

Lesson 2

The Story of Jeroboam

David moved his royal city from **Hebron** to **Jerusalem** after the death of Ishbosheth. He had to drive out the Jebusites who occupied Jerusalem before he could take possession of the city, for they had repossessed it after the conquest of Joshua and had grown strong (Judges 1:21).



Jerusalem (also known as Salem) was a very appropriate choice as the royal city for it was where Melchizedek had been king in the time of Abraham (Genesis 14:18).



Jerusalem in those days was a small city, but its position was one of great natural strength because it was surrounded on three sides by deep valleys. David grew great and made Jerusalem a safe and beautiful city. Hiram King of Tyre sent David cedar trees, carpenters, and masons. The surrounding nations became subject to Israel, for David was much more successful at war than Saul had been.



David had a great desire to build a temple to God in Jerusalem, but God forbid him with the words,

“Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight” (I Chronicles 22:8).

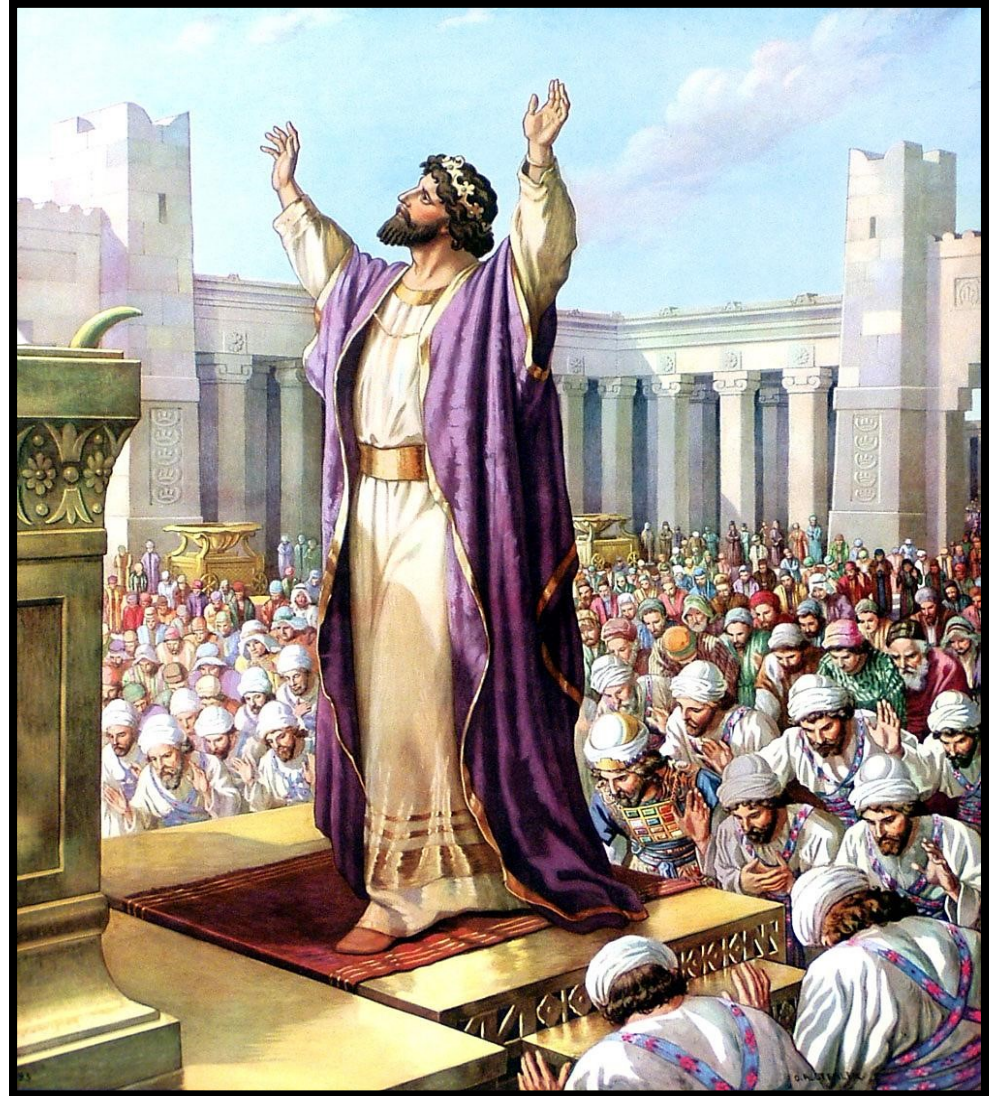


But God did agree that David's son, Solomon, could build a temple, and that he did! It was a glorious temple, a wonder of the world. Solomon's kingdom was peaceful and he was famously wealthy, but Solomon was led away into idolatry by his many foreign wives (I Kings 11:4-7).



God had given Solomon wisdom, riches and honor, and promised him a long life. Yet Solomon did not do the one thing God asked of him: to be faithful (I Kings 3:4ff.).

For David's sake God allowed Solomon to remain king until his death for he had promised David, "I will set up thy seed after thee . . . and I will stablish his kingdom forever" (II Samuel 7:12-13).



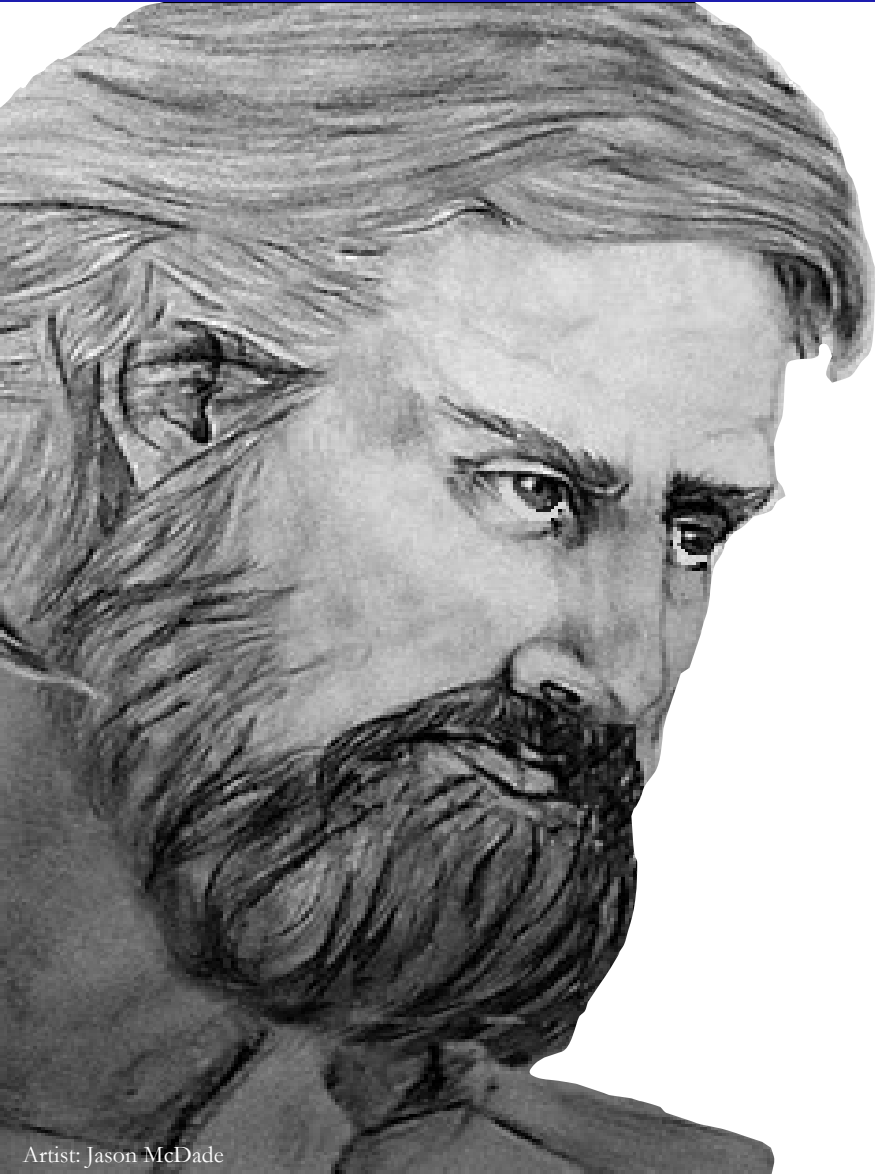
So, Solomon was allowed to remain king despite his idolatry, but after his death the kingdom would not be given intact to his son, Rehoboam. It would be divided. God told Solomon . . .

