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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1526 ~ The Kingdoms Divided.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

A university president once drove an elderly friend to a place she needed to go. The old lady moved slowly and painfully, as she was crippled with arthritis. “Why,” she asked the president, “Does God let us get old and weak?” He replied that he wasn’t sure but he had a theory. He thought that God has planned the strength and beauty of youth to be physical. But the strength and beauty of age is spiritual. We gradually lose the temporary strength and beauty as we get older, so we’ll be sure to concentrate on having the strength and beauty of God, which lasts forever.

Old King Solomon had lived many years in a very rich lifestyle of pleasure. The desire to have the best of everything came at a price. First he lost his servant attitude that he was there to serve his people. Second, his self-importance made him feel he had no need to rely on God. We all wish at times that our problems would go away by themselves. But problems can be our friends if we bring them before the Lord and ask Him for His help. If we thank Him for all the problems in our lives He can start to work good in us, changing us to be what He wants us to become. Nothing happens by chance in the believer’s life.

To keep up the splendour of his palace, wives and the entertainment of foreign visitors, Solomon had to tax the Israelites heavily. They became resentful of the king's good times at their expense. Anywhere, any time, whenever a revolt against rulers started, there was a very good reason for it. Sometimes a revolution simmered for a long time. When a further demand was made on the people, they publicly stood up and demanded a change. Change was well overdue in Solomon's kingdom but it did not happen in Solomon's lifetime. Yet Solomon could have brought about good changes himself, without the need for a later revolution against his son's reign. Solomon wrote the Bible book of Ecclesiastes convinced that worldly things cannot make us happy. Happiness is to be found in proper respect and reverence for God alone.

Sadly Solomon let his relationship with the living God go to pieces while he went with his pagan wives to worship at their idol shrines. This made God very angry. God warned him that some of the kingdom would be taken away from his son and successor and given to one of Solomon's servants. In previous times, God had chosen the new king but now the wickedness of king and his people meant that they changed to the pagan way of giving the throne to the king's first-born son. Rehoboam, Solomon's firstborn, had been reared in the lap of luxury and did not have any understanding of how hard the people worked. His grandfather David, however, had lived in caves and forests and had much compassion on the ordinary people.

Since the death of the prophet Samuel, God spoke directly to the kings David and Solomon. However, close to the end of Solomon's life, one of his faithful servants, Jeroboam, met a prophet called Ahijah. Up until that time, Jeroboam had been in charge over Solomon's forced labour people. He was a courageous and industrious man. One day while away from Jerusalem and by himself, Jeroboam met Ahijah the prophet dressed a new garment. Ahijah tore the garment into 12 pieces and offered 10 of them to Jeroboam, telling him that he would rule over 10 tribes of Israel. Word of this prophecy reached Solomon's ears. The king knew God's word couldn't be altered but he tried anyway to have Jeroboam killed. After all, in Solomon's eyes, Jeroboam was only a servant and had no royal blood in him. Jeroboam thus fled to Egypt where he stayed until Solomon died.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam went to the central city of Shechem, some 30 miles north of Jerusalem, to be crowned as king. The people asked Jeroboam in Egypt to return and become the leader of the people and take a petition to the new king on their behalf. The people wanted the burden of taxes and forced labour lightened. The new king Rehoboam asked for three days to consider the matter.

First, he consulted his father's old wise men. They advised him to be kind and please the people. Then they would be his loyal subjects.

Not entirely satisfied with this answer, the new king asked his friends of his own age what they thought. They said for him to establish his kingdom, he should make things harder on the people so they couldn't revolt against him. Rehoboam accepted his friends' advice.

When the people returned to hear his verdict, the new king told them that he was going to make their burdens heavier still. He would not listen to the people. Jeroboam responded by saying there had always been a serious division between the south and the north of Israel, so it was best if the 10 northern tribes of Israel returned to their homes and elected for themselves their own king.

New king Rehoboam ended up being left with only two tribes, Judah (his own tribe) and the small tribe of Benjamin. What a mistake it had been to listen to his friends! What a mistake also to play difficult with others who are asking to be treated reasonably. Such mistakes happen over and over again in our society today. Someone does not want to cooperate with others. So they demand to be boss to make all the decisions. As a result, they are rejected and lose a lot of what seemed to be theirs in the first place. If only such people learnt to pull together with others when they had the chance, they would have received kindly acceptance and respect.

King Rehoboam returned to Jerusalem and gathered together an army of 180,000 men to fight against the 10 northern tribes. His plan was bring them back under his rule. However, a prophet came to Rehoboam and told him he was not to go to war, as the division was God's doing. And all the soldiers went home.

From the start, there were steps in the new king's decline. Firstly, Rehoboam did not care about how the people he ruled over actually fared. He had learnt this from his father. Then he tried to force them to do what he said, even though it was unreasonable and unsustainable. Following this, Rehoboam was prepared to go out and kill as many of his blood relations as he could to reassert himself as king, whether the people wanted it or not.

Are there people in your life that you don't like and don't care for? Do past bad experiences come quickly to mind when you think of these people? If we want God to forgive our mistakes and wrongdoing, we have to first forgive those who have wronged us. Sometimes this isn't easy to do because that person continues to abuse their rights and make us suffer. Prayers to God asking for help to forgive and forget need to be said often until the victory is won. When the devil reminds you of something bad, or bitterness springs up in your spirit, rebuke the devil, telling him that you have Christ's forgiveness and power to forgive others in your life.

A missionary to China many years ago had a problem with forgiveness. She and her husband had been greatly harmed by another person living near them. While her husband seemed to easily forgive, she still felt internal rage. For more than a year she would not speak to that person. Four years passed and the matter was still unresolved and largely forgotten.

The missionary couple were travelling by train to a Christian conference. The wife had for months felt a lack of power in her life and ministry. She bowed her head and asked God to fill her with His Holy Spirit. Straight away into her mind she received the instruction to write a letter to that person asking for forgiveness. She refused to do so again and again.

Some time later she was reading from Pilgrim's Progress to her children. It was the man in a cage moaning: "I have grieved the Spirit and he is gone. I have provoked God to anger and he has left me." Instantly a terrible conviction came over her and in time, she wrote the letter that God had instructed her to. It was then that the peace and joy of her Christian life returned. From then on, she never dared not to forgive again. Is this lesson one you need to hear too?

MUSIC - [Integrity Music](#).

That was Gene Miller singing "Have Mercy upon Me."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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