

The Story
UNFORSEEN CONSEQUENCES
1 Kings 12-15
January 19, 2014

INTRODUCTION

a. Unless you have been living as a hermit under a rock somewhere you have been hearing much in the news about the Affordable Care Act. It is not my intention to make a political statement this morning.

1. Those who passed this law did so with the intent of providing affordable healthcare to every American

2. There have been some unforeseen consequences though

a. For many their costs for healthcare have gone up

b. Others have had their policies cancelled

b. Can you think of a time when you did something that resulted in some unforeseen consequences

1. Maybe it was something you thought was right and good

2. Maybe it was something you knew was wrong but thought would not affect anything

else

c. If you are new to our church, we are in a 31 week journey through the Bible beginning with Genesis and going through Revelation. We are discovering how God's Upper Story (His ultimate purpose for us) is revealed to us through the Lower Stories of the people, places and events found in the Bible.

1. God's story of forgiveness, restoration and new beginnings has been revealed from the very start.

2. There is also a darker side of judgment, punishment and consequences for those who refuse to worship Him and Him alone

d. In every covenant God makes with an individual or nation He demands that they keep his commands and worship and serve only Him.

1. If they do then He keeps his promise to them

2. If they fail to do so then judgment and punishment come

e. These thoughts are very key to the Story in today's message

I. A LITTLE BACKGROUND

a. Last Sunday we looked at **Solomon's story**

1. Just before his death King David addresses his son Solomon. He is giving the throne to Solomon and charges him to follow the Lord with his whole heart. Solomon is to keep all the commands and follow after the Lord with his whole heart

2. Shortly after God tells Solomon He will give him anything he asks for. Solomon asks for wisdom

3. Solomon is off to a great start and yet he does not finish that way.

4. As he grows older we find that Solomon has almost enslaved the people to work on his projects and has put an increasing financial burden on them too.

5. Solomon has 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. His wives have led him to begin to worship the gods of their people just like God predicted when he forbid the Israelites from intermarrying.

6. Solomon's heart is divided and that sets into motion consequences that he cannot stop or change.

b. As Solomon approaches the end of his life the people are in near rebellion and God has told him that the kingdom would be torn from him and given to a subordinate. **The kingdom would be divided just like his heart.**

1. This would not happen while he was alive but would be taken from his successor.

2. A prophet tells Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officials, that he will be king and he tries to take the throne from Solomon but is rebuffed. He is from the tribe of Ephraim. He flees to Egypt until Solomon's death.

II. TWO LEADERS

a. In the latter years of Solomon's reign the people were feeling oppressed and some uprisings happened. The people were tired of being under the hard fist of Solomon

b. Two leaders emerge

1. When Solomon dies the throne passes to his son, Rehoboam,

2. As he begins to rule Jeroboam and the people come to him and simply ask that he relieve some of the oppression

c. **Rehoboam**, knowing he was not his father, first seeks the counsel of the elders on how to rule the people.

1. The elders tell him to give the people a favorable answer and they would always serve him

2. Rehoboam rejects their counsel in favor of the advice of some of his friends. They tell him to teach the people who is boss. Make things harder. You think my father was hard – He was soft compared to me.

3. **Rehoboam reigned 17 years and did evil in the sight of the Lord and led the people to do the same**

a. He brought in and set up worship centers to other gods and did every detestable act seen in the nations God had driven out before the Israelites

4. **As a result of his harsh rule the people revolted and the kingdom was now divided.**

a. **Jeroboam** and 10 tribes formed the Northern Kingdom called Israel

b. **Rehoboam** and the tribes of Judah and Benjamin made up the Southern Kingdom called Judah.

5. The unforeseen consequence of Rehoboam's choices was a divided kingdom just like God had said.

6. The scriptures indicate that Rehoboam was constantly in conflict with Jeroboam.

d. Jeroboam is the second leader

1. **His rule over the Northern Kingdom was ordained by God**

2. **He, though, is not confident in God's provision** and so he also seeks counsel only it is more foolish than Rehoboam's counsel – He takes counsel from himself

a. Afraid that if the people go to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem that they will return to the rule of Rehoboam so he sets up worship centers in two cities in the north and places a Golden Calf in both

b. He appoints priests from all kinds of people even though they were not Levites.

c. He built shrines in high places and created festivals to mirror those God had required

3. **God declares that Jeroboam had done more evil than all who had lived before him.**

e. This is not a pretty site

III. THE UNFORSEEN CONSEQUENCE

a. Solomon had no idea that his unfaithfulness would lead to a divided kingdom and yet it did

b. Solomon did not foresee that:

1. His disobedience would be **repeated** only worse in both the leaders of the divided kingdom

c. Rehoboam did not foresee that:

1. His decision to make things harder on the people would lead to the **split** in the kingdom

1. The consequences of his divided heart toward the God of Israel and other gods would **exact** such a price.

e. **Jeroboam did not foresee that:**

1. His lack of faith and trust in God would result in him being the **standard** of evil that other kings would be judged by.

2. His behavior would result in **not one** successor king doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

IV. GOD'S UPPER STORY

a. **Most often we look into God's upper story and see a story of redemption and love and forgiveness and new beginnings.** As Randy Frazee has said, "It is the story of God doing all he can to win us back."

b. **We must also realize that there is a darker side to God's upper story.**

1. There is God's justice and righteousness that must be fulfilled

2. God has said there is judgment for those who do not obey and worship Him alone

3. God has forbidden idol worship and the punishment is severe

c. **Why is God so jealous?**

1. It is not from insecurity but rather because he wants the best for us

d. **Why no idols?**

1. **Idols limit our understanding of Who God is**

a. In His nature - He is Alive and Personal but idols are inferior to Him

b. No matter how hard mankind tries we cannot properly craft God

c. No stone or wood or plastic statue or monument could ever adequately represent the Almighty God, Who is alive and active in us.

2. **Idols limit our understanding of Where God is**

a. The God of Heaven cannot be confined to Buildings or Objects made by man. He is everywhere all the time

b. He is not just in this place we call church - You do not need to come here to meet with Him - We do when we gather

3. **Idols limit our relationship with God**

a. God's desire for mankind is that every person enter into a living, personal relationship with Himself.

b. He doesn't want us giving our devotion to a false god. He wants us to be intimate with Him.

c. We do not need some image to aid us in our worship of God. We have a person living in us who will guide us in our worship of God

4. **Idols lead us away from God**

a. When our devotion is given to an idol we are not following the Lord and are being led away from Him - regardless of our intentions we are moving away from God

5. **Idols lead us to Judgment**

a. On our own lives - God will bring judgment to those who replace Him with an idol

b. On following generations - Children tend to repeat in their lives what they have lived

e. **We tend to create idols that we can see feel and manage so that we can manage God to be and do what we want.**

V. LESSONS FOR US

a. **God is serious about worship of Him and Him alone**

b. **Idols bring serious consequences to our lives**

1. We need to ask God to help us identify the idols in our lives and then put them away

c. **Our actions have consequences and many of them unseen**

1. Some affect only us

2. Others may affect our families and others for generations.

d. **If God did not spare Israel from the consequences of her sin why do we think he will spare us.**

e. This is a hard lesson but one we need to learn and take to heart.

1. **Let's give God a unified, undivided, undistracted heart**

BOW WITH ME IN PRAYER

8:30 #271 "STANDING ON THE PROMISES"

11:00 "GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS"