allow 30 years, and you consider each one of these sons on the average having a certain number of sons and you begin to project that forward, you don't get through to many generations till you have populated the world. Do you realize that half of us in this room or more could be descendants of King Solomon, in one way or another? Now I say descendants, the word is very rough, because by that I mean related in some

way, of some distant cousin. Probably all of us are in some way related to one another. Perish the thought.

But anyway, here we are, what a claim to fame it is, it is an interesting concept when you think about it and it also helps you to understand to some extent why these things were done by these kings. Why would it take this many wife in that nation and why would they have that many children? It had to do with connections for the future, it had to do with the establishment of dynasties, of royal houses, of interlocking people of the world. These marriages were an incredible political tool.

But it says in verse 2: "Solomon clave unto these women in love." He loved them all. He was a man with a considerable ability to love.

Verse 4: "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father."

You know when you think about this and you realize that the way in which David did cleave to God, with all of his mistakes, and all of his faults, all of his errors, there is such a profound lesson to be learned in the sequence of men between Saul and David and Solomon, that books could be written, years' worth of sermons could be delivered, developing the concept of the differences between these men.

Here is David sandwiched between a man who started out right and went wrong, and another man who started out right and went wrong, perhaps for different reasons. Saul seems to have been involved in a self-will, a rebellion and then later on a personal ego that was monumental and beyond description. Solomon involved with all of his wives finally became old and it is interesting that the Scripture does say: "When he was old." I have to assume then that his age was a factor in what was going on, otherwise why is it even mentioned here.

To some degree the aging process, the senility and it seems to be a nasty word to some people, but it shouldn't be. All it means is that a person is growing old, showing signs of old age, which are forgetfulness and certain, what shall we say paranoia, which oftentimes sets in older people, as they begin to think that the whole world is out to get them. The senile paranoia is a peculiar thing that happens to old people. I imagine some of you have even experienced it in some of your relatives as they get old and they are afraid that you are going to take their house away from them or they are afraid that you don't care about them anymore. It takes on several forms.

Solomon was old and "his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. {5} For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians."

Easter

The best way to understand this is that she was the original Easter, the Astarte, Ashtoreth, all of the same origin and even the pronunciation was, doubtless in the ancient languages, not far from Easter or Ishtar .

So, Ashtoreth or Easter was "the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. {6} And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. {7} Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."

Now Molech is famous elsewhere as the particular God and the requirement of this God was the passing of children through the fire. That would involve the burning of the firstborn of the family. I'm not sure that was true at this stage of the development of Molech. You will find later prophets turning back to Molech, the goddess of children of Ammon as the one who caused the children to pass through the fire. Some of the historical references to what was done will absolutely curl your hair. I believe in most cases the children were sacrificed, that is their blood was spilled forth before the body of a child was actually placed into an oven, sort of in the central part of this particular god Molech.

Solomon Saw God Twice

Continuing in First Kings 11:8: "And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. {9} And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice."

It's a shocking thing to think about in a lot of ways. You would think that if God would appear to me and if I could just speak to God, if I could envision Him and hear His voice, it would mean so much to me. I think, I speak of myself, I believe inside of myself that if I saw God, if actually I have not one but two experiences with God, that there is no way anyone could ever persuade me to become involved in anything else, any other religion or any other approach. There is no way I could deny Him, there is no way I could go back on his word. But Solomon did. Am I greater than Solomon? Am I somehow a better man than he? It is a shocking thing to realize.

I hope for him there is some mitigation in the fact that he was an old man when this took place. And maybe he was not entirely responsible for everything that happened. But it is a very sobering thing, nevertheless, to realize, here's a man to whom God appeared twice, who built the most magnificent Temple that has ever existed, built on the site in Jerusalem. The Temple in which God filled with His glory, with his presence and to a man, whom God appeared and gave an answer to his specific prayer on the dedication of that Temple. He started out right, but then turned wrong in the end of it all. It is sobering especially because you have to realize that up until this time, with all the ups and downs, with all of problems that Israel had, they had not really gone into idolatry up until this time.

David had not permitted it, with all of his weaknesses, and all of his problems, David had still been faithful to the true worship of the true God and had not worshiped any other gods. There is no indication that Saul allowed such a thing to take place either, even though he did, at a later

time in his life, after he had all witches and wizards put away from Israel did himself go and consult a witch in another area, even though he did that, he still did not allow the resumption of idol worship in Israel.

