

The god of Dan

- Hi everyone!
 - We will be returning to “the story” series next week, but for today the title of the lesson is “**the god of Dan**”
 - Intro
 - I taught a similar lesson over 10 years ago
 - Based off some thoughts from a man called Jeff Fisher – leading the Tel Aviv church when Maura and I visited there as a young couple
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- We are going to start off here by reading from the prophet [Amos](#)...
- Now Amos was a prophet to northern kingdom of Israel
 - You will remember for our “the story” series that after Solomon there was a split in the kingdom into a north and south...[\(show graphic of fork in the road\)](#)
- In [Amos 8](#), we read of a famine coming...

[Amos 8:11-14](#)

[“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord,
“when I will send a famine through the land—
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.](#)

[¹² People will stagger from sea to sea
and wander from north to east,
searching for the word of the Lord,
but they will not find it.](#)

- A famine... not for food and water... but for hearing the word...
- Not that the word would cease to exist... but people would not be hearing it..
- And then he says:

[¹³ “In that day
“the lovely young women and strong young men
will faint because of thirst.](#)

[¹⁴ Those who swear by the sin of Samaria—
who say, ‘As surely as your god lives, Dan,’
or, ‘As surely as the god^{\[b\]} of Beersheba lives’ —
they will fall, never to rise again.”](#)

- He says: ‘As surely as your god lives, Dan,’ or, ‘As surely as the god of Beersheba lives’ — they will fall, never to rise again.”
- Dan was a tribe in Israel
- Now campus...what do you know about the use of capitals in English when talking about God? (‘G’ has a capital)... but look here... he is says as surely as your god lives Dan...(small ‘g’ ...
- So who was this “god of Dan”?... lets see..
- ... if you have a Bible...lets look in the book of 1 Kings

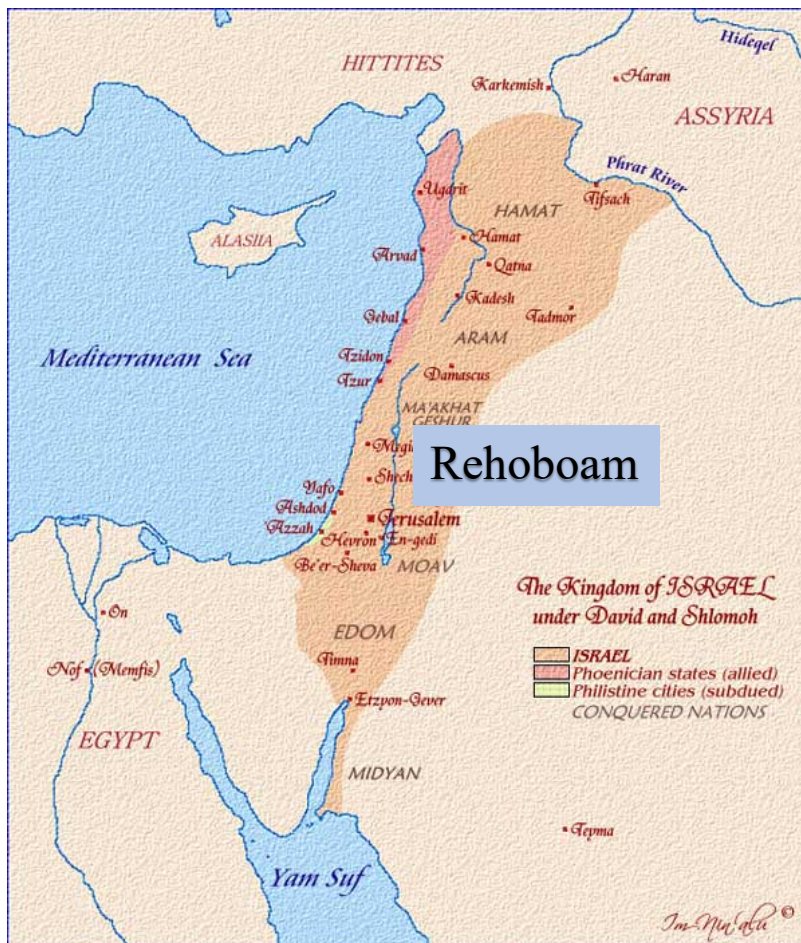
[\(Pray\)](#)

- Lets start with where this passage fits into “the story” of the bible...(show graphic of fork in the road)
 - We start just before the split...with the great king Solomon... son of king David,
 - He had just seen Israel through its greatest period of peace and prosperity...
 - Temples and palaces were built...