“I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant’s sake” (I Kings 11:13).

The peaceful, wealthy Kingdom of Israel would never be the same.



JEROBOAM WAS CHOSEN TO RECEIVE TEN TRIBES



In I Kings 11:26 the Bible introduces the man Jeroboam with the words that he “lifted his hand against the king.” Exactly *what* he did against King Solomon is not told, but it is not hard to deduce *why* Jeroboam “lifted his hand against the king,” for Jeroboam knew he had been chosen by God to rule over ten of the tribes of Israel. God’s prophet, Ahijah, had revealed this to him.

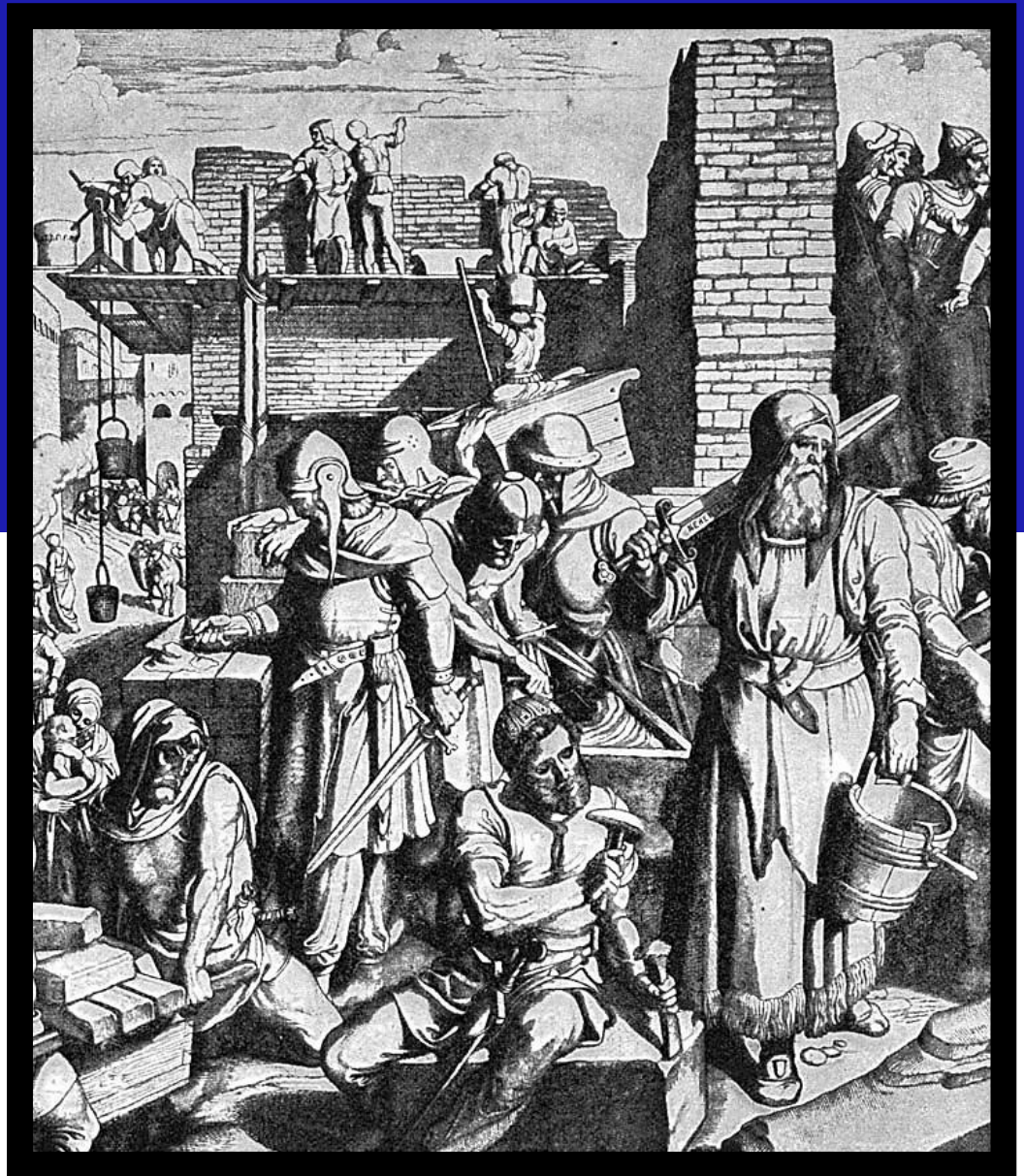
Jeroboam first came to King Solomon's attention when he was making repairs to Millo (a citadel or fortification in the city of Jerusalem).

