

## CHAPTER H4

## A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF

Unregenerate pagans have no alternative but to use their carnal minds by doing what seems right and good. Therefore, God *warned* His people to avoid that leaven by not marrying dogs (**Dt 7:3-5**). However, because *He* takes human wives He *allowed* His people to marry pagan women. But in order to protect His church from the leaven that might be introduced by strange wives, the Lord issued certain guidelines concerning them (**Ex 34:11-16; Nu 31:14-18; Dt 18:9-14; 21:10-13**). As wise as King Solomon was and as much as he loved the Lord, he failed to control his pagan wives, and their leaven of Peor turned his heart away from properly serving God (**1 Ki 11:3,4**). Solomon then did something evil (**1 Ki 11:6**): He officially established religious toleration/freedom of religion in his kingdom (**vv.7,8**)! We've already reviewed other carnal ideas that seem "good" when examined with no consideration for the Bible, and we've seen some of them were fairly subtle. But if you were the King of Israel, the son of King David, and the Lord had appeared to you twice (**v.9**) do you think *you'd* be stupid enough to establish freedom of religion?! No, you say? Do you think you're smarter or wiser than Solomon?

Solomon's mistakes show carnality is no respecter of wisdom and intelligence. And when we consider his actions realistically we must conclude that some combination of socio-political factors convinced Solomon and many others that religious freedom was a good idea. God's anger (**v.9**), however, makes us realize that no matter how pressing life around us may seem, we must be careful to always through discernment consider the will of God as revealed in the Bible.

God was so angry He decided to divide the kingdom (**vv.11-13**), but because of His love for David, He did it not in Solomon's day, He waited until the reign of Solomon's son, Rehoboam. Jeroboam and the congregation of Israel approached King Rehoboam one day with a democratic ultimatum: Reduce their tax burden or they wouldn't serve him (**1 Ki 12:4**).

King Rehoboam sought two sets of advice. One group told him to preserve unity by becoming a democratic public servant (**v.7**), and the other group said, "These willful spoiled brats need a heavier rod" (**vv.10,11**). God caused Rehoboam to reject democracy (**v.15**). So the people of Israel (like the British colonists in America in 1776) declared their independence from their king (**v.16**), murdered the king's tax man (**v.18**), and rebelled (**v.19**). Ordinarily King Rehoboam would have been right to go to war and punish the rebels (**v.21**), but God stopped him (**v.24**) because He wanted the kingdom split.

God's people rising in rebellion against their king does not establish rebellion as a legitimate method of social or political change: Jeroboam is a type of Lucifer, his fellow Christians are types of the angels who joined the rebellion, and rebellion is always witchcraft (**1 Sa 15:23**). This rebellion was God's punishment for His people. God also uses Satan (and other devils) to tempt and to punish Christians (**Jb 1:8; 1 Sa 16:14; 2 Sa 24:1; 1 Ch 21:1**), but that doesn't make Satan good. And Daniel was a eunuch (**Da 1:7-11,18**) because God was punishing His people (**2 Ki 20:18**), but that doesn't mean you should be castrated, too.

When the twelve tribes of God's people were split into two houses or kingdoms, the major portion of the congregation of Israel – the northern ten tribes – was called the kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom was called Judah (**1 Ki 11:37,38; 12:16,17,20,23**). It was later, during the reign of King Ahaz of Judah (**2 Ki 16:1**), when Syria and Israel were at war with Judah (**2 Ki 16:5**), that the people of Ju-dah were called "Jews" (**2 Ki 16:6**).

The division of God's people into two kingdoms was punishment for their apostasy. God continued to keep them as His people but His patience was wearing thin. In fact, it was only because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that God had not cast them from His presence "as yet" (**2 Ki 13:23**). As we shall see, the "as yet" means exactly what it says – the time was coming when He would cast them away from Him. He ran out of patience with Israel first. He had tried to get both kingdoms to repent, but to no avail (**2 Ki 17:13,14**). So He rejected His people of Israel and cast them out (**Ho 1:4,6,9; 2 Ki 17:18,20,23**). He kept the people of Judah even though they also were bad (**2 Ki 17:18,19; Ho 1:7**). Judah had some good moments (**2 Ki 18:1,3**), but God warned future punishment was coming (**2 Ki 20:16-18; 21:12-15**). In spite of these warnings God's people continued in their carnal ways "till there was no remedy" (**2 Ch 36:16**).