The death of Solomon was a watershed. It really was in every sense of the word because now the worship of Chemosh, the worship of Molech, the worship of other gods such as Ashtoreth, Ishtar, the queen of heaven, begin to be entered into and introduced into Israel.

Continuing in verse 11: "Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of you, and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely rend the kingdom from you, and will give it to your servant. {12} Notwithstanding in your days I will not do it for David your father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of your son. {13} Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to your son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

The prophecy of the ultimate division of the kingdom was to come after the death of Solomon, then the story of how that division took place is really fascinating, but this particular event, in this particular prophecy sets the stage for every one of the writing prophets, all of those with whom you are familiar. All of what they did begins to grow out of the events that took place and are described right here in the eleventh chapter of First Kings. All of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, all of these prophets saw the beginning, but they didn't know about it, but this was the beginning of their work. The necessity for their work eventually began right here.

Verse 14: "And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom."

Now that phrase is rather fascinating, because the implication is that this man was one of Solomon's sons by another wife. He was of the King's seed. And of course, one of his wives was an Edomite. So, this man was of some power and he was against the man who had begotten him. Actually, it doesn't call him his son. Did you notice that? He was of the King's seed though, without necessarily being quite considered a son in the true sense of the word. There is no indication that this man stood up against his father, but only against the man who begat him.

Verse 15: "For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom; {16} (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom:)" Now this is going way back in time.

Verse 17: "Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child."

If you get a little confused in the timing of these events you may need to consult a commentary to get this straightened out for you. Essentially it is because of the opposition of Solomon that Hadad fled into Egypt.

Verse 18: "They arose out of Midian and came to Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt." He stayed down there for some time.

Passing on down to verse 23 of First Kings 11: "And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: {24} And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, when David slew them of Zobah: and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. {25} And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel and reigned over Syria. {26} And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king."

Jeroboam

Here, Jeroboam, is introduced as a pivotal character in the history of Israel.

Now at this point in time, I'll just pause for a moment to remind you, as you begin to read through the prophets from this point on, all the writing prophets will fall in this category. We have not gotten anywhere near any writing prophet yet. But as you get into the work of the writing prophets, you will find them divided into two camps. You will find those who live in Judah and wrote about Judah, Jerusalem and the sins of Judah, and then you will find a large body of them who lived in Israel, in the northern tribes and wrote of the sins of the northern tribes. Hosea is a particular illustration, for example, of that genre of prophet.

So, you will find that the entire situation of northern tribes, from here and all through the entire 230 years of their history, is colored by what this one man, Jeroboam, does.

1 Kings 11:26: "And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lifted up his hand against the king. {27} "And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king." Here's why he actually did this. "Solomon built Millo and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. {28} And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph." The house of Joseph was composed of the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasses. {29} "And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite." Now I mentioned to you Ahijah was the first of a new breed of prophet. He actually comes on the scene before the death of Solomon, but he comes on because of what Solomon has done and because of what Jeroboam is about to do.

Verse 29: "The prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and Jeroboam had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field:" {30} And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him and rent it in twelve pieces." He tore it up into twelve pieces to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. {31} "And he said to Jeroboam, Take ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon,

and will give ten tribes to you: {32} (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.)"

Thirteen Tribes of Israel?

You will notice here that this only accounts for 11 tribes. He said I am giving you ten, and I'm giving him one. What's the problem? We do know essentially who the 10 tribes are that went North. We do know historically that essentially Judah and Benjamin stayed in the South. Now if you figure that out for a moment and add the fact that Levi was principally in the South. You wind up with 13 tribes rather than 12. So, the numerics of this are a little bit unusual. Of course, you may have understood already that the 13th tribe in Israel was achieved by the division of the tribe of Joseph into the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasses, his two sons.

Now what worked on this is that any division of the 12 tribes of Israel, in which Levi would not be figured, since Levi would not be given an inheritance, so Levi would not be counted. Levi then is pulled out, but because we divide Joseph into two tribes, we still have 12 tribes. Then if we have some count in which Levi is to be included, we put Ephraim and Manasseh back into the one tribe of Joseph and we still count twelve. So, the availability of the counting of twelve is always there.

