

2 Chronicles Chapter 12

Verses 1-4: The words “all Israel” here refer to the southern kingdom, Judah. “Shishak” (Sheshonq in certain historical texts), was a military commander and the appointed heir of Pharaoh Psusennes II, who died without producing a son.

“Fifth year”: 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.

2 Chronicles 12:1 "And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him."

Or when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin being firmly attached to him, and great numbers from the other tribes coming over to him, and things going on peaceably and prosperously during the three years that he and his people abode by the pure worship of God.

"And had strengthened himself": Built fortified cities for the defense of himself and kingdom (2 Chron. 11:5), he forsook the law of the Lord. After he had reigned three years, and was become strong, and thought himself safe and secure on the throne, trusting to his strength.

"And all Israel with him": The greater part of them following the example of their king; of this defection, and the sins they fell into (see 1 Kings 14:22).

We find that it did not take Rehoboam long to turn his back on the LORD. We saw a little of this in the beginning of the last lesson. He was a really evil man down deep in his heart. It appears that it was not just the king involved in this sin, but all of the people as well. Sodomy was one of the sins they were involved in. The grove worship they had gotten into was a religion of sensuousness.

Verses 12:2-5: “Shishak”: He ruled over Egypt (ca. 945 – 924 B.C.). An Egyptian record of this invasion written on stone has been found, recording that Shishak’s army penetrated all the way north to the Sea of Galilee. He wanted to restore Egypt’s once-great power, but was unable to conquer both Israel and Judah. However, he was able to destroy cities in Judah and gain some control of trade routes. Judah came under Egyptian control.

2 Chronicles 12:2 "And it came to pass, [that] in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD,"

It appears that by the “fifth year” of his reign, “King Rehoboam” had forgotten God. Perhaps he had begun to feel overly confident because he had so strengthened the cities in his realm (11:5-12). Power without accountability has a corrosive effect on the human heart.

For Shishak” (see the note on 1 kings 14:25-26).

One of the ways the LORD punished people, was by sending an army to war against them. Shishak was the son of the Assyrian king Nimrod. He had befriended Jeroboam in Egypt, when he was hiding from Solomon. This does not mean that Shishak was a righteous man. It means that God allowed him to come against Rehoboam and the people of Judah because of their sins.

2 Chronicles 12:3 "With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people [were] without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubim, the Sukkiim, and the Ethiopians."

The “Lubim” were Libyan contingents. The “Sukkiim” were foreign mercenaries in Pharaoh’s army.

This was a tremendous host of chariots and horsemen. Sixty thousand horsemen were an unusually large number, but could easily be correct. Solomon had that many, and more, when he was in power. The Lubims are the Libyians. Sukkiims were Arabs. And the Ethiopians are still a country of Africa today. They were descendants of Cush, the eldest son of Ham.

2 Chronicles 12:4 "And he took the fenced cities which [pertained] to Judah, and came to Jerusalem."

Which Rehoboam had lately built, and placed his sons in them (2 Chron. 11:5). These he took without any opposition.

"And came to Jerusalem": There being no army to oppose him. And so Sesostris took many countries without fighting, and among the rest Phoenicia, as Manetho relates, in which Judea may be included.

These fenced cities were the fifteen that we read of in the previous lesson. They had been well-fortified, but were not strong enough to ward off this type of attack. They came to Jerusalem, but not into Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 12:5 "Then came Shemaiah the prophet to Rehoboam, and [to] the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak."

The same as in (2 Chron. 11:2), there called the man of God.

"And to the princes of Judah that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak": Through fear of him, and for safety and protection from him, and to consult what was to be done

at this critical juncture. Whether to fight him, or make peace with him on the best terms they could.

"And said unto them, thus saith the Lord, ye have forsaken me": His law, his word, worship, and ordinances (2 Chron. 12:1).

"And therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak": Suffered him to invade their land, take their fenced cities, and come up to Jerusalem without any opposition, as a punishment of their apostasy. And to explain this providence to them, and call them to repentance, was the prophet sent.

The princes were the leaders just under Rehoboam. They were not necessarily his sons. The LORD had sent them the prophet Shemaiah, to tell them why they were losing the battle with Shishak. It was not the strength of Shishak, it is the fact that the LORD is angry with Judah and Rehoboam.

Verses 6-7: "Humbled themselves": In the face of the Egyptian conqueror, the leaders responded to the Word of God through the prophet (verse 5), and repented, so that God would end His wrath worked through Shishak.

God kept His promise to Solomon at the dedication of the temple, that He would listen when people "humbled themselves", prayed, sought God, and turned from their evil ways (7:14). The consequences for their actions, however, were still to come: the leaders would be enslaved to Shishak so they would understand what service to the Lord was like in comparison to serving another king.

2 Chronicles 12:6 "Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD [is] righteous."

Both by words acknowledging their sins, and the justice of God, and by deeds. Perhaps putting on sackcloth, as was usual on such occasions, and betaking themselves to fasting and prayer.

"And they said, the Lord is righteous": In giving them up into the hand of their enemies, seeing they had forsaken him, and sinned against him.

The princes and Rehoboam knew that what the prophet said was true. They had sinned and deserved to be destroyed. They repented of their sins, and spoke of the righteousness of God.

2 Chronicles 12:7 "And when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; [therefore] I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak."

Though but externally. The Lord takes notice of external humiliation, as he did of Ahab's (1 Kings 21:29).

