

LESSONS ON PREDESTINATION #87
"Election of Dying Infants - A Divine Testimony"
(Scriptures from NKJV)

Matthew 18:14 -

Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

INTRODUCTION: This is the eighth lesson in the sub-series on the "Election of Dying Infants." It is entitled "A Divine Testimony." We are presently gathering scriptural data containing people and events which are related to our supposition that all infants, children, and the mentally retarded, who live and die in that state, belong to the class of humanity known as the elect, and will be saved and go to heaven upon their death in this present life. They belong to the class of humanity known as the moral incompetents. We are taking the position that the evidence of election in adults consists of their repentance and faith in believing the truth of the Gospel. Meanwhile, the evidence of election in infants and others of their class is death itself since they are incapable of repentance and faith.

In so doing, I am presently using this data to rebuff those who hold to the "we don't know view." This view holds that the Bible is silent on the matter, and we should not inquire into the matter since God does not desire that we should know the answer to the question as to what the destiny of a dead infant shall be. The data thus far is showing that it is in the very silence of the Bible by which God has revealed the answer! This explains why we do not have anyone in the Bible asking this question! Since it is a question which exists in the minds of many, why do we not have individuals in the Bible asking the question? Because the silence in the scriptures told them that all infants dying in infancy are elect and there is no such thing as a reprobate infant!

We have given three Biblical accounts of individuals who were assured of the destiny of all those who die in infancy. They were:

One: David and the loss of his infant son. We called this (A Silent Testimony).

Two: Job and his wish that he would have died while in his mother's womb. This we called (A Painful Testimony).

Three: The Shunammite mother whose child had died. We called this (A Mother's Testimony).

We now come to the account of Jeroboam's child and his death as recorded in I Kings 14:1-18.

A. The Narrative Unfolds - I Kings 14:1-18.

1. The text reads as follows;

At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. And Jeroboam

said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I would be king over this people. Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age.

Now the Lord had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman."

And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the Lord has spoken! Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

"Moreover the Lord will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! For the Lord will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made their wooden images, provoking the Lord to anger. And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."

Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

2. The story unfolds as follows. We will consider the elements in this order:
 - a. The reign of Jeroboam.
 - b. The sins of Jeroboam.
 - c. God's covenant curse upon Jeroboam's dynasty.
 - d. God's election of Abijah.
 - e. A legitimate question is raised.

B. The Reign of Jeroboam.

Jeroboam I was the first king of Israel after the kingdom split in two. He reigned over the ten northern tribes for 22 years from about 930-909 B.C. He served under Solomon's administration and after Solomon's death led a revolt resulting in the kingdom being divided into two sections, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Meanwhile, Solomon's son, Rehoboam, inherited the dynasty of his father. This gave him the rule over all of Israel until Jeroboam's revolt. Rehoboam then became king over Judah, the southern kingdom. Jeroboam reigned over Israel 22 years (I Kings 14:20). He and Rehoboam engaged in a civil war all of his days as king. (I Kings 14:30).

C. The Sins of Jeroboam.

Jeroboam was obsessed with a desire for political power and wanted to control the southern tribe of Judah. Jerusalem, the temple, the priesthood and the sacrificial system all resided in the south. He realized that his people would be making religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem and might be influenced to either stay or switch their allegiance to Rehoboam. To counter this, he introduced a system of idolatry that far surpassed that which occurred under the reign of Solomon. I Kings 14:9, God said to Jeroboam, ***"You have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke me to anger, and have cast me behind your back."***

Jeroboam's sins were threefold in nature. First, He made golden calves and placed one in Bethel and the other in Dan. (I Kings 12:28-30). This would be the counterpart of the temple in Jerusalem. Second, He made priests to serve in the sacrificial system which were not of the tribe of Levi (I Kings 12:31). Third, He changed the feast days from those established by God (I Kings 12:32). This greatly displeased the Lord and brought down His judgment on Jeroboam.

