

# 2 Chronicles 12 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

- 2 Chronicles 12:1
- 2 Chronicles 12:2
- 2 Chronicles 12:3
- 2 Chronicles 12:4
- 2 Chronicles 12:5
- 2 Chronicles 12:6
- 2 Chronicles 12:7
- 2 Chronicles 12:8
- 2 Chronicles 12:9
- 2 Chronicles 12:10
- 2 Chronicles 12:11
- 2 Chronicles 12:12
- 2 Chronicles 12:13
- 2 Chronicles 12:14
- 2 Chronicles 12:15
- 2 Chronicles 12:16

SECOND CHRONICLES						
The Kingdom of Israel						
From Splendor to Disaster						
Splendor			Disaster			
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36			
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split		The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23
Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1-7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1-9:31				
Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple			Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years			

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Click Chart from Charles Swindoll](#)

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2 Samuel				1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	

1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36
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**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

(NOTE: Many consider Uzziah and Hezekiah as "good" kings)

## 2 Chronicles 12:1 When the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and strong, he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the LORD.

- when Rehoboam: 2Ch 12:13 11:17
- he forsook: 2Ch 26:13-16 De 6:10-12 8:10-14 32:15,18 1Ki 9:9 Jer 2:31 Ho 13:1 Ho 13:6-8
- all Israel: 2Ch 11:3 1Ki 12:17 14:22-24 2Ki 17:19 Ho 5:10,11 Mic 6:16
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

### Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:22-24+ Judah did evil (IN FACT IT WAS KING REHOBOAM WHO LED THE WAY) in the sight of the LORD, and **they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done**, with the sins which they committed. 23 (NOW READ SOME OF THE DETAILS OF REHOBOAM'S APOSTASY WHICH WOULD BRING DIVINE RETRIBUTION) For they also built for themselves high places and sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree. 24 There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The king allowed and encouraged the building of idolatrous shrines in the land ("high places"), the erecting of sacred stones ("images") and phallic images and Asherah poles ("groves"). He also permitted the shrine prostitutes, male ("sodomites") and female, to serve the people at these shrines, a detestable practice expressly forbidden by the Law of Moses (Deut. 23:17-18). **Idolatry and immorality go together** (Ro 1:21-27), and it wasn't long before the pagan sins condemned by the law became commonly accepted practices in Judah (Lev. 18, 20; Deut. 18:9-12). The Jewish people were no longer a light to the Gentiles; instead, the darkness of the Gentiles had invaded the land and was putting out the light. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**David Guzik** - These sins provoked the LORD to jealousy because they were essentially sins of idolatry. Israel turned their back on the God who loved and redeemed them, and like an unfaithful spouse, they pursued spiritual adultery with idols. (ED: See Israel the Wife of Jehovah)

**THOUGHT:** What a contrast with 2Ch 11:1-23+ where Rehoboam and Judah obeyed the words of "the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God" (2Ch 11:2) declaring "You shall not go up or fight against your relatives" (2Ch 11:4) which resulted in blessing (2Ch 11:5-23), which obedience always does. Oh, may God's Spirit give us/me ears to truly hear and a heart to heed what I just wrote that we might receive a blessing from Jehovah! Sadly Rehoboam regressed and rebelled against the Word of the LORD, the writer of Kings recording the divine discipline for disobedience in the following passages...

1 Kings 14:25-28+ Now it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, that Shishak the king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 26 He took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he took everything, even taking all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 27 So King Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place (ED: GOLD GONE AND REPLACED BY LESSER VALUE BRONZE - BE CAREFUL IN DISOBEYING THE LORD LEST YOU SUFFER LOSS THAT CANNOT BE REGAINED!), and committed them to the care of the commanders of the guard who guarded the doorway of the king's house. 28 Then it happened as often as the king

entered the house of the LORD, that the guards would carry them and would bring them back into the guards' room.

Proverbs 8:13 The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverted mouth, I hate.

Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Proverbs 29:23 A man's pride will bring him low, But a humble spirit will obtain honor.

**J Barton Payne** has an excellent analysis of the remainder of 2 Chronicles - The nineteen men and one woman who occupied David's throne from 930 to 586 b.c. ranged in character from the strongest and best to the weakest and worst. The fate of any nation is determined in large part by the caliber of its leadership, and this was markedly so in Israel, where God's intervening hand was more clearly manifest than elsewhere. The chronicler thus encourages the men of his day to consecration by demonstrating from God's miraculous past deliverances of Judah how "faith is the victory" that can overcome the world (2 Chr 20:20). Yet at the same time, and from the same historical data, he admonishes them against compromise with the world, against indifference to the Law, and against deviation from the Lord. For the fundamental pattern of Judah's history is one of religious deterioration. Sin becomes so ingrained that even a Josiah cannot reverse the downward trend: "The wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy" (36:16). God can cast off his people whom he foreknew! At points, 2 Chr 12:1-36:16 corresponds closely to 1 Kgs 14:22-2 Kgs 24:20. Much of the content of Kings, however, is omitted, e.g., the lives of the prophets, and, indeed, the whole history of northern Israel. But for Judah, the chronicler supplies thrilling examples of faith and of deliverance that are without parallel in the more summary account of Kings. (BORROW [Wycliffe Bible Commentary](#) )

**Andrew Hill:** Pharaoh Shishak or Sheshonq I was the founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty, and he reunified Upper and Lower Egypt. He ruled from 945–924 B.C., and his campaign into Palestine takes place during the fifth year of Rehoboam (925 B.C.). His own account of the campaign is inscribed on the walls of the temple of Karnak, according to which he sweeps through Judah and Israel as far north as the Valley of Jezreel and Megiddo, capturing more than 150 towns and villages along the way. The Chronicler understands Shishak's invasion of Judah as punishment for sin, in that Rehoboam and all Israel have "abandoned the law of the LORD" (12:1). By "all Israel" the Chronicler means all the Israelites living in Judah (the "true" Israel), whether from northern or southern Hebrew tribal stock. The Chronicler assigns this breach of Judah's faithfulness to Yahweh and the Egyptian raid into Palestine a cause-and-effect relationship, a clear indication of his acknowledgment of the God of the Hebrews as the sovereign Lord of history (12:2). (See [NIVAC Bundle 2: Historical Books](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** The invasion of Shishak was, in the eyes of the Chronicler, retribution for Rehoboam's sin (11:14–16). Against such a foe Rehoboam's defenses were only a partial match. The account here in 2 Chronicles 12 is parallel to 1 Kgs 14:21–28 but owes something to a source that preserved some details of Shishak's invasion and the prophecy of Shemaiah (vv. 3–8, 12). It shows a concern for Judah's abandonment of the law of the Lord. The passage makes use of terms that are characteristic of the Chronicler's theology of divine retribution, namely, "forsake" or "abandon" (vv. 1, 5), "be unfaithful" (v. 2), and "humble oneself" (vv. 6–7, 12). The Shishak incident provided a model of the sort of thing that could happen again. (See [1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Martin Selman:** Rehoboam's unfaithfulness has two interesting analogies elsewhere in Chronicles. Firstly, the combination of his unfaithfulness (v. 2) with a failure to obey God's word (v. 1) or to seek God's will (v. 14), effectively makes him a second Saul (cf. 1 Ch. 10:13-14). Secondly, his pride in his own strength anticipates Uzziah's downfall (2 Ch. 26:16). Both parallels strengthen the typical nature of Rehoboam's sins. (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**Mark Boda:** To his Persian-period audience, this story would have had heightened relevance. On the one hand, it encouraged repentance; on the other hand, it explained the purpose behind the despoiling and domination they had experienced by foreign rulers. The prophet's statement revealed that foreign domination was not an eternal condition but has didactic purposes to teach Israel the advantage of serving their gracious God.

**Geoffrey Kirkland:** We'll see 3 most essential reminders for us in our lives as we walk with God as learn about Rehoboam's Sin, God's Holiness, Sin's Consequences, and God's Abundant Mercy. 1. Humbly Cling to Scripture (2Ch 12:1) 2. Frequently Consider Sin's Consequences (2Ch 12:2-12) 3. Vigilantly Guard Your Heart (2Ch 12:13-16)

*God often shows us our weakness  
in the very place where we thought we were strongest.*  
--Cyril Barber

**When** - Note this key time phrase. What "time" is it describing? Clearly when **Rehoboam was established and strong**, which is the

time when he (and all of us) was vulnerable (cf 1Co 10:12+).

**Cyril Barber** - We have all met people who will walk humbly before the Lord when the arctic winds of adversity blow fiercely upon them. When this happens they quickly repent of any sins they have committed and God, in His grace, forgives them and restores them to a position of blessing. After a while, however, those whose hearts are not wholly the Lord's tire of a life of godliness and begin to assert their independence. It was thus with Rehoboam....What is important is the effect of Rehoboam's conduct on his subjects. They threw off the yoke of the Lord and went a-whoring after other gods. God, however, was not to be mocked, and what happened to Rehoboam after his departure from the Lord is instructive. God showed him that apart from His protection and blessing, he was weak. As we assess the situation we note successive facts: (1) It was God who had established Rehoboam; (2) only after that was Rehoboam able to strengthen himself; and (3) when he felt that he no longer needed the Lord (i.e., was unfaithful to the Lord), he was taught that it is a very serious thing for anyone to turn his or her back on the Lord. To do so is to invite some form of chastisement. God often shows us our weakness in the very place where we thought we were strongest. ILLUSTRATION - ([2 Chronicles](#))

The kingdom of **Rehoboam** was established and strong, he and all Israel with him forsook ('[azab](#); Lxx - [egkatalaipo](#)) the law of the LORD - Established and strong in the Septuagint are both verbs in the passive voice. You say "so what?" The point is that they are both divine passives, indicating it was Jehovah Who **established** Rehoboam and made him **strong**. It was not due to Rehoboam's cleverness, ingenuity, or resolve! So note the backsliding pattern - Rehoboam **established** and **strong** (God's provision) then (implied) he forgot the Lord and then he forsook the Lord!

**THOUGHT** - Be especially careful when you are "**established and strong**!" Don't let pride creep in and honoring of God creep out! Sin will creep in! Similarly, be especially alert after experiencing spiritual victory. I find that I am often attacked by the sin that so easily entangles me (Heb 12:1+) when I have "strangled" it and experienced victory for an extended period (of course only as the Spirit has enabled me). The lesson is clear, that we can NEVER let our guard down. Peter exhorts us "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." (1Pe 2:11+). Note the word "wage war" which in Greek is [strateuomai](#) and in the present tense pictures our arch enemy SIN as continually seeking a strategic advantage to attack us when our guard is down! There are NO FURLOUGHS for soldiers of the Lord!

Note the phrase **all Israel**! **All Israel** does not refer to the northern kingdom of Israel, but Judah. When you read the name '**Israel**' in Kings and Chronicles, you have to check the context to see if it is both kingdoms, only the northern kingdom (2Ch 10:16, 11:13) or the southern kingdom. The people will follow their leader up or down spiritually speaking! In verse 14 the Chronicler explains (what I think is) the root cause stating "He did evil **because** he did not set his heart to seek the LORD." (2Ch 12:14) The Septuagint translates **forsook** ([azab](#)) with the verb [egkatalaipo](#) which is in the active voice signifying that Rehoboam made a conscious, willful choice to forsake God's Law, which was tantamount to forsaking the LORD Himself! Woe!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, how are the sails of your heart set - to blow with the winds of the world or to be blown by the Spirit? You can't have it both ways! The set of your heart's sail will set the course of your life and likely also your eternal destination! Be wary when your footsteps begin to wander and you begin to backslide!

**Warren Wiersbe** on **forsook** ('[azab](#); Lxx - [egkatalaipo](#)) **the law of the LORD** - The phrase "forsaken [abandoned] the commandment of the Lord" occurs frequently in the record of the reigns of the kings of Judah and Israel (1 Kings 18:18; 19:10, 14; 2 Kings 17:16; 21:22; 22:17; 2 Chron. 12:1, 5; 13:10–11; 15:2; 21:10; 24:18, 20, 24; 26:6; 29:6; 34:25). David had warned Solomon about this sin (1 Chron. 28:9, 20) and so had the Lord Himself (1 Kings 3:14; 9:4–9; 11:9–13), but Solomon in his latter years worshiped both the Lord and the abominable idols of the heathen. Solomon was influenced by his pagan wives to worship idols ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**THOUGHT** - Beloved this truth will preach! Forsake the Word of God and be sure that the Lord will give you over to your sins to do as you please, which will not please Him!

**Spurgeon** - They prospered, at first, by adhering to Jehovah. The good people out of the neighbouring land of Israel emigrated to them, strengthening them but, as soon as they grew strong, they forsook the law of Jehovah. He was not able to endure the perils of prosperity. He forgot the Lord who had caused him to prosper; and, in the pride of his heart, he turned aside to idols.

**Raymond Dillard**: The Chronicler's hand in reshaping the account in Kings is transparent here. Kings makes no judgment regarding the reasons for Shishak's attack, but for the Chronicler defeat and humiliation in warfare are the consequence of divine judgment. "Abandon, forsake" and "be rebellious" are key vehicles for the Chronicler's theology of retribution. The author does not spell out the precise nature of this abandoning and infidelity; presumably the transgressions are those described in 1 Kgs 14:22–24; cf. 12:14. The Chronicler will later suggest an additional reason for Rehoboam's political failures, his youth and immaturity (2Ch 13:7). . . Here (12:1) "**all Israel**" refers to the Southern Kingdom, but also as including citizenry from the other tribes (2Ch 11:13–17). The "law of Yahweh" implies a canonical corpus, at least equivalent to the Pentateuch by the Chronicler's own time; cf. 2Ch 17:9;

**Andrew Hill:** The reason for the lapse in Judah's loyalty to Yahweh after three years of walking faithfully in the ways of David and Solomon is unclear (cf. 2Ch 11:17). The phrase "**he had become strong**" (12:1) suggests that pride and self-reliance have replaced Rehoboam's dependence on God (ED: I THINK HILL IS "SPOT ON!"). Perhaps Rehoboam has taken his initiatives to fortify the cities guarding Jerusalem too seriously (cf. 2Ch 11:5–12), trusting in his own defensive measures rather than on God. (See [NIVAC](#))

**John Olley:** A Hebrew phrase using the noun *khezqah* ("strength, being strong") occurs in Chronicles only here and concerning Uzziah (2 Chron. 26:16), and tragically in both instances "**strong**" is followed by "**unfaithful to the Lord.**" It appears that Rehoboam had come to rely on his "strong" fortresses (11:11–12), and he and the people forgot that the "strength" of a supporting population was in their faithful worship at the temple (11:17; cf. 1 Kings 14:23–24).

**J.A. Thompson:** The verb "abandon" ([azab](#)) is theologically significant. Externally Rehoboam and his nation suffered defeat at the hands of Shishak, a foreign enemy (cf. 7:19–22; 21:10; 24:24; 28:6; 29:6, 8–9; 34:25). But the real punishment was that God had abandoned Rehoboam. Abandoning God is the exact opposite of "seeking" God. (See [1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Ron Daniel - Rehoboam Acts Wisely, Then Forsakes The Lord** - Rehoboam is a guy that I just can't figure out. He foolishly responds to the people's request, but then wisely heeds the warning against attacking his relatives. Now, he wisely distributes his sons throughout Judah, but then foolishly forsakes the Law of God. I think that Rehoboam is a good example of the "double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). This is a dangerous man. His wise leadership causes people to follow after him, but then his departure from the Word makes people fall with him. Beware of people who are wise in their actions, but walk in defiance of God's commands.

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**Strong (02393) *chezqah*** from *chezeq* = strength) A feminine noun meaning strength, force, strong, mighty, hard. It is also used to describe the power of kings. When Rehoboam became strong and established his kingdom, he and his people abandoned the Law of the Lord (2 Chr. 12:1). When King Uzziah became strong, he became proud and went into the Temple to burn incense, even though that was the job of the priests (2 Chr. 26:16). In Daniel's vision, the fourth king gained power through his great wealth (Dan. 11:2).

