

## **My Little Finger**

1 Kings 12:1-24

2 Chronicles 10:1-19

2 Chronicles 11:1-4

by Don Falkos

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Rehoboam, the son of King Solomon, went to Shechem to be confirmed as king by the northern tribes of Israel. The leaders of these tribes sent for Jeroboam, who was in Egypt, having fled from Solomon. Jeroboam returned and with Israel's leaders said to Rehoboam, "Your father made harsh labor demands and levied heavy taxes. Lighten this burden and we will be your loyal subjects."

Rehoboam consulted the older men who had served his father. They said, "If you are kind to these people today and do what they ask, they will remain loyal to you always."

But the young men Rehoboam had grown up with and who were now his advisers had a different view. He rejected the advice of the older men and took that of the younger. He said to Jeroboam and the other leaders of Israel, "My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! I am going to increase the burden my father imposed on you. And punishments for non-compliance will be intensified."

The people were outraged and cried out against the dynasty of David. They were in open rebellion. Rehoboam sent the man in charge of forced labor to restore order, but the people stoned him to death.

The ten northern tribes made Jeroboam king of Israel. Rehoboam was left with only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He mustered an army to fight Israel and restore his kingdom. But God sent a prophet to say, "Do not go to war against your relatives, the Israelites. Go home, all of you, for this division is my doing." They obeyed and went home, just as the Lord had commanded.