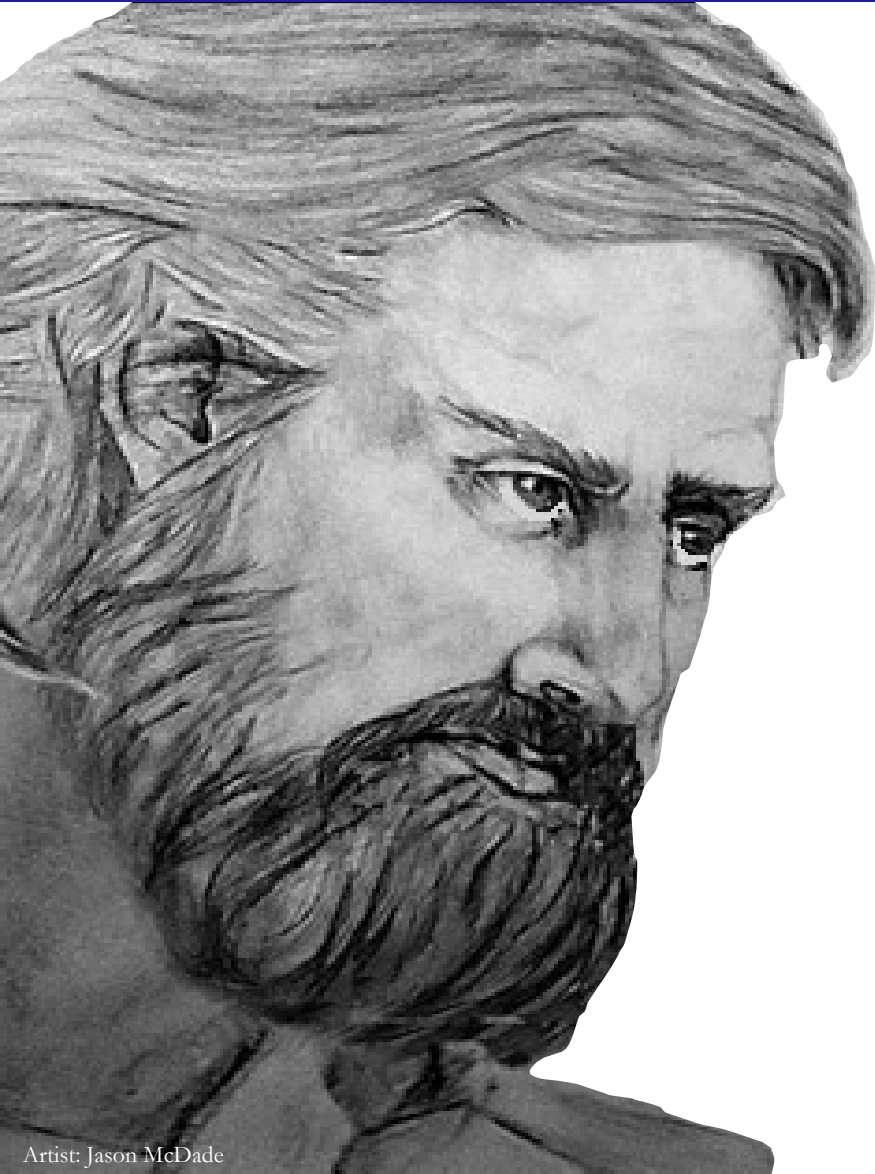


King Solomon noticed that Jeroboam was a man of valor and industrious so he promoted him and made him a ruler.

I Kings 11

“²⁸And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.”





Previously Jeroboam was not a prominent person, just a man of Judah from a very small place called Ephrath which was near Bethlehem (Ruth 1:2; I Samuel 17:12). His father, Nebat, was deceased and his widowed mother's name was Zeruah.

The Prophecy Of Ahijah

After being promoted to a ruler by King Solomon Jeroboam was walking outside Jerusalem one day and met the prophet Ahijah.

Ahijah was wearing a new garment which he tore into twelve pieces (I Kings 11:29-30).



The Prophecy Of Ahijah

I Kings 11

“³¹And he said to Jeroboam,

Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee.”

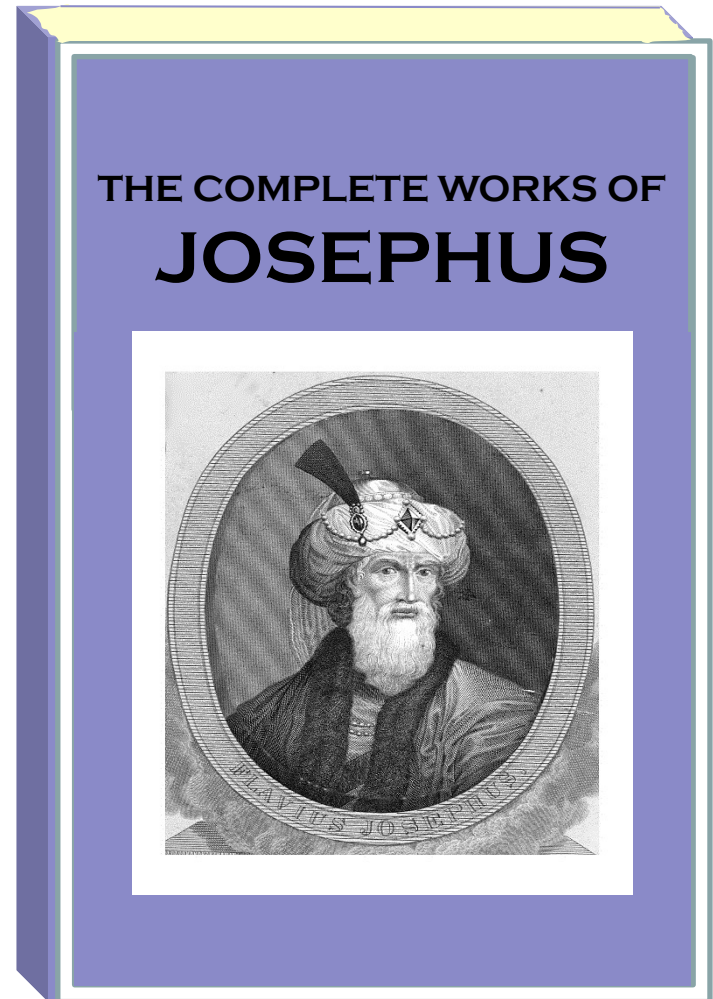


The knowledge that he would someday be king over ten tribes of Israel would be quite a motivation for Jeroboam to assert himself even though he was indebted to Solomon for previous favors and advancement.



The prophecy of Ahijah ignited ambition in the heart of Jeroboam.

Josephus the historian elaborates on this account and asserts that after hearing the prophecy Jeroboam “could not be quiet,” and he was “a young man of warm temper and ambitious of greatness,” so he tried to get the government in his hands at once (Ant., VIII, vii, 8).



I Kings 11

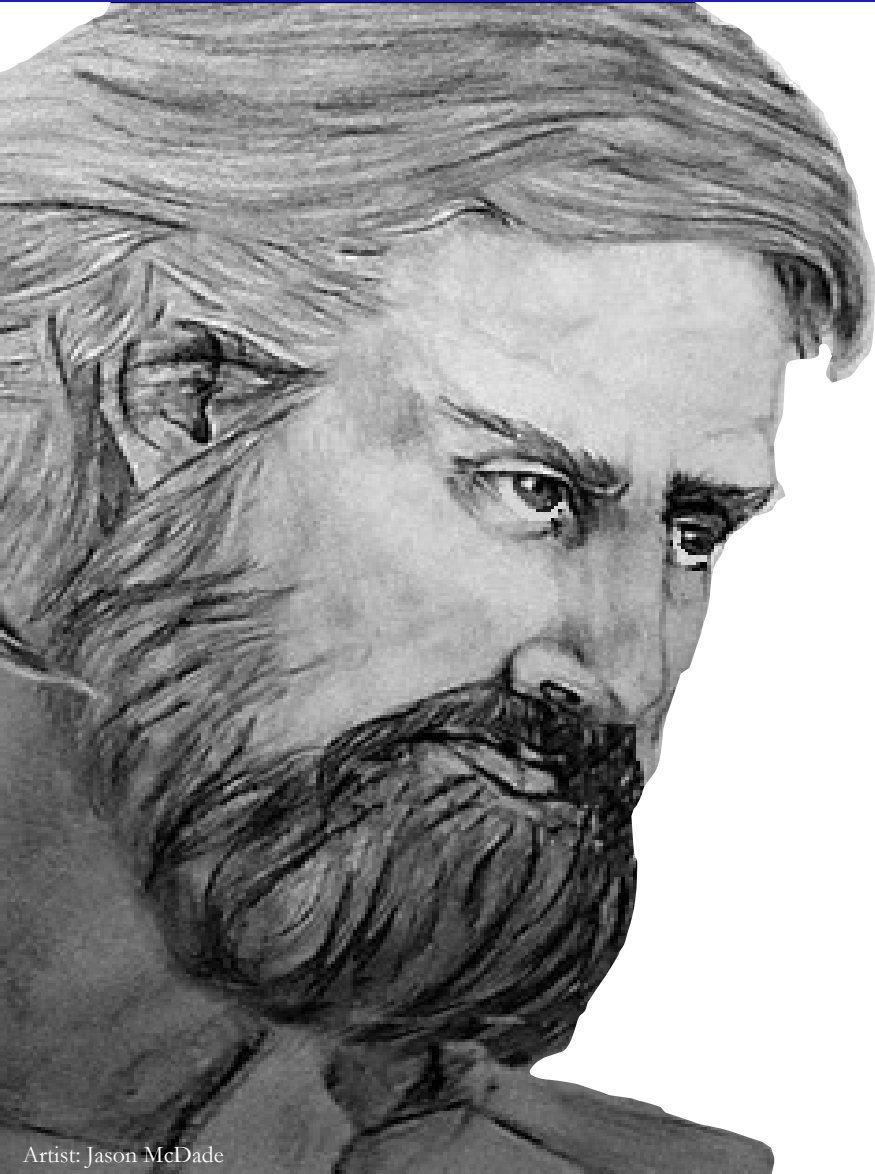
“⁴⁰Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.”