*Chezqah* - 4v -mighty(1), strong(3). 2 Chr. 12:1; 2 Chr. 26:16; Isa. 8:11; Dan. 11:2

**Forsook** (left) ([05800](#)) '[azab](#) basically means to depart from something -- to leave, to forsake (48x), to leave (26x; "left" 22x), to loose, to depart, to abandon. Things that can left behind or forsaken include persons (Ge 44:22; Nu 10:30; Ru 1:16; 2Ki4:30), people who should left behind (Ge 2:24); places (2Ki 8:6; Jer 18:14; 25:38) and objects (Ge 39:12,13; 50:8; Ex 9:21). Men can forsake God (apostatize) (Dt 28:20, 31:16, Jer 1:16), can abandon qualities of virtue (1Ki 12:8, 2Chr 10:8, 13), the way (of righteousness) (Pr 15:10), instruction/wisdom (Pr 4:2, 6), reproof (Pr 10:17 - "ignore" = forsake), kindness (lovingkindness, faithfulness) (Pr 3:3). God promises to not forsake His people (Ge 24:27, 28:15, Dt 31:6,7 contrast what God's people will do = Dt 31:16). In a use similar to Pr 28:13, we are instructed to "forsake wrath." (Ps 37:8) To abandon, reject, desert or leave a former association (1Ki 18:18). Abandoned, deserted or rejected, forsaken (Isa 6:12; 10:14; 17:2, 9; 54:6; 60:15; 62:4; Jer 4:29; Zep 2:4).

**1828 Webster - Forsake** = To quit or leave entirely; to desert; to abandon; to depart from. 2. To abandon; to renounce; to reject. 3. To leave; to withdraw from; to fail. In anger, the color forsakes the cheeks. In severe trials, let not fortitude forsake you. 4. In scripture, God forsakes his people, when he withdraws his aid, or the light of his countenance.

**Azab - 204v - notice repetition in 2 Chronicles where it is aKEYWORD!** Gen. 2:24; Gen. 24:27; Gen. 28:15; Gen. 39:6; Gen. 39:12; Gen. 39:13; Gen. 39:15; Gen. 39:18; Gen. 44:22; Gen. 50:8; Exod. 2:20; Exod. 9:21; Exod. 23:5; Lev. 19:10; Lev. 23:22; Lev. 26:43; Num. 10:31; Deut. 12:19; Deut. 14:27; Deut. 28:20; Deut. 29:25; Deut. 31:6; Deut. 31:8; Deut. 31:16; Deut. 31:17; Deut. 32:36; Jos. 1:5; Jos. 8:17; Jos. 22:3; Jos. 24:16; Jos. 24:20; Jdg. 2:12; Jdg. 2:13; Jdg. 2:21; Jdg. 10:6; Jdg. 10:10; Jdg. 10:13; Ruth 1:16; Ruth 2:11; Ruth 2:16; Ruth 2:20; 1 Sam. 8:8; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Sam. 30:13; 1 Sam. 31:7; 2 Sam. 5:21; 2 Sam. 15:16;

1 Ki. 6:13; 1 Ki. 8:57; 1 Ki. 9:9; 1 Ki. 11:33; 1 Ki. 12:8; 1 Ki. 12:13; 1 Ki. 14:10; 1 Ki. 18:18; 1 Ki. 19:10; 1 Ki. 19:14; 1 Ki. 19:20; 1 Ki. 21:21; 2 Ki. 2:2; 2 Ki. 2:4; 2 Ki. 2:6; 2 Ki. 4:30; 2 Ki. 7:7; 2 Ki. 8:6; 2 Ki. 9:8; 2 Ki. 14:26; 2 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 21:22; 2 Ki. 22:17; 1 Chr. 10:7; 1 Chr. 14:12; 1 Chr. 16:37; 1 Chr. 28:9; 1 Chr. 28:20;

**2 Chr. 7:19; 2 Chr. 7:22; 2 Chr. 10:8; 2 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 11:14; 2 Chr. 12:1; 2 Chr. 12:5; 2 Chr. 13:10; 2 Chr. 13:11; 2 Chr. 15:2; 2 Chr. 21:10; 2 Chr. 24:18; 2 Chr. 24:20; 2 Chr. 24:24; 2 Chr. 24:25; 2 Chr. 28:6; 2 Chr. 28:14; 2 Chr. 29:6; 2 Chr. 32:31; 2 Chr. 34:25;**

Ezr. 8:22; Ezr. 9:9; Ezr. 9:10; Neh. 5:10; Neh. 9:17; Neh. 9:19; Neh. 9:28; Neh. 9:31; Neh. 10:39; Neh. 13:11;



Job 6:14; Job 9:27; Job 10:1; Job 18:4; Job 20:13; Job 20:19; Job 39:11; Job 39:14; Ps. 9:10; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 16:10; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 27:9; Ps. 27:10; Ps. 37:8; Ps. 37:25; Ps. 37:28; Ps. 37:33; Ps. 38:10; Ps. 38:21; Ps. 40:12; Ps. 49:10; Ps. 71:9; Ps. 71:11; Ps. 71:18; Ps. 89:30; Ps. 94:14; Ps. 119:8; Ps. 119:53; Ps. 119:87; Prov. 2:13; Prov. 2:17; Prov. 3:3; Prov. 4:2; Prov. 4:6; Prov. 9:6; Prov. 10:17; Prov. 15:10; Prov. 27:10; Prov. 28:4; Prov. 28:13; Isa. 1:4; Isa. 1:28; Isa. 7:16; Isa. 10:3; Isa. 10:14; Isa. 17:2; Isa. 17:9; Isa. 18:6; Isa. 27:10; Isa. 32:14; Isa. 41:17; Isa. 42:16; Isa. 49:14; Isa. 54:6; Isa. 54:7; Isa. 55:7; Isa. 58:2; Isa. 60:15; Isa. 62:4; Isa. 62:12; Isa. 65:11; Jer. 1:16; Jer. 2:13; Jer. 2:17; Jer. 2:19; Jer. 4:29; Jer. 5:7; Jer. 5:19; Jer. 9:2; Jer. 9:13; Jer. 9:19; Jer. 12:7; Jer. 14:5; Jer. 16:11; Jer. 17:11; Jer. 17:13; Jer. 18:14; Jer. 19:4; Jer. 22:9; Jer. 25:38; Jer. 48:28; Jer. 49:11; Jer. 49:25; Jer. 51:9; Lam. 5:20; Ezek. 8:12; Ezek. 9:9; Ezek. 20:8; Ezek. 23:8; Ezek. 23:29; Ezek. 24:21; Ezek. 36:4; Dan. 11:30; Hos. 4:10; Jon. 2:8; Zeph. 2:4; Zech. 11:17; Mal. 4:1

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**G Campbell Morgan** - What tragic words are these; and how perpetually the fact they record has been repeated in human experience! The influx of godly souls from the Northern Kingdom had made Rehoboam and his kingdom strong; and for three years they had gone in the way of David and Solomon (see 2 Chr 11.17). Then in his strength, "he forsook the law of Jehovah." Man's real strength is ever that of complete dependence upon God. That is to say, it is derived strength. Directly it becomes independent, self-contained, it leads him astray. There is the profoundest truth in the Apostle's words: "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor 12.10). The sequel to this declaration of Rehoboam's deflection is found in the rest of the chapter. God never abandons His purposes or His servants. When those who serve Him depart from the straight way of obedience to His law, He adopts the methods of chastisement. The scourge came now in the person of Israel's ancient foe, the king of Egypt. But the patience of God is ever manifest in His dealing with His people. The repentance of Rehoboam produced the staying and limitation of judgment. The kingdom of Judah passed for the time under the yoke of Egypt. It was saved, however, from complete destruction, not principally for the sake of the king, but because, "in Judah there were good things found" (2 Chr 12.12). God's judgments are always characterized by fine discrimination.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - This is what happened to Brenda. She had divorced her husband because he had begun cavorting with younger women in the church they attended. When the leaders of the church found out about his "sexcapades" they moved to discipline him. He resigned before any action could be taken. Brenda, of course, was devastated. Long before the divorce, she boldly asserted to anyone who would listen to her that she would not have sex until she remarried. This was a bold and commendable stand (cf. Hebrews 13:4). A number of years passed (perhaps as many as five) and Brenda maintained a commendable abstinence. Then, after dating a young man for several months, and desperately desiring the closeness of sexual intimacy, Brenda willingly yielded to him each time they were together. She believed that their forthcoming marriage would make everything right. Later, when they broke up, she blamed herself for her weakness. She also realized that she had fallen at the very point where she believed she was strongest. It was when Rehoboam felt he was strong that the Lord allowed Shishak to invade Judah. (Cyril Barber - [2 Chronicles](#))

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#### **QUESTION - Who was King Rehoboam in the Bible?**

**ANSWER** - Rehoboam was the son of [King Solomon](#) and king of Judah for seventeen years (931–913 BC). Solomon had turned away from God, and God told Solomon that He would tear the kingdom from him yet leave him one tribe. God also promised, for the sake of David, not to tear the kingdom away during Solomon's lifetime but during that of his son (1 Kings 11:9–13). Shortly after Rehoboam became king, a rebellion placed the ten northern tribes under the rule of [Jeroboam](#) and left Rehoboam with his own tribe (Judah) and the tribe of Benjamin.

Jeroboam started out as a servant of Solomon in charge of forced labor (1 Kings 11:28). A prophet told Jeroboam that he would be king over Israel (1 Kings 11:26–40). At some point, Jeroboam fled from Solomon to Egypt. But when Rehoboam went to Shechem to be installed as king of Israel, Jeroboam returned. The people sent Jeroboam to the new king to ask him to lighten the heavy load of labor and taxes that Solomon had laid on them (1 Kings 12:1–4; 2 Chronicles 10:3–4). The older advisers gave King Rehoboam the wise counsel to honor the people's request and thus win their loyalty (1 Kings 12:6–7; 2 Chronicles 10:6–7). King Rehoboam asked the young men who had grown up with him for advice as well. They foolishly told the new king to threaten even harsher conditions. Rehoboam took the young men's advice, and the people rebelled, abandoning the house of David and ultimately making Jeroboam their king (1 Kings 12:8–20; 2 Chronicles 10:8–19). Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:18; 2 Chronicles 10:18), where he mustered 180,000 warriors from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin to mount an attack. But Shemaiah, a prophet of God, delivered God's message to Rehoboam: the troops should go home because the divided kingdom had come from the Lord. The people of Judah wisely listened and did not invade Israel (1 Kings 12:21–24; 2 Chronicles 11:1–4). However, there continued to be warfare between Jeroboam and Rehoboam throughout Rehoboam's reign (1 Kings 14:30; 2 Chronicles 12:15).

In the northern kingdom, Jeroboam promoted idolatry and removed the Levites from service, so the priests and Levites came to Rehoboam and served at the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 11:13–15), along with all those who wanted to seek the

one true God (2 Chronicles 11:16). Second Chronicles 11:17 says, “They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made Rehoboam the son of Solomon secure, for they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon.” Rehoboam also built multiple cities for defense, with strong fortresses, commanders, and supplies (2 Chronicles 11:5–12). King Rehoboam “acted wisely” by placing his sons throughout the districts of Judah and Benjamin, supplied ample provisions, and found them wives (2 Chronicles 11:23).

Unfortunately, after King Rehoboam became established in the southern kingdom, he abandoned the ways of God (2 Chronicles 12:1). In the fifth year of Rehoboam’s reign, Shishak king of Egypt captured the fortified cities in Judah and set out against Jerusalem. Shemaiah the prophet told Rehoboam, “This is what the Lord says, ‘You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak’” (2 Chronicles 12:5). “The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, ‘The Lord is just’” (verse 6). Seeing their humility, God said He would not destroy them but would allow them to become subjects of Shishak. The Pharaoh attacked Jerusalem and removed all the treasures from the temple and the palace (1 Kings 14:26; 2 Chronicles 12:9). Rehoboam did make bronze shields to replace the gold ones his father had made (1 Kings 14:27; 2 Chronicles 12:10–11).

Second Chronicles 12:12 says, “Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the Lord’s anger turned from him, and he was not totally destroyed. Indeed, there was some good in Judah.” “Some good in Judah” seems a fitting way to characterize the reign of Rehoboam. He was unwise and perhaps brash in his treatment of the forced laborers, thus leading to his loss of the kingdom. However, that loss was God-ordained, and Rehoboam proceeded to follow the ways of the Lord for some time. But then he turned from God, and the nation slid into moral and spiritual decay. “Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than those who were before them had done” (1 Kings 14:22). They set up high places and had male shrine prostitutes in the land, which [King Asa](#), Rehoboam’s grandson, would later remove.

From King Rehoboam we learn the importance of wise counselors and maintaining faithfulness to God. When Rehoboam went his own way, things did not go well for his kingdom. When he listened to God, Judah was secure.

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### [Down The Up Staircase](#)

If My people . . . will humble themselves, and pray . . . and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin. —2 Chronicles 7:14

Today’s Scripture & Insight: 2 Chronicles 12:1-8

The video starts with a puppy at the top of the stairs afraid to go down. Despite much encouragement from people cheering at the bottom, Daisy can’t figure it out. She wants so badly to join them, but fear keeps her pacing the landing. Then a bigger dog comes to help. Simon runs up the steps and then back down, showing Daisy how easy it is. Daisy is not convinced. Simon tries again. This time more slowly. Then he watches Daisy try again. But Daisy still is too scared. Once again Simon goes to the top and demonstrates the technique. Finally Daisy dares to let her back legs follow the front ones. Simon stays beside her. She makes it. Everyone celebrates!

What a beautiful picture of discipleship. We spend much of our time trying to teach others to climb up, but the more important, and more difficult, thing to learn is how to “go down.” Throughout Scripture we read that God desires humility of us. Because the people of Judah humbled themselves, the Lord said, “Therefore I will not destroy them” (2 Chron. 12:7).

On numerous occasions, God demonstrated humility by coming down (Ex. 3:7-8; 19:10-12; Micah 1:3). Finally God sent Jesus, who spent His life teaching the technique we are to follow (Phil. 2:5-11). By: Julie Ackerman Link

More like the Master I would ever be,  
More of His meekness, more humility;  
More zeal to labor, more courage to be true,  
More consecration for work He bids me do.  
—Gabriel

No one will learn anything at all unless he first learns humility.

**2 Chronicles 12:2 And it came about in King Rehoboam’s fifth year, because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem**

- **Shishak:** 1Ki 11:40 14:24-26
- **because:** 2Ch 7:19,20 36:14-19 Judges 2:13-15 1Ch 28:9 Ne 9:26,27 Ps 106:43,44 Isa 63:10 Jer 2:19 44:22,23 La 5:15

## THE LORD BRINGS DISCIPLINE FROM EGYPT

**And it came about in King Rehoboam's fifth year (925 BC), because they had been unfaithful ([maal](#)) to the LORD, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem** - Why did he come against Jerusalem? **Because** is the term of explanation. But the answer begins in 2Ch 12:1 and is here described as unfaithfulness which was manifest as the evil described in 1 Kings 14:22-24! She was like an unfaithful wife (See Israel the Wife of Jehovah) Rehoboam was faithful for 3 years (2Ch 11:17) and presumably rebelled in the fourth year followed by divine discipline in the fifth year. So within only 5 years after Solomon's death, the Egyptians were at Jerusalem's gates and "took the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's palace. He took everything." (2Ch 12:9) Did you catch that last phrase Shishak "took everything!"

**THOUGHT** - It bears repeating that obedience brings divine blessing and disobedience brings divine discipline. God's ways have not changed beloved. Oh, Spirit of the Living God, give us hearts to obey Your Word. Amen.

**Unfaithful ([maal](#))** is A KEYWORD IN CHRONICLES 1 Chr. 2:7; 1 Chr. 5:25; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 12:2; 2 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 28:22; 2 Chr. 29:6; 2 Chr. 30:7

**[NIV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#)** - The Bible mentions this invasion only as it affected Jerusalem, but Shishak's own inscription on the wall of the temple of Amun at Karnak (Thebes) indicates that his armies also swept as far north as Megiddo

**[ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#)** - The Egyptian invasion follows hard on the heels of national apostasy and is explicitly identified by the writer as God's punishment for sin; but not every instance of distress or suffering in Chronicles is understood this way (e.g., 2Ch. 20:1–12; 32:1, where Judah suffers foreign invasion after its kings have acted faithfully; similarly 2Ch 13:8).

