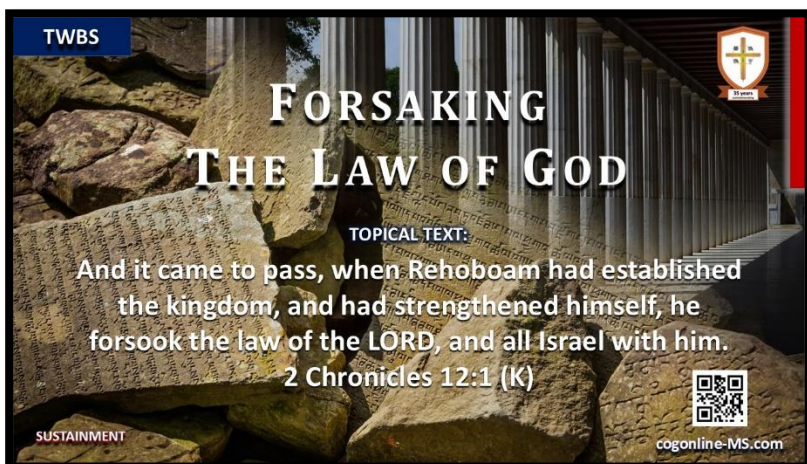




STUDY TEXT:

2 Chronicles 12:1-9 (K)

2 Chronicles 12:1 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.

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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

APPLICATION POINT:

When we choose to forsake the Word of God, by default we open the door wide to invite in the life corrupting influences of spiritual wickedness into our life circles. And by the same token, our (Christ followers) persistent pursuit of this wayward path will also provoke a strong, rebuke & reproving response of divine chastening from the hands of Holy God.

FORSAKING THE LAW OF GOD

FOCUS TEXT: 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 Chronicles 12:1 (K)

If we had presumed that national matters related to the divinely initiated division of the Kingdom of Isarel were gracefully settled in the wake of the described physical cessation events that transpired as was foretold by the Word of the Lord, we would be sadly mistaken.

Despite the fact that the immense efforts of the rebellious human heart can never remotely override the authority of divine power, Scripture fully showcases the fact that a heart nature characterized by unbelief never easily accepts the futility of attempting to challenge the will of God.

Thus, we observe in the present account this timeless pattern that continues to surface in the sphere of those that choose to remain defiant to the Word of God.

Following the Contrary Path

Without question, King Rehoboam (the son of Solomon, and grandson of David) was completely aware of the holy demands of God's Word and the responsibilities and influential impact associated with the executive seat of authority that he was permitted to occupy.

Yet, despite residing in the holy city where the Lord had chosen to place His hallowed name and where the shining beckon of the radiant light of righteousness should have shown brightness, he elected to deviate and follow and embrace the different spiritual path, namely the way of spiritual darkness.

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Thus notably, here observe the timelessly applicable important truth point that mere, prolonged external exposure to divine light does not have a corresponding transforming impact on the state of the inherently sinful human heart.

And sadly, to our deep dismay, we have frequently, practically observed as many that have been privileged to being exposed to the abundance of divine light have yet elected to choose the way of the spiritual darkness.

Without question, it cannot be denied that their former religious experience (albeit shallow and superficial) was reflective of that described in Hebrews 6:4b-5: “who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

“And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.”

Yet ultimately, because they chose to reject “the light” and embrace darkness, inevitably they forsook both “the Word” & “the way” of the Lord.

By notably comparison, we observe from the descriptive portrayal in the account of **1 Kings 12:22a** regarding the spiritual deviation that occurred in the the Southern Kingdom: “**And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord.**”

Then, in **2 Chronicles 12:1b**, we are provided with a fully portrait details: “**when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.**”

Obviously, the revealed key signature elements shown in **2 Chronicles** provides us with the root cause details that resulted in the broader public impact described in **2 Kings**.

After He was Established

The first segment of the opening text of **2 Chronicles 12:1** reported to us that King Rehoboam’s act of spiritual defection (or apostasy) took place once he had sufficiently recovered from the traumatic consequences of the nation’s divinely imposed riff.

Now initially, **1 Kings 12:21** reported that he made an initial attempt to personally reverse the situation by military might.

We learn from the text: **“And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.”**

However, as he was preparing to execute this self-inspired action, once more, the Lord directly interrupted their effort by promptly dispatching the prophet Shemaiah to both inform and warn them in **verse 23a-24a**, **“Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying,**

“Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me.”

And consequently, having been provided with the solemn message of divine insight, on this occasion, they made the right decision, and as reported in **verse 24b**, **“They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart, according to the word of the Lord.”**

In other words, the Lord emphatically told them “No!”

And by obeying the Word of God that were spared from any humiliating combat defeat or other subsequent punitive divine actions that would ensue to address their disobedience.

