

## 2 Chronicles 11-12 – Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

**2 Chronicles 11** -- 1 Now when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and Benjamin one hundred and eighty thousand chosen men who were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam. 2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 3 "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up or fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

- The chapter begins by introducing us to this Shemaiah, who we're told was a man of God with a Word from God for Rehoboam.
- To Rehoboam's credit, he heeds this Word from God, and is spared from what would have arguably been a devastating defeat.
- What I find interesting about this is that this is the one and only time we hear about this Shemaiah, through whom God speaks.

Charles Spurgeon has an interesting take on this, "Here is one Shemaiah,—some of you never heard of him before, perhaps you will never hear of him again; he appears once in this history, and then he vanishes; he comes, and he goes,—only fancy this one man constraining to peace a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, warriors ready to fight against the house of Israel, by giving to them in very plain, unpolished words, the simple command of God ... Why have we not such power? Peradventure, brethren, we do not always speak in the name of the Lord, or speak God's Word as God's Word. If we are simply tellers out of our own thoughts, why should men mind us?"

5 So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6 And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. 11 And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 Also in every city he put shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side. 13 And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him. 14 For the Levites left their commonlands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. 15 Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made. 16 And after the Levites left, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.

- Here we're told that the Levites defected from Jeroboam who had been fully given over to the idolatrous worship of false gods.
- This after Rehoboam built and fortified the cities for a defense in Judah against the potential threat from the North and South.
- Meanwhile in the North, Jeroboam constructs an altar and appoints for himself his own priests for the high places and calf idols.

- For those of you who went to Israel with us before, you probably remember this place very well, especially because of this altar.
- It was located at Tel Dan, in Northern Israel, and it's where Jeroboam had this altar constructed along with two golden calves.
- It's not so much THAT Jeroboam did it as much as it is, WHY he did it. We're told it was so Israel would not go to Jerusalem.

- I would suggest that the motivation for Jeroboam to do this was fear. He feared that he would lose his kingdom to Rehoboam.
- This because, had the Israelites traveled all the way back to Jerusalem, the kingdom would likely revert to the house of David.
- It's for this reason that he builds this site, and institutes a newly ordained feast. In so doing, he's making it convenient for Israel.

- The problem with all of this is that having such a convenience will come packaged with the idolatrous worship of a false god.
- While we may not have Jeroboam's altars with golden calves in convenient locations today, Tel Dan is still alive and well today.
- By that I mean, there are what I'll call Tel Dan churches today that seek to make this type of worship both easy and convenient.

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the subtlest dangers in the life of a Christian it would have to be convenience.
- In other words, when it comes to worshipping and serving the Lord, often times, that which is convenient, has built in dangers.
- More specifically, as it relates to our compromising under the banner of convenience such that our worship becomes idolatry.

17 So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years. 18 Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliah the son of Jesse. 19 And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. 20 After her he took Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom; and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21 Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. 22 And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maachah as chief, to be leader among his brothers; for he intended to make him king. 23 He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and he gave them provisions in abundance. He also sought many wives for them.

- So the chapter ends with the end of a man who repeats the folly of his father by multiplying for himself wives and concubines.
- It's been suggested that had Rehoboam not done this, his reign of peace and prosperity would have lasted many more years.
- Sadly, the prosperity seems to have done to him what prosperity does to the best of men, which is that it ultimately corrupts.

G. Campbell Morgan of this writes, "He was, however, the son of his father; and, even in the years of peace and prosperity, the animal nature came out in the multiplicity of wives and concubines, until he had practically established, as did his father, a harem on the pattern of the corrupt kings around him."

**2 Chronicles 12** -- 1 Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him.

- There's something very important here in this first verse that I would like to point out, and it has to do with depending on God.
- Notice how that Rehoboam forsook the Lord once he had become established and strengthened and no longer needed God.
- This is how it is for us; we can become independent of God after he has blessed us while we trusted in and depended on Him.

Proverbs 28:26 (NKJV) — 26 He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

2 And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, 3 with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt—the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. 4 And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem. 5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak.' " 6 So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "The LORD is righteous." 7 Now 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. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8 Nevertheless they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations." 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 everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made. 10 Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house.

- If you're anything like me and I suspect that you are, you're having as hard of a time as I am wrapping your mind around this.
- One of the reasons it's hard to fathom this is because of the tons of gold that was taken, which lasted for only one generation.
- Notice he replaces the gold shields with bronze instead. I mention this because gold is a type of deity, and bronze judgment.

Adam Clarke of this judgment writes, "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; when they forsook the Lord, they found the fruit to be perfect bondage. A sinful life is both expensive and painful."

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."

11 And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard would go and bring them out; then they would take them back into the guardroom. 12 When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy him completely; and things also went well in Judah.

- In the midst of such judgment, it's a welcomed encouragement that God's wrath turned from him when he humbled himself.
- To me, this speaks to the power of humility to move the mighty hand of God, and I would add, bless the heart of God as well.
- This is why the Proverbs are replete with promise after promise that God is blessed and will bless when we humble ourselves.

Proverbs 11:2 (NKJV) — 2 When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.

Proverbs 18:12 (NKJV) — 12 Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.

Proverbs 15:33 (NKJV) — 33 The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.

Proverbs 22:4 (NKJV) — 4 By humility and the fear of the LORD Are riches and honor and life.

Proverbs 3:34 (NKJV) — 34 Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble.

Proverbs 29:23 (NKJV) — 23 A man's pride will bring him low, But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

13 Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king; 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. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. 14 And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD. 15 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 all their days. 16 So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then Abijah his son reigned in his place.

- So the chapter ends with a very important lesson that we would all do well to learn concerning Rehoboam not seeking the Lord.
- In other words, had he but sought the Lord, walked in the ways of the Lord, we would be reading an entirely different account.
- Here's the take-away, we're more prone to learn from the mistakes of others than we are to learn from the successes of others.