Whatever Jeroboam's action may have been against King Solomon it likely had support of some and won him political favor, for he acquires a great following as events unfold.

NOTE: Later, when

Jeroboam and Rehoboam are simultaneously crowned the political dispute is over heavy taxes. Could the phrase about Jeroboam lifting “his hand against the king” refer to him instigating a rebellion against the heavy taxes King Solomon collected? It would have certainly been a strong political move against Solomon.



In I Kings 11:30ff. Ahijah the prophet explained to Jeroboam

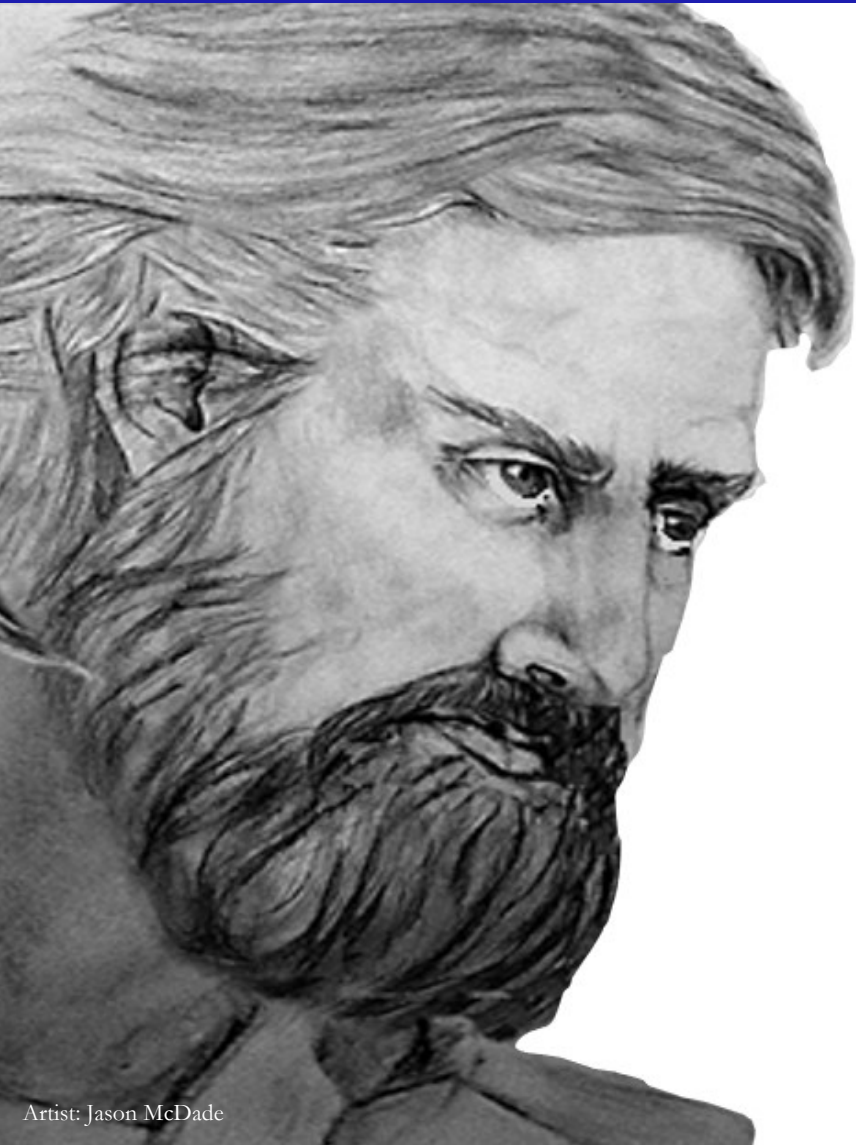
WHY the kingdom was to be taken from Solomon—he was worshipping Ashtoroth, Chemosh, and Milcom. He explained

WHEN it would be taken—after Solomon’s death, for it would be taken out of Solomon’s sons’ hand. He also told him

WHAT part would be taken—all but one tribe which would be kept for David’s seed. Lastly, Ahijah explained

HOW God wanted Jeroboam to rule—walk in “my ways,” and keep “my commandments” like David.





So, Jeroboam knew **WHEN** he would be crowned king over ten tribes—after the death of King Solomon. Yet, he “lifted his hand against the king.” He was not willing to wait upon God.

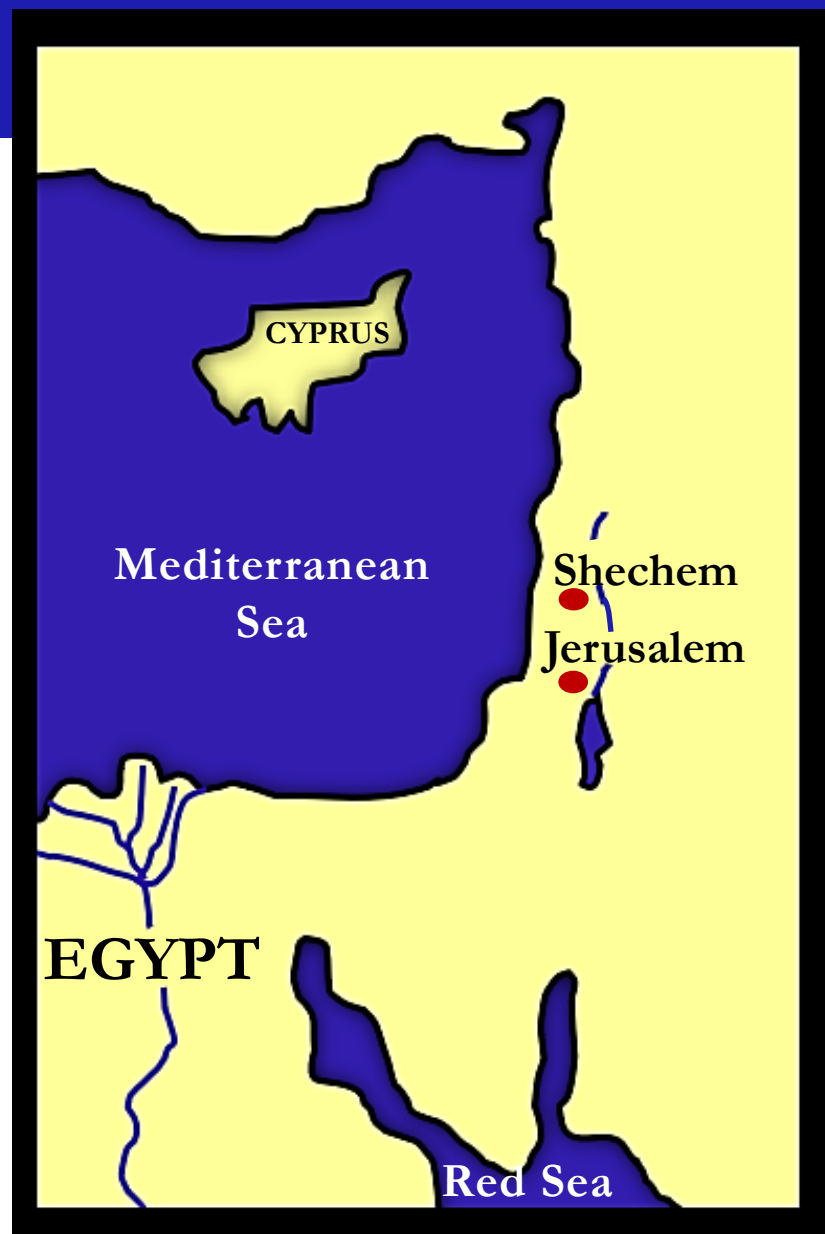
He also knew **WHY** the kingdom was to be taken from Solomon—idolatry.

