

1 Kings 12

Verses 1-5

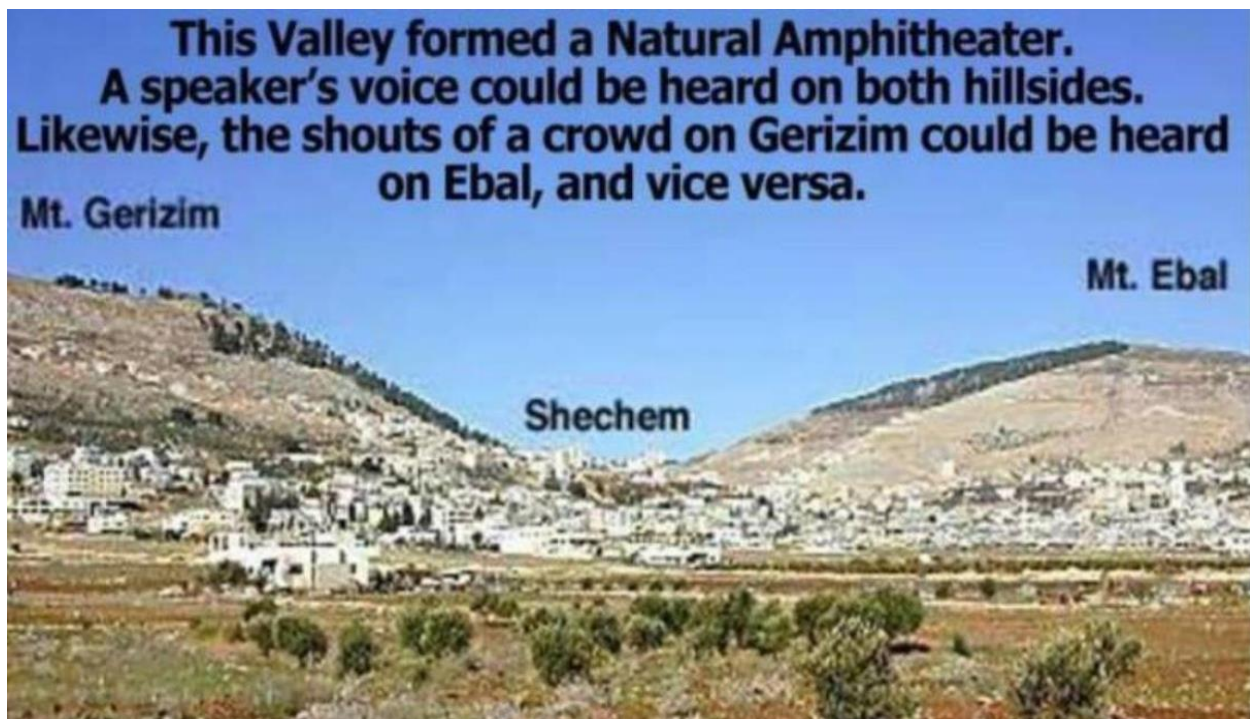
Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. ² Now when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *of it*, he was living in Egypt (for he was yet in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon). ³ Then they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, ⁴ “Your father made our yoke hard; now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you.” ⁵ Then he said to them, “Depart for three days, then return to me.” So the people departed.

Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king.

Why would everyone go to Shechem when the religious and political capital was in Jerusalem? There were two important reasons.

1. The valley between Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal was a natural Amphitheater.

See map 1205



2. Shechem was located at the geographical center of Israel.

See map 1206



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Northern Israel called a general assembly of the ten northern tribes but before they did that, they got a hold of Jeroboam who was in Egypt. They wanted him to negotiate a reduction in the heavy taxation and forced labor imposed by Solomon.

⁵ Then he said to them, “Depart for three days, then return to me.” So the people departed.

Rehoboam needed some time to consider this matter. Asking for council before making an important decision is always good.

Verses 6-11

King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, “How do you counsel *me* to answer this people?”

⁷ Then they spoke to him, saying, “If you will be a servant to this people today, and will serve them and grant them their petition, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.” ⁸ But he forsook the counsel of the elders which they had given him, and consulted with the young men who grew up with him and served him. ⁹ So he said to them, “What counsel do you give that we may answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us’?” ¹⁰ The young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!’ But you shall speak to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins! ¹¹ Whereas my father loaded you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.’”

King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon while he was still alive, saying, “How do you counsel *me* to answer this people?”

The older counselors advised Rehoboam to ease the peoples' burdens and they would follow him faithfully. However, Rehoboam decided to consult with those his own age.

