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Rehoboam King of Judah
First Kings 14:21-31 and Second Chronicles 12:1-16

Rehoboam king of Judah DIG: Why did Rehoboam abandon following the Torah at this time? Why did the so anger ADONAI? What prompts Shishak to attack and Shemaiah to warn Jerusalem? What do you think of Rehoboam's punishment and deliverance? If Second Chronicle 12 shows the rewards for obedience to God, what covenant principle does this show?

REFLECT: If this chapter was your point for rediscovering God, what would you learn about His character and purpose? What examples does Rehoboam leave for you to follow? To avoid? When are you tempted to compromise with God's Torah: When you feel strongest or most vulnerable? Why is that? Do you have a friend like Shemaiah who keeps you in line?

Rehoboam lost his peace as well as his prosperity.



The background of the king: **Rehoboam the son of Solomon was reigning in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began his reign; and he ruled seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city ADONAI had chosen from all the tribes of Isra'el to bear His Name,** despite all the **sins** of **the kings** of

Judah. So, the divine status of **Jerusalem** had not changed. **His mother's name was Na'amah the Ammorite,** again **Solomon** married many foreign women **(First Kings 14:21; Second Chronicles 12:13b).** But this did not affect **Rehoboam's** Jewishness since the Jewishness is passed down by the means of the father. **Na'amah** is mentioned twice, here and in **First Kings 14:31** and reemphasizes **Solomon's** love for foreign women (**to see link click Bx – Solomon's Wives**). This sets up the four basic elements of **the kings** of **Judah**. **The background of the king, the significance of his reign, the summary of his reign,** and finally, **the death of the king.**[353]

The significance of his reign: But in time, after Rehoboam's strength and position were **established** and **he had consolidated his rulership in Jerusalem, he, and with him all Isra'el, abandoned the Torah of ADONAI. Judah did what was evil from ADONAI's perspective because they had not set their hearts on seeking ADONAI. They made Him zealous** (**zealous** over **His** exclusive relationship with **Isra'el**, and **His** covenantial loyalty to **His wife**) **because of their sins, which were worse than any their ancestors had committed. For they erected high places, standing-stones,** representing male gods, **and sacred poles,** representing the female goddesses, **on every high hill and under every green tree. Also there were male and female cult-prostitutes in the land attached to these shrines, doing all the disgusting things which the nations did that ADONAI had expelled ahead of the people of Isra'el (First Kings 14:22-24; Second Chronicles 12:1** and **12-13a** and **14).**

Therefore, **in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem, because they had acted faithlessly toward ADONAI.** Since the last pharaoh of the Twenty-First Dynasty did not have a male son, **he** opted to promote **a Libyan** military commander named **Shishak** to a position of virtual heir to the throne. When Pharaoh Psusenne II died, **Shishak** became pharaoh, founding the Twenty-Second Dynasty. **He came out of Egypt with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen and a numberless army including Libyans, Sukkites and Ethiopians. He captured the fortified cities of Judah, then went to Jerusalem (1 Kgs 14:25; 2 Chron 12:2-4).** The multiethnic African coalition raised by **Shishak** likely reflects a combination of **Shishak's Libyan** heritage as well as **Egyptian** control over **Ethiopia** to the south of **Egypt**.[354] On a number of occasions, the superiority of **Judah's** enemies is noted to stress that divine power was the source of victory. As we will see, **Rehoboam's** ability to withstand **Shishak**

to some degree was the result of **God's** intervention.

Just as the destruction of **Jerusalem** seemed imminent, **Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who had gathered in Jerusalem because of Pharaoh Shishak and said to them, "Here is what ADONAI** says: **Because you have abandoned My Torah, I have abandoned you to the hands of Shishak."** For **Ha'Shem** to abandon **His people** was the same as placing **them** under the covenant **curses** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Ff – Curses for Disobedience**). Although **Shemaiah** didn't explicitly offer any hope or reprieve, **the leaders of Judah and the king humbled themselves.** The response of **Rehoboam** and **the leaders** of **Judah** reminds us of **God's** promise to **Solomon** where **blessings** are promised to those who **humble themselves** (**2 Chronicles 7:12-16)**. Humility is an attitude of submission and utter dependence upon **ADONAI**. **The king** and **leaders** expressed **their** humility in a simple prayer: **ADONAI is just (2 Chron 12:5-6). They** didn't resign **themselves** to destruction; instead, **they humbly** sought **God's** favor. As the following verses indicate, **Rehoboam's** response to the prophetic word was a model for **the Chronicler's** readers. As **they** heard the prophetic word, **they** should react as **Rehoboam** and **his nobles** reacted.