And he knew **HOW** God expected him to rule as a king— walk in “my ways,” and keep “my commandments” like David. Yet, Jeroboam will embrace idols, reject God’s ways, and ignore God’s commandments.

TWO KINGS ARE CROWNED

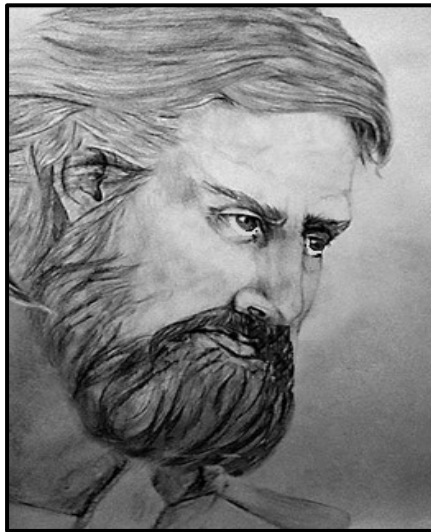
After the death of Solomon, the people persuaded his son, Rehoboam, to go to Shechem to make him king.

Something was suspicious about this plan. Why not crown him at Jerusalem? It is clear that political deception was at work, for the people also sent for Jeroboam in Egypt (I Kings 12:1-3).

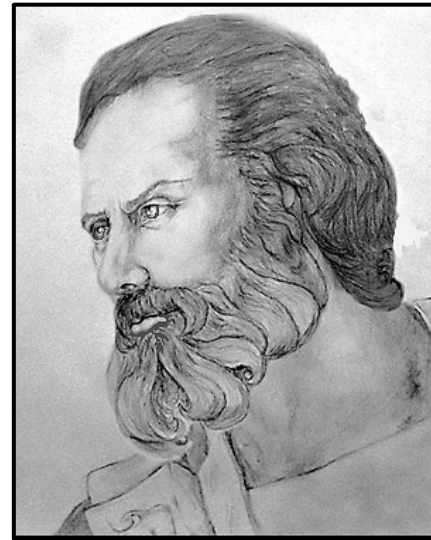


Rehoboam was not pleased to see Jeroboam arrive in Shechem, for he had been his father's enemy, and he would have considered him *his* enemy also because of Ahijah's prophecy.

Now that the people had both candidates there in Shechem they began their politics, but the result had already been determined by God. Rehoboam would not be king over a united kingdom.



Jeroboam
Solomon's Servant



Rehoboam
Solomon's Son

After they were all assembled at Shechem the people presented a grievance and a demand with it.

“Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee” (I Kings 12:4).

They would decide who they would serve, and it would not be a king that continued to place a heavy burden upon them. They wanted changes. They considered the taxes King Solomon had imposed to be a “heavy yoke” and they wanted a “lighter yoke.”



How insulted Rehoboam

must have felt for his coronation day to actually be one of democratic demands. After all, *he was the son of King Solomon!*

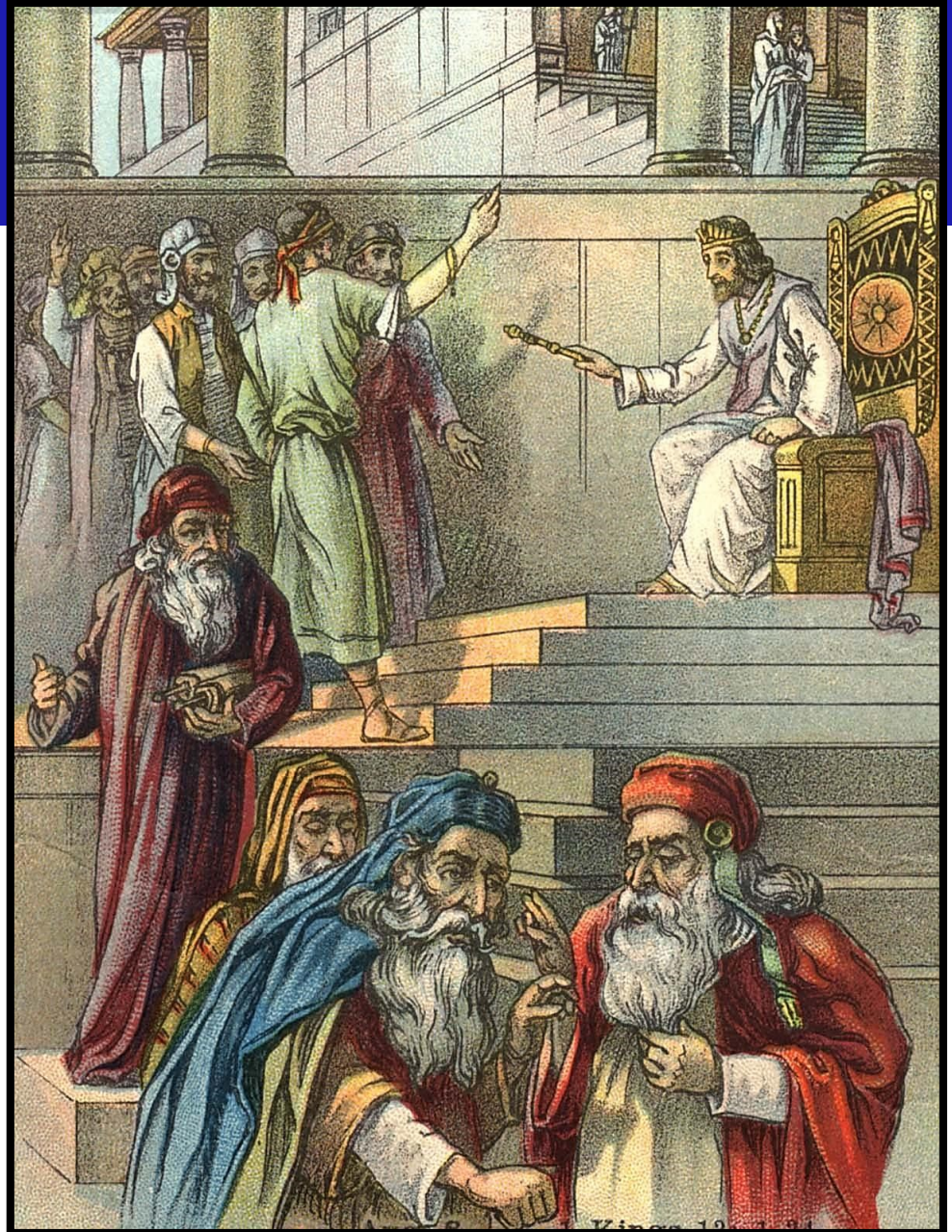
He made a highhanded response to their ultimatum and commanded the people to leave and come back in three days for an answer to their grievance.



