

LESSON SIXTEEN 9—11

A QUEEN COMES TO JERUSALEM. REHOBAM AND THE KINGDOM.

6. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA AND SOLOMON'S GREATNESS (Chapter 9)

INTRODUCTION

The wisdom of Solomon brought the queen of Sheba to Jerusalem. Solomon's wealth could not be counted. His last years were filled with shame as he turned away from God. Rehoboam came to the throne in Judah and saw the kingdom divided.

TEXT

Chapter 9:1. And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great train, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. 2. And Solomon told her all her questions; and there was not anything hid from Solomon which he told her not. 3. And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, 4. and the food of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, his cupbearers also, and their apparel, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of Jehovah; there was no more spirit in her. 5. And she said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. 6. "Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me; thou exceedest the fame that I heard. 7. "Happy are the men, and happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom. 8. "Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on his throne, to be king for Jehovah thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do

justice and righteousness.”

9. And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and spices in great abundance, and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. 10. And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, that brought gold from Ophir, brought alnum-trees and precious stones. 11. And the king made of the alnum-trees terraces for the house of Jehovah, and for the king's house, and harps and psalteries for the singers: and there were none such seen before in the land of Judah. 12. And king Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which she had brought unto the king. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

13. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold. 14. besides that which the traders and merchants brought: and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15. And king Solomon made two hundred bucklers of beaten gold; six hundred shekels of beaten gold went to one buckler. 16. And he made three hundred shields of beaten gold; three hundred shekels of gold went to one shield: and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon. 17. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with gold. 18. And there were six steps to the throne, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne, and stays on either side by the place of the seat, and two lions standing beside the stays. 19. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom. 20. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: silver was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. 21. For the king had ships that went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram; once every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

22. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 23. And all the kings of the earth sought the

presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 24. And they brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and raiment, armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. 25. And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. 26. And he rules over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt. 27. And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore-trees that are in the lowland, for abundance. 28. And they brought horses for Solomon out of Egypt, and out of all lands.

29. Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the history of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? 30. And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31. And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 9:1. When the queen of Sheba heard of Solomon's fabled wisdom, she came to Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. A very great retinue of aids and servants accompanied her, including camel-loads of spices, gold, and jewels. 2. And Solomon answered all her problems. Nothing was hidden from him; he could explain everything to her. 3. When she discovered how wise he really was, and how breathtaking the beauty of his palace, 4. and how wonderful the food at his tables, and how many servants and aides he had, and when she saw their spectacular uniforms and his stewards in full regalia, and saw the size of the men in his bodyguard, she could scarcely believe it! 5. Finally she exclaimed to the king. "Everything I heard about you in my own country is true! 6. I didn't believe it until I got here and saw it with my own eyes. Your wisdom is far greater than I could ever have imagined. 7. What a privilege

for these men of yours to stand here and listen to you talk! 8. Blessed be the Lord your God! How he must love Israel to give them a just king like you! He wants them to be a great, strong nation forever."

9. She gave the king a gift of over a million dollars in gold, and great quantities of spices of incomparable quality, and many, many jewels. 10. King Hiram's and King Solomon's crews brought gold from Ophir, also sandalwood and jewels. 11. The king used the sandalwood to make terraced steps for the Temple and the palace, and to construct harps and lyres for the choir. Never before had there been such beautiful instruments in all the land of Judah. 12. King Solomon gave the Queen of Sheba gifts of the same value as she had brought to him, plus everything else she asked for! Then she and her retinue returned to their own land.

