



By Mrs. Bessie Wilbon

Introduction: Unity is an essential ingredient of any successful enterprise, Jesus himself stated, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." (Matthew 12:25). As it seeks cures for its ills, the sin-sick world regards the broken and divided church and decides that the church is as sick as the world. It views the splinters, fights, politics and hypocrisy with reactions that range from confusion to contempt. In the face of the seemingly impossible task of overcoming division in the church, we must remember that Christ prayed that His followers might all be one (John 17:11). His prayer was uttered in behalf of us today as well as those of the first century.

Lesson Background: Last week's lesson closed with the Lord's pronouncement to Solomon that his kingdom would be torn from him because he had forsaken the true God to follow other gods. In the verses immediately following (I Kings 11:14-25) we are introduced to two men, Hadad, and Teyon, whose hatred for and opposition to Israel would become factors in God's chastisements for Solomon's sin. Another such adversary, Jeroboam, is mentioned in the first portion of this lesson's Scripture text. The time period of this lesson is the same as last week's lesson—during Solomon's reign over Israel.

"One day, as Jeroboam was traveling from Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh met him alone on the road in the open country. Ahijah took off the new robe he was wearing, tore it into twelve pieces, and said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, because the Lord, the God of Israel, says to you, 'I'm going to take the kingdom away from Solomon, and I will give you ten tribes. Solomon will keep one tribe for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen to be my own from the whole land of Israel. I am going to do this because Solomon has rejected me and has worshiped foreign gods:—Solomon has disobeyed me; he has done wrong and has not kept my laws and commands as his father David did.'" (I Kings 11:29-33)

Ahijah's action was sudden and dramatic. The tearing up of a new garment surely would have made a vivid and lasting impression on Jeroboam. The note that Ahijah tore it into twelve pieces and gave Jeroboam ten—indicative of the tribes who would cooperate in his revolt and in the new kingdom to be formed. Although the garment was torn into twelve pieces, each one representing a tribe, seemingly only eleven tribes are accounted for. The explanation seems to be that the one tribe that would be left to Solomon, identified in I Kings 12:20 as Judah, was actually two tribes—Judah and Benjamin—since little Benjamin was looked upon as absorbed in Judah. Many reasons for the division of the kingdom could be considered. The focus of all the religious and political life in Jerusalem pulled the resources of the rest of the tribes into that one area. Thus economic considerations were doubtless significant. The taxation necessary to sustain the elaborate temple, and especially the royal establishment, were political irritants. Besides this, Solomon's many wives—hundreds of them—created a very confusing and competitive situation, making for instability and erosion at the very center of power.

But back of it all was the fact that Solomon and all those involved in the leadership of the nation had turned their backs on the true God and His way. If Solomon had remained dedicated to God, he would have felt no need to enter into "marriages of alliance" with the daughters of surrounding pagan monarchs. This policy ultimately led him and his people into idolatry. The worship of false gods not only brought acts of "devotion" that were repugnant to good morals, but they degraded and cheapened all of life. The very genius of Israel was that they were a "people of the true God." When they rejected God and His way and became like all the nations, their life lost its flavor, its power, and its glory.

We have the testimony of I Kings 4:30, 31 concerning Solomon's wisdom. "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For one was wiser than all men—and his fame was in all nations round about."

Yet the Scripture tells us he became foolish. His previous trust in God became shaken when the desire to further promote the prosperity and security of his kingdom led him to marry many foreign princesses. But this was not all; apparently he became enamored of sensual

pursuits and devoted more and more time and energy to self-indulgence and sensory satisfaction. He failed to encourage his people in a devotion to the God who had been and was the secret of their very existence as a people. We can be sure of this for certainly he did not need "protection" from "political" marriages to seven hundred wives. Besides this, what can be said of the three hundred concubines who had no political status?

The immediate onset of the division was due to Rehoboam's attitude. It was one of arrogance, pride, hostility, superiority, and harshness. (Read the entire story). We need to learn from this the importance of our attitudes. It is not just what people say to us, but how we treat what they say. Separation from God's will and way finally leads to separation and division in all the relations of people with each other—in marriages, families, friendships, and nations.



Mrs. Judy Bradley

Mrs. Bradley Appointed Chairperson

Special To The Post
ORANGEBURG, SC — Mrs. Judy Bradley has been appointed chairperson for the newly established Department of Nursing at South Carolina State College. She received a bachelor of science degree in nursing in 1966 from Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, AL, and a master's degree in nursing in 1976 from the University of South Carolina in Columbia.

Her major study was health nursing with special studies in maternity and public health. For the past three years she has been district director of public health nursing in the East Midlands Health District of Columbia.

The new program will begin in August. There will be an upper division curriculum for an associate degree and a diploma program for registered nurses who plan to pursue a bachelor of science in nursing degree. The program will provide the registered nurse with the opportunity to be enriched personally and professionally as well as to improve the independent and critical thinking needed by today's nurse, she points out.

The program will improve the quality, quantity and scope of health care delivery available to the citizens of the state. It will help alleviate the need in health care settings and community for nurses prepared as leaders and managers. The program will also enable students to develop beginning knowledge or nursing research and provide an academic foundation for the pursuit of graduate education.

"Many efforts will be directed toward the practicing nurse with special consideration for family, job and community responsibilities," Mrs. Bradley said. "National tests may be used to accurately evaluate a student's previous learning and we will not require enrollment in course work in which students are already competent."

Evening classes and evening clinical experiences will be options as well as a full utilization of clinical experience in and around the Orangeburg area or the state. Public health, acute, extended care facilities, community mental health, occupational health, physicians' offices and other ambulatory care settings will be a heavy focus of the program.

Applications for the fall semester will be accepted through July 31. Spaces for 65 students will be available for the first class.

Additional information may be obtained from Mrs. Bradley, chairperson, Department of Nursing, Post Office Box 1658, Orangeburg, SC 29117. The phone number is 803-536-7173.

TEMPLE CHAPEL

The Sixth Annual Appreciation Service for Rev. and Mrs. Gene Gilmore will be held Sunday, July 8, at 3 p.m.

Rev. Dr. L. D. Parker will be the guest speaker. Also at 1:30 p.m. dinner will be served to all members and friends. During the 11 a.m. worship service, Rev. Samuel Madden of Mt. Zion Church, Fountain, Inn, S.C., will speak.

On July 22 Women's Day will be observed. Beatrice Thompson, news reporter for WBTB, Channel 3, will be the guest speaker during the 11 a.m. worship service. The public is cordially invited to attend.

NEW ST. JOHN

Rev. Robert Leak, pastor of St. John Baptist Church, will preach on "Growing A Better Church By Teaching and Preaching," Sunday, July 8, during the 11 a.m. service.

St. John Baptist is located at 2000 St. John Rd. in the Newell Hickory Grove area of Charlotte.



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