I Kings 12

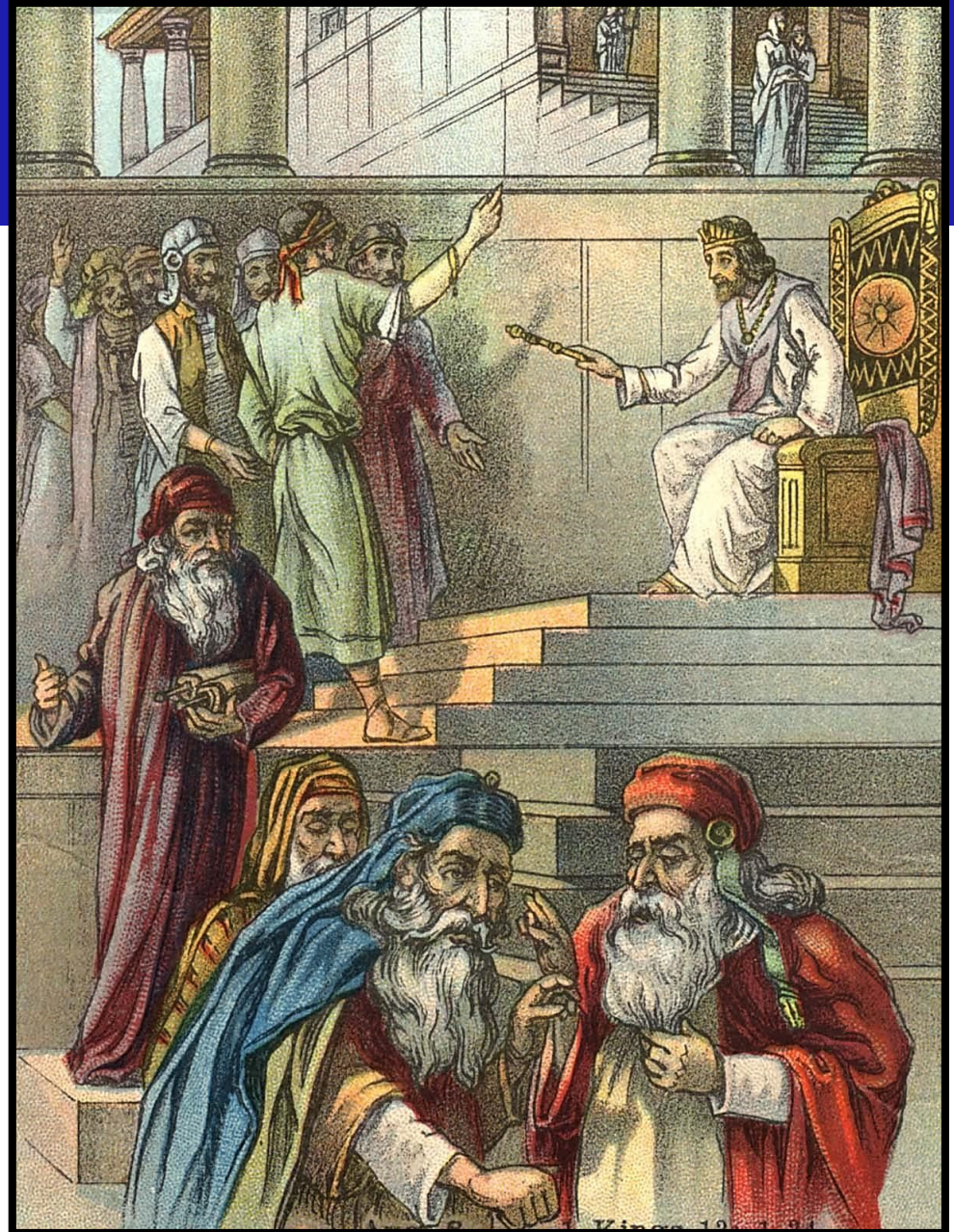
“⁶And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? ⁷And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.”

Notice he is called “King Rehoboam” in verse 6. The question was, would the people submit to him.



I Kings 12

“⁸But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:
⁹And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?”



