

(I Kings 11:43-12:24; 14:21-31)
II Chron 831-12:14
No. 1:7

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THE RECORD OF REHOBOAM. " Chron. 12:14 and Rom. 6:23.

The man whose record we are to consider was the bad grandson of a good grandfather, and the bad grandfather of a good grandson. His grandfather was David, the king, and his grandson was Aza. While the scriptural record before us is largely about the man Rehoboam, it tells us particularly concerning God, illustrating the truth of the Shorter Catechism statement that the scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Campbell Morgan has said, "There is no text in the Bible but that needs the whole Bible to explain it." A key-text in the record of Rehoboam is 2 Chron. 12:14. A New Testament text to throw light on the whole dark record and to bring warning and hope to all evil doers like Rehoboam is Romans 6:23.

I. Concerning Rehoboam.

1. The Nature of his Heritage.

While Rehoboam may have been proud of his royal heritage, since his father was king Solomon in all his glory, at the same time Rehoboam's heritage was far from being perfect. 1 Kings 11:4. All that we are told about his mother is that her name was Naamah, and that she was an Ammonitess. The national god of the Ammonites was Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. Apparently his personal heritage was more perilous than profitable to the young prince.

When he came to the throne upon the death of his father, Solomon, his political heritage was a discontented, overtaxed people. Immediately they made a reasonable request of the new king to the effect that their burdens be lightened, their yoke made easier. Upon his answer to this request depended the loyalty of his people. At the same time the young man, Jeroboam, a mighty man of valor, had returned from a sojourn in Egypt, and was ready to lead Israel in rebellion against Rehoboam.

Over against Rehoboam's adverse personal and political heritage, he inherited a most glorious promise—the promise given to his grandfather, David and his house. It was the gospel of the King, ^{the King} greater than David, greater than Solomon, the King of Kings.

2. Outstanding features of his History.

How did Rehoboam react in such a situation? What did he do with his life and heritage? Here are some of his outstanding acts:

1) He followed evil counsel. Instead of being great by being a servant of the people, and being kind to them, and speaking good words to them, he committed the colossal folly of forsaking the advice of the old men. He answered the people roughly, and promised to multiply their burdens—to chastise them with scorpions. This was the immediate occasion of the rebellion of Israel, and the disruption of the kingdom, with Jeroboam made king of the ten northern tribes.

2) In justice to the man, a second act of Rehoboam must not be overlooked. When he was preparing his chosen warriors to fight against Israel the word of God came to them warning them not to resist Jeroboam. Their response was ^{immediate} obedience. 1 Kings 12:24b.

3) The record continues fairly bright for awhile. Priests and Levites migrated to Judah. "So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and made Rehoboam, the son of Solomon strong, three years; for they walked three years in the way of David and Solomon." Apparently this strength was temporary and imperfect.

4) Alas, Rehoboam fell into immoral family life like his father—"For he took 18 wives and three score concubines, and begat 28 sons and three score daughters"

5) The record continues: "And it came to pass, when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established, and he was strong, that he forsook the law of Jehovah, and all Israel with him." (2 Chron. 12:1) The immediate result of this was enemy invasion.

"And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt

"And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah."

II Chron 11:5

II Chron 11:17

Josephus says that in disposition he was proud and foolish man and that he despised the worship of God, with the people themselves imitated his wicked actions."

came up against Jerusalem, because they had trespassed against Jehovah." And Jehovah said to them, "Ye have forsaken me, therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.

6. Once more the light flashes on this generally dark record, as it continues to tell us "Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said: Jehovah is righteous." The result of this was divine mercy and chastisement. 2 Chron. 12:7, 8, 12.

3. The Set of his Heart.

This brings us to consider as an explanation of the outward acts of Rehoboam, the set of his heart.. "And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah." We come now to the heart of the matter. "The Lord looketh upon the heart." He looked upon the heart of David, and saw in him a man after his own heart. He looked at the heart of Solomon—the great king whose heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God."

He looked at the heart of Rehoboam, who did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah." Rehoboam had freedom of his own will, the same freedom that you and I have. He had an individual responsibility and choice in the set of his heart. As God looks at your heart and mine today, what does He see as to the set of the heart? Is it set like David's or like Rehoboam's? What will the final record be as to the set of my heart?

