

Week One: Rehoboam

Introduction: We are facing another election in our nation. It is a privilege and a responsibility. We are blessed to have the option of helping to choose our leaders in the United States. Why bother with this study someone might ask. Isn't the political sphere so corrupt that Christians should avoid it altogether? Don't we belong to another Kingdom the Kingdom of Heaven? Shouldn't we just focus on the spiritual realm?

I can think of lots of things to say to that. First, can you think of any Bible heroes that served in government? More importantly there is a passage of scripture in the New Testament that has some very specific instructions for us. The whole passage is Rom 13.1-7. I am going to just use one little verse.

Ro 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

Let's think about that. We are citizens of heaven yet we are also citizens on earth. We enjoy **dual citizenship**. Would God declare that He is in charge of those who get appointed to leadership or who becomes rulers on earth and then tell his people to have nothing to do with it? Would He say that government is his own institution and then declare it **off limits** to his children? No, God intends for us to get involved in the society in which we live. I believe that includes at any level from casting a vote to **running for office**.

A few months I preached a sermon called "First of all pray." It was based on Paul's first lesson to Timothy on being a good pastor. It was found in 1 Timothy. *1 Ti 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, 2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

Purpose: We want discover positive character traits and recognize negative character traits in the people that want to lead us.

Method: We will do this by looking at a select group of leaders among the kings of Israel and Judah. We can't study all of the kings in a 10-12 week study. There are too many.

What are we looking for in a leader? A person who holds public office is responsible for the oversight, defense and provision of a civil society for the people they serve. They are to be public servants not self-serving **manipulators**.

Let me read a simple verse from Exodus about the basic qualifications of leaders [This was used by Moses to choose leaders to help him – 70 of them].

Ex 18:21 Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

What if that was the first litmus test that a politician had to pass in order to be able to enter a race for public office? [Do you think the majority of candidates would qualify?]

Let's do some Bible bouncing. I don't normally do that with you because I preach expositional sermons. But for our purpose we need to see a few verses that speak about how God looks at leaders [He calls them Shepherds]. We want to see what God requires.

Ezekiel 34.1-10; 18-19 _____

Jeremiah 10.19-21 _____

Jeremiah 12.10-11 _____

Jeremiah 23.1-2 _____

Ezekiel 22.23-31 _____

Micah 3.11-12 _____

As you can see God expects us to take public leadership very seriously.

Review hand outs:

1. Kings and prophets

2. Kings of Untied and Divided Kingdoms

Note:

- There was a time of a united kingdom and a time of a divided kingdom.
- There are kings of the same names under both kingdoms but they were different people.
- The prophets that prophesied during their reigns are listed.
- None of the kings of Israel (Northern tribes) were good.
- Only half of the Kings of Judah (Southern tribes) were good at any point in their reign.
- [I'll give you a list of the prophets and their ministries next week.]

Rehoboam – The King who listened to bad counsel

Full Text: 1 Kings 12-13; 1 Chronicles 10-12

Background facts:

Heritage: Rehoboam was the son of the richest, wisest and most powerful man on earth, **Solomon**. He inherited his job from his father. His father left him a book of wisdom to help guide him through life. His grandfather was the greatest king in his nation's history, David. His nation was born by the will of God and he had God's counsel available to him. His people were the chosen and most favored people on earth. Yet, his father had been a **hypocrite**. He didn't take his own advice; he married strange women and provided for the worship of idols.

Situation: There was trouble brewing with a rival, one Jeroboam who had been an officer in Solomon's government. He had word from a prophet that Solomon's later unfaithfulness to God was going to result in God tearing away some of the kingdom from David's line. He had hidden out in Egypt until Solomon died but he showed up at the coronation of Rehoboam. He intended to cause havoc. Let's read 10.1-15.

Failures of leadership:

- He ignored the counsel of people with age, **experience** and wisdom [v.6-7].

- He listened to counsellors that only told him what he **wanted to hear**. [v.14]
- He allowed his lust for riches, power and self-aggrandizement to blind him to the **responsibility** he had for the nation [v.8-14]
- He failed to learn anything from other people's **failures**. His father was a womanizer and so was he. [11.21]
- He became **overconfident** not depending on the Lord at all in fact disobeying the Law of God. [12.1] Be sure your sin will find you out.

Personal decisions had public consequences:

- He lost most of the kingdom he **inherited** [1-16-17]. He lost all but Judah and Benjamin – just two tribes left.
- He lost most of the **wealth** and treasure amassed by Solomon [12.9-10].
- He lost the impact of a united kingdom and the **witness** to the other nations.

Some good was found in him:

- He **obeyed** the word of the Lord by the mouth of the prophet Shemaiah to avoid fighting against his own people [11.4].
- He **humbled** himself and led his leaders to humble themselves when Shishak King of Egypt arrived to occupy the land.

How can we use this as we face elections?

- How well does an aspiring leader **listen**?
- **Who** are his/her counsellors?
- What is his/her track record regarding a position of **authority**? Did they submit to authority; did they abuse their authority?
- What is their history concerning **money**?