THE STORY CHAPTER 14

A Kingdom Torn in Two

January 14-15, 2017

Appearing on the Big Screen…

“If you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servant.”

*Pg. 194, 1 Kings 12:7*

10 The young men who had grown up with him replied, “These people have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.’ Now tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. 11 My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.’”

*Pg. 194, 1Kings 12:10-12*

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

*Luke 11:17*

**Be careful who you listen to.**

Wounds from a friend can be trusted,

  but an enemy multiplies kisses.

*Proverbs 27:6*

**Division is seldom one-sided. Own your part.**

**Division has a generational effect.**

“There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam

*Pg. 199, 1 Kings 14:30*

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam through Abijah’s lifetime.

*Pg. 199, 1 Kings 15:6*

There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns.

*Pg. 200, 1 Kings 15:16*

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

*Romans 12:18*

9 The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord’s command. 11 So the Lord said to Solomon, “Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. 12 Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

*Pg. 192; 1 Kings 11:9-13*

**Getting your focus off God is the root cause.**

THE STORY CHAPTER 14

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Oak Hills Church, San Antonio, TX

January 14-15, 2017

**To view The Story Chapter 14 sermon video, [CLICK HERE](http://media.oakhillschurch.com/default.aspx?page=3679&item=566).**

**Introduction**

Raise your hands if you know anything about the families I’m about to mention: The Hatfields and McCoys. These families feuded from 1863 to 1901, a period of 38 years.

Do you know what caused these families to start feuding?

The first recorded incident came in 1863 when Asa McCoy was returning from fighting in the Civil War and was murdered, and one of the Hatfields was blamed for it, although it was later discovered he was home sick at the time and couldn’t have done it.

The second recorded incident of violence between the families took place 13 years later after a dispute over the ownership of a hog.

**The Story of Israel’s Division**

Today as we open chapter 14 of The Story, this chapter could easily be entitled, “The Hatfields and McCoys of the Old Testament.” It is in this chapter that the nation of Israel is divided. Let me tell you how it all came down.

*Read intro from page 193 of The Story.*

Jeroboam hears that they made Rehoboam king, so he heads from Egypt to Israel for the inauguration, and to see if Rehoboam might be less harsh than his father, King Solomon.

Rehoboam, in answering the challenge of Jeroboam, first goes to the elders who served his dad – older experienced guys. He gets their opinion. They advise wisely,

“If you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servant.”

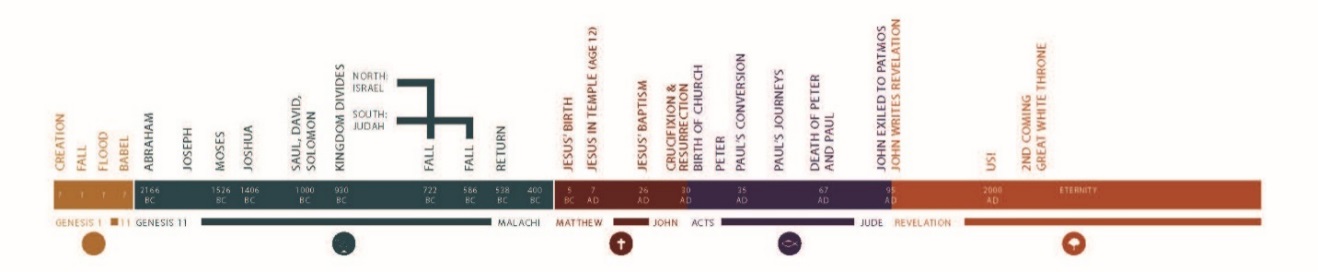
*Pg. 194, 1 Kings 12:7*

Rehoboam rejects their advice and goes to some young men who grew up with him.

**10**The young men who had grown up with him replied, “These people have said to you, ‘Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.’ Now tell them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist. **11**My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.’”

*Pg. 194, 1Kings 12:10-12*

*Refer to Timeline poster.*

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It is at this point the nation of Israel divides, and it’s over something much greater than the ownership of a hog. Of the 12 tribes of Israel, only those living in the towns of Judah stay with Rehobaom. The rest rally behind Jeroboam and make him their king.