What happened in this particular division, in the final fulfillment of this prophecy, was that the 10 northern tribes, all of which can simply be named, everybody except Judah and Benjamin, broke away with Jeroboam. But Judah, not just one tribe, but two stayed in the South.

1 Kings 11:32: "(But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) {33} Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. {34} Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: {35} But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto you, even ten tribes."

Is God the Author of Division?

Now have you ever heard it said that God is not the author of division? Whoever said that was wrong, because this tells us that Jeroboam rebelled and revolted and left Solomon. It says the reason he did so is because a prophet of God came to him and tore a garment into twelve pieces, divided the kingdom, gave him ten and kept this other one for Solomon's house. Who did it? God did it. Is God the author of division? Yes, he is! In this particular case, He actually authored it, insisted upon it and worked it out that it would take place.

1 Kings 11:35: "I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand,... {36} And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen to put my name there. {37} And I will take you, and you shall reign

according to all that your soul desires and shall be king over Israel. {38} And it shall be." This is a very important statement in verse 38, "If you will hearken (listen) unto all that I command you, and if you will walk in my ways, and do what is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with you, and build you a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto you. {39} And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not forever." {40} "Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam." Now Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam because of this prophecy. Solomon somehow found out about the prophecy. It must have become common knowledge as to what was to take place.

Faith in God

Now wouldn't you think that a man who had been given that kind of a prophecy, you know, someone came up to you and tore up a garment and gave you back ten pieces and kept two and told you precisely what it meant. Then whenever Solomon died, you yourself would wind up being caught up, almost without your control, and swept into events and suddenly here you are in the north with full control, full leadership and total support of those ten tribes. Would you not also believe God's statement that if you will obey me, keep My commandments, then I will make you a sure house? Don't you think you could have depended on that? Since you had seen the way the other part came to pass. You would have thought that Jeroboam could have. As history will show us, he did not.

1 Kings 1:40: "Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon. {41} And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? {42} And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. {43} And Solomon slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead." The stage is set. Solomon is dead.

The golden age of Israel is over. It had been quite stale for some time before this, because the adversaries of Solomon were getting stronger and he himself was getting weaker.

Rehoboam Coronated as King

1 Kings 12:1" "Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king." This was the place for the coronation. This was the inaugural pulling everybody together to continue the kingdom.

Verse 2: "It came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) {3} That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spoke unto Rehoboam, saying, {4} Your father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make you the grievous service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve you. {5} And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed."

During the Golden Age

Now when you think about this for a moment, it was an interesting point in history, and certainly a turning point. During the reign of Solomon, a great deal was done. It was a golden age in Israel's history. They had peace from their enemies on every side. They were a world power, but all of this was not without a considerable cost to the people.

When they had originally asked for a king, Samuel had protested to the people. God gave him a message and told him: "I want you to tell the people what is going to happen", because of having this King and He went through and he talked about how the King will take your sons and your daughters. How he will take your sons for the military, he will take your daughters to make bread for the palace, he will take parts of your crops, and you will be taxed and indeed that was fulfilled. I gather it must have gotten worse as the years went by and it reached an absolute peak at the end of the kingdom of Solomon.

They tell us about all the gold of Solomon's kingdom, so great in fact that silver was little accounted for in the days of Solomon, if you can believe that. Now this wasn't done without some cost. Somebody had to pay for all this. Some men had to die in fighting the battles for all of this. Who knows how many ships were sent out by Solomon and never returned. Sons that were seamen and were never seen again. This was all done but not without great cost. When it came down to it, the people never said a word about it all during the days of Solomon. Of course, there had to be an enormous amount of respect for Solomon, he had done a great deal for the people and I am sure a lot of the people regretted what had happened to him in his old age.

Make Our Burden Lighter

It is almost as though they came and said to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, look, we had to endure this from your father, but we are not going to take it from you. You either make our burden lighter or else. This was implicit, because they said, you make our burden lighter and we will serve you, He then sent them away to consult and try to determine what he ought to do.