1 kings 11:42-43

⁴² Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. ⁴³ Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king. ... **12:1**..Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king.

(map and pic)



- Now Solomon was a famous and powerful king..
- Paraphrase the below (not on screen)

1 Kings 10:23-25

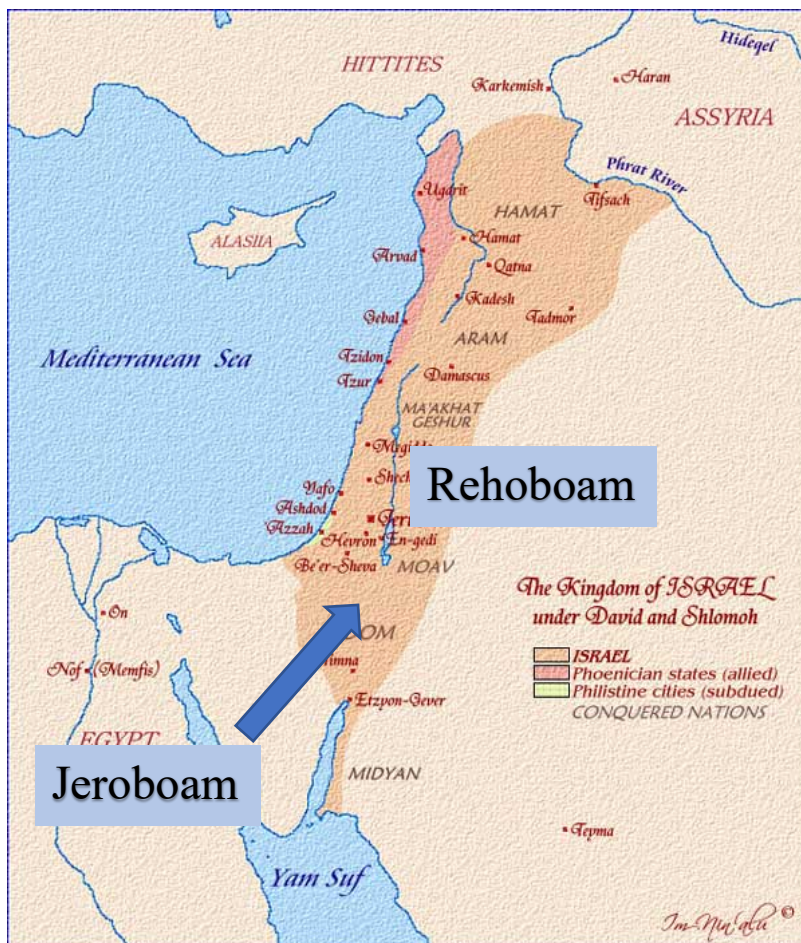
²³ King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. ²⁴ The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. ²⁵ Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules...v27.. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills.

- See Solomon secured probably Israel’s greatest period of peace an prosperity...

- But... his people didn't love him...for a number of reasons..
 - He imposed heavy taxes...(who was to keep the kingdom running?)
 - He implemented 'government employment'...(in other words we imposed forced labour...)
- To be king was great.. the be a worker...not so great...
- But eventually Solomon dies... and his son Rehoboam takes over from his father
- But... another person enters the story...

12:² When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from^[a] Egypt.

(map and pic)



- This Jeroboam is someone we know... someone who had been removed from Israel and was living exiled in Egypt...
- And.. unfortunately for us... someone who has a similar name so it can get confusing...
- See there is a side to Solomon that we can forget...
- .. Solomon had lost his way.. and a prophet told Jeroboam..one of his best generals at the time (head of his entire workforce) that he would take most of Solomon's kingdom away
- Solomon didn't like the message... and instead of repenting... he chased Jeroboam away
- But... Solomon dies and Jeroboam returns to meet the new king...

³ So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: ⁴ “Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you.”

- Solomon build palaces and a temple..and great structures all over... but who did the work???.. not the king!
- So the people say to his son... Rehoboam.. listen.. your dad was hectic... please lighten the load and we will happily serve you..