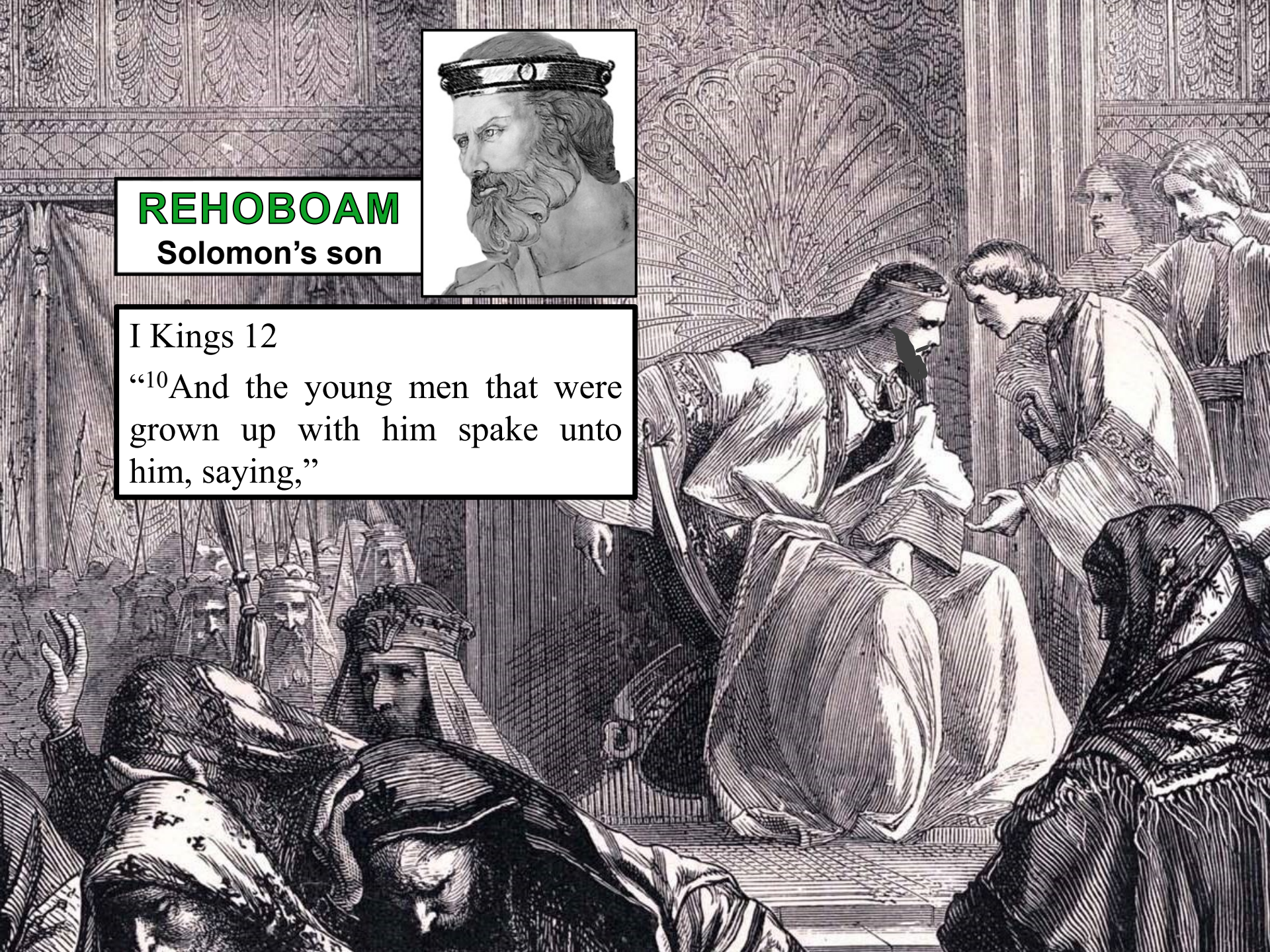
REHOBOAM

Solomon's son



I Kings 12

“¹⁰And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying,”



REHOBOAM

Solomon's son

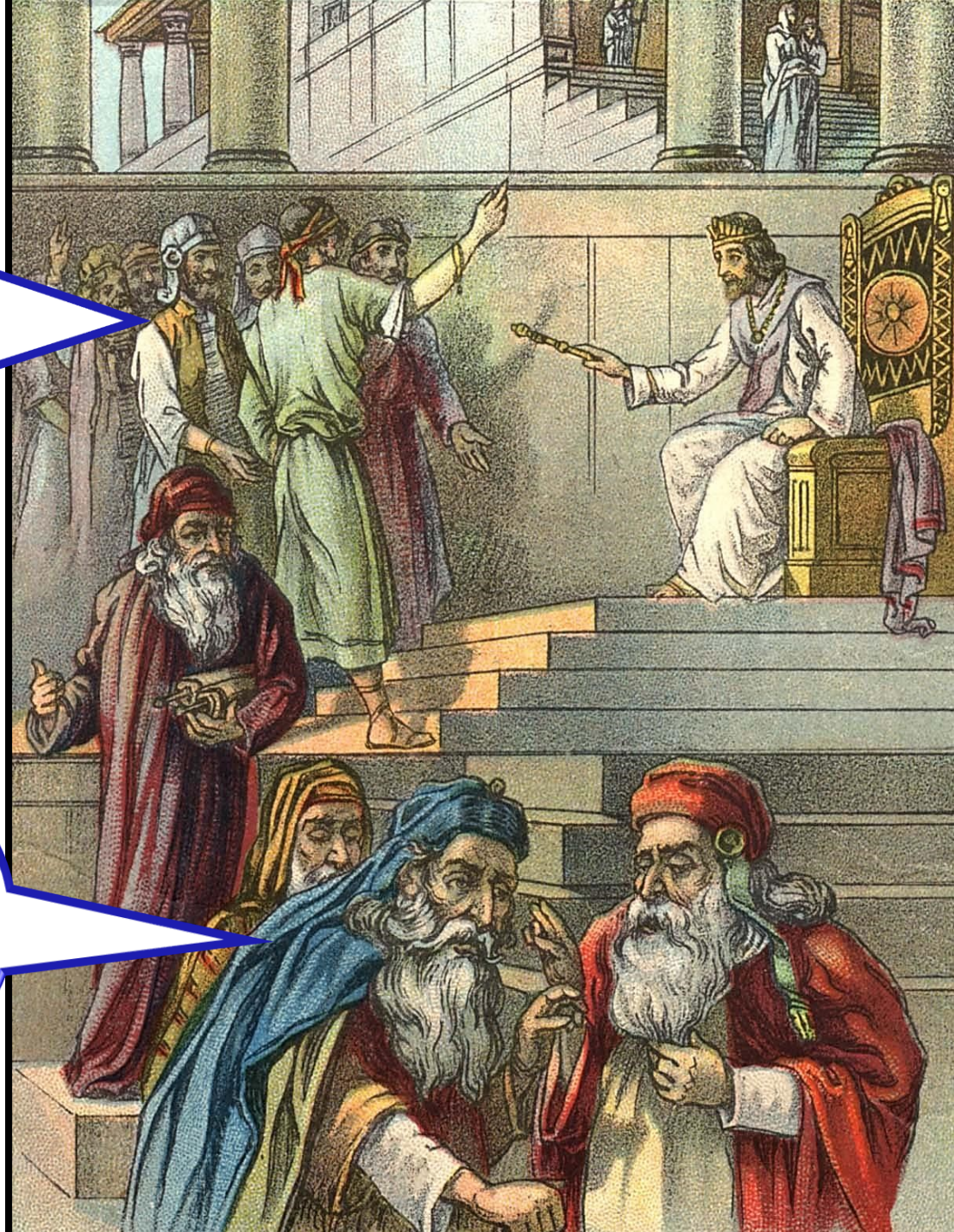


“¹⁰ . . . Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. ¹¹And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”



The younger men were arrogant and advised him to return a severe and threatening answer to the people's demands.

The older men advised him to give a kind answer and submit to what the people wanted.



When **JEROBOAM** arrived from Egypt he immediately became involved . . . actually, leading the people in their grievance against Solomon's son, **REHOBOAM**.

I Kings 12

“¹²So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.”





REHOBOAM

Solomon's son

I Kings 12

“¹³And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; ¹⁴And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.”

Rehoboam answered the people according to the counsel of the young men. He was haughty, self-important, overconfident, and he thought he could MAKE them his followers.