**Martin Selman** - To be **unfaithful ([maal](#))** to God is one of Chronicles' key terms (it never occurs in Samuel and Kings), and its regular occurrence shows Israel's constant estrangement from God.... It involves denying God the worship due to him, usually on a national scale, and is the primary reason given in Chronicles for the exile." (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**Ron Daniel - 12:2-4** Egypt Attacks The first three years (2Chr. 11:17) had been devoted to God, and the people were faithful to follow David's example of worship, which Solomon had also (2Chr. 8:14) appointed. But then the next two years of Rehoboam's reign was marked by unfaithfulness to the Lord.

1 Kings 14:23-24 For they also built for themselves high places and sacred pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree. There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.

God was sickened by this idolatrous behavior and was about to get their attention in the form of Shee-SHAK, the king of Egypt, attacking and capturing the cities Rehoboam had fortified, invading the land of Judah as far as Jerusalem. The Egyptian army had 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and mercenaries from Ethiopia, Lybia, and other nations.

**John MacArthur:** Ca. 926 B.C. Presumably, Rehoboam's 3 years of blessing preceded a fourth year of spiritual rebellion, which God judged in his fifth year with judgment at the hand of the Egyptians. ([The MacArthur Bible Commentary - Page 501](#))

**Payne on Shishak** - "Known in Egyptian history as Sheshonk I, he was the founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty and its most energetic Pharaoh. This particular campaign is documented by a list of conquered Palestinian cities that stands to this day carved on the wall of his temple of Amon at Karnak, Thebes." (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition - Page 50](#))

**Spurgeon** - Shishak did not know that fact, nor did he care about Jehovah. God so ruled in providence that, when his people cast him off, he soon found a rod with which to chasten them. The king of Egypt determined to conquer them. You do not know, my friends, how God will smite you; but if you err from his statutes, he will never be long without a rod. You will bring chastisement on yourself if you depart from the living God. You will have yourself to blame if some dire affliction happens to you....That was not Shishak's reason for coming up against Jerusalem. He had heard of the riches of Solomon; and doubtless, he came for the sake of the spoil which the palace and the temple would yield to him. But God often overrules, for the accomplishment of his own purposes, the lower motives of men. "I girded thee," said he of Cyrus, "though thou hast not known me." So did he gird Shishak for the chastisement of Israel, though Shishak knew him not.

**Andrew Hill:** The Chronicler's inclusion of the "Sukkites" among the allies of Shishak attests to the antiquity of the sources for the report of Shishak's campaign, since these Libyan warriors from the oases of the western desert are known primarily from Egyptian records of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C.



**Matthew Henry:** God quickly brought troubles upon them, to awaken them, and recover them to repentance, before their hearts were hardened. It was but in the fourth year of Rehoboam that they began to corrupt themselves, and in the fifth year the king of Egypt came up against them with a vast army, took the fenced cities of Judah, and came against Jerusalem, 2 Chron. 12:2, 3, 4. This great calamity coming upon them so soon after they began to desert the worship of God, by a hand they had little reason to suspect (having had a great deal of friendly correspondence with Egypt in the last reign), and coming with so much violence that all the fenced cities of Judah, which Rehoboam had lately fortified and garrisoned and on which he relied much for the safety of his kingdom, fell immediately into the hands of the enemy, without making any resistance, plainly showed that it was from the Lord, because they had transgressed against him.

See [Wikipedia article on Shishak](#)

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL NOTE:** Shishak's Invasion of Judah. Shishak's own record of this campaign is inscribed on the south wall of the great Temple of Amon at Karnak, in which he is depicted as presenting 150 "cities" of Palestine to his god Amon.

A fragment of a monument he set up in Megiddo has been found.

Although Shishak received tribute from Rehoboam of Jerusalem, the cities he conquered indicate that he was active north of Jerusalem, in Israel, and south of Jerusalem, in the Negev. ([Halley's Bible handbook](#) BORROW)

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**Unfaithful** (verb) (be or act unfaithful) ([04603](#)) **maal** means to act unfaithfully, to trespass, to violate one's duty, to break faith, to commit a violation, to act. in a manner which is untrustworthy or unreliable in relation to an agreement or relationship. It is often used in Hebrew together with the noun maal ([04604](#) - described below), so literally it could be translated "trepasses a trespass." (NIV = "commits a violation") (following use both verb and noun forms of maal - Lev 5:15, 6:2, Nu 5:6, 27, Josh 22:20, 22:31) The idea of maal is that of a conscious act of treachery or unfaithfulness against the Lord. In fact in Ezek 39:23 and Da 9:7 maal describes the sin which resulted in Judah's exile to Babylon! They were unfaithful to their covenant with Yahweh. The Chronicler sees this as the leading sin of Israel that punctuates its history from beginning to end. **NET Note** - The word maal refers to some kind of overstepping of the boundary between that which is common (i.e., available for common use by common people) and that which is holy (i.e., to be used only for holy purposes because it has been consecrated to the LORD).

**Maal - 32v** - Lev. 5:15; Lev. 6:2; Lev. 26:40; Num. 5:6; Num. 5:27; Deut. 32:51; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 22:16; Jos. 22:20; Jos. 22:31; A KEY WORD IN THE CHRONICLES 1 Chr. 2:7; 1 Chr. 5:25; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 12:2; 2 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 26:18; 2 Chr. 28:22; 2 Chr. 29:6; 2 Chr. 30:7; Ezr. 10:2; Ezr. 10:10; Neh. 1:8; Neh. 13:27; Prov. 16:10; Ezek. 14:13; Ezek. 15:8; Ezek. 17:20; Ezek. 18:24; Ezek. 20:27; Ezek. 39:23; Ezek. 39:26; Dan. 9:7

Leviticus 26:40 'If they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their forefathers, in their **unfaithfulness** (maal) which they committed against Me, and also in their acting with hostility against Me—

1 Chronicles 10:13 (**NOTE WHAT HAPPENED TO ISRAEL'S FIRST KING BECAUSE HE WAS UNFAITHFUL**) So Saul died for his **trespass** which he **committed** (MAAL) against the LORD, because (TO REASONS GIVEN TO EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF HIS UNFAITHFULNESS) of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it,

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#### Geoffrey Kirkland: Historical Information on Shishak, King of Egypt:

- Before Shishak, the kingdom of Egypt didn't really seem to be a big factor in the history of Israel once they were settled in Israel
  - Shishak was hugely important in biblical history.
  - He was able to bring UNITY and STRUCTURE and PURPOSE to the Egyptian nation.
  - Shishak was Libyan, not a native Egyptian, THOUGH THIS HELPED HIM create a multinational army. And Shishak unified his army when Rehoboam SPLIT his nation apart
  - In a king's victory report, he even provided us with an inventory of all the towns he conquered during this operation.
  - The INSCRIPTION in which Shishak tells the world of all his accomplishments in this Palestinian campaign, he listed 150! cities that he crushed.
  - Even though he defeated many towns and cities, he acknowledged THAT HE DID NOT conquer — Jerusalem. This harmonizes perfectly with the biblical record. He plundered but didn't destroy Jerusalem.
-

**Shishak, Sheshonq I** (945-924 B.C.), was a Libyan who overthrew the Egyptian king and established the twenty-second dynasty. He also provided political asylum to Jeroboam, who fled to Egypt to escape King Solomon's displeasure (1 Kin. 11:40). During the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign (925 B.C.), Shishak plundered Jerusalem and removed the treasures of the temple and the palace which had been placed there by David and Solomon. When restoring the treasures, Rehoboam was unable to replace the gold items in kind, so he resorted to using bronze. The splendor of the golden age was lost in the judgment of the Lord against Rehoboam. When Rehoboam submitted himself in humble repentance (vv. 1-12), he experienced the faithfulness of the Lord to forgive and to restore His people (cf. 7:14-16), confirmation of the message of the chronicler.

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#### **SHISHAK [ISBE] - shi'-shak (shishaq (1 Ki 14:25); Sousakeim):**

##### **1. Shishak, 952-930 BC:**

Sheshonk or Sheshenq I, as he is called on the monuments, the founder of the XXII<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, was in all probability of Libyan origin. It is possible that his claim to the throne was that of the sword, but it is more likely that he acquired it by marriage with a princess of the dynasty preceding. On the death of Pasebkhanu II, the last of the kings of the XXI<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, 952 BC, Shishak ascended the throne, with an efficient army and a well-filled treasury at his command. He was a warlike prince and cherished dreams of Asiatic dominion.

##### **2. Patron of Jeroboam:**

He had not long been seated on the throne when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, of the tribe of Ephraim, whom Solomon had promoted but afterward had cause to suspect, fled from the displeasure of his sovereign to the court of Shishak (1 Ki 11:26 ff). There Jeroboam remained till the death of Solomon, when he returned to Canaan, and, on Rehoboam's returning an unsatisfactory answer to the people's demands for relief from their burdens, headed the revolt of the Ten Tribes, over whom he was chosen king with his capital at Shechem (1 Ki 12:25 ff). Whether there was not in the XXI<sup>st</sup> Dynasty some kind of suzerainty of Egypt over Palestine, when Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter and received with her Gezer as a dowry, seems not to be clearly established. It is, however, natural that Jeroboam's patron in the day of adversity should take sides with him against Rehoboam, now that the kingdom was divided. Active support of Jeroboam would be in the line of his dreams of an eastern empire.

##### **3. Syrian Campaign:**

So it came to pass that in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of Rehoboam, Shishak came up against Jerusalem with 1,200 chariots, and 60,000 horsemen, and people without number out of Egypt, the Libyans, Sukkiim, and Ethiopians, and took the fenced cities of Judah, and came to Jerusalem. At the preaching of the prophet Shemaiah, Rehoboam and his people repented, and Jerusalem was saved from destruction, though not from plunder nor from servitude, for he became Shishak's servant (2 Ch 12:8). Shishak took away the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's house, carrying off among the most precious of the spoils all the shields of gold which Solomon had made (1 Ki 14:25 ff; 2 Ch 12:1-9). From the Scripture narrative it does not appear that there was any occupation of Palestine by the Egyptian forces on this occasion.

##### **4. Shishak's Record at Karnak:**

There is, however, a remarkable contemporary record of the campaign engraved on the south wall of the Temple of Amon at Karnak by Shishak himself. Not only is the expedition recorded, but there is a list of districts and towns of Palestine granted to his victories by Amon-Ra and the goddess of Thebes engraved there. A number of towns mentioned in the Book of Josh have been identified; and among the names of the list are Rabbath, Taanach, Gibeon, Mahanaim, Beth-horon and other towns both of Israel and Judah. That names of places in the Northern Kingdom are mentioned in the list does not imply that Shishak had directed his armies against Jeroboam and plundered his territories. It was the custom in antiquity for a victorious monarch to include among conquered cities any place that paid tribute or was under subjection, whether captured in war or not; and it was sufficient reason for Shishak to include these Israelite places that Jeroboam, as seems probable, had invited him to come to his aid. Among the names in the list was "Jud-hamalek"--Yudhmalk on the monuments--which was at first believed to represent the king of Judah, with a figure which passed for Rehoboam. Being, however, a place-name, it is now recognized to be the town Yehudah, belonging to the king. On the death of Shishak his successor assumed a nominal suzerainty over the land of Canaan.

LITERATURE. Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt*, III, 227 ff; Maspero, *Struggle of the Nations*, 772 ff; Nicol, *Recent Archaeology and the Bible*, 222-25.

T. Nicol

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**D A Carson - THE CHRONICLER PROVIDES SOME fascinating insights into the reign of Rehoboam, the first king of Judah after the end of the united monarchy (2 Chron. 11–12). We note two of them.**

(1) Predictably, many of the Levites who lived in the north drifted south (2Ch 11:11–17). Their entire life centered on the temple, and this was the connection that Jeroboam, king over the northern ten tribes, wanted to break. Not only therefore did he establish his own idol gods, but he sacked all the Levites. The effect, at least initially, was to strengthen the hand of Rehoboam (2Ch 11:17). Sometimes the principle of “unintended consequences” is quietly used by God’s providence to bring blessings out of what at first appears to be unmitigated disaster. The most stellar example of this, of course, is the cross.

(2) Rehoboam proves to be a mediocre king whose total effect is bad. Certain early elements in Rehoboam’s reign were good. He chose the right son, Abijah, to be his “chief prince” (2Ch 11:22), preparing him for the throne. Learning from the stupidity of the initial decision that had cost him the unified kingdom (2Ch 10:8; cf. 1 Kings 12:8), Rehoboam worked hard at maintaining contact with the people, dispersing his many sons around the districts and fortified cities of Judah. Sadly, once he had become comfortable, once his kingdom was more or less secure, he drifted away from the Law of the Lord, and so did his people (2Ch 12:1). God responded by unleashing Shishak, king of Egypt, against this small nation. The prophet Shemaiah thundered, “This is what the LORD says, ‘You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak’ ” (2Ch 12:5).

King Rehoboam and the leaders of Israel humble themselves (2Ch 12:6, 12). The result is that God does not permit the Egyptians to destroy Judah. Nevertheless, God says that his people will “become subject to [Shishak], so that they may learn the difference between serving me and serving the kings of other lands” (2Ch 12:8). This development reminds us of God’s reaction when the people of Israel entered the Promised Land and promptly compromised their faithfulness. The result was that instead of the clean sweep they might have had, they were embroiled in squalid skirmishes for generations.

There is a kind of evil that is not very bad and not very good, not too terribly rebellious yet not hungry for righteousness, a stance that drifts toward idolatry and hastily retreats at the threat of judgment. What it lacks is David’s heart, the heart of a man who, despite failures, sets himself to pursue God with passion and delight. The final verdict on Rehoboam’s reign explains the problem: “He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD” (2Ch 12:14). (BORROW [For the Love of God, Combined Edition, Volumes One and Two](#))

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#### **John Kitto - Daily Bible Illustrations - Tuesday. The Egyptian Invasion—I Kings 14:25–28; II Chronicles 12:2–12**

Our own house here, in this “wicked London,” is safe, though defenseless, and with small protection of bolts and bars, because there is little in it to tempt the spoiler; whereas the great house of the old lady in Threadneedle street is never deemed to be safe without a company of dreadful bearskin-capped grenadiers within its walls, because of the great riches it contains. Now we should not be over glad to have all that gold down in our own cellars, without the grenadiers also, to keep guard over it. What a perilous life it would be to have it, without adequate means of protecting it from the envious hands ready to clutch at it, and whose endeavors would be excited by our obviously defenseless condition!

This was the case of Rehoboam. The immense treasures in gold which the temple and palace contained—the accumulations of David and Solomon—were known far and wide, and were such as required a strong power to protect from the neighboring princes, who could not but calculate, from time to time, upon the glorious spoil which might be obtained by the rapid pillage of Jerusalem alone, even apart from any views of territorial aggrandizement. Such power Solomon had possessed; and grievously as the strength which Rehoboam inherited from him had been impaired, it was still sufficient, under the judicious measures which had in the early years of his reign been adopted for putting the country in a state of defence, to withstand any attempt of the small neighboring states. Of these, the new kingdom was alone to be seriously dreaded; and the alienation had not yet become such as to render it probable that the ten tribes would dare, even if Jerusalem were in their power, to pillage the temple of the Lord.

There was, however, in the distance, a more powerful and dangerous enemy, not to be restrained by any such considerations, and who had for some time beheld with longing eyes the treasures of the sacred city. This was the king of Egypt. As long as Rehoboam continued in a right course, this powerful prince was restrained by the Lord from the measures he contemplated; but no sooner had the king, with his people, sinned against Jehovah, than the hands of the Egyptian monarch were loosened, and he proceeded to invade the land with a mighty host levied from the different African territories subject to his scepter. This was the first time the Egyptians had appeared in the sacred land with hostile purposes against the Hebrews; and it is probable that so formidable a body of chariots, horsemen, and infantry had never before invaded the country. The appearance of this new enemy, whose power and resources they knew, must have filled the Judahites with dread,—the rather, as their unfaithfulness had disintitled them to the right of looking to the Lord for his protection. Probably, in the first instance, the king placed some hope in the strong fortresses he had built towards the southern frontier; but these fell, one after another, before the might of the invaders,—and the Egyptians, having cleared their rear from obstruction, marched direct upon Jerusalem.