13, 14. Solomon received a billion dollars worth of gold each year from the kings of Arabia and many other lands that paid annual tribute to him. In addition, there was a trade balance from the exports of his merchants. 15. He used some of the gold to make 200 large shields, each worth \$280,000. 16. and 300 smaller shields, each worth \$140,000. The king placed these in the Forest of Lebanon Room in his palace. 17. He also made a huge ivory throne overlaid with pure gold. 18. It had six gold steps and a footstool of gold; also gold armrests, each flanked by a gold lion. 19. Gold lions also stood at each side of each step. No other throne in all the world could be compared with it! 20. All of King Solomon's cups were solid gold, as were all the furnishings in the Forest of Lebanon Room. Silver was too cheap to count for much in those days! 21. Every three years the king sent his ships to Tarshish, using sailors supplied by King Hiram, to bring back gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

22. So King Solomon was richer and wiser than any other king in all the earth. 23. Kings from every nation came to visit him, and to hear the wisdom God had put into his heart. 24. Each brought him annual tribute of silver and gold bowls, clothing, armor, spices, horses, and mules. 25. In addition,

Solomon had 4,000 stalls of horses and chariots, and 12,000 cavalry-men stationed in the chariot cities, as well as in Jerusalem to protect the king. 26. He rules over all kings and kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines and as far away as the border of Egypt. 27. He made silver become as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones in the road! And cedar was used as though it were common sycamore. 28. Horses were brought to him from Egypt and other countries.

29. The rest of Solomon's biography is written in the history of Nathan the prophet and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and also in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 30. So Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all of Israel for forty years. 31. Then he died and was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Rehoboam became the new king.

COMMENTARY

I Kings 10:1-13 recounts the remarkable visit of the Queen of Sheba as she came to Jerusalem in Solomon's day.¹ Sheba was located in Arabia some fifteen hundred miles south of Jerusalem. It was at the southern extremity of the Red Sea and north of the Indian Ocean. The kind of gifts that she brought would indicate that she had an abundance of wealth at her disposal. We are impressed by the fact that even though she lived so far from Jerusalem, she had "heard of the fame of Solomon." Her primary concern was to prove Solomon's wisdom. This is a good commentary on Jehovah's promise to give Solomon a wise and an understanding heart. The Arabians found pleasure in riddles, proverbs, in matters pertaining to natural history. The Queen was disposed to doubt that anyone could be as wise as Solomon was heralded to be. The caravan which accompanied the Queen was one of great splendor. Camels were loaded with spices, gold (120 talents), and precious stones. Spices were often more precious than gold itself. The gifts she brought were of inestimable value. Many attendants were in the company of this Queen. Solomon willingly received

¹Spence, H. D. M., *The Pulpit Commentary*, II Chronicles, p. 106ff

the queen as an honored guest and they freely exchanged ideas. In all of the intellectual matters Solomon passed every test and the time came when the royal guest "had seen the wisdom of Solomon." While she was in Jerusalem, Solomon showed her his house (the Temple and the whole range of palaces). "The ascent" (verse 4) probably refers to the architectural device of winding stairs which provided access to the second and third stories of rooms built in the Temple wall. She paid particular attention to the banquet food, the servants and their dress. The Queen confessed that what she had heard about Solomon's wisdom was so unbelievable that she could not accept it unless she could personally confirm it. She was most complimentary in her evaluation. "Thou exceedest the fame that I heard." "The half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me." In the name of Solomon's God the Queen of Sheba blessed Solomon and his people. Prophetically she spoke of a reign of justice and righteousness and of Israel's being established forever.

She and Solomon exchanged gifts. He gave her "all her desire." When her delightful visit was complete she returned to her own land bearing lavish treasures from Israel. The chronicler records the fact that the Ophir navy also brought much gold, precious stones and alium trees into the land of Israel. The alium trees were native to India and were of excellent texture for exquisite woodwork, especially for making musical instruments. These were days of wonderful prosperity in Israel.