REHOBOAM

Solomon's son



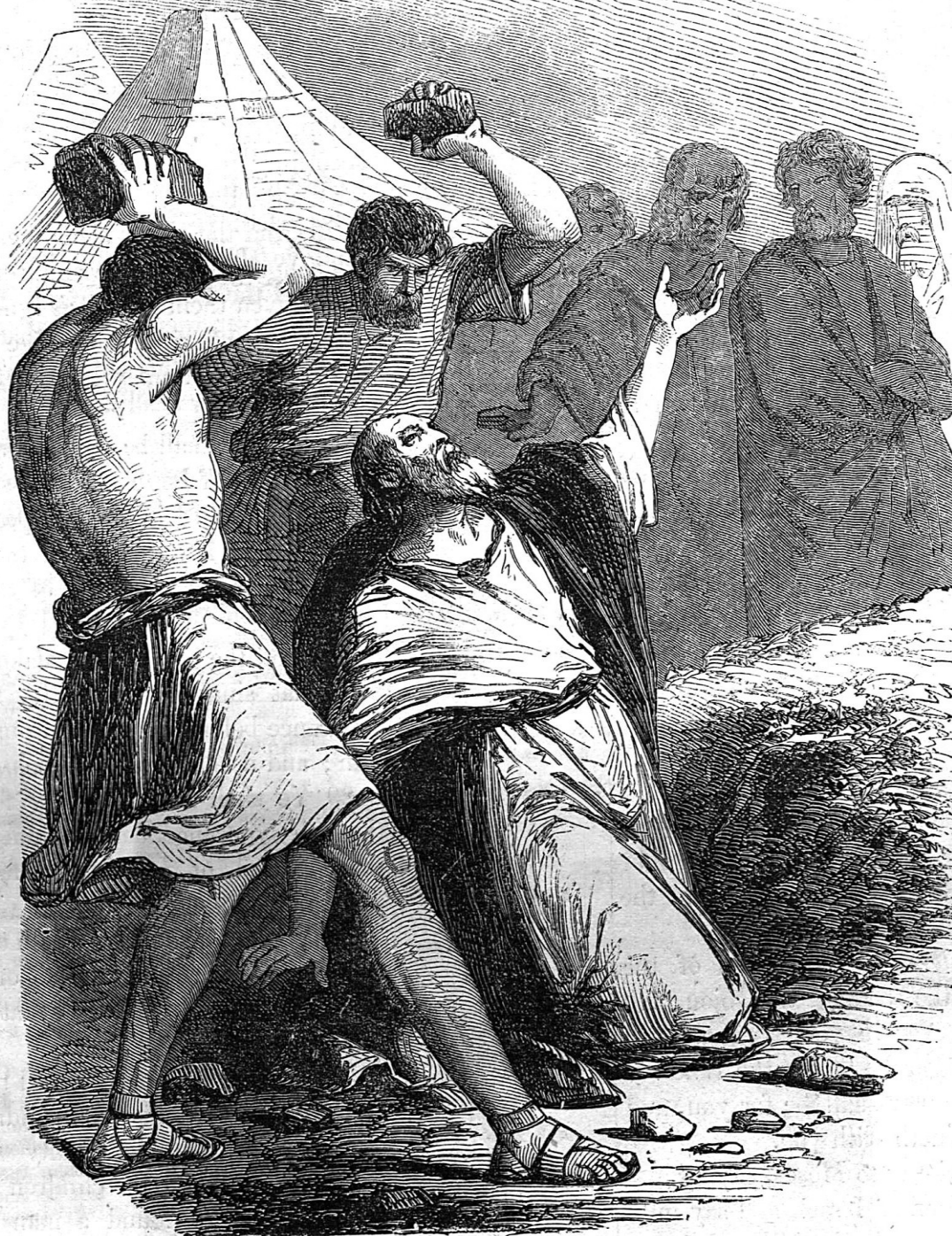


REHOBOAM

Solomon's son

I Kings 12

“¹⁶So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. ¹⁷But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.”

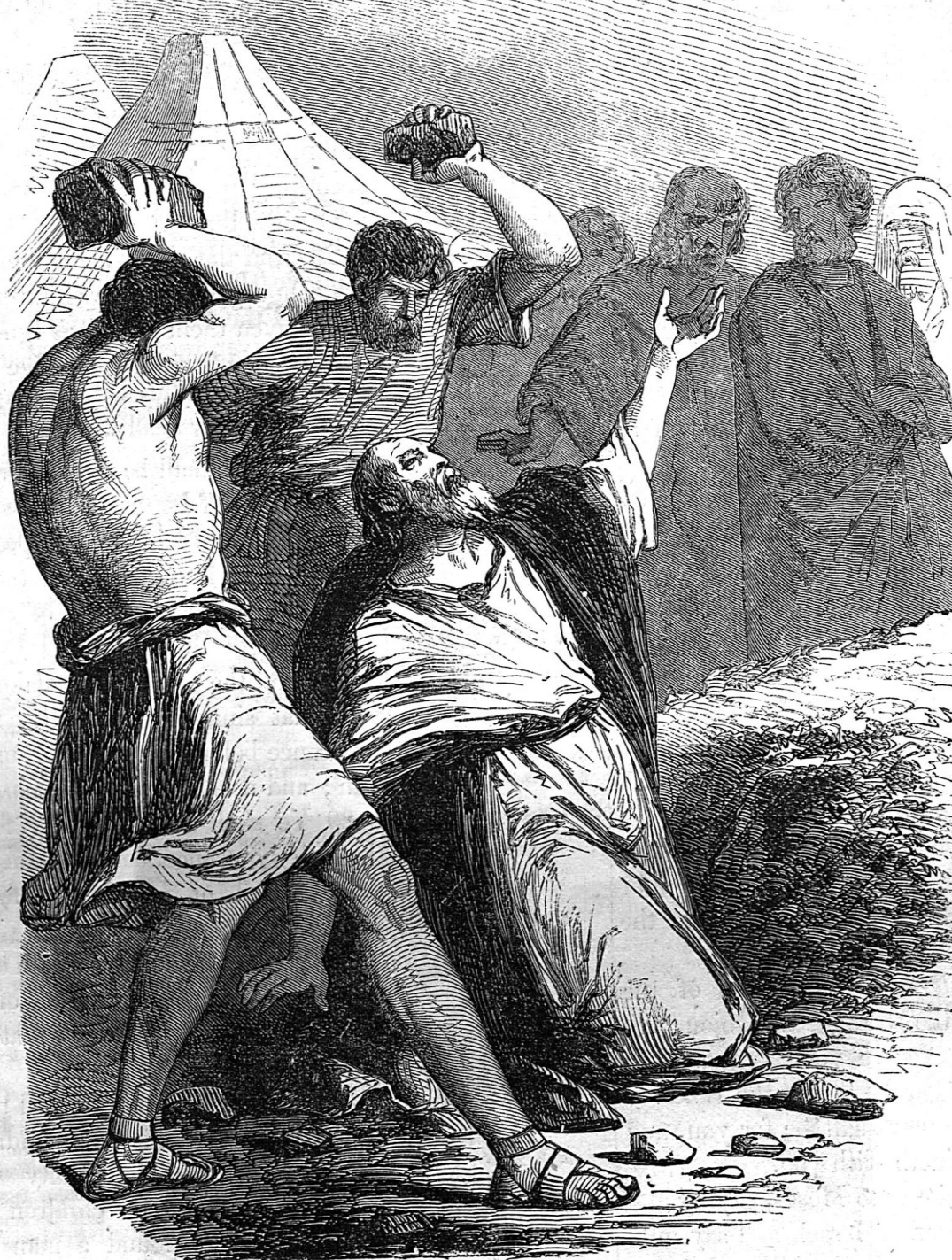


REHOBOAM

Solomon's son

I Kings 12

“¹⁸Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.”



REHOBAM

Solomon's son

Rehoboam was foolish to send Adoram, his tax collector, to negotiate with the people!

The very sight of him made them angry. They rioted and murdered Adoram.



JEROBOAM

Solomon's Servant
King Of Israel
King Over 10 tribes

I Kings 12

“²⁰And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.”





COMMENT:

God's judgment against King Solomon was final.

His decree had been delivered by the prophet Ahijah that Jeroboam would receive ten tribes. Yet, Rehoboam continued on as if he was chosen to rule over all Israel in the place of his father, Solomon. His uncompromising severity toward the people confirms that he believed he was a man of privilege because he was the son of the wisest, richest, King that ever lived.

The End Of The United Kingdom

The kingdom lasted 120 years before dividing

Saul reigned 40 years (Acts 13:21)

David reigned 40 years (2 Sam. 5:4)

Solomon reigned 40 years (1 Kings 11:42)

10 Tribes formed the Northern Kingdom called Israel

The Southern Kingdom was the tribe of Judah



SAUL



DAVID



SOLOMON

THE END