1 Kings 12:6: "King Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do you advise that I may answer this people? {7} And they spoke unto him, saying, If you will be a servant unto this people this day, and will serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever. {8} But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: {9} And he said unto them, What counsel give you that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which your father did put upon us lighter? {10} And the young men that were grown up with him spoke unto him, saying, Thus shall you speak unto this people that spoke unto you, saying, Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter for us; thus shall you say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. {11} And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

What a shocking thing to say. What in the world was in their minds? What did they think they could do? What were they trying to accomplish with this? Did they believe that they could build a greater kingdom than Solomon? Were they going to reduce their own people to abject slaves as

it were, because this is what it sounds like? They were going to add to their yoke. They were going to burden them down more. They were whipped before, but now they would be whipped worse. What reason could there be? Was it that Rehoboam didn't want to live in his father's shadow? Did he want to do greater things than his father ever did? I suspect it was ego and vanity that was in the minds of Rehoboam and these young men.

The Irony of it All

The irony of it all is that if he had been willing to say yes, we will make the burden of taxation lighter. Yes, we will begin to reform some of the things. Yes, we will give you back your land. As they said, these people would be your servants forever. He would have had them from there on out.

1 Kings 12:12: " Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. {13} And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; {14} And spoke 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."

Do you have any idea what that did to these people listening there? They came back with hope, and he destroyed it all, as they stood there and listened.

Verse 15: "Wherefore the king did not listen to the people; for the cause was from the LORD." Who was the author? God was the author! "That he might perform his saying, which the LORD spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. {16} So when all Israel saw that the king listened not to them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David?" That is in the house of David, who was represented by Rehoboam. "Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to your house, David. So, Israel departed to their tents." In other words, you take care of yourself and we will take care of ourselves.

Verse 19: "But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. {18} Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore, king Rehoboam made speed to get up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. {19} So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day."

The house of David was the ruling household of King David which was represented by Rehoboam.

Jeroboam Made King of Israel

1 Kings 12:20: "And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only. {21} And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an

hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon."

Rehoboam was making plans to go up and end this, this was civil war, all of these states in the union, just like President Lincoln who got all of the armies together and was going to fight the battle and was going to heal the nation and bring them back together.

In verse 22 another prophet speaks: "But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, {23} 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, {24} Thus saith the LORD, You 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."

Now a very remarkable thing takes place, for one time in their history, they listened to a man of God. "They listened to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD."

And it was done. The kingdom was divided. God had prophesied it through Ahijah, and He had brought it to pass through Jeroboam. It was done.

If Jeroboam Would Obey God

Now remember, Jeroboam had the promise that if he would obey God, if he would be like David, if he would be a man after God's own heart, if he would be faithful to Him and no other, that God would establish him and his family. The indications are, there could have been incredible dynasties and kings of his own sons, generation after generation, sitting on the throne of a great kingdom in the northern part of Israel. If he would just obey, if he would just stay away from the idols, and not do as Solomon did.

1 Kings 12:25: "Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from there, and built Penuel." Shechem was the capital of the northern tribes at this point in time.

Jeroboam Did Not Have Faith

1 Kings 12:26: "Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: {27} If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah."

Now what is important about this is that having experienced the fulfillment of a dramatic prophecy in his own life, he was not able to have faith in the rest of that prophecy. He was not able to say in his heart, or in his mind, or somehow to bring himself to believe that this was of God, that God had brought it to pass, and that even when those nations were getting ready to come up and fight against them, to bring the kingdom back together again, that they stopped because God insisted on it, and God said "No, this is of me."

Jeroboam did not have the trust that God would preserve the kingdom intact. He was afraid. And he said to himself "If I let these people go up to Jerusalem to the house of God to do worship, their heart is going to return, and the kingdom will be reunited, and I am as good as dead".

When did the People Go to Jerusalem?

Now I would have to say that according to any rational thoughts of man that that is probably true. Let's stop for a moment and ask, when was it that the people went up to Jerusalem to do sacrifice?

Deuteronomy 16:16 "Three times in a year shall all your males appear before the LORD your God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:"

They were not allowed to offer an offering just any old place. It was to be at Jerusalem and in certain times of the year.

Jeroboam could easily see what was going to happen. The Feast of Tabernacles was coming up and autumn was in the air. When the first couple of cold fronts came through, the temperature began to drop a little bit, and everybody begins saying, this is the time of year that we go to the Feast of Tabernacles and the time is coming up to get everything together. We're going to Jerusalem to keep the feast.

Jeroboam figured that it would not take very long for those people going down to Jerusalem to keep the feast and coming back, and going down again and coming back and pretty soon they will say: Why are we divided this way? Why can't we put this back together?