The Queen of Sheba gave Solomon one hundred and twenty shekels of gold. The gold paid into Solomon's treasuries by the nations subject to Israel amounted to more than five times that which the Queen presented as a gift. The annual tribute was six hundred and sixty six talents of gold. This cannot be accurately figured in terms of our currency, but may have amounted to as much as twenty five million dollars. In addition to this there were several other important sources of revenue in connection with commerce. The national income far exceeded expenditures. Solomon had the excess gold fashioned into shields which could be properly displayed in the great military museum in the house of the Forest of Lebanon. The "buckler" was a large

oblong shield designed to protect the entire body of a warrior. Two hundred of these shields were fashioned. Each shield contained six hundred shekels of gold. Three hundred shields were fashioned each of which contained three hundred shekels of gold. There were thirty six hundred shekels of gold in each talent of gold. These shields represented values from two thousand five hundred dollars to five thousand dollars. They remained in the great military house until they were carried away by Shishak, King of Egypt (I Kings 14:26), in the fifth year of king Rehoboam. Solomon's throne was a worthy seat for the great king.¹ Ivory was imported from Africa and India. This material was used in the basic construction. It was beautiful in its own right; however this beauty was enhanced by a gold overlay. The throne was elevated. It was fashioned with arms and was provided with a foot-rest of gold. The lion was the symbol of kingly power. This animal was the peculiar symbol that pertained to the tribe of Judah. The arm rests on the throne may have been fashioned like a lion. Whether there were twelve or twenty-four lions fashioned to guard the steps is difficult to determine. The number "twelve" or its double would represent all of the tribes of Israel. The uniqueness of the throne is emphasized by the chronicler. In these days of unrivaled prosperity all of the appointments for Solomon's personal quarters and for state ceremonies were made of gold. It is possible that this luxurious living had much to do in turning Solomon away from Jehovah.

"The kings of the earth" (verses 22, 23) were those who reigned in territories from Egypt to the Euphrates River. Jehovah had kept His promise. Solomon was the wisest of all and he had great wealth at his disposal. The kinds of goods considered valuable are listed in verse 24—silver, gold, raiment, armor, spices, horses and mules. Solomon was renowned for his chariotry installations. These were necessary from a military standpoint to protect various sections of Israel's territory. Four thousand stalls for horses and twelve thousand horsemen

¹Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II, p. 648

composed this select service.¹ This was in sharp contrast with Israel's lack of such resources when Joshua first brought them into Canaan. Solomon procured the horses and chariots from Egypt. The prosperity of Israel is described proverbially in verse 27 when the writer indicates that silver was like stones and cedar trees were as plentiful as sycamores in Jerusalem.²