At this juncture, the same prophet Shemaiah, who had before interposed to prevent Rehoboam’s army from marching against Jeroboam, again appeared, and delivered to the king and his princes the short but awfully emphatic message,—“Thus saith the Lord, Ye have forsaken me; and therefore have I also left you in the hands of Shishak.” At this they were conscience-stricken, and

acted exactly as became them, and as was best suited to turn the Lord's anger aside. They admitted the justice of the punishment they had brought upon themselves, and they humbled themselves, and said,—“The Lord is righteous,”—an admission as brief and significant as the reproof.

This humiliation was graciously received in heaven; and it was intimated that for this they should be spared some portion of the ignominy they had incurred. This seems to have meant that their lives would be spared, and that the city would not be destroyed by the Egyptian host; yet they should for a time feel that these overbearing foreigners were their masters, that they might know the difference between the service of the Lord and that of strange princes.

It was probably as an act of submission to this doom that no defence of Jerusalem was attempted; and He in whose hand is the heart of kings so mollified the stern purposes of Shishak, that he was content with the spoils of the temple and the palace, without molesting the inhabitants, or damaging the city, or attempting to retain the country in subjection. Indeed, recollecting the prodigious quantities of precious metal lavished by Solomon on these buildings, this spoil must have been amply sufficient to fulfill the greedy expectations of the invaders, and satisfy the wishes of then nation. It has indeed been urged that no such spoil could have proved an adequate return for the costs of the expedition, and that it was unlikely that its objects should be satisfied by the plunder of a palace and a temple. But it may be answered, that, under ancient military arrangements, an army was a less costly instrument than—happily for the peace of the world—it has now become; and that the balance of profit and loss, in expeditions furnishing an immediate access of plunder and glory, was less nicely calculated in former times than it is now,—although, indeed, modern history has furnished examples, not few nor far between, of expeditions costing millions of money being employed upon objects not worth as many shillings. Besides, to allege that the plunder of a temple is not an adequate object of military action is against the facts of history, and is to forget that riches equal to the wealth of a nation were often in ancient times lavished upon or treasured up in temples. The reader will call to mind the celebrated temple in Elymais of Persia,—the rich treasures of which were the objects of attention to two of the greatest of the Seleucidian kings of Syria, one of whom (Antiochus the Great) lost his life in a commotion created in the attempt to seize them; and whose son (Antiochus Epiphanes) was engaged in the same distant quarter, quelling the disturbances created by the actual plunder of the temple to recruit his exhausted finances, when he received the news respecting the Jewish successes over his officers, which made him hastily quit the place with horrid purposes of vengeance against the Jews, which he lived not to accomplish.

It may also be observed, that Shishak was not allowed to accomplish all the purposes of his expedition, as is clearly shown by the promise given on the repentance of the king and the princes. What that intention was it is difficult to see. The fact that he did not march into the territory of the ten tribes, coupled with Jeroboam's previous sojourn in Egypt, and his favorable reception there, may suggest that he acted at the instance of Jeroboam, with the view of weakening the rival power, if not of adding the dominions of Rehoboam to those of the sovereign of the ten tribes—or of holding them as a dependency of his own Egypt. The subsequent reflection which led him, under Divine influence, to alter his views, and to be content with the treasures of the palace and temple, may have been found in the consideration that it might not be good policy for Egypt to push its frontier in this direction—thus destroying politically the desert barrier which separated it from other nations,—and still less to reconstruct and render once more formidable the kingdom which had been weakened by separation into two; for although, perhaps, he might count on the subserviency of Jeroboam, he could not know but that the united kingdom might in no long time acquire such strength, and lapse into such hands, as might render its neighborhood inconvenient to Egypt. In old times, as in our own, thinking politicians—and there were thinking politicians even in those days—must have seen the futility of basing political arrangements on personal considerations. Men die, and men change; but political action has permanent effects, which survive the men by whose hands it was wrought.

That the result was not inadequate to the extent and importance of the expedition—that it was, in fact, regarded as a memorable event in Egypt—is shown by the circumstance that the successful results of the campaign are celebrated in a series of sculptures on the north external wall of the temple at Karnak. The king, as usual, presents his prisoners to the deity of the temple; and to each figure is attached an oval, indicating the town or district he represents; one of which is concluded to be Yooda Melchi, or “kingdom of Judah.” It is not to be supposed that Rehoboam was actually carried captive to Egypt, but that the figure is a symbol of the king's triumph over him.

Whether the figure be a portrait or not, is uncertain; but, as the Egyptian artists were used to make as near a likeness as they could of the objects they intended to represent, it doubtless presents a general resemblance, if not of the king, of as much of the Jewish physiognomy and costume as it discloses. We introduce it, together with the head of Shishak himself.

The preservation of this figure is a notable circumstance, especially as the picture is so much mutilated that nothing remains but three captives bound to a stake, which forms, as usual, a sort of title-page at the beginning, and a portion of the triumphal procession at the end, which is so much mutilated that only the names of the captives are legible. This defaced condition of the monument is much to be deplored, as it might very possibly have presented details, not only confirmatory but illustrative of the sacred narrative.

**2 Chronicles 12:3 with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. And the people who came with him from Egypt were without number: the Lubim, the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians.**

- twelve hundred: Judges 4:13 1Sa 13:5 2Sa 10:18
- without number: 2Ch 14:9 Judges 6:5 Rev 9:16
- Lubims: Lubim, apparently the same with Lehabim (Ge 10:13,) were probably the ancient inhabitants of Lybia, (called Lubi in the Syriac version, Ac 2:10,) a district of Africa, adjoining to Egypt, and extending along the shore of the Mediterranean as far as the city of Cyrene. 2Ch 16:8 Eze 30:5 Na 3:9
- the Sukkiims: The Sukkiim, (from {sachach,} "to cover,") are supposed to have been the Troglodites, as the LXX. and Vulgate render, a people of Egypt, on the west of the Red Sea, so called because they dwelt [en troglais,] in caves.
- Ethiopians: These Cushim were probably the inhabitants of Ethiopia, south of Egypt. 2Ch 14:12 16:8 Isa 43:3 Da 11:43 Na 3:9, Cushim, Heb. Ge 10:6-8

## SHISHAK'S FORMIDABLE FORCE

**with 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen. And the people who came with him from Egypt were without number: the Lubim, the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians** - Yes he had **chariots** and **horsemen** and **people...without number** (probably mercenaries), but that is not why he defeated Judah! He defeated Judah because God had given them over into his hands as "payment" for their unfaithfulness.

**Spurgeon** - How vain is man when he boasts in the strength of his fortifications! These fenced cities fell at once, like houses built of cards, before the power of the mighty king of Egypt, and the vast hordes that accompanied him. Rehoboam had spent his strength in making these defenses, but how soon they were proved to be worthless. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is;" (Jeremiah 17:7KJV) but "cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." (**ED**: DON'T MISS THAT LAST PHRASE - HIS HEART DEPARTS FROM THE LORD! WHAT A CONTRAST WITH "WHOSE HOPE IS THE LORD!") (Jeremiah 17:5KJV)

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**ISBE - LUBIM** loō' bim [Heb. lûbîm]. A people in northern Africa, named with Egypt, Cush, Put, and the SUKKIIM (2 Ch. 12:3; 16:8; Dnl. 11:43; Nah. 3:9). The Lubim are to be identified with LIBYA (Gk. Libyes), probably also with LEHABIM, and perhaps with PUT.

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**ISBE - SUKKIIM** suk'ē-im [Heb. sukkîyîm; LXX A Trōglodytai, B Trōgodytai, Luc. Souchieim] (2 Ch. 12:3); AV SUKKIIMS; NEB SUKKITE. Foreign mercenaries who, along with the Libyans (AV "Lubims") and the Ethiopians, campaigned with Shishak king of Egypt during his invasion of Palestine ca 918 b.c. (OTMS, pp. 17f; cf. 1 K. 14:25–28). H. G. M. Williamson, following K. A. Kitchen, suggested that the Sukkiim were perhaps auxiliary Libyan forces from the western desert oases (1 and 2 Chronicles [NCBC, 1982], p 247).

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**ETHIOPIA** (ē-thi-ō'pi-a; Heb. kûsh). Lying S of Egypt, corresponding to what is now called the Sudan, i.e., the country of the blacks. It was known to the Hebrews (Isa. 18:1; 45:14; Zeph. 3:10). The name Cush (KJV, "Ethiopia") is found in the Egyptian Keesh, evidently applied to the same territory. In the description of the Garden of Eden, an Asiatic Cush is mentioned (Gen. 2:13). In all other passages the words Ethiopia and the Ethiopians—with one possible exception, "the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians" (2 Chron. 21:16), which may refer to Arabians opposite Ethiopia—may be safely considered to mean an African country and people or peoples (Kitto). The languages of Ethiopia are as various as the tribes. In Ps. 68:31, Isa. 45:14, and probably Zeph. 3:10, the calling of Ethiopia to the service of the true God is foretold. The case of the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:27–39) indicates the spread of the old dispensation influence in that country and the introduction of the new. The NIV regularly uses the transliteration "Cush" except in Jer. 13:23 and Acts 8:27, where it is "Ethiopian."

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**2 Chronicles 12:4 He captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.**

- the fenced: 2Ch 11:5-12 Isa 36:1 Jer 5:10



- came: 2Ki 18:17 Isa 8:8 10:11

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 11:5-12 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built cities for **defense** in Judah. 6 Thus he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron, which are **fortified** cities in Judah and in Benjamin. 11 He also **strengthened** the fortresses and put officers in them and **stores of food, oil and wine**. 12 He put **shields and spears** in every city and **strengthened** them greatly. So he **held** Judah and Benjamin. (**NOTE THE WORDS AND PHRASES THAT SPEAK OF WHAT *HE* DID, WHAT *HE* ACCOMPLISHED!**)

### EXTENT OF SHISHAK'S INVASION

**He captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem** - These are the very cities mentioned in 2Ch 11:5-12 ([SEE NOTE ABOVE](#)) and were the cities managed by Rehoboam's sons (2Ch 11:23). How easily these so-called "fortified cities" fell to Shishak's forces! Prior to this Rehoboam surely felt confident, but he had placed his trust in what he had done, which caused him to take his eyes off the only One Who provides complete "fortification" from enemy assaults! And he also forgot (or did not know) the warning of Solomon...

Unless the LORD builds the house,  
They labor in vain who build it;  
Unless the LORD guards the city,  
The watchman keeps awake in vain.  
- Ps 127:1

Notice the phrase **as far as Jerusalem** - Limited only by Divine Providence in protecting God's holy city from utter devastation. And this divine protection was in response to the leaders humbling themselves before the Lord (2Ch 12:6).

**Leslie Allen** writes "The **"fortified cities"** which featured so prominently in chapter 11 as the medium of the king's trust in God to protect Judah, now crumble (12:4). They are only as strong as their builder's faith. In the absence of true trust they become houses built on sand. (BORROW [1, 2 Chronicles](#))

As [Paul Apple](#) says you can mark it down as an immutable, axiomatic principle that **"Apostasy Leaves Us Defenseless!** Human attempts at defense and fortification proved futile in the face of God's agency for judgment" I would add, running willfully into sin produces a very similar state!

**Spurgeon** - When God means to chasten a people, he does not take long to do it neither can their weakened strength successfully oppose their enemy.

**2 Chronicles 12:5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, 'You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shishak.'"**

- Shemaiah: 2Ch 11:2 1Ki 12:22
- Ye have forsaken me: 2Ch 12:1,2 2Ch 15:2 De 28:15-68 Jdg 10:9-14 1Ch 28:9 Jer 2:19 4:18 5:19 Jer 23:33
- left you: 2Sa 24:14 Ps 37:33

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

2 Chronicles 15:2 and he (Azariah the son of Oded) went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

## TURN ABOUT IS FAIR PLAY!

**Then** - Praise God for this "time phrase" which marks progression in the narrative. Had this not occurred Judah would have been overrun by the Egyptians, but in the midst of wrath, God remembered mercy. Shemaiah was a man of God, a manifestation of God's grace, for "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (SUPER- ABOUNDED)." (Ro 5:20KJV+).

**Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them, "Thus says the LORD, 'You have forsaken (azab) Me, so I also have forsaken (azab) you to Shishak.'"**  
- **Shemaiah** (*heard by Jehovah*) is the same prophet who had warned them in 2Ch 11:2. The Septuagint translates both uses of **forsook....forsaken (azab)** with the verb **egkataleipo** which is in the active voice signifying on one hand that Judah made a conscious, willful choice to forsake God and His Law, which was tantamount to forsaking the LORD Himself! On the other hand the choice of God's will was to abandon Judah.

There is a saying "**tit for tat**" and here we see a divine variant, forsake Me and I will forsake you, a repeated refrain in 1Ch 28:9; 2Ch 15:2 and 2Ch 24:20. When they forsook God, He forsook them into the hands of an adversary. His divine discipline matched their human disobedience!

**THOUGHT** - **Look out** when you forsake God and tell Him to leave you alone, because He just might take you up on your request!

**Spurgeon** The prophet gave them no invitation to repentance; but just an explanation of the sorrow which had come upon them.

**Leslie Allen** writes "There is a striking double use of the verb **'forsake'** (**azab**) in the Hebrew of verse 5, although the inflexibility of the English language does not permit its repetition: compare the RSV "You abandoned Me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak." There is spiritual logic at work here. The Chronicler's theology has a strongly moral tone: throughout his history he insists that God keeps short accounts and that to backslide is to forfeit His blessing in a life-shattering way. (BORROW [1, 2 Chronicles](#))

**Peter Wallace:** It would be wrong to say: "If you feel like God has abandoned you then God has abandoned you!" Your feelings do not provide sufficient evidence to explain what God is doing! But one possibility for your feeling that God has abandoned you is that you have abandoned God.

**Ron Daniel** - Humbling Themselves - Five years previously, Shem-aw-YAW the prophet had come to Rehoboam with the word of God regarding the impending attack on his relatives to the north. Now, he tells it straight again: God was saying, "You have forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you to Shee-SHAK." Fortunately, Rehoboam and the other leaders listened. They humbled themselves and acknowledged that the Lord had indeed said this. It was their actions towards the Lord which had brought about this attack from Egypt.

**Bob Utley** on **forsaken Me, so I also have forsaken you** - This is the direct opposite of "seek" (see 2 Chr. 11:16 vs. 2 Chr. 12:14). The *Tyndale OT Commentary* by Martin Selman, p. 372, makes this excellent comment that the violation of covenant law mentioned in 2 Chr. 12:1 was in reality a rejection of YHWH Himself (i.e., "Me"). There is always the tension between obedience (i.e., legalism) vs. heart faith (i.e., a circumcised heart; with all their heart, cf. Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16; 30:6; 1 Kgs. 8:61; 2 Kgs. 20:3; 1 Chr. 28:9; 29:19; 2 Chr. 12:4; Jer. 4:4). Attitude and motive, not just actions, are crucial in biblical faith. God sees the heart (cf. 1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 6:30; 12:14; 15:12,15,17; 16:9; 19:3,9; 28:2; 30:19; 34:31).

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**Shemaiah** is a frequent name in the OT. Here is the [ISBE note on Shemaiah](#) - A prophet who, together with Ahijah, protested against Rehoboam's contemplated war against the ten revolted tribes (1 Ki 12:22-24 = 2 Ch 11:2-4). He declared that the rebellion had divine sanction. The second Greek account knows nothing of Ahijah in this connection and introduces Shemaiah at the gathering at Shechem where both Jeroboam and Rehoboam were present; it narrates that on this occasion Shemaiah (not Ahijah) rent his garment and gave ten parts to Jeroboam to signify the ten tribes over which he was to become king. (This version, however, is not taken very seriously, because of its numerous inconsistencies.) Shemaiah also prophesied at the invasion of Judah by Shishak (2 Ch 12:5-7). His message was to the effect that as the princes of Israel had humbled themselves, God's wrath against their idolatrous practices would not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak (2 Ch 13:7). He is mentioned as the author of a history of Rehoboam (2 Ch 12:15).