⁵ Rehoboam answered, “Go away for three days and then come back to me.” So the people went away.

⁶ Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. “How would you advise me to answer these people?” he asked.

⁷ They replied, “If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants.”

⁸ But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. ⁹ He asked them, “What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, ‘Lighten the yoke your father put on us’?”

¹⁰ The young men who had grown up with him replied, “These people have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.’ Now tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. ¹¹ My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.’”

- I don’t think we need a long explanation...
- He was given two sets of advice..
 - One was to be a kind king
 - One was to be a harsh king
- And 1 piece of advice not listened to had major consequences (as we will see)
 - Usually our problem is not the availability of good advice...
 - It is that you have already decided before you ask..

Will Paraphrase – no slide

~~¹² Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, “Come back to me in three days.” ¹³ The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, ¹⁴ he followed the advice of the young men and said, “My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.” ¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from the Lord, to fulfill the word the Lord had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.~~

~~¹⁶ When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:~~

~~“What share do we have in David,~~

~~—what part in Jesse’s son?~~

~~To your tents, Israel!~~

~~—Look after your own house, David!”~~

~~So the Israelites went home. ¹⁷ But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.~~

- So Jeroboam gathered a group who wasn’t happy with this outcome and said ‘forget this’ and left to set up a new kingdom set up in the north...

- Now we won't look at the specific details of how this went down...
- But like any rebellion it was fairly nasty..
- Look what happened...
- 1 decision... 1 power trip...massive consequences...
- The kingdom of Israel literally splits into 2 kingdoms
- (map and pic) – lets call this “**split map**”.. will need it up a lot while I explain things later...maybe on TV?



- Rehoboam (Solomon's son)...remains loyal to the house of David in the South... (In the Bible this kingdom is called Judah, since it was predominantly made up of the tribe of Judah..)
- And Jeroboam was like
 - He was like... forget this...We are out of here...
 - So he starts a new breakaway kingdom...
 - And was declared king of the Northern tribes...(in the Bible, this was called Israel)...

- The main point is that the kingdom went from 1 into 2 (show Werner timeline picture)

(background in boxes below)

Leave a background

¹⁸ King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram, ¹⁹ who was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. ²⁰ When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the house of David.

Decide if point needed, otherwise maybe just explain...

~~21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered all Judah and the tribe of Benjamin—a hundred and eighty thousand able young men—to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.~~

~~...~~

~~22 But this word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God: 23 “Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah, to all Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, 24 “This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.” So they obeyed the word of the Lord and went home again, as the Lord had ordered.~~

~~25 Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim and lived there. From there he went out and built up Peniel.^[c]~~

- Now the new kingdom set up in the north was quite nice...
 - .. no forced labour...no scorpions..
- BUT... he had a problem...
 - The truth was in Jerusalem...
 - That's where the temple was...and it was still imperative for the Jews to go to Jerusalem to worship

~~26 Jeroboam thought to himself, “The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, they will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and return to King Rehoboam.”~~

- One of his core concerns was that if the Jews from the north went back to visit Jerusalem... even just to offer a sacrifice.. they would see the temple and priests and he may lose favour...
 - (why are we following this guy??...God is in Jerusalem)
- So he distracted them... check at this...

~~28 After seeking advice, the king made two golden calves. He said to the people, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan.³⁰ And this thing became a sin; the people came to worship the one at Bethel and went as far as Dan to worship the other.^[d]~~

~~31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites. 32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival held in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made. And at Bethel he also installed priests at the high places he had made. 33 On the fifteenth day of the eighth month, a month of his own choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to make offerings.~~

split map

- In order to prevent his people from going to Jerusalem, he made some new teachings...

- “Its way to far to travel to Jerusalem... we have our own places of worship here in Bethel and Dan”
- But he put up golden calves to sacrifice to...(show picture of site in Dan)...