D. God's Covenant Curse Upon Jeroboam's Dynasty.

Jeroboam proved himself to be an apostate from God and became the Biblical model of an idolatrous king. Because of the magnitude of his sin, God pronounced a curse upon him and his sons. They would all die without anyone of them being allowed to perpetuate the dynasty of Jeroboam - In I Kings 13:34 we are told "**And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth.**"

The severity of God's judgment upon the sons of Jeroboam is seen in how God ordered their bodies not to be buried upon their deaths, but to be left to the dogs and birds to devour them. In I Kings 14:10, 11 we read, "**Therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the Lord has spoken!**" The great desecration in the Jewish society was not to be given a proper and decent burial. Any male descendent of Jeroboam, who dies in the city, is to be left in the streets for the wild dogs to eat. In like manner, any son who dies in the fields, is to be left unburied and for the vultures to consume. This was one of the curses which God had promised to Israel when they were about to enter the promised land. This is sometimes referred to as the Palestinian Covenant. The Covenant contained the conditions of obedience required by God to remain in His favor as a special people. There were blessings and curses contained in this Covenant. Moses was to stand upon Mount Gerizim and pronounce the various blessings which would come upon the people for obedience. Then he was to stand upon Mount Ebal and pronounce the curses which would fall upon them for disobedience. These are recorded in Deuteronomy chapters 24-28. One of the curses is recorded in Deuteronomy 28:26 which reads, "**Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away.**" Notice that if someone saw one of Jeroboam's sons die in the city or the fields, they were not to scare away the animals, but let them eat their dead bodies! Let it be known that God had placed a curse upon them by the manner of their deaths.

There was, however, an exception to be made of one of Jeroboam's sons, who was but a small child.

E. GOD'S ELECTION OF ABIJAH.

1. The child's name was Abijah. (I Kings 13:1). We read there that Abijah became

sick. **"At that time the son of Jeroboam became sick."** Jeroboam sent his wife to inquire of the prophet Ahijah as to what was going to happen to the child. (Verses 2, 3). In verse three we are told that **"he will tell you what will become of the child."** Upon meeting the prophet, Jeroboam's wife was given a barrel full of bad news. All of Jeroboam's sons were going to die as a result of God's judgment upon Jeroboam. But one thing was going to be different about Abijah. While he would die as a child, he was to be given a proper burial. And the reason is given in I Kings 14:12-13 where we read, **"Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, because in him there is found something good toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."**

2. Every male in Jeroboam's family was going to be desecrated, eaten by dogs and vultures, but the little child was to have a decent, respectful burial. Why was his death and burial to be different from that of his brothers? We read **"because in him there is found something good toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam."** Now what is that good which was non-existent in his brothers? It was not righteous merit. But it was due to the fact that he had not knowingly and willingly rebelled against God and become an idolater like his father and his brothers! God said "there is no wilful rebellion in him against me." This indicates God's special favor and care toward little children. While Abijah suffered temporal death due to the sin of his father, he did not suffer eternal death in hell. Why? He belonged to the class of humanity which God has chosen to spare should they die in the state of non-discretion. Herein is God's testimony to the question of infant salvation. More will be said about this in a later lesson as we examine Jesus' view of little children.

F. A LEGITIMATE QUESTION IS RAISED.

1. A legitimate question can now be raised concerning the concept of the universal salvation of all infants who die in infancy. It flows out of the time in the Old Testament when God commanded the complete extermination of entire nations or races of people. This included women and children. One example can be given which gives rise to the question. It is found in I Samuel 15:2, 3, 18. **"Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. Now go and attack (strike) Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' . . . Now the Lord sent you on a mission, and said 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are consumed.'"**

In this section of Scripture, God is commanding Saul to totally annihilate the race of the Amalekites because they fought against Israel when they were leaving Egypt to enter the land of Palestine. This is recorded in Exodus 17:8-16 and Deuteronomy 25:17-19. There, God predicted they would be destroyed at some future date. This destruction was to be complete and no mercy was to be shown to man or beast. This was to include the children and infants. God refers to the Amalekites as **"the sinners"** in 15:18. Since the infants and children are included in this group, they were not to be spared because of their infancy or lack of knowledge and understanding. God seems to have made them accountable and included them among **"the sinners, the Amalekites."**

2. So the question is this: Did the Amalekite infants perish and go into eternal damnation along with their parents? If so, does this not destroy the premise which holds to the universal salvation of all infants dying in infancy? No, while the infants died a physical death, they, like all infants who die physically, do not suffer the second death in which both soul and body are cast into the lake of fire. First, these infants died like all infants because they fell in Adam and acquired a sinful nature which exposes them to death. Second, these infants died because they belonged to a family which was under the curse of God, just like Jeroboam's son was exposed to the curse of belonging to the dynasty of Jeroboam, even though he had not fallen into idolatry like that of his brothers. God's election of grace spared him from God's judgment even though he suffered death due to his union with his father Adam, and his union with his idolatrous father Jeroboam. And as we have seen, David's son suffered death because of his father's sin and not due to some personal sin of his own.

