

“God himself is with us for our captain.” 2 Chron. 13:12

“And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.” (2 Chron. 13:12)

Eloquent words from a wise and eloquent man (Gill says, although Trapp says he was a bad man, a libidinous man for marrying 14 wives, and Trapp also says his so-called wisdom “*is very artificial*”). He spoke under battlefield conditions. His name was Abijah, grandson of Solomon, and king of Judah for only some 2 years. He was at least a very interesting character in the history of the Messianic line – (i.e., the genealogy and ancestors of the Lord Jesus). The Bible account of Abijah is sparse, but enough to impart to us patience and comfort and hope in reading and studying what HAS SURVIVED the ravages of time, about king Abijah; to wit:

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4)

Thereupon, we read: “*And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo.*” 2 Chron. 13:22. In expounding that verse, Gill says, “*Not only his warlike actions, and his course of life, but some remarkable sayings of his, he being a man of wisdom and eloquence, as his above speech shows.*” The “*above speech*” – referred to by Gill – is the remarkable speech that king Abijah delivered – from atop Mt. Zemaraim – to king Jeroboam’s opposing forces – on the eve of battle. Abijah was outnumbered – greatly outnumbered – two-to-one. Here’s how the story was told by the Holy Spirit; to wit:

“And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valor.” (2 Chronicles 13:2-3)

Beloved, that’s two-to-one any way you look at it. And Abijah is making a speech? What are you thinking of? Great balls of fire! As they say. It’s time for fighting, not speech-making. Didn’t Hillary just tell us that she is running for President to solve the problems – not to talk about them? Didn’t she say that her opponent, Obama, was good at making speeches, but not at solving the problems he was making the speeches about? And didn’t Obama respond by making another speech, – that some say he stole from the governor of Massachusetts – which said in effect that words, speeches, do make a difference. And Obama cited Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech. And he quoted the Declaration of Independence language, “*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.*” And he quoted Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, “*That government of the people, by the people and for the people should not perish from the earth.*” And Obama cited some other historical speeches that powerfully influenced conduct and changed the course of history. But, Beloved, Obama left out this famous

speech atop Mt. Zemaraim – delivered by king Abijah – that influenced the outcome of one of the greatest and most decisive battles of history – known as “The Battle of Zemaraim.”

Beloved, it certainly looks to me like the speech carried the day. Call it, “The Mt. Zemaraim Address.” Despite Trapp’s caustic conclusion that the speech “*is very artificial*,” listen to Bro. Gill: “*The battle was between Abijah and Jeroboam, previous to which Abijah made a speech to Jeroboam and his army, to vindicate his own cause, encourage his own soldiers, and intimidate the enemy, and dissuade them from fighting.*” Jamieson says that Abijah’s victory at the Battle of Zemaraim saved the southern kingdom of Judah – and the line of Messiah through which it came – from complete destruction – by breaking the will and the spirit of its greatest enemy – Jeroboam, king of Israel; to wit: “*The disastrous action at Zemaraim, which caused the loss of the entire flower and chivalry of Jeroboam’s army, broke his spirits and crippled his power. The Lord struck him, and he died.*” Hear how the Holy Spirit records the matter; to wit:

“It came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand. And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand (out of 800,000) chosen men. Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers. ...NEITHER DID JEROBOAM RECOVER STRENGTH again in the days of Abijah: and the Lord struck him, and he died.” (2 Chron. 13:15-20)

Jeroboam is one of the most pathetic people in all the Bible. He reminds me of king Saul, after Saul had refused to completely destroy the Amalekites, and thereby brought down the curse and rejection of God upon himself and his posterity. Reduced to visiting the Witch of Endor by night for spiritual and psychological help, when God no longer would hear his prayers and cries for aid.

“And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night.” (1 Sam. 28:5-8)

So sad. Lonely figures by night slinking in the shadows to the witch’s coven. And Saul had a legitimate, bona fide opportunity to serve as king of Israel – he and all his posterity – for ever. And he blew it! So sad. Can you picture the sad figure, alone, abandoned by God? Can you hear the mantle of Samuel rip, as Saul sought desperately to retain the prophet by force, and grabbed Samuel’s garment; to wit:

“And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent (i.e., He will not change his mind).” (1 Sam. 15:27-29)

Even so, Jeroboam was a man chosen of God to punish Israel for their sins, by ripping the nation asunder, and leading a rebellion of the ten northern tribes to form a new nation, called Israel; leaving two tribes to form a greatly-diminished nation, called Judah. Listen as the Holy Ghost describes Jeroboam and his bright prospects for God’s great blessings; to wit:

“And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph (i.e., chief tax collector of the kingdom – a huge appointment.)” (1 Kgs. 11:28)

Gill says that Jeroboam was, “A man of great strength of body, and fortitude of mind.” And, as in the case of king Saul, Jeroboam had a legitimate, bona fide opportunity from the Lord – for himself and his posterity for ever – to be king over Israel (i.e., the 10 northern tribes) – just as David and his posterity were to rule over Judah (i.e., the two southern tribes). And, that such was the avowed purpose of God to thus do good unto Jeroboam, it was communicated dramatically and unmistakably unto Jeroboam by the supernatural prognostication of the prophet Ahijah; to wit:

“And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he (Ahijah) had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him (on Ahijah), and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David’s sake, and for Jerusalem’s sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.) (1 Kings 11:29-32)

(NOTE: JEROBOAM WAS THUS PUT ON NOTICE, that notwithstanding the break-up, there was to be no change in the status of Jerusalem, as the only place for acceptable public worship for all the tribes. Simultaneously with the grand and glorious gift of eternal and perpetual kingship to Jeroboam and his posterity, was the solemn announcement and warning; to wit: Hands off Jerusalem. No legitimate public worship anywhere else in all the tribes. All citizens of all tribes must be allowed access unto – and be required to make regular pilgrimages unto – Jerusalem.) And the donative prophesy of Ahijah goes further; to wit:

“And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. (Listen up, Jeroboam: Don’t Mess with Jerusalem!) And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.”

(1 Kgs. 11:36-38.)

What a wonderful thing for Jeroboam and his family and his posterity. How bright things looked for him on that fateful day when the prophet Ahijah met him in the way, tore his own new garment into twelve pieces, and gave Jeroboam ten of them. But wait. Just a while ago we saw Jeroboam’s disastrous end at the Battle of Zemaraim. Half a million valiant men of Jeroboam’s army lay dead. Jamieson: *“The loss of the entire flower and chivalry of Jeroboam’s military forces. It broke his spirits and crippled his power. ‘Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah. The Lord struck him, and he died.’” 2 Chron. 13:20.* What happened? It all started out so well. Things looked so bright. But, one day; one fateful day; the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, began to work in Jeroboam’s heart. **Eph. 2:2.** He neglected to, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Pet. 5:8.* The mechanism is simple; to wit: *“Then entered Satan into Judas.” Lk. 22:3.* Then entered Satan into Jeroboam.

“And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David. If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.” (1 Kgs. 12:26,27)

Beloved, the man is playing with fire. The Lord God specifically and plainly made this a condition for Jeroboam’s award of the kingship. Hands off Jerusalem! Don’t mess with Jerusalem! Jeroboam was put on strict notice. No change in the status of Jerusalem as the ONLY PLACE for legitimate, acceptable public worship – FOR ALL THE TRIBES. In the first place, it was not true that the heart of the people would turn again to the king of Judah if Jeroboam obeyed the Lord. In the second place, what if they did? Bald political expediency is NEVER a justification for disobeying the Lord our God. Never! Jeroboam is playing with fire. And then he adds insult to injury by closing off the borders between the two states, installing troops of heavily-armed guards to patrol the borders and keep all Jews from 10 tribes from acceptably worshiping the Lord at His Temple in Jerusalem; and then – of all things – developing a nation-wide system of gross idolatry featuring two golden calves as the center pieces of his smash-mouth, in-your-face, spit-in-your-eye insult to God Almighty; to wit:

“Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. AND THIS THING BECAME A SIN.” (1 Kgs. 12:28-30)

“After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. AND THIS THING BECAME SIN UNTO THE HOUSE OF JEROBOAM, EVEN TO CUT IT OFF, AND TO DESTROY IT FROM OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.” (1 Kgs. 13:33,34)

The day of reckoning came for king Jeroboam, when the wise and eloquent Abijah, king of Judah, “*stood up upon mount Zemaraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel.*” 2 Chron. 13:4. A short, brilliant speech – just before the battle – that greatly inspired his own army of 400,000; and that greatly disheartened the opposing army of 800,000. A polished shaft of a speech; to wit:

“Hear thou me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord. And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted, and could not withstand them. And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. Have ye not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods. But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the Lord, are the Lord, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business; And they burn unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; the showbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening; for we keep the charge of the Lord our God; but ye have forsaken him. And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.” (2 Chron. 13:4-12)

In their fight against WBC, this evil nation is fighting against God. O America, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; FOR YE SHALL NOT PROSPER. 2 Chron. 13:12. Amen.