¹⁰ **The young men who grew up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you shall say to this people who spoke to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, now you make it lighter for us!’ But you shall speak to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins!’**

Rehoboam was 41 when he became king so these young men were close to his age.

See 1 Kings 14:21

²¹ **Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the Lord had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. And his mother’s name was Naamah the Ammonitess.**

Rehoboam is 41 years old at this point which means that Solomon was married and had a child by 971 BC. One year before he became King in 970 BC

See chart 1210

1st Kings timeline

Ch.	Event	Year
	Solomon is born	990
	Rehoboam is born	971
1	Solomon becomes king	970
2	David Dies	970
6	Temple started	966
6	Temple completed ---- 7 years	959
7	Solomon starts his palace	959
8	Ark brought to the temple	958
9	Solomon finishes his palace ---- 13 years	946
9	Lord appears to Solomon for 2nd time	946
10	Queen of Sheba visits	
11	Solomon dies	930

Verses 12-15

Then Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as the king had directed, saying, “Return to me on the third day.” ¹³ The king answered the people harshly, for he forsook the advice of the elders which they had given him, ¹⁴ and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.” ¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people; for it was a turn *of events* from the Lord, that He might establish His word, which the Lord spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

¹⁴ and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.”

Solomon used 150,000 slaves for his building projects but it sounds like he was also abusing the free Israelites.

See 1 Kings 5:13-16

¹³ Now King Solomon conscripted forced laborers from all Israel; and the forced laborers *numbered* thirty thousand men. ¹⁴ Then he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts; they were in Lebanon for a month, *and* two months at home. And Adoniram was in charge of the forced laborers.

If Solomon had been whipping only the slaves (foreigners), the free Israelites would probably not have been ready for rebellion.

¹⁵ So the king did not listen to the people; for it was a turn of events from the Lord, that He might establish His word, which the Lord spoke through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Did the Lord harden the hearts of Rehoboam and his young advisors? The text does not say so in those exact words, not like the text says God hardened the heart of the King of Egypt but God was definitely intervening that He might establish His word.

Rehoboam and these young men should have had a better understanding of the mood in Israel but God may have hardened their hearts so the kingdom would split. Or did God simply use the foolishness of youth to bring about His will?

Verses 16-17

When all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying,

**“What portion do we have in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse;
To your tents, O Israel!
Now look after your own house, David!”**

So Israel departed to their tents. ¹⁷ But as for the sons of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

This established a permanent separation between the 10 northern tribes ruled by Jeroboam and the 2 southern tribes ruled by Rehoboam.

Verses 18-20

Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death. And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. ¹⁹ So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. ²⁰ It came about when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, that they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. None but the tribe of Judah followed the house of David.

Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the forced labor, and all Israel stoned him to death. And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

Rehoboam sending this hated emissary to the people was a slap in the face to the 10 tribes and they promptly stoned him. They would have done the same thing to Rehoboam if he had not escaped to his chariot and make a hasty retreat to Jerusalem.

²⁰ It came about when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, that they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. None but the tribe of Judah followed the house of David.

In verse 12 it says that Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day but then he must have went somewhere prior to his return back home.

Verses 21-24

Now when Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin, 180,000 chosen men who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. ²² But the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, ²³ “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all the house of Judah and Benjamin and to the rest of the people, saying, ²⁴ ‘Thus says the Lord, “You must not go up and fight against your relatives the sons of Israel; return every man to his house, for this thing has come from Me.”’” So they listened to the word of the Lord, and returned and went *their way* according to the word of the Lord.

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It is interesting how God says Rehoboam would be given one tribe but Simeon was part of Judah making it two tribes and here we learn that Benjamin was also part of the southern kingdom. So was it 1, 2, or 3 tribes in the south?