He said to himself: "How am I going to keep this from happening?"

1 Kings 12:28: "Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. {29} And he set the one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. {30} And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. {31} And he made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. {32} And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made."

I want to stop here for a moment to think about that.

God's Holy Days are Important

Occasionally, Judah, was corrupted by idol worship, and even though they turned away from God repeatedly, they again and again repented and turned back to God. What is interesting as you study this is that in most cases, the focus of that repentance and that turning back to God,

was the Holy Days. It was the Passover, or the Feast of Tabernacles, that was kept gloriously, in a way that they had never done it before, and it was a time of great renewal, and a great revival where the people turned to God and it focused on the annual Holy Days.

So, whenever you look down the list of the kings of Judah, in Halley's Bible Handbook, it gives you the list of them and has the dates of when they reigned, the approximate time, and what sort of a King they were: good, bad, indifferent, or worst, etc. Across the page is the list of the Kings of Israel, the northern tribes and they were bad, bad, worst, bad, the worst, awful. There is not one revival. Not one time, not one King listed as good in the entire 230 years of the history of the northern tribes of Israel.

Two hundred and thirty years, and they never turned back to God. I suspect that they would basically say that the Holy Days don't need to be kept and just as sure as sunrise follows sunset, they didn't keep them. They had become divorced from the sanctuary and they had become divorced from the Holy Days. This is the one continuing besetting sin of king after king after king, and it will say again and again that he departed not from the ways and the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who did sin and made all Israel to sin.

Priests Made of the Lowest of the People

There's another thing that caught my attention in this passage of Scripture, and I think it is really worth stopping for just a moment to look at.

1 Kings 12:31 says: "He made a house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi."

Now when I read that and began to wonder a little bit about it, it is kind of thought provoking. I can understand, of course, that having separated from Israel and having separated from the house of God, that you wouldn't have a Levite as a priest, unless you had a corrupted Levite to be your priest in this situation, but realizing that you couldn't have anybody of the house of Levi to be priest, why go to the lowest of the people? I suspect that Jeroboam sat back and said "What kind of people do I want for priests? I don't want nobles, I don't want the intelligent, the wise, the dedicated, the devoted. I don't want respectable people, I don't want the charismatic leader type person. I want the lowest of the people". I don't think so, I think what he did was to make priests out of people who were available to suit his needs, to what he wanted done, and they turned out to be the lowest of the people. Why do you suppose that would have happened that way? You would think it would be wise to choose out among the noble or the intelligent or the aged and experienced, the man who has the respect of the people, wouldn't you? I wonder if it is because these men could be bought.

They could be bought reasonably. They were right there, they were willing and able, and their price wasn't too high. I think in any situation that you are going to find like this, you are going to wind up, if it becomes a matter of expediency or working out your own arrangements, you are going to wind up with the lowest of the people in this situation.

Jeroboam Rebelled

I want you to go over with me for a moment to 2 Chronicles 13 and let's begin in verse one: " Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. {2} He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Micaiah And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam." Continuing in verse 4: "Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, Jeroboam, and all Israel; {5} Ought you not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? {6} Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and has rebelled against his lord. {7} And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. {8} "And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and you be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. {9} Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever comes to consecrate himself (Margin says: to fill his hand) with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods."

The implication is that if the person who comes to fill his hands, to get, to accomplish, you wind up actually making this kind of person a priest. Here is the Abijah speaking to Jeroboam for what he did as he rejected the men who should be priests instead of accepting the lowest of the people.

Now let's turn over to first Timothy and draw a little contrast between what Paul told Timothy of how he should be in a position of leadership among God's people.

1Timothy 3:1: "This is a true saying, If a man desires the office of a bishop, he desires a good work. "The Greek word for Bishop is episkopos, (ep-is'-kop-os;) , and it means in the simplest terms, an overseer. You seem to have listed here two categories of offices in the church. A deacon, or diakonos, (dee-ak'-on-os); or servant of the church and an episkopos, (ep-is'-kop-os;) or overseer of the church. More or less a pastor or bishop.