**2 Chronicles 12:6 So the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The LORD is righteous."**

- **humbled:** 2Ch 32:26 33:12,19,23 Ex 10:3 Lev 26:40,41 1Ki 8:37-39 Ps 78:34,35 Jer 13:15,18 44:10 Da 5:22 Ho 5:15 Lu 18:14

## **HUMBLING ONESELF A GOOD THING TO DO!**

**So the princes of Israel and the king humbled ([kana](#)) themselves and said, “The LORD is righteous.”** - Their humility is shown to be true humility by their acknowledgement that Yahweh was righteous (aka "right") in disciplining them (and by inference, they are not right, not righteous). Their humbling and the Lord's response illustrates fulfillment of the promise of 2Ch 7:14+! When the nation's leaders humble themselves, God moved in with a measure of deliverance for Judah.

**Humbled ([kana](#))** is used 4x in this section (2Ch 12:6, 7, 12) and in each case is translated in the Septuagint with the verb *entrepo* which strictly speaking means to turn oneself toward someone; to show deference to a person in recognition of special status, to turn about. *Entrepo* also conveys the meaning of to shame or cause to turn in shame.

**THOUGHT** - What would happen in America if our president and congressmen would have a sense of shame and humble themselves before the Lord because they had forsaken Him and rejected His Word of Truth? That's rhetorical. This section gives us the clear answer! Oh, if all His true children in Christ would pray the prayer of (Ps 119:25) "My soul cleaves to the dust; Revive me according to Your word."

**Spurgeon** - That was well done. They had not yet become so confirmed in their rebellion as to reject the prophet of God, and to turn in willful, wanton, resolute disobedience against him....Now, that is the very essence of true humility, the acknowledgment that God is righteous in whatever punishment he brings upon us on account of our sin. It is a very short sentence, but there is a great fullness of meaning in it: "Jehovah is righteous."

**Leslie Allen** Rehoboam has allowed himself to be sucked into the fatal vortex of 1 Chronicles 10:13 and 1Ch 28:9: death and being cast off forever loom ominously near. In fact the gracious revelation of 2 Chronicles 7:14 comes to his rescue. He does not fall to his merited doom. Near the top of the precipice God has provided a cleft in the rock, a foothold from which he may call for help. "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more" (Rom. 5:20): this is the good news of the Chronicler and the apostle alike. Self-humbling, prayer, and repentance are for the Chronicler God's appointed way back to Himself and to a new lease on life. Four times he tells his readers about Rehoboam's and his ministers' humbling themselves (vv. 6, 7, 12). It is surely his call to whoever has ears to hear that the gospel of 2Ch 7:14 is true and that, as it worked for Rehoboam, it can work for anybody else. The liturgical formula "**The LORD is righteous**" is a confession of sin, implying that He is in the right and correspondingly they are in the wrong and receiving their just deserts (compare Ex. 9:27; Dan. 9:14). (See [The Preacher's Commentary - Vol. 10: 1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 25](#))

**Peter Wallace:** What does it mean to humble yourself? There may be outward signs of humility (fasting, tearing clothes, sackcloth and ashes – are all outward signs) – but the Chronicler isn't interested in that. He wants to focus on the one thing that is essential to humility: what you say to him. The princes and the king say, "**The LORD is righteous.**" They are not merely stating a general theological truth (although it is always true!). (Yahweh is always righteous!) They are saying that in this case, the LORD is righteous. They are acknowledging that God is just – and that he has passed just judgment in this case.

**Raymond Dillard:** The outworking of the programmatic statement that "if my people . . . will humble themselves . . ." (2Ch 7:14) is vividly portrayed in this narrative; Yahweh does take account of the humility and penitence of king and people and lessens the consequences of Shishak's attack. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**Andrew Hill:** Shemaiah the prophet (2Ch 12:5) is known as a "man of God" (2Ch 11:2) and earlier warned Rehoboam not to wage war against the northern tribes of Israel after the split of Solomon's kingdom (2Ch 11:4). He now brings a message of both judgment (2Ch 12:5) and mercy to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah (2Ch 12:7–8). The principle that God "abandons" those who "abandon" him is candidly presented and basic to the Chronicler's theology (cf. 1 Chron. 28:9, 20; 2 Chron. 15:2; 24:20). The response by Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah that "the LORD is just" (2 Chron. 12:6) is essentially a confession of sin—an acknowledgment that God is in the right (cf. Dan. 9:14). God accepts this confession as an act of "humbling oneself" (2 Chron. 12:6–7), a form of repentance that brings the sinner back to God. (See [1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 7](#))

**De Vries** - Perhaps the most important theological statement in this entire account is 2Ch 12:6, 'Righteous is Yahweh!' Even in humbling himself at Shemaiah's reproach, this meant that Rehoboam could not escape Shishak. The principle of divine righteousness governs Chr[onicler]H[istorian]'s entire pattern of coming punishments on apostasy." (BORROW [1 and 2 Chronicles](#))

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**Humbled** ([03665](#)) [kana](#) is a verb which has the basic meaning of being lowly, meek. This biblical Hebrew word is also found in modern Hebrew. The word can mean "to humble, to subdue," and it can have a passive or reflexive use, "to be humble" or "to

humble oneself." The most common meaning to subdue (akin to "political humiliation") and the second meaning to humble oneself (Lev 26:41, 1 Ki 21:29 twice, 2 Ki 22:19, 2 Chr 7:14, 2 Chr 12:5-7, 12:12, 30:11, 32:26, 33:12, 19, 23, 34:27, 36:12). In regard to nations being subdued Judges 3:30<sup>+</sup> says "So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land was undisturbed for eighty years." But then we see that they power to subdue is from God for Judges 4:23<sup>+</sup> says "So God subdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the sons of Israel." This is a wonderful truth and comforting thought for all God's people living in a world where evil seems to be out of control, but it is not out of control because God is sovereign and in control and as Paul says "And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you." (Ro 16:20<sup>+</sup>) **Kana** is is often used of a person falling on his knees in subjugation or humiliation.

**2 Chronicles 12:7 When the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves so I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some measure of deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak.**

**MSG** When God saw that they were humbly repentant, the word of God came to Shemaiah: "Because they are humble, I'll not destroy them—I'll give them a break; I won't use Shishak to express my wrath against Jerusalem. What I will do, though, is make them Shishak's subjects—they'll learn the difference between serving me and serving human kings."

- the Lord: Judges 10:15,16 1Ki 21:28,29 Jer 3:13 Lu 15:18-21
- therefore: Lev 26:41,42
- some: or, a little while, 2Ki 13:4-7,23 Am 7:6-8
- and my wrath: 2Ch 34:21,25 Ps 79:6 Isa 42:25 Jer 7:20 Rev 14:10 16:2-17

#### **Related Passages:**

Leviticus 26:41-42+ (GOD'S PROMISE EVEN WHEN ISRAEL WAS UNFAITHFUL) I also was acting with hostility against them, to bring them into the land of their enemies—or if their uncircumcised heart becomes humbled so that they then make amends for their iniquity, 42 then (CONDITIONAL PROMISE) I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and My covenant with Abraham as well, and I will remember the land.

### **GOD HEARS, REMEMBERS AND RESPONDS**

**When the LORD saw that they humbled ([kana](#)) themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled ([kana](#)) themselves so I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some measure of deliverance, and My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak** - There would be discipline but not destruction, consequences but not catastrophe!

**Leslie Allen** - As Jacob was left with a limp as a material reminder of his fight with God, so Rehoboam evidently becomes a vassal of Shishak, although the capital and throne are spared. The king is to be taught a lesson by this partial "deliverance".

**Ron Daniel** - They had humbled themselves just in time. And, because God is gracious and merciful to the repentant sinner, He committed that Jerusalem would not be destroyed. They would receive some measure of deliverance. (See [The Preacher's Commentary - Vol. 10: 1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 25](#))

**Andrew Hill:** God mercifully decrees that Judah will experience a "qualified" deliverance from Shishak (2Ch 12:7b), but they will not escape the consequences of their disobedience—they will "become subject to him [i.e., Shishak]" for a time (2Ch 12:8). The so-called "school of hard knocks" is a trying way to learn that it is better to serve the Lord than to be subjects of a foreign king (2Ch 12:8). At times God uses whatever means are necessary to teach his people important lessons about the nature of his covenant relationship with them (in this case "fearing" God and not Shishak, 2Ch 12:5). ([1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 7](#))

**John MacArthur:** A fitting punishment arose to remind the Jews of their heritage in relationship to Egypt. This was the first major military encounter with Egypt since the Exodus had ended hundreds of years of slavery there. A taste of being enslaved again to a people from whom God had given liberation was bitter. The message was crystal clear – if the Jews would forsake the true worship of God, they would also lose His protective hand of blessing. It was much better to serve God than to have to serve "kingdoms of the countries." (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**John Olley:** Instead of expected destruction, the taking of Jerusalem, we see gracious mitigation in “some deliverance [“a little escape”]” (cf. 2Ch 12:12); they will, however, continue to serve Shishak. The reality that “they [will] know my service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries [“lands”]” makes the immediate situation an example of others to come, particularly after the exile, when the people are secure in Jerusalem with its temple but remain as “servants” of the Persian Empire. That service, however, does not lessen their responsibility in the larger, overarching “service” of God. The wording points to God’s using foreign rulers as means through which the people learn more what it means to serve God (cf. Ezra 9:8–9).

**Frederick Mabie:** In the aftermath of this covenantal unfaithfulness and God’s judgment, the covenant functionary role of the prophet is reflected in Shemaiah’s proclamation of the sin of the people and the resulting divine judgment (v. 5; cf. Johnstone, 2:41-43). The king and the leaders of Israel respond to the prophet’s indictment in a way anticipated in Solomon’s temple-dedication prayer in 6:24-25 (12:6; also cf. v. 12). While Jerusalem is not destroyed (v. 7), the temple and palace treasuries are ravaged (see v. 9) and the southern kingdom will now be under the hegemony of Egypt as a continuation of the consequence of abandoning God and his Word. (See [1 and 2 Chronicles](#))

**2 Chronicles 12:8 “But they will become his slaves so that they may learn the difference between My service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries.”**

- Nevertheless: Ne 9:36 Isa 26:13
- that they may: De 28:47 Judges 3:1 Jer 10:24 Ho 8:10

### ENSLAVED TO EGYPT....AGAIN!

**But they will become his slaves so that they may learn the difference between My service and the service of the kingdoms of the countries** - Talk about a bitter pill to swallow! It had been almost 500 years since Israel had been set free from bondage in Egypt, but now they find themselves once again in that same state! Sin always cost more than you think it will. God had accepted their humbling, but there were still ongoing consequences of their unfaithfulness. Note the purpose clause **so that**, indicating Yahweh’s purpose was to put them in a classroom of consequences that they hopefully might learn that His yoke is easy and His load is light! (cf Mt 11:30+).

*All masters, to whom we surrender our minds and hearts,  
will turn out to be tyrants, except the blessed Prince of peace.*  
-- C H Spurgeon

**THOUGHT** - Isn’t that often the way it is in our lives when we sin, confess and repent? The consequences do not necessarily disappear! Better than confession and repentance is simply to not commit sin in the first place! Are you currently in the “classroom of consequences”? If so, “study hard” so that you learn the lesson well!

**Leslie Allen** - The reference to **“the kingdoms of the nations”** strikes a discordant note in comparison with the ideal of 1 Chronicles 29:30. The awed respect of the nations was David’s fortune, and its potential was to be realized by a later Davidic king, Jehoshaphat (2Ch 17:10; 2Ch 20:29). Rehoboam, however, sadly lacks the blessing enjoyed by his grandfather. (See [The Preacher’s Commentary - Vol. 10: 1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 25](#))

**Adam Clarke** - “They shall be preserved, and serve their enemies, that they may see the difference between the service of God and that of man. While they were pious, they found the service of the Lord to be perfect freedom (**ED**: cf Jas 1:25); when they forsook the Lord, they found the fruit to be perfect bondage. A sinful life is both expensive and painful.”

**Bob Utley** rightly reminds us that “Historical events involving YHWH’s people are an opportunity to teach and reveal YHWH’s will and plan. History is in the hand of God. This is the Bible’s revelatory worldview.”

**Spurgeon** - The Lord’s people were to know the difference between the service of God and the service of the kings of the countries round about them. It would be a very sharp contrast, and a very bitter one....That is a very instructive expression. I believe that, when God’s people go astray from him, he sometimes allows them to fall into great bondage, in order that they may realize the difference between his happy service and the servitude in which they may be held by any other lord. All masters, to whom we surrender our minds and hearts, will turn out to be tyrants, except the blessed Prince of peace. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light; but all other yokes gall the shoulders sooner or later; and God has sometimes made his wandering people feel this so bitterly that they have longed to get back again to the service of their God.



**2 Chronicles 12:9 So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's palace. He took everything; he even took the golden shields which Solomon had made.**

- Shishak: 1Ki 14:25,26
- took away: 1Ki 15:18 2Ki 16:8 18:15,16 La 1:10
- the shields: 2Ch 9:15,16 1Ki 10:16,17

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Kings 10:16; 17 King Solomon made 200 large shields of beaten gold, using 600 shekels of gold on each large shield. 17 He made 300 shields of beaten gold, using three minas of gold on each shield, and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

1 Kings 14:26-28 He (SHISHAK) took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he took everything, even taking all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 27 So King Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place, and committed them to the care of the commanders of the guard who guarded the doorway of the king's house. 28 Then it happened as often as the king entered the house of the LORD, that the guards would carry them and would bring them back into the guards' room.

### **PEOPLE SPARED BUT KINGDOM SPOILED!**

**So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's palace. He took everything; he even took the golden shields which Solomon had made** - This is amazing turnaround -- Solomon had left the most abundant wealth of any king to his son and in only 5 years it was largely depleted! Why? They forsook the Law of the LORD! In fact what Solomon had accumulated over many years was gone in a matter of days! Proverbs 23:5 says "When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens." Solomon's gold was gone! Rehoboam, forsaking the way of David and Solomon (2Ch 11:17), has forfeited their divine blessings.

**THOUGHT** - Look out when you set your sights on treasure for you may soon forsake your greatest Treasure, the LORD!

**Guzik** on taking of the **shields** - These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This was an example of the emphasis of image over substance that began in the days of Solomon and worsened in the days of Rehoboam. According to Dilday, each large shield was worth about \$120,000. The smaller shields were worth \$30,000. \$33 million was invested in gold ceremonial shields—and now in the hands of the Egyptians.

**Cyril Barber** - the Chronicler made specific mention of the fact that Shishak took with him the golden shields that Solomon had made. Rehoboam, however, fearing loss of face before his people, made replicas of bronze. In the bright light of the sun, as he walked to the Temple, the shields look the same. In reality, however, they were a poor substitute for the real thing. They projected the impression of wealth, but in reality they merely covered up the true situation in Judah. Ichabod, "**your glory has departed**," could be written over Rehoboam's reign.

**Spurgeon** - "The temple was always very rich. Shishak came and stripped it. Everything there that was really valuable was taken away. That is generally the way with the devil. God is satisfied with tithes; but Shishak and Satan take all." (Spurgeon)

**Spurgeon** - He did not plunder the people; he was contented with the loot of the temple and the palace. These were comparatively easy terms for the conquered nation, and one wonders how such a powerful king as Shishak should have been thus satisfied in those days; but God has the hearts of all men under his control, and even when he lets a powerful foe go forth against his people, he still restrains him when he pleases. What a mercy it is for us that, when God chastens us, there is an end to it! It is always in measure, he does not let loose the fullness and the fierceness of his wrath, as he will upon the castaways in eternity; but when he lays his rod upon us, he counts every stripe. Forty stripes save one was all that an Israelite might have to endure; and, surely, God often stops far short of that number when he deals with us. However, Shishak humiliated the king and his people by taking away the treasures of the temple and the palace; and, among the rest of his plunder, "he carried away the shields of gold, which Solomon had made."

**Henry Morris** - An Egyptian inscription confirms this invasion by Shishak, a Pharaoh of Egypt's twenty-second dynasty, boasting of his triumphs in both the southern and northern kingdoms of Israel.