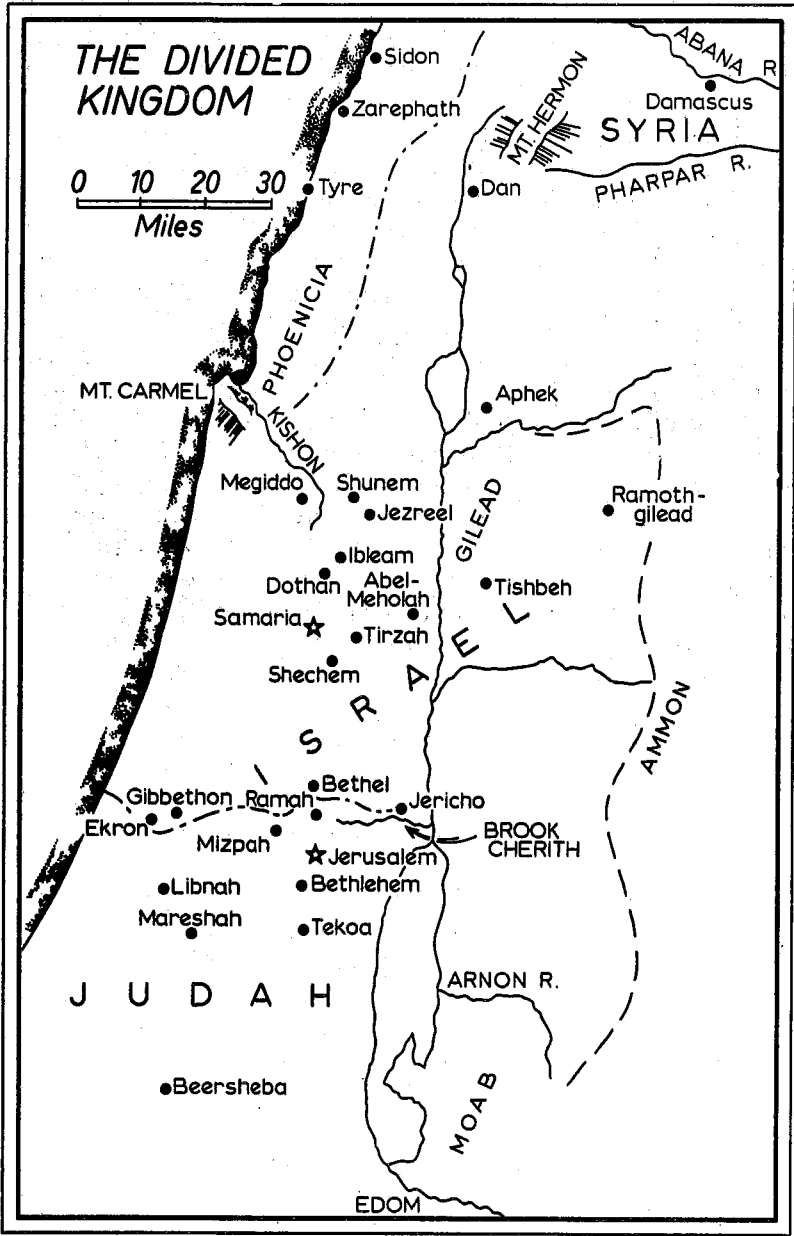
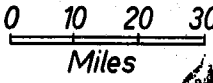
Nathan, Ahijah and Iddo are identified as persons who wrote histories of the life and times of Solomon. Nathan was the personal seer who charged David in his sin with Bathsheba. Ahijah the Shilonite (I Kings 11:28-40; 14:1-20) distinguished himself as Jehovah's herald in predicting the division of the kingdom to Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Later Ahijah pronounced Jehovah's judgment on Jeroboam because of the king's wickedness. According to II Chronicles 12:15, Iddo the seer wrote a history of Rehoboam. The life and times of Abijah, king of Judah, were described "in the commentary of the prophet Iddo" (II Chronicles 13:22). The life and times of Solomon were said to have been written "in the visions of Iddo the seer." Iddo also was concerned about Jeroboam, king of Israel. These three men, Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo were important original sources for some of the materials in this record.

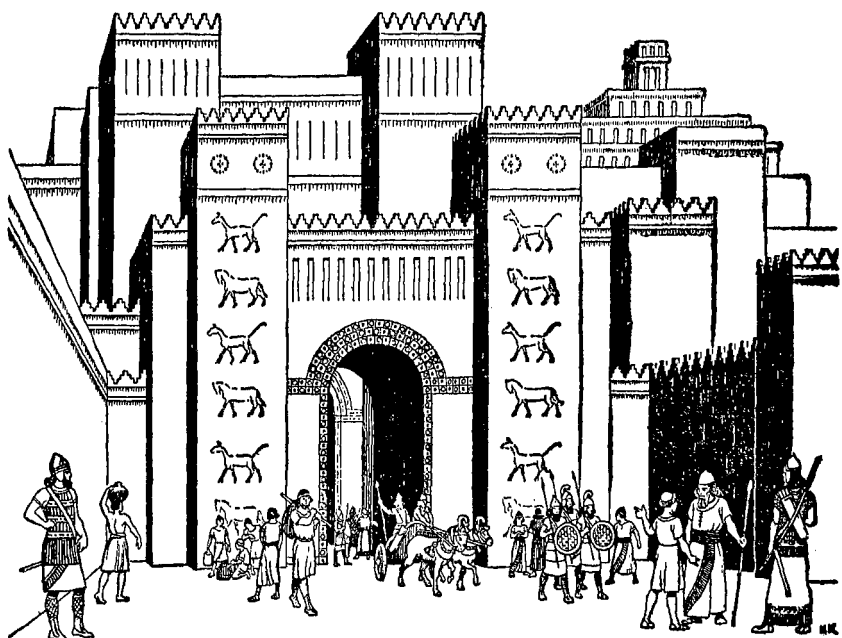
Like his father before him, Solomon's reign reached through forty years. While no adverse word is recorded here, the first twenty four years of Solomon's reign were productive of much good; but the last sixteen years found Solomon rebelling against Jehovah in every conceivable way. "And Solomon slept with his fathers," the Bible says. Certainly he was one of God's choice men; but he died. This experience awaits the wise man and the fool alike. It is of the utmost importance that every person be faithful to God until he dies. At the time of David's death a royal cemetery was established at Jerusalem. Solomon was buried with all of the honors that were due him as king of Israel. By Jehovah's grace, Solomon's successor to the throne was Rehoboam, the king's only son.