God cursed the kingdom of Judah by having it defeated and taken into the Babylonian captivity. God used pagan King Nebuchadnezzar as His servant (**Je 25:9; 27:6**) to punish and to bring evil (**Je 25:29**) upon the Jews in accordance with His wishes (**2 Ki 24:3**). (Interestingly enough, at the end of seventy years of having Judah captive, God would punish Babylon for doing evil to His people (**Je 25:12**)! It goes to show it doesn't matter if your name is Satan, Balaam, or Nebuchadnezzar; you don't mess with God's people and get away with it – even if He is using you to punish them.)

## RETURN TO JERUSALEM

When Judah was allowed to return to Jerusalem, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Malachi were leaders during the rebuilding of the city. They speak of God's people disobeying His orders that they should not marry pagans, and they record the putting away of the pagan women they had married during their captivity (**Ezr 9:1-10:44; Ne 13:1-3,23-31**). Through the prophet Malachi, God rebukes them: **Mal 2:9** says they were partial in the law; **2:10** says they dealt treacherously against their brethren; **2:11** says they had married heathen women of other religions; and **Ne 13:23,24** says they did not require them to speak the Jews' language. But **Mal 2:16** says God hates putting away and knew His people were just trying to cloak their own sins by putting away their wives. So He warned them not to deal treacherously. **2:17** says they wearied God by claiming the evil of their disobedient marriages was good in His eyes; or, knowing they were being hypocrites they said in their hearts "God won't do anything about this."

Once God's people were reestablished in Jerusalem they continued to err. Some of their misdeeds I'll cover in the doctrinal section, but for now I think it's fitting to see how God's people closed the Old Testament era with another democratic act:

When Jesus Christ was arrested by His people He was tried by the pagan governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilate. Pilate announced to the assembled Christians three times that he had found no fault in Christ and would therefore chastise and release Him (**Lk 23:13-22**). But the voice of the people cried out that they wanted Barabbas released, and that they did not want Christ chastised – they wanted Him crucified. The will of the people prevailed (**Lk 23:23**) and Pilate did as the people required (**v.24**) and delivered Christ to their will (**v.25**).

## 2 H4 A HOUSE DIVIDED

The carnal mind had reared its ugly “head” again. And by the time of Christ’s First Coming carnality had picked up another synonym to describe it: Previously it was referred to as carnality, doing what was right in your own eyes, living by your own inventions, living by your own counsel, the whoredom of Peor, the leaven of the Pharisees, the doctrine of devils, etc. Now it was also called philosophy (**Co 2:8**).

We need to realize none of the mistakes mentioned in this and in the previous chapters was committed by stupid Christians. Saints who thought they were serving the Lord committed them, saints who were no different from you and me. These mistakes were made because the realities and events of everyday life caused our brethren to take their eyes off Christ and the Bible and instead to focus on the events themselves. We must never allow that to happen. We must always have some part of our minds objectively analyzing events in order to find and understand the Biblical concepts and principles behind them. And then we must have what it takes to walk by faith, not by sight. You and I have already used some of the events in the Bible to develop and practice our ability to objectively and Scripturally evaluate the actions of Old Testament saints. We are not condemning them; we are learning from them. As we move through the rest of the chapters in this section we shall continue practicing discernment by Scripturally evaluating the actions of Christians about whom we have read in our studies of world history. We are going to see why they made the decisions they made and see if we think they were the Biblically-correct decisions, and in the process gain a better understanding of world history from a Christian perspective. By the time you finish this book you will understand how important it is for us to use discernment because you will see how the world-shaping errors of our carnal Christian ancestors down through history compounded and produced Western civilization and the unscriptural doctrines in our so-called “Bible-believing, Bible-preaching, Bible-teaching” churches.