**Andrew Hill:** The report of the “treasures” of the Jerusalem temple and royal palace “carried off” by Shishak suggests the loot is given as tribute to “buy off” Shishak rather than taken as booty through war (12:9–11). It is even possible that an unhealthy fixation on these “treasures” may have been connected to Rehoboam’s unfaithfulness (since Israel’s kings were not to accumulate large amounts of silver and gold, cf. Deut 17:17). Beyond the fact that Judah is a diminished nation politically and economically after Shishak’s invasion, the reference to the confiscation of Solomon’s gold shields, subsequently replaced by bronze replicas, emphasizes the loss of Israel’s splendor (cf. 1 Kings 10:16–17; 2 Chron. 9:15–16)

**Peter Wallace: vv. 9-12 -- Rehoboam and the Age of Bronze.** The Chronicler has emphasized the wealth and splendor of Solomon’s day – a golden age, where silver was as common as stone. Now, all of that is gone. The service of God was golden. But now Egypt plunders Israel. When Israel came up out of Egypt, they had plundered the Egyptians taking much gold and silver, because after the ten plagues, the Egyptians were willing to pay anything to get rid of the Israelites! Now, several hundred years later, Egypt plunders Israel – taking back (with interest!) what they had given. The basic principle here is that while repentance may deliver you from destruction, it does not necessarily deliver you from the consequences of your sin.

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**James Smith - THE DIVINE ALCHEMIST** “Instead of which (shields of gold) King Rehoboam made shields of brass” (2 Chron. 12:9, 10). “For brass I will bring gold” (Isa. 60:17).

The old alchemists spent their lives in seeking to discover a substance which would change the baser metals into those of value. But all their efforts only met with failure. What would they have given to be able to transform brass into gold! There is a heavenly Alchemist who can do this. What a contrast there is between these two Scriptures! In the one brass is substituted for gold, and in the other gold for brass. The contrast is so great because one is the act of man, whilst the other is the act of God. Man, if left to himself, always substitutes the lower for the higher. Yet side by side with this degeneration we see the Divine Alchemist at work in regenerating, transforming and transfiguring.

Five years had passed since Solomon’s death, and they had been sad years of retrogression. During these decadent years the great split in the nation—the revolt of the nine and a half tribes—had taken place. Then, worse than all this, Judah “forsook the law of the Lord.” In this time of sin and schism their old enemy, the King of Egypt, found an easy entrance into the land. Though the king and people humbled themselves and sought the Lord, God permitted Shishak to spoil Jerusalem, to appropriate the treasures of the Temple and of the king’s house, wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. Note the irony of the situation—Israel, when led by God out of Egypt, spoiled the Egyptians. Now the Egyptians, six hundred years afterwards, spoiled them, getting their own back with usury. Among the booty were three hundred solid gold shields, worth £7500 each, used on special state occasions. Oh, how short lived is the glory which depends on the faithfulness of man! The Temple built by Solomon is robbed in the days of his son; and instead of the shields of gold which Shishak looted, Rehoboam made shields of brass. Yet, thank God, the Divine Alchemist is at work for His people. He is coming back again. And when He comes, He will bring back glory to Israel. Then, literally, as well as spiritually, for brass He will bring gold. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

But there is a message in all this for the backslider. When Rehoboam lost the pure gold what did he do? By all means he must keep up appearances. If he cannot afford golden shields, he must have something which resembles that precious metal—brass. And to avoid too close scrutiny by the people, he had them doubly guarded.

Is there a single Christian who has not at one time or another substituted brass for gold? Through unfaithfulness and sin we lose the pure gold of heart purity and communion with the Lord, of spiritual hunger and thirst after Divine things. And for all this gold, brass is substituted. All the outward acts of devotion and piety are kept up, and we look just the same as ever in the eyes of men. Scientists tell us of ice, and stone, and bronze ages. In religious experience we have these different periods. The ice stage is our state by nature the golden age is our state by grace. But, alas, there is sometimes the bronze age of mere externalism, when, though we have lost our first love, we keep up our round of Christian duties and perform all the outward acts of piety. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” Brass instead of gold. The appearance without the reality. “I bless His name, that I wax not pale, neither have I lost the colour of gold,” wrote Samuel Rutherford, during a time of great testing. Can you say this? If not, pray put yourself into the hands of the Divine Alchemist, who can give gold for brass. Then you will be able to joyfully testify: “He restoreth my soul.” Are you burdened by a sense of unworthiness? Then listen once again to Rutherford: “Often He makes gold of dross.” Splendid! What cannot the Divine Alchemist do with us, if we will but surrender ourselves to Him?

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**2 Chronicles 12:10 Then King Rehoboam made shields of bronze in their place and committed them to the care of the**

commanders of the guard who guarded the door of the king's house.

- shields of brass: 1Ki 14:27 La 4:1
- the chief: 2Sa 8:18 23:23 1Ch 11:25 Song 3:7,8

## TRADING GOLD FOR BRONZE

Then King [Rehoboam](#) made shields of bronze in their place and committed them to the care of the commanders of the guard who guarded the door of the king's house - This is a very sad verse. Imagine the effect on those who had seen Solomon's gleaming golden shields proudly displayed on the walls and now they look and see the pitiable bronze substitutes!

**William MacDonald** has an interesting note that Rehoboam "substituted bronze shields for gold, unwittingly illustrating that God's presence and favor (gold) were being replaced by His judgment (bronze). Gold is widely recognized by Bible students as symbolic of deity, and bronze (KJV, brass) as symbolic of judgment.

**Knapp** - Rehoboam made in their stead shields of bronze, and with these pathetically tried to keep up former appearances. It is like souls, who, when despoiled of their freshness and power by the enemy, laboriously endeavor to keep up an outward appearance of spiritual prosperity; or, like a fallen church, shorn of its strength, and robbed of its purity, seeking to hide its helplessness, and cover its nakedness, with the tinsel of ritualism, spurious revivalism, union, and anything that promises to give them some appearance."

**Spurgeon** - That was a come-down indeed, from shield's of gold to shields of copper; that is, I suppose, what is meant here by the brass. This is what the king suffered at the hands of Shishak; and it was an emblem of the condition of his people. The golden kingdom had become a brazen one.

**August Konkel:** The gold shields served a ritual function. They were carried by the guard accompanying the king when he moved from the palace to the temple. Royal processions lost much of their splendor with the bronze shields, but these were safely stored in the huge armory Solomon had built. ([Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**David Guzik** - 1 Kings 10:16–17 mentions these 500 shields, 200 large and 300 small. These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This was an example of the emphasis of image over substance that began in the days of Solomon and worsened in the days of Rehoboam....According to Dilday, each large shield was worth about \$120,000. The smaller shields were worth \$30,000. \$33 million was invested in gold ceremonial shields—and now in the hands of the Egyptians.

**J. Barton Payne:** They wished to emphasize how far Rehoboam fell in a mere few years. He had inherited an empire; five years later, master of a small state, he could protect his capital itself only by denuding his palace of its treasures. Solomon's court had despised silver; his son's court had to be content with bronze!

**G. Campbell Morgan:** The picture of Rehoboam's substitution of brass for gold is unutterably pathetic. Yet how often do the people of Jehovah masquerade amid imitations because they have lost the things of pure gold through unfaithfulness and sin.

**Ron Daniel** - 12:10-11 Shields Of Gold Replaced With Shields Of Bronze. Solomon had made 500 shields of gold (1Kin. 10:16-17; 2Chr. 9:15-16) for his royal palace. These were all taken by the Egyptians. As replacements, Rehoboam made bronze shields, which were kept in storage and only brought out when Rehoboam was going into the temple.

**THOUGHT - I think this paints an interesting picture for us.** Remember, shields in Scripture tend to be a symbol of faith (Eph. 6:16). Solomon's shields had been on display for all to see, 24 hours a day. But Rehoboam's shields are made out of an inferior material, and are only brought out when he goes to church. Sounds like the faith of many today, doesn't it? (Ron Daniel)

2 Chronicles 12:11 As often as the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards came and carried them and then brought them back into the guards' room.

As often as the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards came and carried them and then brought them back into the guards' room.

**2 Chronicles 12:12 And when he humbled himself, the anger of the LORD turned away from him, so as not to destroy him completely; and also conditions were good in Judah.**

- when: 2Ch 12:6,7 33:12,13 Isa 57:15 La 3:22,33,42 1Pe 5:6
- also in Judah things went well: or, yet in Judah there were good things, 2Ch 19:3 Ge 18:24 1Ki 14:13 Isa 6:13

### **Petitioning the Mercy of God to Mitigate the Judgment**

**And when he humbled himself, the anger of the LORD turned away from him, so as not to destroy him completely; and also conditions were good in Judah** - Conditions were "good" but consequences were real. Although it is not clearly stated, along with their action of humbling themselves, there must have been accompanying repentance, so that the sins described in 1 Kings 14:23-24 were terminated. That is the only way conditions could have been described as "good in Judah!" "This was the redeeming feature of a painful experience." (Allen)

**Leslie Allen** - In verse 12 the Chronicler sums up the situation. Rehoboam's self-humbling had averted the operation of God's destructive "wrath." Like a brand plucked from the burning, he had survived— "yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15), suffering loss.

**Utley** writes "There is a word play on "turned away." This word (BDB 996, KB 1427) is also commonly used for repentance. Rehoboam "humbled" himself, YHWH "repented" of His judgment and spared Jerusalem but, not without cost. (1) fortified cities destroyed, (2) royal sons probably died, (3) Jerusalem's temple and royal palace emptied of treasure, (4) Israel served Egypt for a period of time (cf. 2 Chr. 12:8) YHWH wants to bless His people. He has provided three ways for sinful people in the OT to come into fellowship with Himself and stay in fellowship. (1) the sacrifice system (FULFILLED AT THE CROSS). (2) the Mosaic regulations (feast days, social laws, etc) (FULFILLED BY CHRIST). (3) repentance (THE PATH STILL OPEN - CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE).

**Spurgeon** - Or, some behaved well. Even a measure of humiliation is acceptable with God; and though he did not save the nation from being plundered, yet he did rescue it from being altogether smitten. Alas for Rehoboam, he did a bad day's work when he turned away from God!....

**Spurgeon conditions were good in Judah** - Or, rather, "things in Judah even went well." There was comparative prosperity; they were not altogether prosperous, for they were not altogether right with God; but there was a sufficient proportion of godly men, the Puritanic party, the Evangelical party, was strong enough in the land, for God still to look upon it with favor, yet not unmixed with disapprobation; for the party that worshipped idols, the party composed of the superstitious, the party belonging to the world was still very strong.

**Ron Daniel** - 12:12-16 Summary Of Rehoboam's Life. As we see again, Rehoboam's double-mindedness lasted throughout his lifetime. He humbled himself, but then did evil.

**David Guzik** has an interesting note - Many in sin humble themselves before God hoping that He will not humble them further. Nevertheless, God knows just how much humbling someone needs and if more is necessary, God will certainly bring it.

**Martin Selman** - If God could show favour to a man such as Rehoboam, who typified the attitude which resulted in Judah's eventual collapse, there was always hope for those who humbled themselves before God. Indeed, the interest in the people was surely a direct encouragement to the Chronicler's contemporaries to seek God for themselves." (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**Raymond Dillard**: The Chronicler reiterates his conclusion that it was by humbling himself before the Lord that Rehoboam escaped (12:7), but he also adds the note that there was "some good" in Judah. The good is left undefined—it may have been the very acts of contrition themselves, the many faithful in the kingdom, the residual benefit of God's promises to David, or simply the favor shown to his people Israel. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**Andrew Hill**: The ambiguous phrase "there was some good in Judah" seems to look back to those three years when Rehoboam and Judah imitated the faithfulness of David and Solomon (esp. 11:13–17). . . The word "humbled himself" (Niphal of *kn'*, 12:12) means to forsake one's pride and yield in self-denying loyalty to God. This action appeases God's wrath and spares Rehoboam and Judah from total destruction. God delivers on his promise to respond with forgiveness and healing to those who humble themselves before him in prayer (7:14). The message of "humbling oneself" before God and receiving forgiveness and healing remains pertinent for the Chronicler and his audience. This will become the gist of John the Baptist's preaching (cf. Luke 3:2–9).

**2 Chronicles 12:13** So King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned 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.

- for Rehoboam: 2Ch 13:7 1Ki 14:21
- the city: 2Ch 6:6 Ps 48:1-3 78:68,69
- to put: Ex 20:24 De 12:5,11 Eze 48:35
- an Ammonitess: De 23:3 1Ki 11:1 Ne 13:1,26

#### Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:21 (Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned 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.

### Completion of Rehoboam's Reign

So King [Rehoboam](#) strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned - He had to hunker down in the capital city.

As Payne says the writer of chronicles emphasizes "how far Rehoboam fell in a mere few years. He had inherited an empire; five years later, master of a small state, he could protect his capital itself only by denuding his palace of its treasures. Solomon's court had despised silver; his son's court had to be content with bronze!"

Now [Rehoboam](#) was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem(930-913 BC), 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.

**Cyril Barber** - After the withdrawal of the Egyptians and their allies, Rehoboam knew that he and his people were in a vulnerable position. His defenses in the south were now virtually nonexistent, and to the north Jeroboam still posed a serious threat. "So he strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned" over God's people. The might of the kingdom of David and Solomon, however, was now only a memory.

**Martin Selman:** The statement that God had **chosen** Jerusalem (cf. 1 Kgs 14:21), and mention of God's Name are linked by the temple (cf. 2 Chr. 6:5-6, 34, 38; 7:12, 16; 33:7). They may also provide a backcloth to Rehoboam's humility, for the temple existed to encourage humble repentance (cf. 2 Chr. 7:14). (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**Utley** has an interesting comment on Rehoboam's mother **the Ammonitess** - This is a subtle hint at the problems caused by Solomon's foreign wives (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:1-8).

**Leslie Allen** closes out this section with some interesting conclusions - Later in his history the Chronicler is to state concerning Jehoshaphat that he set his "heart to seek God" (19:3). Rehoboam functions as his negative image, dark where he should have been light. This was the skeleton in his closet, and for the Chronicler it is the punchline of his historical sermon. He is warning Judeans of his own day not to presume on their heritage but to let geographical proximity to the temple be the measure of their proximity to God. A saner aptitude than Rehoboam's is supplied in Isaiah 33:14-16, to listen with respectful awe to the demands the God of Zion makes on the lives of His followers: "The sinners in Zion are afraid; ... / 'Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?' ... / He who walks righteously / His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks."

**2 Chronicles 12:14** He did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD.

- **set:** Heb. he fixed, 2Ch 11:16 2Ch 19:3 2Ch 30:19 1Sa 7:3 1Ch 29:18 Ps 57:7 Ps 78:8,37 1Co 15:58 1Co 16:13
- to seek: De 5:29 Ps 105:3,4 Isa 45:19 55:6,7 Eze 33:31 Mt 7:7

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, **'If you return to the LORD with all your heart**, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtarotheim from among you and **direct your hearts to the LORD** and serve Him alone; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines."



1 Chronicles 29:18 "O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Your people, and direct their heart to You;

2 Chronicles 11:16 Those from all the tribes of Israel **who set their hearts on seeking the LORD God of Israel** followed them to Jerusalem, to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.

2 Chronicles 19:3 "But there is some good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and **you have set your heart to seek God.**"

2 Chronicles 30:19 everyone who **prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers**, though not according to the purification rules of the sanctuary."

Deuteronomy 5:29 'Oh that they had **such a heart** in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!

Psalms 78:8; 37 And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God....37 For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant.

### **Moral Characterization of Rehoboam's Reign**

**He did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD**- Oh, the sails and rudder of the heart! Solomon had spoken clearly to the vital importance of one's heart writing "**Watch** over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." (Pr 4:23+)

**Spurgeon** - He was one of that fickle sort, neither here nor there; a compromising gentleman, not very definite in anything; he would go right if he were driven that way, and he would go wrong if he were led in that direction. Oh, how many there are who never prepare their hearts to seek the Lord! They are not determinately bad; they have not enough backbone in them to be leaders in evil; but they are never good for much, because they have never made up their minds to do the right at all costs; they have never had their heart prepared by the Holy Spirit to seek the Lord.

**Spurgeon** - You see how readily Rehoboam went, first towards God, then towards idols, and then back again, towards God; he was always ready to shift and change, he wrought no great reforms in the land; we do not read that, he held a great passover, as Hezekiah did, or that the high places were taken away; but, as soon as Shishak was gone, he felt perfectly content. There was not anything real and permanent in his religion; it did not hold him. He held it sometimes, but it never held him."