¹Archer, Gleason G., Jr., *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*, p. 394

²Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 469

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM





Babylon—The City of the Captivity



II. THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM (10:1-36:21)

1. JEROBOAM'S REVOLUTION (Chapter 10)

TEXT

Chapter 10:1. And Rehoboam went to Shechem; for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. 2. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard of it (for he was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Solomon), that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt. 3. And they sent and called him; and Jeroboam and all Israel came, and they spake to Rehoboam, saying, 4. "Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, 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, then they will be thy servants for ever." 8. But he forsook the counsel of the old men which they had given him, and took counsel with the young men that were grown up with him, that stood before him. 9. And he said unto them, "What counsel give ye, that ye may return answer to this people, who have spoken to me, saying, 'Make the yoke that thy father did put upon us lighter?'" 10. And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, "Thus shalt thou say unto the people that spake unto thee, saying, 'Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. 11. 'And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add 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 the third day, as the king bade, saying, "Come to me again the third day." 13. And the king answered them roughly; and king

Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, 14. and spake to them after the counsel 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 it was brought about of God, that Jehovah might establish his word, which he spake by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16. And when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." So all Israel departed unto their tents. 17. But as the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. 18. Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was over the men subject to taskwork; and the children of Israel stoned him to death with stones. And king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. 19. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 10:1. All the leaders of Israel came to Shechem for Rehoboam's coronation. 2, 3. Meanwhile, friends of Jeroboam (son of Nebat) sent word to him of Solomon's death. He was in Egypt at the time, where he had gone to escape from King Solomon. He now quickly returned, and was present at the coronation, and led the people's demands on Rehoboam: 4. "Your father was a hard master," they said. "Be easier on us than he was, and we will let you be our king!" 5. Rehoboam told them to return in three days for his decision.

6. He discussed their demand with the old men who had counseled his father Solomon. "What shall I tell them?" he asked. 7. "If you want to be their king," they replied, "you will have to give them a favorable reply and treat them with kindness." 8, 9. But he rejected their advice and asked the opinion of the young men who had grown up with him. "What

do you fellows think I should do?" he asked. "Shall I be easier on them than my father was?" 10. "No!" they replied. "Tell them, 'If you think my father was hard on you, just wait and see what I'll be like!' Tell them 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins! 11. I am going to be tougher on you, not easier! My father used whips on you, but I'll use scorpions!'"

12. So when Jeroboam and the people returned in three days to hear King Rehoboam's decision, 13. he spoke roughly to them; for he refused the advice of the old men, 14. and followed the counsel of the younger ones. "My father gave you heavy burdens but I will give you heavier!" he told them, "My father punished you with whips, but I will punish you with scorpions!" 15. So the king turned down the people's demands. (God caused him to do it in order to fulfill his prediction spoken to Jeroboam by Ahijah, the Shilonite.)

