

# The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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How Will You Be Remembered? (Part 1)

I Kings 14:16; II Kings 12:2; II Kings 18:5

I Kings 14:16 says, *“And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin.”* II Kings 12:2 says, *“And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.”* II Kings 18:5 says, *“He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him.”*

Some time ago as we were reading our Bibles in family devotions, the Lord placed this message upon my heart. We were reading through the accounts of the kings of Israel and Judah in I and II Kings. I was impressed with what the Lord recorded concerning each of these kings. The three verses written at the beginning of this message stood out above the others. Every king is remembered throughout these passages for something that he said or did. Some are remembered for saying wicked things and doing wicked things as well. Others are remembered for saying righteous things and doing righteous things. Still others have a mixture of doing and saying both righteous and wicked things.

As I thought about how God remembered each of these kings, the thought struck me that each of us will be remembered as well. The record of our lives will not be placed into Scripture as these accounts have been, and what we do may not be remembered as long as these will, but, nevertheless, we will be remembered for what we say and do. That is a sobering thought. We do not live in a vacuum. Our lives do affect other lives—for good or bad. For the most part, we will be remembered for a generation or two. If we should live a long life, it may reach to a third generation. But when we come to the end of

-2-

our life, how will people remember us? Will they think about things we said or did that helped them in their lives? Or will they remember how foolishly we spoke and how foolish our actions were?

This is not just in reference to when we die and how those that are close to us will remember us. There are some people that we may not see again in this life. We may just cross paths with them one time, or maybe a few times. Perhaps we knew them for a few years, but now do not see them anymore. We may become just a memory to them. Will that memory be a good one or a bad one? If we do not see someone for years, will they remember us for our faithfulness to God, or will they remember how unfaithful we were to God and how we mistreated them?

As I read about the lives of all of these kings, three stood out above the others. There could be many lessons to learn from other kings, and there are important truths about other people throughout Scripture that could be pointed out, but these are the three that I want to focus on now. As the message develops, you will notice that every person falls into one of these three categories. Our lives will not as elaborate as these kings, but in the summation of their lives, we can read our own summation. Every one of us, by many or by few, will be remembered. How will you be remembered?

Before we get into the message itself, let me give a few introductory comments concerning the history of the nations of Israel and Judah and the kings that reigned over them. After Joshua's death, judges were in charge of the land. There were a total of fifteen judges covering a period of about 300 years. In I Samuel 8, Samuel was the judge and leader of the nation. At this time the people demanded a king. Saul was anointed king in I Samuel 10 and would reign for forty years. Because of his disobedience to God, God took the kingdom away from him and gave it to David. Upon Saul's death, David became king over the tribe of Judah and after seven years became king over all twelve tribes. His reign over Judah and the whole nation totaled forty years.

Right before David died, he announced that Solomon would succeed him and had Solomon anointed as king. Solomon would reign forty years, build the temple, and make Israel the greatest nation on the earth. Toward the end of his life, he began to follow other gods. Because of this, God pronounced judgment upon Israel and Solomon. God told Solomon that the kingdom would be taken from his son and given to another. Two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, would remain with Solomon's son, in accordance with God's promise to David. When Solomon died, the kingdom split, just as God had said.

The three kings that we are looking at reigned during the period of the divided kingdoms. This small outline will help us understand exactly how the kingdoms developed after the division.

- I. The Kings of Israel—the Northern Kingdom
  1. The Composition—the ten northern tribes
  2. The Change—nine royal families
  3. The Count—20 kings—all wicked
- II. The Kings of Judah—the Southern Kingdom
  1. The Composition—the two southern tribes—Judah and Benjamin
  2. The Consistency—one royal family—all descendants of David
  3. The Count—19 kings—8 righteous; 11 wicked

The Northern kingdom, Israel, would last until 721 B.C. when it was defeated and taken over by Assyria. It existed separately for about 224 years. As you can tell from the outline, it was in disarray for much of its history with many of the kings being overthrown. The nation began in idolatry and never did reject it. In spite of some great prophets proclaiming the truth of God, such as Elijah and Elisha, not one of the kings is classified as being righteous. They all practiced wickedness and led these ten tribes into a captivity from which they never recovered.

The Southern kingdom, Judah, would last 135 years longer. It was a separate nation for over 350 years. In spite of Solomon's sin,

God kept his promise to David during this time by allowing David's descendants to continually reign. As we will see, several righteous men reigned during this time and kept the kingdom on the right path. Eventually, wickedness dominated and God allowed Babylon to overtake them in 586 B.C. They would return from this captivity after 70 years, but eventually were dispersed by the Romans and did not return to the land as a nation until 1948.

Out of these kings that reigned over Israel and Judah, we turn our attention to three of them. One came from Israel. He is the first that would reign over these ten northern tribes—Jeroboam. The other two reigned over Judah. They are Jehoash (also called Joash) and Hezekiah. In the verses written at the beginning of the message, we can see that they are remembered for how they lived in relation to God. May we learn from these men and make sure that we are remembered for our service to God and not for our rejection of God or our departure from God.

Jeroboam is what I call **A Man of Contempt**. If we were to look at his political skills or his power as a king, then one might find some good things to say about Jeroboam. But God is not interested in Jeroboam's political ability or his military skill. God is only interested in what a man does in relation to Him. The Bible is a spiritual book, and though it does mention the physical accomplishments of many of the kings, that is not the most important detail. The spirituality of the man is what matters to God. For every king, even the ones that are only mentioned in a few verses, God says if they practiced righteousness or evil. God cares about the hearts of people, and the actions that are expressed by the condition of that heart. Some will say that we focus too much on the spiritual condition of people, but that is certainly not the case. In fact, the reality is that we focus too little on the spiritual condition of men's hearts. We have fallen for the mantra of letting people do their own thing and enjoy life. We must return, as the prophets of the Bible and the preachers of yesteryear, to focusing on the hearts and actions of people. God was concerned about what they loved and what they did.

We must be too!

Jeroboam is mentioned for the first time in I Kings 11:26, and his death is recorded in I Kings 14:19-20. He is also mentioned in II Chronicles 10:2 through 13:20. In the II Chronicles passages, the only activity of Jeroboam that is mentioned, aside from becoming king, is his defeat at the hand of Abijah. In the I Kings passages, the predominant theme is Jeroboam's institution of idolatry, not his victories in battles, nor the monuments that he built. This theme and its consequences will be developed further in the following paragraphs and pages, but I must repeat and make something absolutely clear before we go any further.

In God's eyes, PHYSICAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS DO NOT MATTER! That is all we seem to focus on, but it does not impress God at all! What matters to God is having hearts that are devoted to Him, and actions flowing from those hearts that are pleasing to Him. I have said it earlier and will say it later, but we must remember—God cares if we are right with Him. We will continue next month.