

Day 57 – Apr. 18

After a number of days of Solomon's wealth and wisdom, today we get back to the political shenanigans of the people of Israel. As promised, God takes the kingdom (minus Judah) from Solomon's son Rehoboam and gives it instead to his political rival Jeroboam. And so while Rehoboam maintains Judah and therefore Jerusalem, Jeroboam takes the other tribes making up the bulk of Israel. This division will last for generations and set up the Exile eventually.

Today's passage is not a very popular one in our culture that worships youth and considers young people wiser than older ones. Rehoboam begins with his father's wisdom but ends having lost it completely. We see this first when he requests 3 days to consult his advisors. Taking time and consulting wise advisors is a wise thing to do. Consulting those who were part of his father's kingdom, who had experience and age, was a wise thing to do. And their advice was wise as well. Earn the people's trust and love and you will reign in peace. But for whatever reason, Rehoboam is not content with this advice. Maybe it wasn't what he wanted to hear, or maybe he was swayed by his childhood friends. But moving forward, he becomes increasingly unwise. He consults his young friends, without experience, age, or political savvy, and in so doing he receives very unwise advice. I am always amused by the advice of the young men which he eventually takes, "...I will whip you with scorpions!" The image is ridiculous even if the result of this threat is weighty. And sure enough, Rehoboam loses the kingdom with his severity.

We need to be careful who's advice we seek and obey. While age is not automatically a factor, it is something to pay attention to. Our elders are given titles and roles in the early church for a reason. Experience, savvy, and a lifetime of building wisdom makes for good advisors. But I am always disturbed by this passage as a whole. Before we go to either elders or young people for advice, we need to consult God. If any advice doesn't jive with His, it is not good advice regardless of who gives it.