16. When the people realized what the king was saying they turned around and deserted him. "Forget David and his dynasty!" they shouted angrily. "We'll get someone else to be our king. Let Rehoboam rule his own tribe of Judah! Let's go home!" So they did. 17. The People of the tribe of Judah, however, remained loyal to Rehoboam. 18. Afterwards, when King Rehoboam sent Hadoram to draft forced labor from the other tribes of Israel, the people stoned him to death. When this news reached King Rehoboam he jumped into his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. 19. And Israel has refused to be ruled by a descendant of David to this day.

COMMENTARY

Solomon's name meant "Peace" and described his character and the nature of his reign. Rehoboam's name meant "the people are enlarged" or "one who sets the people free." There was bound up in Rehoboam's name Solomon's hope for Israel. Rehoboam's actions contradicted the anticipation in his name. The selection of Shechem for the great national gathering was unusual. Jerusalem was the capital. The Temple was in Jerusalem. Shechem was in Ephraim about thirty miles north of Jerusalem. Whether Rehoboam went there by choice or was

advised by the people that this was where they would meet him is not clear. The people of Israel gathered there to make him king if he would meet their conditions.

When Ahijah had revealed to Jeroboam that Jehovah would give him ten parts of the kingdom (I Kings 11:31), Jeroboam conspired to take the throne from Solomon. The conspiracy failed. Jeroboam was able to find refuge in Egypt where he remained until Solomon's death. Jeroboam had friends in Ephraim and other northern tribes who looked to him for leadership. In the meeting at Shechem, Jeroboam is the champion of the ten tribes. He and the elders of these tribes presented themselves before Rehoboam with their requests. Solomon's demands upon Israel had become very galling especially in the latter half of his reign. There was much wealth; but the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. Social injustice was evident throughout the kingdom. The people were burdened with excessive taxation. They had been pushed to the point of rebellion. They asked that their "heavy yoke" be made lighter. They requested a readjustment of personal responsibilities with regard to the kingdom. From a human viewpoint, Rehoboam probably could have made the necessary adjustments and the kingdom would have remained united. From Jehovah's viewpoint His purpose was that the kingdom should now be divided (I Kings 12:15). Rehoboam would rule over Judah and Jeroboam would lead the ten northern tribes. Faced with this serious request, Rehoboam promised an answer within three days. Rehoboam used the time to seek the advice of counselors. He turned to "the old men," contemporaries of Solomon. They advised that he follow a policy of kindness and consideration for the people. Even here, Jehovah was at work as Rehoboam rejected good advice. Having decided what he wanted to do, his heart was hardened as was the case with Pharaoh in Moses' day. At this time Rehoboam was forty one years old (I Kings 14:21). He turned to younger men, those of his own generation for advice. They advised him to be stern, kingly, demanding. They fed Rehoboam's ego, reminded him of his authority, sent him to the people with a proverbial

expression—"my little finger is thicker than my father's loins." The people understood that if they had found Solomon's regime burdensome, Rehoboam's would be unbearable. They could not and would not "live with scorpions." The scorpion was a creature which was able to inflict a person with a very painful sting. The term was also used as a name for a whip made of rawhide thongs to which pieces of lead were attached. Rehoboam threatened to coerce Israel and rule as a despot. When the appointed time came, the king hatefully announced his policy to the people. Verse 15 reviews Jehovah's purpose in this matter. It must be understood that Jehovah did not use Rehoboam as a pawn. What the king decided to do was, first of all his own decision. When he would not do God's will, his heart was hardened. In these matters we cannot limit Jehovah's knowledge of the past, present and future. He is omniscient. At the same time, He allows personal choice and holds man responsible for that choice.