- This was the 'god of Dan that Amos was speaking about'
- And made it really attractive:
 - It was similar BUT... anyone could be a priest..(not just the Levite as commanded)
 - Worship was in their own neighbourhood...
 - He even added some festivals to spice it up...
- BUT...it was not the truth...
- If im hot and thirsty and drink a bottle of water...I feel quite good..
 - What would happen if this water had 1% arsenic in it?
 - Would it look any different?...no
 - But it would kill me...
 - Satan is not stupid...
 - Would he really make his lies look so different from the truth??
 - If you were counterfeiting money..
 - How close would you make the counterfeit R200 look compared to the truth?
 - (as close as possible right?)
 - See Satan wants just enough poison in your truth to mess up your relationship with God... too much and you will just go running back...
- If he can just get you to believe...
 - That you can live with 1 foot in the kingdom and 1 foot in the world (better wording?)...that's all he needs to do..
 - That all roads lead to Rome and doctrine isn't as important as finding a church that makes you feel good... that's all he needs to do
 - Etc.. (thoughts on relevant applications?)
- Its all he needs isn't it?

In our quest for knowledge of the truth...

- ...QUALITY is important...
- And we can make the mistake of substituting our focus from quality of TRUTH for comfort of experience...
 - In the middle ages... Christianity substituted truth for elaborate church buildings
 - But it could be other things...
 - We substitute truth for..

- The music we like...
 - Neighbourhood convenience...
 - A fancy preacher...
- Today you can go and pick your truth at any church.. (like shopping at PnP or Shoprite)..
- If you really want... you can find something that suits you... and you will find people to join you...

But how should you make your choices of anything spiritual?...

- Is it aligned to the truth of the Bible!...
 - The rest is marketing techniques...
 - Now... there is nothing wrong with meeting in a big hall, investing in worship.. having nice powerpoints... building a youth centre...
 - But that's not why we are here...
 - We make choices because of what we read in the Bible...
- And not all of it is Biblical truth... A lot of the Bible is DESCRIPTIVE... it describes things... there is lots to learn... but we must be careful not to make them PRESCRIPTIVE commands...if that's not what was intended
- Some in here are not deep enough in the Bible...
- I can say with confidence that I have had periods of deep Bible study and have also had periods of shallow Bible study...
 - If you are NOT deep... you will drift
 - If you are NOT deep... you will lose faith (faith comes from hearing the word.. Romans)
 - If you are NOT deep... The truth gets fuzzy... it really does...
- The truth can be ugly...
 - The truth doesn't always build up... sometimes the truth cuts..
 - Sometimes the truth is heavy...
 - There is a disease in protestant theology that gets you to feel like there is a problem if you aren't feeling happy and light...
 - "No no.. you are relying on your own strength...if you are unhappy its because you don't understand grace alone"
 - Listen... the truth is heavy!!!
 - Grace is awesome... but it doesn't take away all your pain...
 - In fact... pain can often be a form of grace...
 - It takes someone special to pass up on the extras in order to seek the truth...
 - (Maura and I speaking...anyone who becomes a disciple is a hero... it is a hard life to make Jesus lord... its worth it!!! But not easy...)

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- Lets look at a wonderful group of people during this time...
 - A group that clearly chose their truth carefully...

2 Chron 11 – Now Chronicles gives us a version of Kings, but a slightly different perspective... often from the priests perspective...

~~✓⁵ Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built up towns for defense in Judah:~~

~~...~~

~~¹² He put shields and spears in all the cities, and made them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his.~~

¹³ The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with him.

split map

- Just let that soak in... there were priests in the lands of Israel (north)... Who sided with Rehoboam... not Jeroboam...

¹⁴ The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the Lord ¹⁵ when he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made. ¹⁶ Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the Lord, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the Lord, the God of their ancestors. ¹⁷ They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon three years, following the ways of David and Solomon during this time.

split map

- During the division, priests saw what was happening with the golden calf and the new festivals...
- In fact, a group from every tribe... left their OWN LAND... and went back to Jerusalem... and sided with Rehoboam...
- BUT WAIT A MINUTE...
- They LEFT the South because of Rehoboam... remember he was the one who was going to whip them with scorpions!!??
- They left because of his leadership...
- But they came BACK... because no matter what... they refused to live a lie..
- Church.. We live in a confusing time... there are 1000 churches, politics and social causes and we have opinions and internet and 50 priorities...
- ... Make sure you search carefully for the truth in the right place...
 - In the Bible...
 - Deeply in the Bible... and regularly in the Bible...
 - If you take your focus off the Bible and get caught up with comfort and opinion matters...
 - You may just find YOURSELF... serving the god of Dan..

AMEN