When ADONAI saw that they had humbled themselves, this word of ADONAI came to Shemaiah: "Because they have humbled themselves, I will not utterly **destroy them but will grant them a measure of deliverance.** For the sake of **My son David, My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak.** Nevertheless, **Ha'Shem** didn't completely reverse **His** previous judgment. **Rehoboam** and **his leaders** needed a vivid demonstration that **their sin** was serious. As a result, **the prophet** declared that **the Israelites would become Pharaoh's "slaves." Judah** would become a vassal of **Egypt**, subject to taxation and other exploitations. The purpose of this oppression was **that they will come to appreciate the difference between serving God and serving earthly kingdoms (Second Chronicles 12:7-8).** Here, **YHVH** spoke as **Judah's** great **Emperor** whose benevolence had been ignored. Now, perhaps, **the nation** would see how much better it was to have **God** as **their King** rather than some foreign human oppressors. However restrictive **the Torah** may have seemed to **Judah, they** would soon understand that **its** burden was light compared to the yoke of foreign domination. **The Chronicler's** readers also faced the temptation to turn from **God's Torah**. Yet, the experience of the exile (see the commentary on **Jeremiah Gu – Seventy Years of Imperial Babylonian Rule**) had taught them

the lesson **Rehoboam** was about to learn.

Shishak attacked Jerusalem and won the victory. **He took the treasures in the house of ADONAI and the treasures in the royal palace – he took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. To replace them, King Rehoboam made shields of bronze.** The mention of **Solomon's gold shields** opens the way for a wonderfully symbolic scene. The exchange of **bronze** for **gold** nicely symbolized the changes in **Rehoboam's** kingdom. **He** had not lost everything, but had lost the glory inherited from **Solomon**. Along with **his** economic losses, **Rehoboam** no longer felt secure. **He entrusted to the commanders of the contingent guarding the gate to the royal palace** in charge of **the bronze shields**. **Whenever the king went to the house of ADONAI, the guard would bring the shields.** Apparently, **Rehoboam** wanted to keep what little **he** had close by. **Later,** when **they returned** to **his** palace, **the shields** were safely locked away **in the guardroom (First Kings 14:26-28; Second Chronicles 12:9-11).** This scene of timidity stands in sharp contrast with the opening of this story. The record of **Rehoboam** began with **him** being **established** and **strong (Second Chronicles 12:1);** at this point, **he** could barely hold on to **his kingdom**.

The Chronicler added a comment to the end of this narrative to explain **his** understanding of the **Shishak** invasion. **After he humbled himself, the anger of ADONAI turned away from him, so that he did not altogether destroy him. The king's** contrition averted a horrible fate. **Moreover, some good things were found in Judah (Second Chronicles 12:12).** Despite **the Egyptian** victory, **the Chronicler** was deeply concerned that **his** readers take to heart the effect of **Rehoboam's humble** response to the prophetic word. **Humility** before **God** and **His prophet** led to **forgiveness** and **blessing**.[355]

The summary of his reign: From a spiritual standpoint, **Rehoboam's** kingship was a huge disappointment. Back in **Chapter 12** we saw how **he** disregarded **his elders** and divided the Kingdom (see **Dc – A House Divided**). Here in **Chapter 14** we see **his** sin of false worship – a spiritual failure that led to the loss of **his** peace and prosperity. This was not **Rehoboam's sin** alone, but also the **sin** of **his people (First Kings 14:22-24)**. But as **the king** went, so went the Southern kingdom. By rejecting the true worship of **YHVH**, **He** led **Judah** into all kinds of **ungodliness**. **They** did what was **evil** in **God's** sight. In fact, **they** were even more **sinful** than **their** fathers, which is saying something, given **their** history of grumbling, complaining, and idolatry.