Verse 2: "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; {3} Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; {4} One that rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; {5} (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) {6} Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. {7} Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

This is impressive when you think about it and compare or contrast it making a leader out of the lowest of the people. What does this say to us? You see what was actually taking place, and you will see other references that we will come to later on, that just about anybody who came to Jeroboam, and said I want to be a priest, was made a priest. Should you then when you come down to the Church of God, do that with people who want to be in the Ministry? Should you take anyone who wants to be a minister and make him a minister? I will tell you what you will wind up with, you will be making ministers of the lowest of the people. Now this isn't to say, that a man who wants to be in the Ministry is lowest of the people. I'm talking about if that is your

policy, as a bishop or a leader in the church or an evangelist as an existing minister. You are going to wind up with a pretty sorry Ministry.

As you look at this thing that Paul wrote to Timothy, one thing becomes abundantly clear. You had better know any man you ordain as a bishop. You not only have to know him, you have to know him well. You've got to know him and his children, and how those children behave. You have to be able to understand the little vagaries that sometimes do take place with his children and what they mean; because in some cases, albeit with misconduct of one child or two and with all of this occasionally, does not disqualify a man.

You don't make your Ministry of unknown, or unnecessarily of people who want it, you make it of people who are qualified for the office of leader in the Church of God as manifested by a whole lot of things, that a person might do. Then you take a look at the next office in the church, the deacon.

1 Timothy 3:8: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; {9} Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. {10} And let these also first be proved." A very critical qualification for a deacon, which I'm afraid occasionally has been overlooked, "Then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless." What? You mean to tell me that a person has to use the office of the deacon before he can be one. Yes, that's what it says.

Verse 11: "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. {12} Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. {13} For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Now then, do you make a man a deacon because he wants to be one? No, you don't. If you just ordain those people who seem to want to be, who come to you and wants to be a Minister and he wants you to make him one, what are you going to wind up with, a deacon, Greek diakoneo, (dee-ak-on-eh'-o), of the lowest of the people.

Again, you're dealing with a man you know, whose character is obvious, he is actually proved in-service of the church. He has been given jobs to do that have been carried out. He has been there long enough for you to know where he's coming from. You just don't act quickly or halfheartedly.

A lot of people, by the way, have noticed that the deacon has to be the husband of one wife and say: Does that mean that the church practiced polygamy? This was common in the church and a lot of people had more than one wife, but the minister couldn't have more than one wife. Interesting thought, if you think about it for a moment, however, if that's true, it would mean, that it's alright that a member could be double tongued, but the deacon couldn't be. A member shouldn't be double tongued either. The fact of the matter is, there are going to be members who are double tongued, and you don't put them out of the church, because they are. You give them time to overcome and God gives them time to overcome and you hopefully can preach to them and help them to grow in what they're doing.

Just because a person is given to wine doesn't mean that you put him out of the church and refuse to allow him to be a part of the body of Christ, and so forth, but is it all right for a member to be given to wine and yet a bishop must not be given to wine? Is it alright for a member to be? No, it's not, but if he is, you don't put him out. In other words, a person could be member of the church with a fairly broad spectrum of weaknesses that you should not put into the Ministry.

You don't want to end up with your ministry being of the "lowest of the people", but with people who've been proved, people with some ability, people that have high-caliber morals and with a great deal of integrity and who are not double tongued and not given to much wine, and not greedy of money. These are all nice characteristics to see developed in the Ministry.

Jeroboam Ordained a Feast

1 Kings 12:32: "And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah."

Jeroboam ordained a feast, like the Feast of Tabernacles but not the same. "And he offered upon the altar. So, did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made." {33} "So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar and burnt incense."

Now, what was God's response to this action that he did, to this change that he made to this most fundamental of God's Holy Days?

The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit RLDEA.com where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.

Discussion Questions

1. What are your thoughts about prophecy?
2. Do you agree with Mr. Dart that in order to understand the prophecies of the Bible, you have to understand the historical setting of when the prophecies took place?
3. Have you ever thought of Abraham, Aaron, Moses, Gideon, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan as prophets?
4. What are your thoughts about Solomon and the fact that God appeared to him twice, but he still turned away from God because of his love for his wives?

5. What are your thoughts about the fact that it was God who separated the kingdom of Israel?
6. What are your thoughts about Rehoboam and Jeroboam?
7. How did not keeping God's Holy Days affect the Northern Tribe?
8. Why do you think that Jeroboam chose the lowest of the people to be priests?
9. What do you think about the eighth month feast that Jeroboam created?
10. Are there similarities between moving the Feast of God to moving the Sabbath of God?