

~ Our Spiritual Safari has completed an examination of Solomon's life and reign according to the viewpoint presented by the True and Living God. The most important thing Solomon did in his life was build the temple in Jerusalem, dedicate it, and place it into the service of the Lord. Two-thirds of the content we have considered in this book of second Chronicles thus far concerns construction of the temple. The double historical books of Chronicles presents the same historical period of the nation Israel that Samuel and Kings covered. Samuel and Kings were narrated from *man's viewpoint*, but Chronicles is given from *God's point of view*. We have seen profoundly wonderful spiritual lessons in Chronicles; but God deals with the bad, too – and we'll get to those bad things in this report.

This is where Israel becomes divided; and the southern kingdom of Judah is the main focal point for the remainder of Chronicles. Specifically, the line of David is recorded. The ten northern tribes of Israel who split off in rebellion are almost entirely ignored in the remainder of this historical account. Further, within the emphasis on the southern kingdom of Judah, five great periods of reformation and revival are also presented. That's what this safari will pay particular attention to as we complete our studies in second Chronicles. So, as we begin this leg of our expedition, Solomon has died and his son, Rehoboam, has succeeded him on the throne....

X

¹ And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.

² And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.

~ You will recall Jeroboam led a failed coup attempt against Solomon; as recorded in the Book of Kings. As a result, Jeroboam had to flee for his life, and ran away to Egypt until Solomon died. Here, he returns and takes a stab at keeping the kingdom united. If Rehoboam, Solomon's son, had been a little smarter in asking for wisdom, judgment and discernment — I believe he could have prevented almost all of what is going to happen next; and he could have prevented the kingdom from splitting. Unfortunately, that didn't happen....

³ And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

⁴ Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee.

⁵ And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.

⁶ And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?

⁷ And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.

~ So, raising taxes caused rebellion. Perhaps you were aware of this, but taxes have caused rebellion and downfall of more nations than any other reason in recorded history. It brought the Roman Empire down, and taxes produced the American Revolution; specifically, taxation without representation caused the Boston Tea Party. Heavy taxation is a definitive manner by which to divide and wreck a nation. I don't think our leaders today see a revolt as a possibility because they continue to blindly raise the taxes of the poor while exempting the rich. My estimation is dissention

over taxation is how this country will begin its inevitable cessation in being a functional and viable government and world power; in fact – you can just write it down that this is how it will begin. By the way, have you ever heard of any government ever reducing taxes? Every presidential politician I can remember in my lifetime has said they were going to reduce taxes while running for office. Strangely, after they take office, taxes just keep on going up.

See, human nature never changes, friends. This the love of money gone horribly out-of-control. Remember, Solomon had undertaken an elaborate building program — and it was impressive; but he overtaxed his people to build luxury homes for wives he never should have had. Naturally, a thousand women have to be heavily financed; which created an effective platform for Jeroboam to gain support in protest. Jeroboam was, actually, very mild mannered at this time in his approach.

Jeroboam tells Rehoboam that if he'll just reduce the taxes, there won't be any problem. Well, that didn't happen, and there was a definite problem. Rehoboam gathered his council to get some advice; and he did what all bad rulers do: he took the advice of foolish young men – as opposed to the good advice of men who had experience and wisdom advising Solomon for so many years. Those older men knew the situation, but the young men were receiving huge paychecks from the public; and the younger crowd, naturally, wanted the picnic to continue indefinitely. That's how it works, friends. As we read on, we see the most foolish decision Rehoboam could have made be made....

⁸ But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.

⁹ And he said unto them, What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?

10 And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.

13 And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men,

14 And answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 So the king hearkened not unto the people: for the cause was of God, that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 And when all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and we have none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: and now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents.

17 But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

18 Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram that was over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

19 And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

~ So, Rehoboam gullibly and naïvely sends a tax man to collect; and the people kill him; and, just like that, the ten northern tribes of Israel are incensed and alienated. Judah and Benjamin are the only two tribes remaining united in the south now. Even though God still views them as a unified nation, they are definitely divided at the time in which we are studying. Rehoboam runs away scared half to death and realizes his kingdom is now cut way down in size – which means way down in tax revenue. The next huge mistake Rehoboam will make is more stupid than the first; because he is going to gather an army to fight Jeroboam. This marks the beginning of a civil war that virtually never stops until they are all carried away captive by outside nations. What a picture of extreme foolishness we have here, friends....