The activities and accomplishments of Rehoboam from beginning to end are written in the genealogically organized histories of Shemaiah the prophet, 'Iddo the seer, and the Annals of the Kings of Judah. But there were continual wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (First Kings 14:29-30; Second Chronicles 12:15). What is noticeable in this brief account of **Rehoboam's** reign is that there is no prophecy about the end of **David's house** to match the prophecy about the end of **Jeroboam's** (see **Dg – The Prophecy of Ahijah**). **Rehoboam** does suffer a setback at the hands of **Shishak, king of Egypt,** losing the treasure that **his father** had so carefully stockpiled in both **the Temple** and **his palace (First Kings 14:26** and **7:51, 10:14ff)**. The **golden** age of **Solomon** was replaced by the rather duller **bronze** age of **Rehoboam**; and the peace that **Solomon** had known was replaced by **continual warfare (First Kings 14:30)**. All this, however, was little more than the **fatherly** discipline of **Second Samuel 7:14**. It is not insignificant, then, that the authors' introduction to **Rehoboam's** reign is placed alongside the information about **his Ammonite mother** with a reminder that **Jerusalem** is **the chosen city**. For it is, of course, **ADONAI's** choice of **David** and **Jerusalem (First Kings 11:31-39)** that is the only explanation for the difference in the treatment of **Rehoboam** and **Jeroboam**. And what symbolizes this difference more than anything is that **Jeroboam's son Abijah dies**, even though there is some **good in him**, whereas **Rehoboam's son Abijah** lives to succeed **him**, in fact, have a stable dynasty throughout the period when **Isra'el** was **like a reed swaying in the water**; and **Asa**, the descendant of two wicked **Judean kings**, will be sitting comfortably on the **Judean** throne at the very time when **Nadab**, the descendant of one wicked **Israelite king**, loses **his Israelite** throne.[356]

The death of the king: Rehoboam slept with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His mother's name was Na'amah; she was an Ammorite. Then Aviyam his son became king in his place (First Kings 14:31; Second Chronicles 12:16). Rehoboam's death comes after a lifetime of struggle. Unlike **David**, **he** could not defeat **his** enemies; unlike **Solomon**, **he** was unable to collect wisdom, wealth or prestige. Unlike both men **he** was unable to keep the kingdom together. The decline of the monarchy coincides with the decline of the nation as a whole and decline of the nation's spiritual commitment.[357]

Rehoboam's death would not stop **the LORD's** promise that **He** would **build an everlasting house for David and establish the throne of His Kingdom forever.** However, **the Messiah** would not descend from **Solomon** but from

Nathan the ancestor of **Miriam**, the mother of **Yeshua** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ai – The Genealogies of Joseph and Mary**). **David** would always have a descendant of **his** sitting on **the throne** (see the commentary on **the Life of David Ct – The LORD's Covenant with David**). Today, that **descendant,** sitting on **the throne** in heaven, is **Yeshua Messiah**. **He** is called **the Son of David (Mattityahu 1:1, 12:23, 21:9** and **15, 22:42)**; **Yeshua** is called **the root of David (Revelation 5:5, 22:16)**; **Messiah** is called **the offspring of David (Revelation 22:16)**; **He** is also called **the key of David (Revelation 3:7).** In fact, **David** will have a special role in **the Messianic Kingdom** in that **he** will be the co-ruler with **Messiah** over **Isra'el** (see the commentary on **Revelation Fi – The Government of the Messianic Kingdom**).

The great blessing of **Rehoboam's** life was to sit on **David's** throne, ruling as **king** in **Jerusalem**. Many things could be said about **his** seventeen years of kingship, but the Bible has only one, highly selective interest. the Bible is not very interested in what the kings of **Judah** and **Isra'el** built, or the size of their economies, or other details of their political history. the Bible's main interest is their faithfulness to **God**. Even when other subjects are discussed – the battles and building projects – the Bible's primary concern is always personal godliness.

The most important thing to know about anyone is whether or not that person has a heart for **ADONAI**. We may accomplish many things in life. We may also fail to accomplish many things. But the most important thing about us – the one thing that will make a difference for all eternity – is whether we have a saving relationship with the living **God**. This is the great question of existence that everyone has to settle: Have I given my life to **Yeshua Messiah**, **the Son of God**?