II. Concerning God.

Although the record of Rehoboam tells us largely concerning the man himself, at the same time it teaches us particularly what we are to believe concerning God. From the manward side of the record we now turn to the Godward side. This scriptural record is profitable especially to teach us the sovereignty of God, the righteousness of God, and the grace of God.

1. The Sovereignty of God.

a. God's Word is sovereign. It never fails. When Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men and failed to grant the reasonable request of the people, he exercised his own free will, and choice. At the same time God's sovereign Word was established. The inspired account makes this truth quite clear in these words: "So the king hearkened not unto the people; for it was a thing brought about of Jehovah, (another translation reads, "for it was a turn of affairs brought about by the Lord") that he might establish his word, which Jehovah spake by Ahijah, the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. That word of the Lord was "I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon—because they have forsaken me."

b. God's will is also sovereign. 1 Kings 12:24 reads: "Thus saith Jehovah, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is of me. So they hearkened unto the word of Jehovah, and returned and went their way, according to the word of Jehovah."

No mere man cannot explain fully the sovereign will of God. Paul himself said, "His ways are past finding out." Yet we can accept His will and pray, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.

Deep in unfathomable mines Of never failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs, And works His sovereign will."

"The king's heart is in the hands of Jehovah as the watercourses: He turneth it whithersoever He will." (Prov. 21:1.)

2. The Righteousness of God.

The supreme, overruling cause of the disruption of the kingdom of Israel was God, in the exercise of His righteous judgment.

The righteousness of God demanded that the apostasy of Solomon be dealt with. Staying close to the inspired record we read again: "And Jehovah was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned away from Jehovah, the God of Israel, who had appeared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which Jehovah commanded. Wherefore Jehovah said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant." Again the similar prophecy addressed to Jeroboam: "Thus saith the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee— because that they have forsaken me.."

The supreme overruling cause of the invasion from Egypt was the righteous judgment of God: 2 Chron. 12:2 and 5. "... Thus saith Jehovah, Ye have forsaken me, therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak." The princes and the king himself so recognized this as God's righteous judgment, when they humbled themselves and said, "Jehovah is righteous."

Here the ancient inspired record foreshadows the theme of the book of Romans, "The Righteousness of God". Rom. 1:16-18.

3. The Grace of God.

It was a re-counting of

Along with the sovereignty of God, and the righteousness of God, the record of Rehoboam, again like the book of Romans, teaches the grace of God. Three prophets of this era were used especially as messengers of this grace, Nathan, Ahijah, and Shemaiah. In the time of Rehoboam's grandfather, thru Nathan came the gospel promise to David, 2 Sam. 7:16, one of the greatest and most glorious of the Messianic promises— a promise most gloriously fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ, that Messianic decree, formulated in the counsels of eternity, and which was the cause of Rehoboam's place in the ancestry of Christ, the last mention of him being in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, chapter one.

Another witness to the grace of God in the record of Rehoboam was thru the prophet Ahijah when God promised that David his servant would always have a Lamp Before the Lord in Jerusalem, and that He would afflict the seed of David, for their sins, but not forever. I wonder if Isaiah had his eye on this promise of grace when he wrote of "the sure mercies of David."

The wonderful grace of God was proclaimed not only thru Nathan to David, and thru Ahijah to Jeroboam, but also directly to Rehoboam thru Shemaiah, the man of God. He was not only the prophet bringing the word of warning from God not to resist Jeroboam, but particularly the prophet not only of judgment but also of grace following Shishak's invasion. The enemy hand of Shishak is explained briefly as being used to execute the righteous judgment of God 2 Chron. 12:5b.

The Humility of the princes and king Rehoboam under this judgment is experienced 12:6. And the hand of God's grace is extended. 12:7, 8, 12. "And when Jehovah saw that they humbled themselves, the word of Jehovah came to Shemaiah saying, They have humbled themselves." "God giveth grace to the humble." Continuing He says, "I will not destroy them". That reminds us of John 3:16—"shall not perish." "But I will grant them some deliverance.", or a marginal reading, "a few that shall escape"— "a remnant according to the election of grace" Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life. "And when he (Rehoboam) humbled himself, the wrath of Jehovah turned from him, so as not to destroy him altogether; and moreover in Judah there were good things found." *One N. J. ... the record of Rehoboam in Rom. 1:13 -*

"For the wages of sin is death; but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." ~~"And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ."~~
 "Marvelous grace of our Loving Lord, Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
 Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured, There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt.
 Grace, grace, God's grace, Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
 " " " " " " is greater than all our sin."