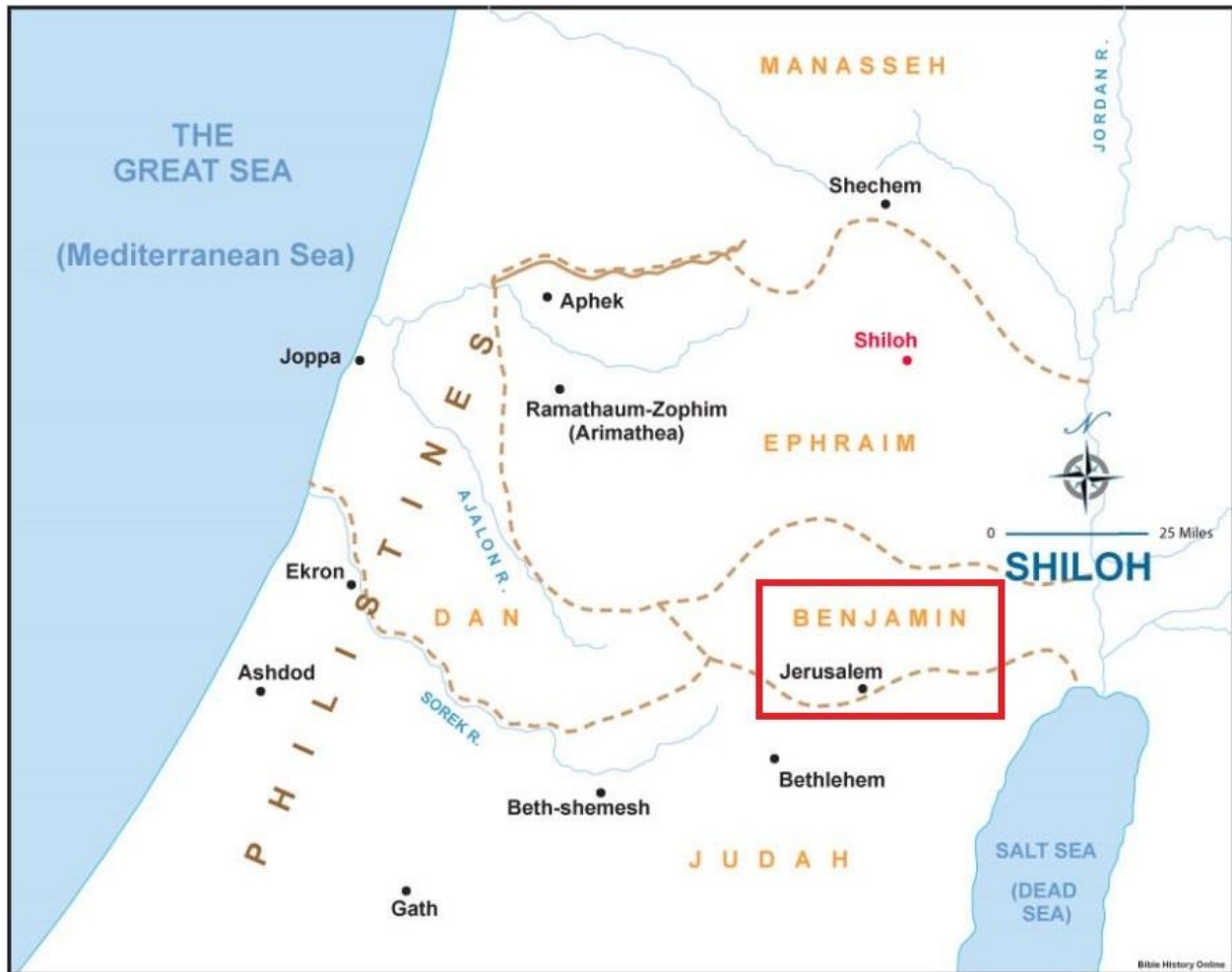
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This is the only time that the prophet Shemaiah is mentioned in scripture. But here he is told to speak to all the house of Judah, Benjamin, and to the rest of the people.

Let's assume all the house of Judah means Judah and Simeon so who are the rest of the people?

Jerusalem was in the tribe of Benjamin so this tribe was essential to the coalition.

See map 1215 below



The Lord said there should be no war because this thing had come from Him. When the 3 tribes heard the message from the Lord they returned home in obedience to the message from the Lord.

Verses 25 - 29

Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel. ²⁶ Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will return to the house of David. ²⁷ If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will return to their lord, *even to Rehoboam king of Judah*; and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” ²⁸ So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.” ²⁹ He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan.

Then Jeroboam built Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and lived there. And he went out from there and built Penuel.

For Shechem see map 1206 above.

This was one of the two capitals that Jeroboam established for his kingdom. It had a rich history in Israel.

See Deuteronomy 11:29

29 “And it shall come about, when the Lord your God brings you into the land where you are entering to possess it, that you shall place the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.

See video 1220 8.46 Shechem

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.46.html>

Penuel was east of the Jordan River on the bank of the Jabbok River.

See map 1225



Some scholars think Jeroboam built this capital in case of an attack from Egypt.

Peniel has a long and interesting history. This place was mentioned first in Genesis 32 and again in Judges 8.

