

The Reign of King Rehoboam of Judah

1 Kings 14:21-31

1 Kings 14:21-31 - *“And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. 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 Ammonite. Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done, for they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. And there were also perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.*”

It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. 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. And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom.

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? And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonite. Then Abijam his son reigned in his place.”

Background Notes

King Rehoboam was King Solomon’s son. When he became king he followed unwise counsel and announced that he was going to tax the people of his kingdom even more heavily than King Solomon had taxed them (see 1 Kings 12). Rehoboam actually said: “My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist!” As a result of this foolish policy, the United Kingdom of Israel split apart. Ten tribes peeled off and became the northern kingdom of Israel, with Jeroboam as king; two tribes became the southern kingdom of Judah, with Rehoboam as king.

From the second half of 1 Kings 12 through the first half of chapter 14, we followed the reign of wicked King Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel.

The last section of 1 Kings 14 is the record of the reign of King Rehoboam, the first king of the southern kingdom of Judah. It is not a good record. *“Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their*

sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. King Rehoboam allowed idolatrous and cultic shrines to be built throughout the land. For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree” (v22-23).

Perverted sexual practices were associated with this idolatrous worship. *“And there were perverted shrine prostitutes in the land. The people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites”(v24).* Departure from the Lord and His Word always leads to moral decline.

God allowed Pharaoh Shishak of Egypt to attack Jerusalem. Why? 2 Chronicles 12:2 gives us the answer: *“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.”* Shishak conquered the fortified cities of Judah but, because Rehoboam and his officials temporarily humbled themselves, the Lord did not allow Shishak to take Jerusalem. However, Shishak did take the Temple treasures, including the shields of gold that Solomon had made. By the way, the record of Shishak’s conquest of Judah is also recorded on the wall of an Egyptian temple on the Upper Nile, at ancient Karnak.

Verse 30: *“And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days.”* This verse refers to the friction and constant border clashes between the two kingdoms. It is not a contradiction of 1 Kings 12, where God stopped Rehoboam when he was about to go to war with King Jeroboam with the 180,000 troops.

One final background note. Verse 29 says, *“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?”* The “book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah” is the two books in our Bible, 1 and 2 Chronicles. In the Hebrew Bible it’s just one book, “Chronicles” - not 1 and 2 Chronicles.

Doctrinal Points

1. Mothers have a great effect on one’s character.

Rehoboam’s mother’s name and her nationality are mentioned twice in this passage. *“His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonite” (v21), and “His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonite” (v31).* This is significant, because mothers have a great effect on a person’s character.

Back in 1 Kings 11:1, we learned that King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. And 1 Kings 11:4-5 says, *“...when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.”*

Naamah, an Ammonite, was one of Solomon's wives, and because of her that Solomon followed the god Milcom, or Molech, the abomination of the nation of Ammon. 1 Kings 11:7-8 says, *"On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods."* Human sacrifice, especially child sacrifice, was part of the worship of Molech, the god of the Ammonites. We don't read of child sacrifice during the reigns of Solomon or Rehoboam, but eventually child sacrifice was practiced in the kingdom of Judah.

Well, with a mother from a pagan nation like Ammon, Rehoboam's character was bound to be affected. Rehoboam's character is linked to his mother in 2 Chronicles 12:13-14, *"His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonite. And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord."*

Mothers can prepare the hearts of their children to seek the Lord - or to not seek the Lord. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, *"...from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:15). How did Timothy learn Scripture when he was a child? From his mother and his grandmother. In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul said to Timothy, *"I remember the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also."* I can identify with this verse for two reasons. My mother's name is Eunice, and my mother taught me the Bible and biblical values and principles when I was a child. For this I am forever grateful!

I'm sure many of you here have had godly mothers or grandmothers who molded your character for the Lord. Mothers have a great effect on one's character.

2. Obedience has a great effect on one's protection.

Notice the sequence of events in 2 Chronicles 12:1-2 - *"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. 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."*

Did you notice the sequence? When Rehoboam and people of the southern kingdom of Judah *"transgressed against the Lord,"* the kingdom lost God's protection and became vulnerable to attack. King Shishak of Egypt invaded Judah, and Judah was spared only because of the mercy of God.

Do you see the spiritual picture we have here?. Certainly in Shishak, Pharaoh of Egypt, we have a spiritual picture of Satan, the prince of this evil world system, and an enemy of our souls. When people turn away from the Lord and disobey His Word, they are wide open to attack from Satan and the satanic world system.

In Scripture, Egypt is very often a picture of the world. Do you want to be protected from the evil influences of the world and Satan? The key to protection is walking with the Lord, in obedience to His Word. 1 John 5:18 says, *"We know that whoever is born of God does not continue to practice sin... and the wicked one does not touch him."* As we stay close to the Lord and obey His Word, we are protected from the evil one. As we stop practicing sin, and put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6), we are protected from Satan. Attacks will come, but we will not be defeated, as Rehoboam was defeated. And we will not be robbed of blessing, as Rehoboam was robbed of blessing. Obedience has a great effect on one's protection.

Practical Application

Go where the Lord has chosen to put His Name!

Notice what verse 21 says about Jerusalem:: Jerusalem was *"the city that the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put His Name."* God chose Jerusalem as His holy city, a city that was set apart as the location of His holy Temple. Godly Jews gathered together in Jerusalem to worship at the Temple at least three times a year, in accordance with God's Law (Deuteronomy 16:16).

The Temple was the house of the Lord, where God's presence was centered in the midst of His people Israel. Today God dwells in the midst of His people in a spiritual temple, the Church. The Church is not a building or a denomination. The Church is composed of all God's people, who have put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. This is where God has chosen to put His name.

In Matthew 18:20 the Lord Jesus said, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."* The Lord Jesus is in our midst whenever we are gathered in His Name.

Hebrews 10:25 tells believers to be sure not to give up on gathering together for fellowship and encouragement. Be sure to gather together with other believers in the place where the Lord has chosen to put His Name!