When the people heard Rehoboam's insulting speech, they lifted up the cry of rebellion and left the scene in an angry mood. Perhaps some of the people were glad for an occasion to rebel. Others among them were perplexed. "Israel," as a name, from this time specially identified the ten northern tribes. The rebel cry, "what portion have we in David? Every man to your tents," had been heard in Sheba's rebellion against David (II Samuel 20:1). The tribes of Judah, Simeon and a part of Benjamin submitted to Rehoboam's kingship. All of the other tribes of Israel turned to Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and made him king. This was a tragic day in Hebrew history. Rehoboam made a futile attempt to bring the northern tribes under his rule. Hadoram (Adoram—I Kings 12:18) was sent to organize some forced labor or to arrange for tribute to be paid to Rehoboam. The king, Rehoboam, kept himself at a safe distance. When Hadoram was stoned to death by the rebels, Rehoboam hurried to the safety of Jerusalem. The division between Judah in the south and Israel in the north continued until the time of the Babylonian captivity.

2. THE REIGN OF REHOBOAM (11-12)

TEXT

Chapter 11:1. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, that were warriors, to fight against Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam. 2. But the word of Jehovah 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 Jehovah, "Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is of me." ' ' ' So they hearkened unto the words of Jehovah, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6. He built Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa. 7. and Beth-zur, and Soco, 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, fortified cities. 11. And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of victuals, and oil and wine. 12. And in every city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong. And Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

13. And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their border. 14. For the Levites left their suburbs and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons cast them off, that they should not execute the priest's office unto Jehovah; 15. and he appointed him priests for the high places, and for the he-goats, and for the calves which he had made. 16. And after them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek Jehovah, the God Of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice unto Jehovah, the God of their fathers. 17. 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.

18. And Rehoboam took him a wife, Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse; 19. and she bare him sons: Jeush, and Shemariah, and Zaham. 20. And after her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom; and she bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith. 21. And Rehoboam loved Maacah 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 appointed Abijah the son of Maacah to be chief, even the prince among his brethren; for he was minded to make him king. 23. And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his sons throughout all the lands of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fortified city: and he gave them victuals in abundance. And he sought for them many wives.

Chapter 12:1. 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. And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had trespassed against Jehovah, 3. with twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen. And the people were without number that came with him out of Egypt: the Lubim, the Sukkiim, and the Ethiopians. 4. And he took the fortified cities which pertained to Judah, and came unto Jerusalem. 5. Now Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam, and to the princes of Judah, that were gathered together to Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said unto them, "Thus saith Jehovah, 'Ye have forsaken me, therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak.'" 6. Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "Jehovah is righteous." 7. And when Jehovah saw that they humbled themselves, the word of Jehovah came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves: 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 Jehovah, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all away: he took away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. 10. And king Rehoboam made in their stead shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, that kept the door of the king's house. 11. And it was so, that, as oft-as the king entered into the house of Jehovah, the guard came and bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber. 12. And when he 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.

13. So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which Jehovah had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there: and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 14. And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah.

15. Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the histories of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, after the manner of 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.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 11:1. Upon arrival at Jerusalem, Rehoboam mobilized the armies of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 strong, and declared war against the rest of Israel in an attempt to reunite the kingdom. 2. But the Lord told Shemaiah the prophet, 3. “Go and say to King Rehoboam of Judah, Solomon's son, and to the people of Judah and of Benjamin: 4. “The Lord says, ‘Do not fight against your brothers. Go home, for I am behind their rebellion.’” So they obeyed the Lord and refused to fight against Jeroboam.

5-10. Rehoboam stayed in Jerusalem and fortified these cities of Judah with walls and gates to protect himself: Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. 11. He also rebuilt and strengthened the forts, and manned them with companies of soldiers under their officers, and stored them with food, olive oil, and wine. 12. Shields and spears were placed in armories in every city as a further safety measure. For only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to him.