"The word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, they have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them": Not now, at least not altogether (2 Chron. 12:12).

"But I will grant them some deliverance": Yet not a complete one, for they were brought into servitude by Shishak (2 Chron. 12:8), or only for a short time.

"And my wrath shall not be poured out against Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak": That is, to the uttermost. That was reserved to another time, and to be done by another hand, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

This was a reprieve for the moment. God would not let this king destroy Jerusalem. If they had truly repented and would turn to Him again in sincerity, He would bless them mightily. If they go back into their evil the minute their trouble is over, then another king would come and destroy them. Their deliverance was for as long as they were faithful to the LORD.

2 Chronicles 12:8 "Nevertheless they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries."

"Nevertheless": 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".

They would have their lives spared, but would suffer great monetary loss. Judah would pay taxes to Shishak, as the countries around had paid tribute to Solomon in the past. They would be working for Shishak.

Verses 9-16 (see notes on 1 Kings 14:25-30).

2 Chronicles 12:9 "So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made."

"Against Jerusalem": After the parenthetical section (verses 5-8), describing the state of the beleaguered court, the historian returns to discuss the attack on Jerusalem and the pillage of the temple and palace.

The tremendous value in gold that had been in the temple in Solomon's time would be in the hands of these invaders. The temple and the house of the king was stripped of all of the gold.

Verses 10-11: "Brass": The pure gold was replaced by brass, which was carefully guarded.

2 Chronicles 12:10 "Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed [them] to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house."

The mention of the "shields of brass" indicates the price that Rehoboam had paid for his sin, even though the Lord had relented. The brass shields were not nearly as valuable as the gold shields that Solomon had made.

We remember there was so much brass that it could not even be weighed. This would still be plentiful, and would be as strong as the gold shields they had. "Brass" means judgement. We find that the people of Judah had been judged and found guilty of sin. God did spare their lives however.

2 Chronicles 12:11 "And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard chamber."

The temple; for though he had fallen into idolatry, he had not wholly forsaken the worship of God in the temple, and perhaps by the late humbling providence he might be stirred up to attend there more frequently.

"The guard came and fetched them": Before him, partly for pomp and grandeur, and partly to keep in awe such as were inclined to mutiny and sedition.

"And brought them again into the guard chamber": When the king returned, the place where the guard lodged and slept by turns.

It appears the guards accompanied Rehoboam to the temple. They stayed outside, and Rehoboam went in and humbled himself before God.

2 Chronicles 12:12 "And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy [him] altogether: and also in Judah things went well."

(Compare 12:7). God preserved Judah because of her repentance.

God forgave Rehoboam and the people of Judah. They were without their great wealth, but their lives had been spared. They had much to be thankful for. When God's wrath was stopped, blessings came in.

2 Chronicles 12:13 "So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam [was] one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name [was] Naamah an Ammonitess."

(Ca. 931 – 913 B.C.). By the general revival of true worship, Rehoboam's reign acquired new life and continued many years after the departure of Shishak. Sadly, he faltered (verse 14), probably due largely to his heathen mother (verse 13).

Finally, it appears that Rehoboam had grown up and made a decision on his own. He repented, and it helped him and the whole country. The marauders had gone, and left Jerusalem intact. He reigned until he was 58 years old. God's wishes were that all of Israel would worship in Jerusalem, where He had put His name. They would not. They sought false gods. The ten tribes of Israel would fall first, because they went into idolatry stronger and quicker than did Judah.

2 Chronicles 12:14 "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD."

Rehoboam's legacy is forever summed up with these words: "he did evil". The only way anyone can avoid the same judgment is to commit oneself wholly to the Lord.

This is a summation of his reign. He was an evil man and did not seek God, as David and Solomon had done.

2 Chronicles 12:15 "Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, [are] they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And [there were] wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually."

"Now the acts of Rehoboam": Of these two verses (see 1 Kings 14:29; 14:30; 14:31).

These wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam were more like disputes. They fought a little, but never got into an all-out war. The books mentioned above, are not in the Bible, and are of a more historical nature.

2 Chronicles 12:16 "And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead."

"Abijah": (Compare 11:20, 22). In (1 Kings 15:3), he is called a great sinner. But consistent with his pattern, the writer of the Chronicles highlights the little good he did to indicate that he was still in line with God's covenant promise to David.

We read earlier that this was Rehoboam's favorite son by his favorite wife. He had planned from early on that Abijah would take his place as king. He was buried in Jerusalem with David and Solomon.

2 Chronicles Chapter 12 Questions

1. When did Rehoboam forsake the LORD?
2. What was one of the sins he was involved in?

3. _____ king of Egypt came against Jerusalem.
4. Why had this happened to Judah?
5. Who was Shishak's father?
6. When had he befriended Jeroboam?
7. How many chariots did he bring with him?
8. How many horsemen did he bring against Judah?
9. Who were the Lubims?
10. Sukkiims were _____.
11. The Ethiopians were descended from whom?
12. This is speaking of which fenced cities?
13. Who was the prophet that brought the message from God?
14. What was the message?
15. Why did God decide not to kill them?
16. What punishment did he allow to come on them?
17. What did Shishak take out of the temple and the king's house?
18. Rehoboam made the new shields out of _____.
19. When did the wrath of God turn from him?
20. How old was Rehoboam when he began to reign?
21. How long did he reign?
22. Why did Rehoboam do evil?
23. What world books contain more on Rehoboam's life?
24. The wars were really what?
25. Where was he buried?