

## Session 13: Northern Kingdom of Israel

- **The Davidic Kingdom, established in David and in his sons, divides in the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation under Rehoboam, soon after the death of David's successor, Solomon, in the year 930 BC.**
- **The divided fate of the Kingdom is sealed during the end of the tyrannical reign of Solomon, who devolved from wise king to unfaithful servant.**
- **The division of the Kingdom is a direct consequence of Solomon's sins, as the sins of kings have consequences upon their subjects, just as the Original Sin of Adam had consequences upon his children.**
- The cracks in Solomon's reign appear early. For example, **though Solomon built the Temple, he spent *twice as long* building his palace, which is also *twice as large* as the Temple (1 Kgs 7:1-12).** Later, **Solomon leads Israel into idolatry** by marrying foreign wives, who led Solomon and the Israelites into worship of their native gods/demons, as we read in the Septuagint version of Psalm 96:5, "For all of the gods of the gentiles are demons".
- More problematic even is **Solomon's egregious and systematic violation of the threefold law for kings, expressed in the *torah*, and intended as a safeguard against the threefold concupiscence, that the king ought not multiply horses (pride), wives (lust of the flesh), or silver and gold (lust of the eyes) (Dt 17:14-17), thus triggering a proverbial earthquake, which will shake the Kingdom to its foundations.**
- The threefold concupiscence is that with which we all struggle due to Original Sin, and is in fact the very dynamic of the temptation to the Original Sin, as we read in account of the Fall of Man, "So that when the woman saw that the tree was **good for food** (lust of the flesh), and that it was a **delight to the eyes** (lust of the eyes), and that the tree was **to be desired to make one wise** (pride), she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband, and he ate (Gen 3:6)."
- Not surprisingly, this dynamic is seen again in the Fall of Israel at Mt. Sinai, as the Golden Calf represented the threefold concupiscence through **gold** (lust of the eyes), **fertility** (lust of the flesh), and **strength** (pride).
- And St. John the Evangelist warned Christians, as he wrote, "For all that is in the world, **the lust of the flesh** (inordinate sexual desires), **and the lust of the eyes** (greed), **and the pride of life** (pride), is not of the Father, but is of the world (1 Jn 2:16).
- To counter the threefold concupiscence, one must practice the opposite virtues, **as chastity counters lust of the flesh** (inordinate sexual desires), **poverty counters lust of the eyes** (greed), and **obedience counters pride of life** (pride).

- Rehoboam, being unreasonable and foolish, promises to be even harder and more oppressive than his tyrannical father Solomon, **and so the ten Northern tribes rebel**, leaving only Judah, which essentially absorbs the little tribe of Benjamin. **Thus begins a prolonged civil war, lasting on and off for more than 200 years, until the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 BC.**
- **The northern kingdom is called either “Israel” or “Ephraim”** because Ephraim was the largest and most powerful of the northern tribes. **Its capital was first Shechem, then later Samaria.**
- Importantly, **the northern kingdom is a false kingdom with a false kingly line**, not of the line of David, and is ultimately doomed to be unstable, with nine dynasties, and short-lived, 930 BC-722 BC.
- Even worse, **the northern kingdom was idolatrous from the start**, as Jeroboam, the first non-legit king of Israel, **devised a new state religion with new sanctuaries, new priesthood, new feast days, et cetera.** Especially ominous, he returned Israel to worship of the Golden Calf, located in two different locations in the north, and also names his two sons after the two sons of Aaron, thus establishing himself as the new Aaron.
- **The apostasy (abandonment of the One True Faith) of Jeroboam seals the fate of Israel, who will therefore eventually be exiled from their lands, to be then scattered throughout the earth, becoming the lost tribes of Israel (1 Kgs 14:15). This will occur in 722 BC when Israel fall to the world power Assyria, not to be confused with the neighboring Syria.**
- *All* of the 19 kings, or 20 if you count Tibni, who attempted to reign while Omri reigned, were losers, and were bad or terrible or despicable or wicked or evil or worse.
- Because Israel was such a spiritual and political wreck, God first sent to them the prophets, beginning with the blockbusters Elijah and Elisha, two of the most important prophets in salvation history, and then Amos and Hosea. **But Israel listened to none of these prophets, refusing to repent.**
- After the capital of Samaria was conquered in 722 BC, Assyria, as a political strategy to destroy nationalism, which might lead to insurrection and rebellion, removed from the land most of the surviving Israelites, scattering them among the vast Assyrian Empire. Simultaneously, Assyria repopulated Samaria with five other pagan nations, who brought with them their idolatrous worship of gods/demons. **These new peoples intermarry with the few remaining Israelite stragglers, and their descendants become the Samaritans (2 Kgs 17), whose religion is a syncretism of worship of false gods/demons joined to worship of the One True God named Yahweh.**
- The northern tribes, scattered throughout the Assyrian Empire, and eventually throughout the world, all but disappear from the stage of salvation history, but not forever. **Specifically, God prophesies a restoration of the lost tribes to the Kingdom of David (1 Kgs 11:39) through the Messiah-King, through the Christ (Ezek 37:15-28). He will gather all Israel, all twelve tribes, into His Kingdom, which is His Mystical Body the Church, through grace, given in the Sacraments, especially Baptism and Eucharist (Rm 9:1-11).**