

Lesson VI.

THE KINGDOM TORN ASUNDER

August 8, 1915

1 Kings 12 : 6-16. Study 1 Kings 12 : 1-24—Memory Verse, 16.

Golden Text—Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.—Proverbs 16 : 18.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people ; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake by Ahi'jah the Shi'lonite unto Jerobo'am the son of Ne'bat.

16 So when all Is'rael saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in Da'vid ? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jes'se : to your tents, O Is'rael : now see to thine own house, Da'vid. So Is'rael departed unto their tents.

THE LESSON RETOLD

A rumble of heavy wheels ! The stamping of horses ! Rehoboam had driven in his chariot to meet the people of Israel.

King Solomon had died, and now Rehoboam, his son, had come to be crowned. The place of the meeting was Shechem, a town about 30 miles north of Jerusalem, between the two mountains of Ebal and Gerizim.

Suddenly a man stepped out from the crowd. He began to speak to Rehoboam.

"Thy father, Solomon, was a hard master. He laid heavy burdens upon us. We ask thee to make our work lighter and easier. Then we will serve thee well."

Everything this man said was true. Solomon had, indeed, been a hard master. At first, as you know, he truly loved and served the Lord, but afterwards he forgot some of God's rules. He was not kind to his people. He made them work too hard. Sometimes his overseers even cruelly whipped the men.

6 And king Rehobo'am consulted with the old men, that stood before Sol'omon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people ?

7 And 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.

8 But 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 :

9 And 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 ?

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

11 And 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.

12 So Jerobo'am and all the people came to Rehobo'am the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him :

14 And 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.

You remember how Solomon built the temple. There were other splendid buildings which he built. Now all the hard work on these buildings had to be done by the laborers. They had suffered a great deal, and it is no wonder that they complained to the new king.

Rehoboam listened and then he said, "Come back in three days for your answer."

The people went away, and Rehoboam went to some wise old men who had served his father. He said to them, "What shall I do ?" The old men answered, "If thou wilt be kind to these people, and speak kind words to them, they will be thy servants for ever."

But Rehoboam did not want to listen to these wise men. He did not like their advice.

He next went to some of his own friends, young men like himself. "What shall I do ?" he asked them also. The young men told him what to say. Oh, what a mistake Rehoboam