10 of the twelve tribes form the Nation of Israel to the north. The tribe of Simeon is melded into the tribe of Judah and they form the Nation of Judah to the south.

This division happened in 930 BC and remains that way throughout the rest of the Old Testament – 530 years! Division is a nasty to place live. It churns our stomachs, it boils our blood, it robs us of joy. It ruins weddings, it undermines a church’s witness in a city; it dashes hope and dreams; it crushes the spirits of innocent children.

**Application:**

Jesus said,

“A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

*Luke 11:17*

In the teaching of the Bible, a “house” can be a family, an individual, a church, a business or in this case an entire nation. There are so many outside forces that threaten our unity and stability but they can be overcome with unity on the inside. But, once a house on the inside turns against it itself, it is just a matter of time before that house crumbles.

So, what can we do about avoiding division in our house? There is a host of principles to promote unity and hold divisions at bay, but let’s focus our attention on four principles we can learn from Israel.

**Be careful who you listen to.**

It is pretty easy to see the rookie mistake Rehoboam made. He rejected the advice of his elders and embraced the advice of the young men he grew up with. If all you listen to is people your own age, you are not taking advantage of people who have experienced this very situation before.

But there’s more. These are guys he grew up with. He’s now the king. What is the likelihood they are going to tell the king bad news or tough things he needs to hear? The cost is too high for them.

I find this to be true as a general rule for all of us. Our friends are generally predisposed to tell us what we want to hear. Our friends want to please us and they don’t want to drive a wedge in our relationship. You must be aware of this. Listen to Proverbs 27:6 –

Wounds from a friend can be trusted,

  but an enemy multiplies kisses.

*Proverbs 27:6*

You need to have friends around you that will tell you the truth If you are wise, you will beg them to tell you something that will be hard for you to hear. At the time, it will feel like a wound, but in the end, it will save you and preserve the bonds of unity in your house.

If you are the friend who is approached to give counsel to another friend about a relationship conflict with someone – another friend, a spouse, a co-worker, a neighbor – I have two pieces of advice for you:

* Ask for permission right up front to tell them what they don’t necessarily want to hear.
* Don’t ever give hard counsel without listening to the other side of the story. We can’t help ourselves in how we spin the story. If only one person controls the narrative, you can almost bet you are going to give bad advice. Seek permission to hear the other side.

Which leads to our second point:

**Division is seldom one-sided. Own your part.**

At first it appears Rehoboam is the one completely in the wrong. But when you get the whole story you see that Jeroboam also played a part. First, before Rehoboam is even in the story, Jeroboam is told by a prophet that he would be king. He takes matters in his own hands and makes a move to take the kingdom from Solomon, Rehoboam’s dad. That attempt failed because it was outside the timing of God and it caused him to flee to Egypt. Jeroboam was ambitious. He wanted the position.

After he gets what he wants, we learn that to keep the 10 tribes from going back to Jerusalem, and to worship God and offer sacrifices he made two golden calves and set them up for the people to worship and offer sacrifices to.

*Refer to Timeline poster.*

If you recall the story from Moses, how did that work out for them the last time? *The Story* says on page 196, “And this thing became a sin.”

God sends a prophet to Jeroboam to confront him. Here is the result on page 197 – “Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways.” We see a few pages later this led to his ultimate downfall.

After being married now for 35 years and a minister for 30 years, I have only seen on a handful of occasions where the division was one-sided. They are seldom exactly 50/50 but nonetheless, both parties contribute a significant part in the division.

You can’t control the other person but you can own your part. I find this posture of humility creates the best environment for healing.

**Division has a generational effect**

We certainly saw this for the Hatfields and McCoys, and likewise we this squabble between Rehoboam and Jeroboam rippling through their family for generations. Listen to these passages –

“There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam

*Pg. 199, 1 Kings 14:30*

There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam through Abijah’s lifetime.

*Pg. 199, 1 Kings 15:6*

There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns.

*Pg. 200, 1 Kings 15:16*

*Indicate on timeline the 960-year span from “Kingdom Divides” to “Jesus’ Birth.”*

The division took place in 930 BC and continued to be a contentious relationship from that day on.