See video 1230 8.51 Peniel

<https://www.levickfamily.com/8.51.html>

²⁸ So the king consulted, and made two golden calves, and he said to them, “It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem; behold your gods, O Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

Jeroboam knew if the people went to Jerusalem to worship his popularity would diminish and he was willing to do whatever it took to prevent that from happening. Politicians often choose short term gain over long term consequences.

Jeroboam quoted the Israelites who said pretty much the same thing after Aaron presented the golden calf to them at Sinai.

See Exodus 32:3 – 4

³ So all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ Then he took the gold from their hands, and fashioned it with an engraving tool and made it into a cast metal calf; and they said, “This is your god, Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

Jeroboam must have forgotten that God killed 3000 Israelites for their sin of idolatry in Exodus 32.

See Exodus 32:28

²⁸ So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

Not all of those who sinned that day died for their sin but they will be held accountable on that great and terrible day.

See Exodus 32:33

³³ However, the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will wipe him out of My book.

This punishment is delayed but it is of the greatest consequence.

Then the Lord also struck the people with a plague.

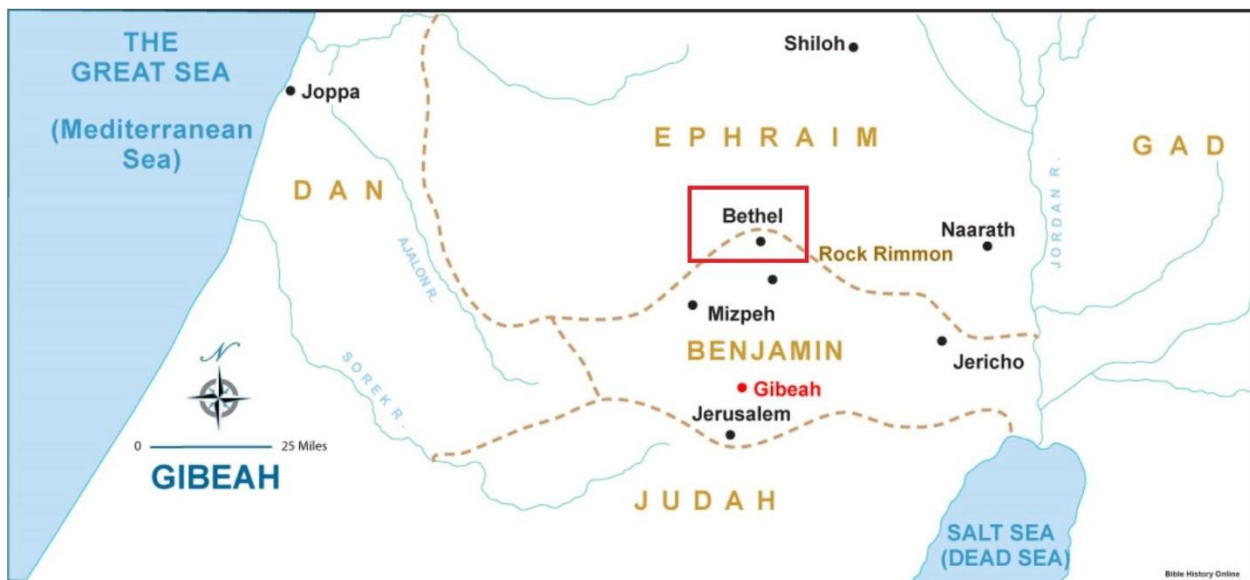
See Exodus 32:32:35

³⁵ Then the Lord struck the people *with a plague*, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

The sin of idolatry brought death, plague and being removed from the book of life.