Notwithstanding this occasion, however, we are shown in the inspired record that this still was not the end of the matter.

Although King Rehoboam and Judah had submitted to the Word of God on this occasion, the further detail of holy chronicle reminds us that their minds yet remained preoccupied with seeking an alternative means to override the will of God and engineer a reunification of Kingdom.

Thus, according to **2 Chronicles 12 1a**, once **“Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself,”** their

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first major action was to break their connection with Heaven (as if they had to power to accomplish that) and seek allegiance elsewhere.

“With whom?” would be a honest question we would expect to be posed.

And clearly that answer (other gods – idolatry) was shown to us in **1 Kings 12:23-24** that sadly reported: **“And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.**

“For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.”

Herein we observed that King Rehoboam and Judah had openly and brashly rebelled against the Law of God (or stoutly defied the Living God) falsely believing that somehow, their lives would become better off, and their future would be characterized by prosperity.

Also, we should note from Scripture that there was another close vocal source of influence that contributed to the Southern Kingdom’s heinous defection from the Word of God came from the king’s mother, Naamah, **“an Ammonitess” (v. 12:1c).**

Notably, both her name and nationality (as well as religious background) is explicitly mentioned twice in the record of Scripture.

Here we observe the consequential impact of his father’s (Solomon) actions now negatively impacting the next generation.

Contributing to this latter state of defection, we are able to glean further applicable insights from **2 Kings 11:5, 7: “For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.**

“Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.”

That is, the distinct presence of the influence of these foreign idols was already operating in the public sphere of the nation; hence, it was only a matter of time before that corrupting element of evil would begin to spread and permeate their life circles.

In fact, the immense degree of degradation of its spiritual defilement was specifically showcased in **1 Kings 12:24**, “**And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel.**”

In the Fifth Year

The inspired record of **2 Chronicles 12:2** immediately focuses our attention on the dramatic chastening response that was initiated by Heaven against the widespread deplorable conditions of spiritual and moral wickedness that had spread throughout the public sphere of the Southern Kingdom.

According to **verse 12:2** this climate had persisted for five years with no hint of remorse or repentance being demonstrated by the hearts of the leaders, nor the people.

Again, we observe from the details of **1 Kings 14:24** that their unbridled and unrestrained practices of wickedness had exceeded the levels of the former inhabitants of the land.

Specifically, Scripture reported: “**and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.**”

And **verse 14:24b** added: “**and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.**”

Thus, herein we are shown the clear justification for the measure of severity of Heaven’s response against the willful transgressions people.

They were given plenty of space to repent but had defiantly refused to do so. Hence the consequences for their rebellion were hugely enormous.

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Addressing the serious matter of spurning the grace of God, **Romans 2:4-6** declared: **“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”**

“But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds.”

Therefore, when the day of wrath ultimately arrived during Rehoboam’s generation.

It came unexpectedly with an enormity and ferocity that they could have never imagined.

Regarding the collective coalition of the opposition, **2 Chronicles 12:3** reported that the Shihak came accompanied, **“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.”**

Naturally, this international coalition of military force was allied for a much greater purpose of conquest. However, we observe that the Lord used them to serve His chastening purposes as well.

And in **verse 5b** Shemiah, the prophet of the Lord notified King Rehoboam and the inhabitants of the Southern Kingdom of this very reason.

He strongly and explicitly declared to them: **“Thus saith the LORD, Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak”**

Herein we are taught again the keynote bible truth that we are completely dependent upon the grace and favor of Heaven for our earthly livelihood and protection.

And when we foolishly believe and conduct our lives to the contrary, our brazen defiance will be directly addressed.

A Small Measure of Residual Grace

Upon being confronted with the physical consequences of their sin, Scripture reported that the Rehoboam, the princes and the people rightly, **“humbled themselves; and they said, The LORD is righteous.”**

In other words, they finally realized the gravity of their transgressions and remorsefully repented of their sin, falling on the mercy of God.

In turn, the Lord responded by granting them a small concession of mercy by declaring: **“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.”**

However, although they avoided the most severe degree of punitive action, they still were held accountable for their actions and were forced to experience a lesser degree of suffering for the prolonged duration.

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

And so, we are plainly taught here the important lesson that the bestowal of divine grace, does not nullify the timeless bible truth stated in **Galatians 6:7** that still strongly emphasizes to us: **“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”**

Thus, we yet observe that King Rehoboam and Judah had completely forfeited the broader measure of grace privileges that they once enjoyed; and would yet be forced to live with the consequences (burdensome servitude) of their life crippling transgressions.

And most importantly, we are taught the primary spirit-life lesson from this inspired account that sin always incurs consequences.

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And our failure to repent and turn from it, when given ample opportunity, will rouse punitive, corrective consequences, that will leave an unfavorable, yet enduring imprint on our lives.