**Martin Selman** - "Chronicles' over-all view of Rehoboam [has] quite a different feel from Kings. While accepting Rehoboam's very real failings as a leader, Chronicles is keen to demonstrate the value of repentance and the extent of God's mercy." (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** The evil associated with his reign is explained in the parallel account in 1 Kgs 14:22–24 to be idolatry, but there it is attributed to the whole nation of Judah. The Chronicler focuses only on the sins of Rehoboam. He had not set his heart on seeking the Lord. Despite his early good impression (11:5–23) he finally was judged in unfavorable terms (see 13:5–7).

**Geoffrey Kirkland:** We learn 4 things from v.14: 1. the REVIEW — he did evil... 2. the REASON — because... 3. the ROOT — he did not set his heart... 4. the RESOLVE — to seek the LORD

**Frederick Mabie:** As anticipated in Solomon's temple-dedication prayer, God abounds in mercy and forgiveness when his people seek him in humility and contrition. This is a theme stressed over and over again by the Chronicler, no doubt for the instruction and encouragement of the postexilic community still reeling from the sting of drastic divine judgment. Although there is some "good" to be found in Judah (cf. 11:2-4, 16-17; 12:5-7), Rehoboam is nonetheless described at the beginning of chapter 12 as abandoning God's covenantal law (cf. v. 1), and he is summarized at the end of the chapter as doing evil because he did not set his heart on the Lord (v. 14).

**Peter Wallace:** There is only one thing that God requires of us. You can say it a lot of different ways – but it is really just one thing. Set your heart to seek the LORD. (the idea of "set your heart" has to do with "firmly establishing" your heart; this is the word used to describe how God has firmly established the heavens and the earth). The point here is that this must be your **fixed and determined purpose**. This is not something that you can "try" for a few weeks to see if it works. It must be your settled conviction – the one thing that drives you in everything else – **To seek the LORD**.

**David Guzik** - "As the first king of Judah, Rehoboam is an example of God's dealings with David's whole dynasty." (Selman)

Therefore, the following themes are seen in Chronicles' description of Rehoboam:

- Obedience to the prophetic word (2 Chronicles 11:1–4)
- Strengthening the kingdom through building work (2 Chronicles 11:5–12)
- Activities of priests, Levites, and those who seek God (2 Chronicles 11:13–17)
- An expanding royal family (2 Chronicles 11:18–21)
- Humble repentance (2 Chronicles 12:5–12)

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**F B Meyer** - He did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord.

In the margin of the A. V. for prepared the alternative rendering fixed is suggested. The R. V. gives set, "he set not his heart to seek the Lord." This is very true of all of us. Before temptation comes we almost always have a warning of some kind. The barometer falls; the sea birds come in to the shore; the leaves of the trees are bent back. The Spirit of God contrives to give the soul some signal that at any moment it may expect an assault. The question always is at such a time, Is the heart set on seeking and doing the will of God? If it be, if without reserve the whole nature is determined to do God's will at any cost, there is no fear of the enemy effecting an entrance. All day the thunder of its artillery may boom around, but from every side the foe will be repelled, until presently the storm will roll far down the wind.

If, on the other hand, there is any vacillation; if, whilst ostensibly avowing our determination to do the right thing, we secretly whisper in our deepest consciousness that we intend to go as far as we can in self-indulgence, and would be almost thankful if circumstances compelled us to yield—we are almost certain to fall. The will must be whole in its resolves; the heart must be consecrated in its most secret determinations; no traitor may be harbored, who may open the postern gate. Oh to say with David, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed"! But this steadfastness is one of those preparations of the heart which can only be obtained through the gracious indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Hence we pray with David, "Renew a steadfast spirit within me." And while we pray, we must never forget our Lord's command to watch also.

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**Spurgeon - Sermon Notes on 2Ch 12:14**—"And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord."

See his sermon [Rehoboam the Unready](#)

This is the summing up of Rehoboam's life: he was not so bad as some, but he did evil in various ways, not so much from design as from neglect.

The evil effects of the father's sin and the mother's idolatry were seen in their son, yet there was another cause, namely, a want of heart-preparation. The son of Solomon very naturally desired many wives—2 Chron. 11:23; and it was no marvel that the child of Naamah the Ammonitess allowed images and groves to defile the land; yet there was a deeper cause of his life's evil, and that lay in himself. His heart was not thorough with the Lord, and he, himself, was not carefully consecrated to the worship of Jehovah. He might have done well had he not been **Rehoboam the Unready**.

#### **I. HE DID NOT BEGIN LIFE WITH SEEKING THE LORD.**

1. He was young, and should have sought wisdom of God; but he went to Shechem to meet the people without prayer or sacrifice. 2 Chron. 10:1. That which commences without God will end in failure.
2. He leaned on counsellors, saying, "What advice give ye?" Of those counsellors he chose the worst, namely, the younger and prouder nobles. 2 Chron. 10:8. Those who reject divine wisdom generally refuse all other wisdom.
3. He committed great folly by threatening the people, and refusing their just demands; and that while as yet he had not been accepted as their king. 2 Chron. 10:13, 14. He had none of his father's wisdom. How can they **act prudently and prosperously who are not guided of the Lord?**

#### **II. HE SHOWED NO HEART IN SEEKING THE LORD AFTERWARDS.**

1. He obeyed the prophet's voice when the man of God forbade him to fight with Israel; yet afterwards he forsook the law of the Lord. 2 Chron. 12:1. He is said to have been "young and tender-hearted," which means soft. 2 Chron. 13:7.
2. He winked at the most horrible crimes among the people whom he ought to have judged. 1 Kings 14:24.
3. He fell into his father's sins.
4. He busied himself more for the world than for God. We hear nothing of his worship but much of his building, nothing of his faith but much of his fickleness. 2 Chron. 11:5–12.

#### **III. HE WAS NOT FIXED AND PERSEVERING IN HIS SEEKING THE LORD.**

1. For three years his loyalty to his God made him prosper, by bringing into Judah all the better sort of people who fled from Jeroboam's calf-worship. (2 Chron. 11:13–17), yet he forsook the Lord who had prospered him.
2. He grew proud, and God handed him over to Shishak. Verse 5.

3. He humbled himself and was pardoned, yet he stripped the Lord's house to buy off the king of Egypt.
4. He wrought no great reforms and celebrated no great passover, yet he owned, "the Lord is righteous." Verse 6.

#### IV. HE HAD NO CARE TO SEEK THE LORD THOROUGHLY.

Yet no man is good by accident: no one goes right who has not intended to do so. Without heart, religion must die.

1. Human nature departs from the right way, especially in kings, who are tolerated in more sin than others.
2. Courtiers usually run the wrong way, especially the young, proud, and frivolous. Rehoboam loved the gay and proud, and gave himself up to their lead.
3. Underlings are apt to follow us and applaud us if we go in an evil path, even as Judah followed Rehoboam. Thus those who should lead are themselves led.

The kind of preparation required by me, in order to the diligent and acceptable seeking of the Lord, my God, is somewhat after this fashion:—

To feel and confess my need of God in the whole of my life.

To cry unto him for help and wisdom.

To yield to his guidance, and not to follow the counsel of vain persons, nor to bluster at those around me.

To be anxious to be right in everything, searching the Scriptures, and seeking by prayer, to know what I should do.

To serve the Lord carefully and earnestly, leaving nothing to chance, passion, fashion, or whim.

Are there any professors among us of the same sort as Rehoboam?

Are there any hopeful young men who lack whole-hearted devotion to the Lord?

Are there any older men who have suffered already from vacillation, hesitation, or double-mindedness?

Are there any just escaped from such trouble who nevertheless are not firm, and ready even now?

Oh, for a clear sense of the evil and folly of such a condition!

Oh, for the confirming power of the Holy Ghost!

Oh, for vital union with the Lord Jesus!

#### EXAMPLES

Before the University Boat-race comes off, the men undergo a long and severe training. They would not think of contending for the mastery without preparation; and do we imagine that we can win the race of life at a venture, without bringing under the body and cultivating the mind? The preacher studies his discourse carefully, though it will only occupy part of an hour; and is our life-sermon worthy of no care and consideration? A saintly life is a work of far higher art than the most valuable painting or precious statue, yet neither of these can be produced without thought. A man must be at his best to produce an immortal poem, yet a few hundred lines will sum it all up. Let us not dream that the far greater poem of a holy life can be made to flow forth like impromptu verse.

Well known to me was a kindly, well-disposed gentleman, who, like Rehoboam, was tender-hearted or persuasible. He was a worldling of pleasing manners, who delighted in the esteem of the circle which surrounded him. He had a great respect for religious persons, and especially for ministers; but he could not afford to be a godly man himself, for then he might have become unpopular with a large circle of worldly fashionables. He once quitted an assembly which I addressed, because he said, "I felt almost on the go, and should soon have been converted if I had not rushed out." "There," said he, "Spurgeon, I am like an india-rubber doll when you are preaching; you can make me into any shape you like; but then I get back into my old form when you have done." He was an accurate reproduction of the soft-souled son of Solomon: a very Pliable, easily persuaded to set out on pilgrimage, but equally ready to return at the world's call.

The parable of the two sons will come in here. Rehoboam said, "I go, Sir"; but he went not. The modern Rehoboam is a perfect gentleman: if he did but know his own mind, he would also be a man. He is inclined to obey God, but others incline him to keep in the fashion. He is like the pear which the French call *Bon Chrétien*, very promising, but apt to become sleepy, and to rot at the core. This sort of people is not of much use either to the good cause or to its opposite.

**2 Chronicles 12:15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, according to genealogical enrollment? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.**

- first and last: 2Ch 9:29
- book: Heb. words
- Shemaiah: 2Ch 12:5 1Ki 12:22
- Iddo: 2Ch 9:29 13:22

- wars: 1Ki 14:30

#### Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:29-31 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 30 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually. 31 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. And Abijah his son became king in his place.

### REHOBAM'S REIGN RECORDED BY A PROPHET AND A SEER

Now the acts of [Rehoboam](#), from first to last, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, according to genealogical enrollment? - Shemaiah's records provided some of the source material for the book (2Ch 11:2; 12:5). (Ryrie)

**And there were wars between [Rehoboam](#) and Jeroboam continually** - This was a "civil war" with brother fighting brother like in the American Civil War but this one did not come to an end as did America's civil war (after 4 years, 1 month and 2 weeks).

**Utley** points out that "There is no OT evidence of a full war but this probably refers to ongoing border skirmishes and raids (cf. 2 Chr. 13:4-20)."

**Spurgeon** - So they pass away. One generation dies, and another follows. God grant that, when we fall asleep, it may not be with the sin of Rehoboam lying upon us, neither may we be succeeded by evil sons; but may we serve God in our day, and be followed by those who shall serve him still better! The Lord grant it! Amen.

**Spurgeon** - Where are those books now? It is of no consequence whatever where they are. There are a great many other books that have perished because they were not inspired. They were books of genealogies, valuable in their day; but if they had been of any use to us spiritually, they would have been preserved. Now, as other ancient books have evidently been lost, let us devoutly bless God that the inspired Books have been preserved to us. By what a continuous miracle of Providence, every inspired letter has been continued in existence, it would be hard to tell; but we ought constantly to praise the Lord that, out of the Book of this prophecy, not a line has been removed.

**Payne** - "The destiny of any country depends to a great extent on the character of its leaders; and this was particularly the case among the Hebrews, into whose history God chose to intervene more directly than he has for other nations." (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition- Page 50](#))

**2 Chronicles 12:16 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David; and his son Abijah became king in his place.**

- slept: 1Ki 14:29-31
- Abijah: 2Ch 13:1 1Ki 14:31, Abijam, 1Ch 3:10 Mt 1:7, Abia

### ABIJAH ASCENDS TO THRONE

**And [Rehoboam](#) slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David; and his son Abijah became king in his place** This was Rehoboam's favorite son (2Ch 11:21-22). In 1Ki 14:31 **Abijah** is called Abijam.

#### Related Resource:

- [Who was King Abijah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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Steven Cole - [The Peril Of Partial Obedience \(2 Chronicles 10-12, Rehoboam\)](#)

Henry Ford is reputed to have scoffed, "History is bunk!" Unfortunately, many Christians tacitly agree, as shown by the fact that they seldom read and even less frequently meditate on and apply the many lessons from the historical books of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. But these things were written for our instruction (1 Cor. 10:11), and we suffer if we neglect studying them.

The books 1 & 2 Chronicles (in the Hebrew Bible they were one book) were written shortly before 400 B.C., either by Ezra or a scribe living around Ezra's time, to the remnant of Jews who had returned to the land after the Babylonian captivity. They wrap up the recorded history of the Old Testament period (they are placed at the end of the Hebrew Bible). While the history in 2 Chronicles often parallels events in 1 & 2 Kings, the authors have different purposes. The books of Kings show how the fall of Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom) occurred because of God's judgment because the two kingdoms forsook God and followed the idolatrous practices of the nations around them. The books of Chronicles were written to encourage the returned remnant and bring them back to the true worship of God by showing that His covenant with David still stands, and if the nation will obey Him, they will experience His blessing. (The above information gleaned primarily from Eugene Merrill, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary, Old Testament* [Victor Books], pp. 432, 590-591.)

In our study over the next few weeks, I'm going to focus on the kings of Judah beginning with Rehoboam down to the Babylonian captivity, as recorded in 2 Chronicles 10-36 (the chronicler ignores the kings of the northern kingdom, except as they interact with the kings of Judah). We will skip a few of the minor kings. Keep in mind that this is not just a recounting of historical facts, but history with a punch line. It is selective history, written to make a spiritual point. This is not to say that it is fabricated or untrue history, but rather that the author has chosen and arranged his material to move God's people to greater obedience. I pray that it will do the same for us.

The central lesson we learn from King Rehoboam, son of Solomon, grandson of David, is the peril of partial obedience. Rehoboam *sort of* obeyed the Lord, and he *sort of* experienced God's blessing. But as any parent knows, there is a vast difference between your children *sort of* obeying you and their complete obedience. There's a big difference between their *sort of* being home by ten o'clock and their being home by ten o'clock! And when it comes to obeying the Word of God, we all, due to our perverse fallen natures, are prone to *sort of* obey God, but also *sort of* do what we wanted to do anyway.

Partial obedience is a peril that plagues us all and results in partial blessing.

Before we point our finger at Rehoboam, we need to realize that he inherited a number of problems beyond his control. Although his grandfather David was a godly man in many ways, he never dealt with his weakness for women. In disobedience to the Law of Moses, David multiplied wives for himself. As if all of his beautiful wives were not enough, he committed adultery with Bathsheba and, after murdering her husband, took her as another of his wives.

Although God forgave David when he repented, God did not remove the disastrous consequences. David's sin wreaked havoc in the lives of his adult children. Rehoboam's father, Solomon, multiplied wives more than David had ever dreamed of (300 wives and 700 concubines)! Rehoboam's mother was a foreigner, an Ammonitess (2Ch 12:13). Solomon's foreign wives led him into idolatry. As a result, God told Solomon that He would tear the kingdom from him and give it to Solomon's servant. But on account of David, God promised not to do it in Solomon's lifetime, but rather to tear the kingdom from his son (1Ki 11:11-13). That's Rehoboam! When Rehoboam makes a stupid decision that results in the rebellion of the northern kingdom, the author points out that "it was a turn of events from the Lord," to establish His word (10:15).

You're probably thinking: If God sovereignly ordained this turn of events, then Rehoboam was playing against a stacked deck! He was a "victim" of his father's disobedience and of God's sovereignly ordained prophecy! Surely, God wouldn't hold him accountable for doing something that had been predestined to happen! And yet--don't stumble over this point--God held Rehoboam accountable for his disobedience!

Here's the mystery--that nothing, not even the rebellion of Satan or of sinful people can thwart God's sovereign plan (see Acts 2:23; 4:27-28). He works all things after the counsel of His will (Eph. 1:11). And yet, God holds each person accountable for his disobedience. You may be coming from a terrible background. Maybe your parents, like Rehoboam's, were hypocrites who claimed to be believers, but their lives didn't match up. Maybe your life was scarred because of your father's terrible sin. You may have every excuse in the book as to why you don't obey the Lord. But God still expects you to obey and you and those around you will suffer if you don't! The first lesson we learn from Rehoboam is that ...

