

Ahijah's Prediction that King Jeroboam's Son Will Die

1 Kings 14:1-20

1 Kings 14: 1-20 - *"At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age.*

Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman."

And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler 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 as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back—therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!"' Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

"Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."

Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. The period that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place.”

Background Notes:

Soon after the events of 1 Kings 13, King Jeroboam’s son Abijah became sick. We don’t know the boy’s age, or what his illness was. But we do know that he was old enough to trust the Lord, because verse 13 says, *”he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the Lord, the God of Israel, has found anything good.”*

This verse does not teach that Abijah went to heaven because he did some good deeds. The point is of this verse is that the Lord knew the heart of this young boy. He saw that Abijah trusted in the one true God of Israel. This is true today. God sees the hearts of children, and He knows whether or not they’re responding to Him and trusting in Him. There are many young children who trust the Lord even though their parents are not saved. This is why children’s ministries are extremely important.

King Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise to ask the prophet Ahijah what would become of their son. Isn’t that interesting? Jeroboam had plenty of false prophets at his shrines who would gladly have told him what he wanted to hear, but Jeroboam knew that they didn’t speak the truth. What a sad commentary on the spiritual condition of Jeroboam’s soul! He even tried to hide the fact that he was sending his wife to a true prophet!

Of course Jeroboam was hoping to hear some good news about his son from Ahijah. Remember Ahijah? He had predicted that Jeroboam would become king. 1 Kings 11:29-31: *”Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the field. Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it into twelve pieces. 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.’”*

The Tabernacle was located in Shiloh back in the early days of the United Kingdom, and Ahijah the prophet was still living in Shiloh. The Lord gave Ahijah insight as to the identity of Jeroboam’s wife, the coming death of Jeroboam’s son, and the disastrous future for the northern kingdom.

The Lord took the child Abijah to heaven rather than let him live on in the immoral and idolatrous conditions of the northern kingdom of Israel. The death of little Prince Abijah was not by chance, just as the death of any child is not by chance. God is in control.

Doctrinal Points

1. God speaks to individuals in times of personal tragedy.

Do you think King Jeroboam's son became sick by chance? No way. God was speaking to Jeroboam, giving him a chance to repent of his proud and idolatrous ways. Even the hardest of men sometimes soften when a personal tragedy takes them by surprise. Sure enough, Jeroboam was very concerned when his son, the heir to the throne, became ill.

At the beginning of this chapter, when Jeroboam sent his wife to the godly prophet Ahijah, we hoped that maybe, just maybe, he would change his ways - but Jeroboam never changed his ways. Even though his child died, Jeroboam would not listen to the Lord. In fact, he never changed his ways for the rest of his life. 2 Chronicles 13:20 says that, in the end, the Lord struck Jeroboam and he died. How sad.

King Jeroboam was known as *"the king who sinned, and made Israel sin."* What a reputation! God spoke to him through the death of his son, but he wouldn't listen. Has the Lord spoken to you through personal tragedy? Is He speaking to you right now? Are you listening - or are you like Jeroboam? God speaks to individuals in times of personal tragedy.

2. God speaks to nations in times of national crisis.

"For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin" (v15-16).

Through Ahijah the Lord pronounced that not only would the dynasty of Jeroboam be brought down, but also that the entire northern kingdom of Israel would eventually be removed. Notice that both the nation and the king would be held accountable for the coming disaster. Verse 15: *"Because they [the nation] have made their wooden images, provoking the Lord to anger,"* and verse 16: *"because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."* So God held both the nation and the king accountable for the future disaster.

Nineteen kings would come to the throne in the northern kingdom of Israel, but none of them turned the heart of the nation back to God. The Lord sent prophets specifically to the northern kingdom: Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, Hosea - but the people would not listen.

Finally, the Lord allowed the armies of Syria and to strike Israel as *"a reed shaken in the water."* The northern kingdom was uprooted and scattered. 2 Kings 17:5 - *"Now the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years." You talk about a national crisis -- a three year siege of the nation's capital,*

Samaria. God was speaking to the nation with judgment, but the nation would not listen. Verse 6, "In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and carried Israel away to Assyria." Samaria and the northern kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722BC. God speaks to nations in times of national crisis.

God is speaking to the nation of Israel right now. The secular state of Israel faces national crisis today. Bible prophecies about the End Times tell us that the national crisis in Israel will ultimately get worse before it gets better. In Zechariah 14:2 God said, *"For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem."* Notice - **God** will bring the nations against Jerusalem. Why? Because God speaks to nations in times of national crisis. Out of Israel's national crisis will come a number of believing Jews who will prepare the nation for the Lord's return.

In view of recent tragedies in our own country, do you think God is speaking to this nation? Yes, He certainly is! He's sending us a wake up call - for sure! But are the people of our nation listening? God speaks to nations in times of national crisis.

Practical Application

Don't compromise God's message because of gifts!

In verse 3 Jeroboam said to his wife, *"Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him [Ahijah] and he will tell you what will become of the child."* . It looks like this may have been a bribe, rather than a courtesy gift, doesn't it? Perhaps Jeroboam was hoping that the gifts would somehow influence the prophet to send him a favorable message. But the prophet Ahijah did not compromise God's message because of the gifts. He gave God's message - the whole message - even though it was not pleasant news for Jeroboam.

And we must do the same. For example, the fact that hell exists and unbelievers are bound for hell is not a pleasant message. But it's the truth! We must not compromise the truth.

Unbelievers will use a number of tactics to try to get us to compromise this unpleasant message, including "gifts" such as social acceptance and promotion and success in this world. Many Christians have capitulated in this area – even some Christian pastors! Have you? Don't compromise God's message because of gifts!