

June 22 Answers

- 1) The division of the kingdom. Solomon was dead, and his son, **Rehoboam**, went to **Shechem** to be declared king over Israel. His right to rule over Judah was unquestioned, but his right to govern the northern tribes was far from certain. The harsh **policies** enacted during Solomon's final years had created resentment among the people, and they called for **Jeroboam**, a known enemy of the crown, to be their spokesman. From Rehoboam's point of view, this was not an encouraging sign. However, he showed himself to be his father's son by seeking the **advice** of his father's counselors (cf. Prov 11:14). Their wise advice was spot on, but his younger advisers, the friends he had grown up with, persuaded him that appeasement was a mistake. 'It's no accident that Jeroboam is their spokesman!' they said. 'Your best bet is to stand firm and show no weakness!' That made sense to Rehoboam, and he rejected the counsel of the older men. Disaster soon followed, and only a divine intervention prevented a bloody civil war. This story teaches us that men may plot and plan, but **God** is in control. When God says a thing will come to pass, it will. Our response should be to **listen** to the word of the Lord (1 Kgs 12:24). Jeroboam lost no time in strengthening his position in the north. He built up Shechem and Peniel, but it didn't give him much peace of mind. He was convinced that the temple in Jerusalem would prove his undoing. Rather than trusting God to keep His promise to be with him and build him a sure house, Jeroboam made two golden **calves** and set them up as the gods of Israel. The people quickly joined in his idolatry, and this terrible sin became a stumbling block for **all** the future kings of Israel. Jeroboam's sin grieved God's heart, and He sent a prophet to rebuke Jeroboam and curse his altar. Rather than repent, Jeroboam tried to seize the prophet, and only God's mercy allowed his hand to be restored. If Jeroboam had any lingering doubts about how serious God was, they were laid to rest when God's judgment fell on the very prophet who had rebuked him. When God speaks, He is to be obeyed. Good **intentions** cannot excuse disobedience. Yet Jeroboam remained hardened (1 Kgs 13:33), and it ended up costing him the life of his son and the destruction of his dynasty. How sad that he was more afraid of losing his kingdom than he was of losing God!