1. Partial obedience is a peril for us all.

We'll see this clearly if we examine Rehoboam's partial obedience and spell out what it means.

#### A. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE MEANS HEARING WHAT WE WANT TO HEAR, NOT WHAT GOD SAYS.

Rehoboam was wise in that when Jeroboam's delegation presented their request to lighten the load, Rehoboam didn't shoot off his mouth on the spot. He asked for three days to think about it. He was also wise to seek out counselors. But where he blew it was to listen to counselors who told him what he wanted to hear, not what he needed to hear. The older counselors who had served Solomon urged a gentle approach. It's doubtful whether their advice would have totally prevented a revolution, since Jeroboam and company seemed determined to grab power one way or another. But at least it could have forestalled the revolt and it would have

deprived them of a pretext for revolution. But his macho reply in line with the younger counselors was like tossing a match on a powder keg.

Rehoboam knew better. His father wrote the book of Proverbs to him. It's filled with exhortations to heed the counsel of elders and not to be hot-headed and impetuous. But he probably felt uneasy in his new leadership role and mistakenly thought that asserting his authority was the way to establish his power. So he took the counsel he wanted to hear, not what he needed to hear.

Have you ever had that problem? You read the Bible looking for a verse to support what you want to do, even if you have to ignore ten verses that confront you! Or, you shop around for someone to tell you what you want to hear and ignore the many who tell you what you need to hear. You're falling into the peril of partial obedience.

#### B. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE MEANS ACTING BEFORE YOU SEEK THE LORD'S MIND, NOT AFTER.

Rehoboam sent Hadoram (NIV = Adoniram), who was over the forced labor, but the people stoned him (10:18). Rehoboam hopped into his chariot and took off for Jerusalem. When he got back, he started putting together an army to quell this rebellion. He had a good case: He was the king descended from David! These rebels had killed his man. Let's go get them!

There was only one problem. He hadn't bothered to ask the Lord about it. The Lord sent a prophet who said, "Don't do it!" Whether from obedience or practicality, Rehoboam had enough sense at that point to obey. But it was only partial obedience because he hadn't sought the Lord first.

Do you ever do that--plan first and pray second? A lot of churches operate that way. Their plans are in line with what God would seem to want (why would God want a divided kingdom?). But there's a big difference between formulating all of our great plans for God and bringing them to Him for His rubber stamp of approval versus seeking Him first and then doing as He directs.

#### C. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE MEANS LIVING IN LINE WITH CUSTOM, NOT IN SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WORD.

Note 2Ch 11:21: He took 18 wives and 60 concubines. Where did he get that idea? From his father and grandfather, who got it from the other kings in that day. It was the thing for kings to do. It showed how powerful and wealthy you were. Talk about feeding a man's pride, to have dozens of beautiful women at your disposal! There was only one slight problem. Deuteronomy 17:17 specifically commanded that the king should not multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away from God.

Why didn't David and Solomon and Rehoboam obey that commandment? It wasn't in line with the custom. Nobody did that! A king who didn't have a large harem would have been the laughingstock of the Middle East!

There are a lot of things the Christian world does today because they're the custom. Oh, sure, there are Bible verses to the contrary. But everybody's doing it these days. So the church slips into partial obedience.

Let me single out just one--the matter of divorce. Thirty years ago in our nation, divorce was taboo. A divorced man had a stigma against him if he tried to run for political office. Today nobody gives that a second thought. It really doesn't matter. Thirty years ago, very few Christians got divorced. In our day, many Christian leaders get divorced and keep right on going without missing a beat. The custom of our day is, if you're not happy, then do whatever you need to get happiness.

And so when you find yourself in a difficult spot in your marriage, what will you do? Will you stay and pay the price of commitment, hard work, and change to please the Lord, or will you bail out and move on to the next partner? Custom says, "Nobody stays in a lousy marriage. Your happiness is the thing." Full obedience to God says, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate" (Matt. 19:6).

Thus partial obedience means hearing what you want to hear, not what God says; acting before you seek the Lord's mind, not after; and, living in accordance with custom, not God's Word.

#### D. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE MEANS DILUTING THE WORSHIP OF THE ONE TRUE GOD WITH CULTURAL RELIGION.

Note 2Ch 12:1: "It took place when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established and strong that he and all Israel with him forsook the law of the Lord." By forsaking the law of the Lord, the author does not mean that they cast it off completely. Just a few verses later (2Ch 12:11) we read that the king used to enter the house of the Lord. In verse 12 we read that "there was some good in Judah" (NIV), which Keil and Delitzsch interpret as "there were some proofs of piety and some fear of God." So it wasn't total apostasy.

What did Rehoboam do? 1 Kings 14:22-24 says that they added to Israel's worship all the abominations of the Canaanite nations which the Lord had dispossessed. Keil and Delitzsch (*Commentary on the Old Testament* [Eerdmans] 1 Kings, pp. 213-14) argue that at first these were not pagan idols, but rather were human inventions of worship copied from the pagan idols. At first they were associated with the worship of the Lord, but they quickly polluted the purity of worship prescribed in the Scriptures.



Now you may be thinking, “Well at least we don’t have any problem in this area. We don’t worship idols in America. We don’t have pagan religious customs mingled in with our Christianity.” The late Francis Schaeffer argued that the American idols are personal peace and affluence. In other words, as long as God makes us feel good (peace) and gives us what we want (affluence), we’ll “follow” Him. But we’re really not following God; we’re using God for personal gain. Our real god is self. If the true God calls us to go through hardship or sacrifice or if He confronts our sin, forget it! We shop around for something that makes us feel good.

Listen, we live in a leisure-oriented, laid-back, low commitment, licentious, luxurious culture. You can’t tell me that our culture hasn’t affected our Christianity. We’ll attend church as long as it’s convenient. We’ll even give to the church, as long as it doesn’t pinch our lifestyle too much. But to be committed to serve every week? To give sacrificially off the top every paycheck, so that we have to give up some new toy or some leisure activity? But if you only serve Christ when it’s convenient and give when it doesn’t pinch you too much, you’re into partial obedience.

#### E. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE MEANS FOLLOWING GOD WHEN YOU’RE IN NEED, BUT FORSAKING HIM WHEN YOU’RE DOING WELL.

Note 2Ch 12:1: When Jeroboam was threatening Rehoboam from the north and Egypt from the south, he sought the Lord. But as soon as the pressure eased off and he was strong, he forgot about God. It’s called foxhole faith: you cry out to God when you’re in a jam, but forget Him when things are going well.

The church at Laodicea was there. Their evaluation of themselves was, “We’re rich and wealthy and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17). As a result, they were lukewarm and God threatened to spit them out of His mouth. God’s evaluation of them was slightly different: “You are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.” In other words, our true condition before God is that we are always needy. If we lose sight of that, we’ll grow lukewarm and lapse into partial obedience.

#### 2. Partial obedience results in partial blessing.

The fact that God blesses us at all when we only partially obey Him reveals the magnitude of His grace. But He did give Rehoboam and the nation a measure of blessing (2Ch 12:7, 12). But they also missed out on so much more that God would have done for them if they had obeyed Him completely. Note three results of partial obedience:

#### A. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE RESULTS IN WEAKENED NATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, AND FAMILY LIFE.

Nationally, the nation was divided and never recovered the influence it had under David and Solomon. With the weakened nation went a weakened testimony for the Lord God of Israel. Our nation suffers because of the partial obedience of the church.

Religiously, the glory of Solomon’s temple was gone forever (2Ch 12:9). Shishak stripped the gold and Rehoboam replaced it with bronze, a cheap substitute (the symbol of God’s judgment). In our day, partial obedience means an anemic church where the glory of God’s presence is seldom experienced.

Family-wise, partial obedience means weakened family life. If you don’t think that Rehoboam’s family life was weak, think about this: How would you like to grow up as one of 28 sons or 60 daughters born to one of the 18 wives and 60 concubines? No doubt they had all the material comforts they needed (2Ch 11:23), but time with dad (who had a favorite wife and son) was rare. Partial obedience to God’s Word, especially mingling worldly psychology with what the Bible says about the family and how to deal with relational and emotional problems, is greatly limiting God’s blessing on American Christian homes.

#### B. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE RESULTS IN THE SERVICE OF A MORE DIFFICULT MASTER.

Note 12:8: They thought it was tough serving God, so He said, “All right, let’s let them serve the world for a while!” We sometimes think that it’s tough serving Christ. Have you ever tried serving the world? The world is a far more exacting master than the Lord. As Proverbs 13:15 (KJV) puts it, “The way of the transgressor is hard.”

God loves you; the world couldn’t care less about you. God seeks to build you as a person; the world tears you down. God gives your life purpose by fitting into His eternal plan; the world has no purpose except trying to make yourself happy for a few years before you die. Would you rather serve the Lord or the world?

#### C. PARTIAL OBEDIENCE RESULTS IN CONTINUAL HASSLES.

Note 2Ch 12:15: “And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.” “Continual wars” means little border skirmishes and continual hostility. There wasn’t an all-out battle until the reign of Rehoboam’s son Abijah (2Ch 13:2ff). But Rehoboam never had rest or peace.

Do you have continual hassles in your life? Sometimes such things are not due to any specific sin, but rather God’s means of making us more like Jesus. But quite often we experience continual hassles because of partial obedience on our part. At least such hassles

should make us stop and examine ourselves to see if there is some area where we're only "sort of" obeying the Lord. We ought to experience His rest and peace.

## Conclusion

What's the solution for partial obedience?

**First, we need to see the foolishness of trying to dodge God.** He is the absolute sovereign of the universe. He even used the Egyptian king to do His will, and that only as far as God allowed (2Ch 12:2, 5, 8). If we try to dodge God and get our own way, we only hurt ourselves and miss out on His full blessing.

**Second, humble yourself and acknowledge God's righteousness in disciplining you through trials** (2Ch 12:6). So often when trials come we think, "I'm following God and He then allows this to happen. It's not fair! I don't deserve this!" And so we resist God's righteous dealings with us. Never forget: If God dealt fairly with you, He would send you straight to hell! Even the righteous Job had no claim against God. He is righteous in all His ways, including His discipline of us through trials. We need to repent and submit.

**Third, set your heart to seek God.** The priests who defected from Jeroboam to Rehoboam had done this (2Ch 11:16), but Rehoboam had not (2Ch 12:14). "Setting your heart" implies a deliberate, sustained focus. You don't accidentally or casually fall into seeking the Lord. You have to make a fixed resolution to seek God through His Word and prayer and to obey His commands.

One of the most difficult patients for any doctor to treat is the one who doesn't follow orders. The patient takes half the prescription and seems to feel better, so he stops even though the doctor emphasized the need to take the whole dose. The patient sort of follows the diet the doctor prescribed, except for here and there where his little violations cancel any benefits of the prescribed course. The patient more or less stays off the sore foot as the doctor prescribed, except for when he absolutely couldn't avoid it, which was precisely when the doctor told him to keep off it. Partial obedience!

Even though we experience poor health, we don't obey the doctor completely because to do so would mean changing our habits or schedules, and that's too inconvenient! And even though we miss out on God's full blessing, we only sort of obey Him because change is just too difficult. Don't fall into the peril of partial obedience. Obey God no matter how tough and you'll experience His abundant blessing.

## Discussion Questions

1. What are some American customs which threaten to undermine our total obedience to God's Word? How has our culture affected our Christianity?
2. Some obey God and yet suffer terribly. Do we have distorted views of what His blessing means?
3. How can we guard against partial obedience?

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## Paul Apple - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How can we keep our faith strong and fervent during times of prosperity and security?
- 2) How can we continually humble ourselves before the Lord and acknowledge our sin and His righteous rule in our lives?
- 3) How does the repeating theme of God's mercy towards His rebellious chosen people encourage us to forsake sin and seek God despite the desperate nature of our circumstances?
- 4) What privileges did Rehoboam enjoy that should have prepared him to be a godly leader – making his failure even sadder?

## QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Raymond Dillard:** Shishak (945–924 B.C.) was the founder of the twenty-second dynasty and achieved the reunification of a divided Egypt, a goal that had eluded his predecessors. As long as Israel remained militarily powerful under Solomon in its position along Egypt's northern and eastern borders, Shishak could do little more than harbor rebels (1 Kgs 11:26–40) and foster rebellion among Solomon's vassals (1 Kgs 11:14–22). After Solomon's death and the disintegration of his empire, and with a client of Egypt on the throne of the Northern Kingdom, Shishak's forces could sweep through and around Israel and Judah at will. So great is the concern of the biblical authors with Jerusalem that were the Bible our only source regarding this campaign, it would seem that Shishak attacked Judah alone, primarily for the prize of Solomon's golden shields in Jerusalem. However, in Shishak's own record of the

campaign written on the walls of a temple at Karnak, more than 150 towns are named, but Jerusalem is not mentioned. From Shishak's topographical list it emerges that the kingdom of Israel and the Negev of Judah were in fact the main objectives of the expedition. . . The reign of Rehoboam is the author's first opportunity to demonstrate how he will treat the reigns of kings after the schism; it provides a virtual paradigm for the program announced in the divine response to Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple (7:14). Almost all the changes the Chronicler has made in his Vorlage have served the purpose of highlighting the fact that God responds with blessings for obedience and with punishment for transgression. Though Kings reports the obedience of Rehoboam to Shemaiah's first speech (1 Kgs 12:21–24), the Chronicler goes on to show how this obedience issued in prosperity and power (11:5–12), popular support (11:13–17), and progeny (11:18–23). Though Kings reports the invasion of Shishak and the loss of Solomon's shields (1 Kgs 14:25–28), that author makes no theological judgment regarding those events; contrast the Chronicler, however, who provides the theological rationale for both the attack and the narrow escape of Judah. All the key terms ("seek, humble, abandon/forsake, rebel") the Chronicler uses to convey his theology of immediate retribution occur in these chapters. Rehoboam's reign marks the first time Jerusalem suffers military humiliation since it became the City of David; it had never experienced in Israelite hands "servitude to the kingdoms of other lands" (12:8, a passage unique to Chronicles). Penitence and fidelity in Rehoboam's day had opened a way to escape disaster, just as a penitent community had enjoyed restoration to their land and temple in the days preceding the Chronicler's own times. The author's message to the post-exilic community, now living in servitude under the Persian empire, could not be missed: the path to freedom and to the amelioration of Judah's difficulties lay in seeking God and in humbling oneself before him, while turning from that path could bring only disaster. The passage is a warning against presumptuous transgression, for "the soul who sins is the one who will die" (Ezek 18:4, 20, 24) (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**Andrew Hill:** The split of Solomon's kingdom signals the end of Israel's "golden age" both figuratively and literally. The harsh consequences of divine retribution for disobedience to Yahweh's covenant is no doubt meant as a "wake-up" call to both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The Shishak episode illustrates what can (and sadly does) happen again in Israelite history. The message has currency for the Chronicler's audience as well since God is still the sovereign Lord of history, and postexilic Israel is still bound to him in covenant relationship. (See [1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 7](#))

**John Olley:** Warnings of how being "strong" can turn to the arrogance of self-sufficiency and a turning away from God, who has enabled the blessing, and to other gods are seen elsewhere in Scripture. In the preaching of Deuteronomy, the people are warned that, once they have settled in the land where God has given so much, they must "beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day" (Deut. 8:17–18). Such "wealth" can be extended to matters such as abilities, family background, physical beauty, knowledge, or spiritual experience. The prophets proclaim God's anguish as people ascribe and give to other gods what he has given (Ezek. 16:1–22; Hos. 2:1–13). Later, Jesus warns of the self-confidence of the builder of "larger barns," leading to the alternative of seeking God's kingdom, for "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:13–34).

Beyond the warnings, however, is hope. The account of Rehoboam is a reminder that even when there has been a turning from trust and humble service of God, often with grave consequences, the grace of God is seen as we "humble ourselves." Consequences of the wrongdoing may remain and be mitigated, but the relationship is restored, and we look forward to the new heavens and new earth when all will be put right (Rom. 8:18–25; 2 Pet. 3:13). (See [ESV Expository Commentary \(Volume 3\): 1 Samuel–2 Chronicles](#))

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