Remember during Jesus’ ministry he encountered the Samaritan woman at the well? Jesus was going from Jerusalem to Galilee, and to get there, you can go through Samaria, which is where Jesus encountered the woman at the well. The Samaritans are the remnant of Jews still living there from the northern kingdom established under Jeroboam. The Jews from the south, from Rehoboam’s kingdom or Judah, despised the Samaritans so much, they would go out of their way to walk around Samaria to avoid any contact with them. But Jesus is a reconciler, and he goes right through Samaria, and talks with the woman at the well for the purpose of reconciliation.

Division can ruin families for generations. Like the Hatfields and McCoys. When you decide to destroy a relationship, remember it will usually run through generations.

In Romans 12:18 Paul writes:

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

*Romans 12:18*

This leads us to our last point.

Rehoboam and Jeroboam aren’t the ones who struck the first match of division. It was Rehoboam’s dad – King Solomon.

In our previous chapter King Solomon was doing great. It was a time of peace for the children of Israel. In response to Solomon’s request, he is filled with God’s wisdom and is reaping the benefits galore. But little by little he stops applying it to his life and kingdom. A frog that is dropped into a pot of boiling water will immediately jump out. But, if you place him in a pot of lukewarm water and slowly turn up the heat underneath, you can cook him to death. By the time he becomes aware of what is happening, his body cannot respond.

Let me tell you the lukewarm pot of water Solomon jumped into. Solomon married foreign women to establish political alliances with the surrounding nations. He had 700 wives in all, plus 300 concubines (which are like 2nd class wives or legalized mistresses that the king could call on at any time). These foreign wives worshipped other gods and talked Solomon into building temples so they could worship their gods.

What does the first commandment say?

“You shall have no other gods before me.”

God visits Solomon one day and gives him this message – page 192 in the Story or 1 Kings 11:9-13:

**9**The Lord became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. **10**Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the Lord’s command.**11**So the Lord said to Solomon, “Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. **12**Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. **13**Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen.”

*Pg. 192; 1 Kings 11:9-13*

Here is the most important principle of this lesson. If you are threatened with a feud…

**Getting your focus off God is the root cause**

A family, a church, a nation that stays close to God puts the biggest wall of protection around themselves to preserve unity. The single greatest thing I can do to preserve the unity of this church as your Senior Minister is to walk closely with and humbly before God. The single greatest thing I can do as a husband is to walk closely with and humbly before God. The single greatest thing I can do as a dad is to walk closely with and humbly before God. The same is true for you.

**Closing:**

On June 14, 2003, Bo and Ron McCoy partnered with Reo Hatfield to declare an official truce between the families, 140 years after the first fight broke out. The document was signed by 60 descendants from both sides of the family, and Governor Paul Patton of Kentucky and Governor Bob Wise of West Virginia signed the proclamation declaring June 14 Hatfield and McCoy Reconciliation Day. Reo Hatfield said he wanted to show that if these two families could reach an accord, others could also. Ron McCoy said that up to then the Hatfields and McCoys had represented feuding and fighting, but by signing this hopefully people would realize that’s not the final chapter.

Jesus said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.”

The opposite is also true: A house united can withstand anything. This is God’s prayer for you – to be united.

As I pray for you today, if you are sitting with your family and you want to be united, just reach over and grab their hand. No pressure. If you’re here by yourself, and you’re sitting next to someone you know, you can put your hand on each other’s shoulders. If you don’t know them, maybe ask their permission. If you’re here and you’re single, you need to know you can be divided even against yourself – place your hand on your heart.

*PRAY*

Father, Jesus prayed that we would be one, even as you and he are one. You told us, “A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one.” Paul challenged us that we are one body, and we need to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. This is our desire, but we need your help. Our flesh is at war with our mind and spirit to tear us apart. The Devil is prowling about our homes, trying to devour us, and he has gotten some of us. So we draw close to you in this moment as our only hope. Restore what the locusts have eaten, draw us toward each other. May we be quick to ask for forgiveness and to receive it. May we display the humility of Christ.

You want to write a good story for our lives that is filled with unity, love, peace and joy. We join you today in making that story a reality in our life. We pray this for the sake of Jesus and the witness of his name.