XI

1 And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

3 Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

4 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

⁵ And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah.

⁶ He built even Bethlehem, and Etam, and Tekoa,

⁷ And Bethzur, and Shoco, and Adullam,

⁸ And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph,

⁹ And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah,

¹⁰ And Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities.

¹¹ And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine.

¹² And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

¹³ And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts.

¹⁴ For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD:

¹⁵ And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made.

~ The Levites leave the northern kingdom and go to Jerusalem. Any priests remaining in the north were considered false prophets. Jeroboam made two golden calves at this time, placing one in Bethel and one in Samaria. The people in the northern kingdom worshipped those calves in rank demonism. This is nothing less than Satan worship! The Lord Jesus told the

church in Pergamum, “*you dwell where Satan’s throne is!*” That’s quite an indictment, my friends! Any time we find idolatry, we have demonism as its source. Most of us don’t like to think we practice idolatry in our lives, but idols can be clothes, shoes, cars, houses, food, money, jobs, spouses, children and friends. Take my word for it – *YOU* have an idol if you breathe air. If you don’t think so, then you just don’t happen to believe the Word of God. Idolatry manifests itself in ways that we are totally and completely ignorant of....

16 And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.

17 So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon.

18 And Rehoboam took him Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David to wife, and Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse;

19 Which bare him children; Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham.

20 And after her he took Maachah the daughter of Absalom; which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith.

21 And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

22 And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren: for he thought to make him king.

23 And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives.

~ Many people mistakenly believe God approves of polygamy concerning Solomon; however, the reason it is recorded in the Bible is because God does *NOT* approve of it. God never covers up the sins of man – this is recorded as a matter of factual history. Rehoboam was wrong rejecting the wise counselors Solomon his father depended on for advice. He did wrong in fighting the northern tribes. Here, he does wrong with all these women because God specifically told the kings of Israel not to multiply wives or horses. God condemns these practices, friends – and make no mistake: God will judge Solomon for this willful disobedience.

In the next chapter, we'll discover Rehoboam lead an apostasy — and God will say Rehoboam has "*forsaken His law.*" Be very clear: God never approved of any events recorded in this section of Scripture. The most striking corresponding illustration is the life of Abraham. Abraham took Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian maid, and had a son named Ishmael by her. Many people think Abraham got by with his sin – but he didn't get by with anything. Today, the real problem in the Middle East is the Arab. Well, that just happens to be the sons of Abraham from the line of Ishmael. If you ever visit Israel, have an Arab guide take you to visit Jericho. The Arab will tell you they are as much the son of Abraham as any Jew ever was — which is absolutely correct; and they are very proud of that fact.

God recorded all of this as a historical fact; but if you believe God approves of these sins, then you have no spiritual judgment or discernment in truth whatsoever. The Muslim condones rape, murder, lying, hate, polygamy, theft – whatever – anything goes with the Arab against an "infidel;" and they decide your label, too, by the way. There is absolutely *NO* blessing in Muslim Islam, and they have been a thorn in the side of the Jew down throughout history. The bottom line in this section of this report is: Jeroboam made some terrible life decisions. That opens the door for the invasion of Israel by the surrounding nations....

XII

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.

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,

³ With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen: and the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt; the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.

⁴ And he took the fenced cities which pertained to Judah, and came to Jerusalem.

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.

⁶ Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

¹⁴ And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

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.

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

~ Our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God with Jerusalem having been invaded, and most of the gold being carried away. Verse ten reveals the shields of gold David had made were stolen and an inferior substitute – brass shields – were put in their place. The wealth of the kingdom is virtually gone now. They no longer

have shields of gold; they have shields of brass – and brass speaks of judgment in the Word of God.

Scripture is clear: God does not tolerate sin. Those who continue in sin will be judged – both nations and individuals. If God would judge Israel and Judah, then don't think for a moment He won't judge us. We have all turned to our own ways today, my friends. Unless we accept His grace and mercy through the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ we will be judged, and we can expect nothing but decline in our life with an ultimate fall – sooner or later. Only if you have been crucified with Christ can you be raised again unto newness of life. Won't you turn to Him today?

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