

Did God Micromanage Jeroboam?

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Bible students like to discuss God's involvement in the selection and behavior of civil leaders. In the previous three articles, we discussed three Old Testament leaders who were chosen by God.

The three examples demonstrate that, even when God does choose a person to lead nations, He generally does not micromanage the actions of that leader.

Although I was not originally planning to talk about Jeroboam, his story is enlightening to this conversation.

Previous three leaders

When we recollect about the three leaders from the three previous weeks (Saul, David and Solomon), we remember a few similarities.

- God micromanaged in choosing each of them.
- But God did not micromanage in forcing them to be obedient.

A new twist

Although those two factors are true about Jeroboam, there was a new factor involving him.

- God micromanaged in choosing Jeroboam.
- God did not micromanage in forcing Jeroboam to be obedient.
- But God did micromanage in causing a separation involving the nation of Israel.

The separation

Notice the words of the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam concerning the northern 10 tribes.

1 Kings 11:31-35—"And he said to Jeroboam, 'Take for yourself ten pieces, for thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), because they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do what is right in My eyes and keep My

statutes and My judgments, as did his father David. However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes.' "

Notice Ahijah's words to Jeroboam concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

1 Kings 11:36—"And to his son I will give one tribe, that My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there."

When Jeroboam proceeded with the plan to assume control of the northern 10 tribes, Rehoboam of Judah assembled an army and was ready to fight (1 Kings 12:21).

Notice God's words from Shemaiah to Rehoboam.

1 Kings 12:23-24—"Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' "

Jeroboam's sins

It is interesting to note that God initially offered blessings to Jeroboam if he was obedient (1 Kings 11:38).

However, the Bible described the reign of King Jeroboam as very negative (2 Kings 17:20-23). Many of the kings who followed him were mentioned as following in the sins of Jeroboam.