3. In order to further help us to understand the infants of the Amalekites, it is necessary to understand God's dealing with the idolatrous nations which dwelt in the land of Palestine prior to Israel's occupation of the land. Two main things stand out in God's purpose. One, He chose or elected Israel to be His holy people, distinct from the Gentile nations. Two, He chose the land of Palestine to be His holy land, distinct from the lands making up the rest of the earth. In order to achieve this purpose, he required that both the people and the land be purged of idolatry. The first of the Ten Commandments which He gave to Israel is stated in these words found in Exodus 20:2, 3 - **"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."**

4. The nations which were dwelling in the land had spent hundreds of years steeped in idolatry. God had shown much patience with them. Now His judgment will fall upon them. Time will not permit a full explanation of God's plan to bring this about, so I must be brief. In Deuteronomy 7:1,2, God says to Israel, **"When the Lord your God brings you**

into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. These people were God haters. In Deuteronomy 7:10 God informs Israel ***"He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack (delay) with him who hates Him, He will repay him to his face."***

The reason for this is given in Deuteronomy 20:16-18. There we read, ***"But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God."*** The infants and children were to be destroyed, not because they were rebels against God, but because they belonged to a sinful nation and upon reaching an age of discretion, would begin to practice the idolatry of their parents and leaders.

5. It should be understood that God had shown great patience and mercy toward these nations who lived in Palestine. But His patience has now reached an end. From the time He gave His promise to Abraham that he and his descendants would be given the land for an inheritance, until they took possession of the land, was over four hundred years.

Question: Why did the descendants of Abraham have to wait so long before they could enter the land?

Answer: Genesis 15:13-16 gives us the answer. There God tells Abram, ***"Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."***

This passage, along with several others, reveals the principle that God has allotted an idolatrous people only a certain amount of time in which He will show mercy unto them. But after their allotted period of time, His mercy will be withheld, and His judgment will fall. As this was applied to the nations in Canaan, the judgment was to come about by total

annihilation, resulting in the extermination of the race. There were to be no children left alive to grow up and perpetuate the race.

6. This was carried out in the form of what was known as *herem* warfare. This warfare transcended the mere warfare between Israel and the nations. It was a warfare between the Holy God of Israel and the unholy idolatry of men. The word, "*herem*" is hard to translate, but it basically means to be "banned" or "devoted things." It refers to people and items captured during the course of a holy war. It involves consecration to God, the giving over of the spoils of the battle to God as a sacrifice to His holy justice. The total destruction of man and beast along with personal items such as clothing and property was to be viewed as an act of worship to the Lord God of heaven and earth. Unless so stated, the Israelites were not to keep any of the spoils for their own personal use. The God who won the battle was due the spoils.

The first two battles involving the conquest of the land illustrate the importance of keeping *herem*. After the battle of Jericho and after separating Rahab from the group, we read in Joshua 6:21, **"And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword."** Thus ended the most powerful city within Palestine at the time.

The next battle was against Ai, a small city whose name means "ruin." Israel was defeated, and Joshua and the people were shaken with the outcome as he inquired of the Lord the reason why. He discerned that someone had not observed *herem* in Jericho. Someone in Israel had sinned and transgressed the covenant of God. After careful investigation, they traced the crime to a man named Achan of the tribe of Judah (Joshua 7:16-18) In verses 20 and 21 Achan confesses his sin - **"I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."**

The judgment of *herem* was then transferred upon Achan, and all that he possessed was destroyed including his children. In verses 24-26 we are told, **"Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, 'Why have you troubled us? The Lord will trouble you this day.' So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the**

Lord turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day."

7. Note that while none of his children and his animals participated in the sinful act, they nevertheless suffered because they were represented by

the person, Achan. Thus his whole family could be classified as "the sinners—the Achanites." This is why the infants of the Amalekites could be included in the destruction of the adults even though they had not reached the age of discretion when they could choose to embrace the idolatry for which the whole nation was noted.

This is the lesson which God is teaching in the life of Jeroboam's little child Abijah. He suffered and died because of the sins of his father, nevertheless the Lord saw something good in Abijah. That good was that he had not participated in the idolatry which his father and brothers practiced. Thus his destiny would be that of all infants dying in infancy; Heaven! It made no difference whether the infant belonged to the covenant nation of Israel or the pagan nation of the Amalekites. This shows that one can die a temporal death and yet be spared from eternal death by the electing grace of God. This is God's Divine testimony on the destiny of dying infants, children, and the mentally retarded. They are chosen as a class to be spared from the second death which those experience in the lake of fire.