He set one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan

See Pic 1235

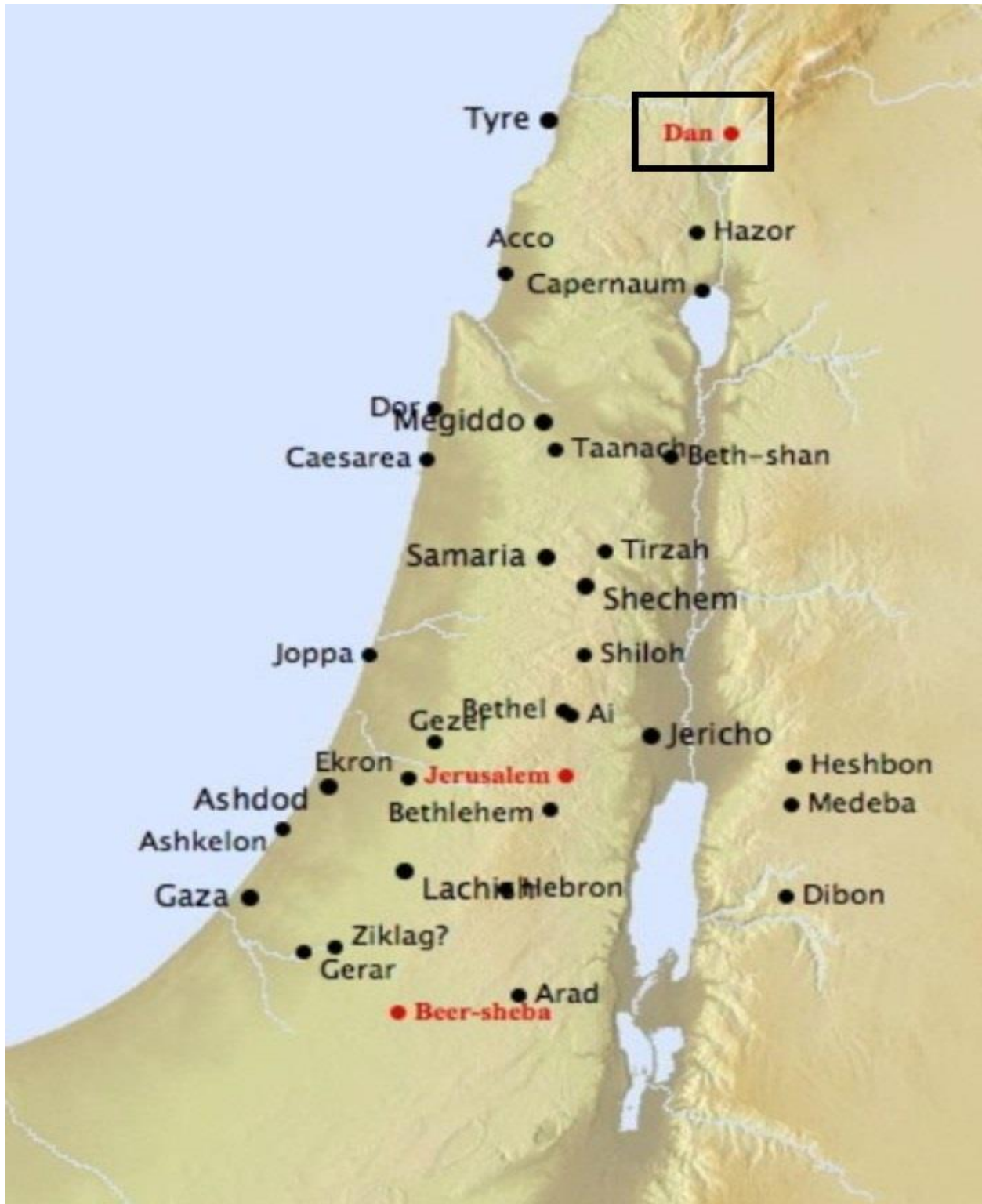


Verses 30 - 33

³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. ³¹ And he made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi. ³² Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. ³³ Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.

³⁰ Now this thing became a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan.

See Pic 1240



³¹ **And he made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi.**

The law limited the priesthood to the Levites so Jeroboam chose anyone but a Levite and provided housing for them.

³² **Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made.**

Jeroboam designed this feast to compete with the Feast of Tabernacles (in the 7th month) except his feast was held in the eighth month.

See chart 1245

Number	Hebrew Month Names	Gregorian Calendar Months	Number of Days Per Month	Holidays
1	Nisan	March-April	30	Pesakh
2	Iyar	April-May	29	Lag B'Omer
3	Sivan	May-June	30	Shavuot
4	Tammuz	June-July	29	
5	Av	July-August	30	Tisha B'Av
6	Elul	August-September	29	
<u>7</u>	Tishrei	September-October	30	Rosh Hashanah <u>Sukkot</u> Yom Kippur Shemini Atzeret Simchat Torah
8	Cheshvan	October-November	29	
9	Kislev	November-December	30	Chanukah
10	Tevet	December-January	29	End of Chanukah
11	Shevat	January-February	30	Tu B'shvat
12	Adar	February-March	29	Purim

Seasons are indicated by color.

Sukkot is the Hebrew word for huts or booths. Sukkot is a Jewish holiday that takes place in the fall to celebrate the harvest and the Jewish exodus from Egypt. It begins on the 15th day of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Jewish calendar, which usually falls in late September or October.

³³ Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.

False religions (man-made religions) often copy certain aspects of the one true faith but other details are changed by the leader (false prophet) who dictates how and when certain things will be done according to his own heart.