13, 14. However, the priests and Levites from the other tribes now abandoned their homes and moved to Judah and Jerusalem, for King Jeroboam had fired them, telling them to stop being priests of the Lord. 15. He had appointed other priests instead who encouraged the people to worship idols instead of God, and to sacrifice to carved statues of goats and calves which he placed on the hills. 16. Laymen, too, from all over Israel began moving to Jerusalem where they could freely worship the Lord God of their fathers, and sacrifice to him. 17. This strengthened the kingdom of Judah, so King Rehoboam survived for three years without difficulty; for during those years there was an earnest effort to obey the Lord as King David and King Solomon had done.

18. Rehoboam married his cousin Mahalath. She was the daughter of David's son, Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of David's brother Eliab. 19. Three sons were born from this marriage—Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. 20. Later he married Maacah, the daughter of Absalom. The children she bore him were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21. He loved Maacah more than any of his other wives and concubines (he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines—with twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters). 22. Maacah's son Abijah was his favorite, and he intended to make him the next king. 23. He very wisely scattered his other sons in the fortified cities throughout the land of Judah and Benjamin, and gave them large allowances and arranged for them to have several wives apiece.

Chapter 12:1. But just when Rehoboam was at the height of his popularity and power he abandoned the Lord, and the

people followed him in his sin. 2. As a result, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam's reign, 3. with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand cavalymen and an unnumbered host of infantrymen—Egyptians, Libyans, Sukkiim, and Ethiopians. 4. He quickly conquered Judah's fortified cities and soon arrived at Jerusalem. 5. The prophet Shemaiah now met with Rehoboam and the Judean leaders from every part of the nation (they had fled to Jerusalem for safety), and told them, "The Lord says, 'You have forsaken me, so I have forsaken you and abandoned you to Shishak.' " 6. Then the king and the leaders of Israel confessed their sins and exclaimed, "The Lord is right in doing this to us!" 7. And when the Lord saw them humble themselves he sent Shemaiah to tell them, "Because you have humbled yourselves, I will not completely destroy you; some will escape. I will not use Shishak to pour out my anger upon Jerusalem. 8. But you must pay annual tribute to him. Then you will realize how much better it is to serve me than to serve him!"

9. So King Shishak of Egypt conquered Jerusalem and took away all the treasures of the Temple and of the palace, also all of Solomon's gold shields. 10. King Rehoboam replaced them with bronze shields and committed them to the care of the captain of his bodyguard. 11. Whenever the king went to the Temple, the guards would carry them, and afterwards return them to the armory. 12. When the king humbled himself, the Lord's anger was turned aside and he didn't send total destruction; in fact, even after Shishak's invasion, the economy of Judah remained strong.

13. King Rehoboam reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city God had chosen as his residence after considering all the other cities of Israel. He had become king at the age of forty-one, and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 14. But he was an evil king, for he never did decide really to please the Lord.

15. The complete biography of Rehoboam is recorded in the histories written by Shemaiah the prophet and by Iddo the seer, and in The Genealogical Register. There were continual

wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 16. When Rehoboam died he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Abijah became the new king.

COMMENTARY

Rehoboam decided to use military power against the northern tribes to bring them under subjection. The murder of Hadoram was a defiant rejection of Rehoboam's authority. One hundred and eighty thousand warriors out of the south were readied for this civil war between Judah and Israel. Jehovah had determined that the division between Judah and Israel should be accomplished at this time. Shemaiah is called a prophet and a "man of God." There are references to many false prophets in the Old Testament; but one never meets a false "man of God." In II^d Chronicles 12:5 Shemaiah declared the word of Jehovah to Rehoboam concerning Shishak and the Egyptians. Shemaiah also is credited with writing the history of the life and times of Rehoboam (II Chronicles 12:15). When Rehoboam faced this crisis and was about to send this large army into Israel, Jehovah sent Shemaiah to the king of Judah and all the people who submitted to his reign. Jehovah's word was, "Dismiss this army." The statement, "This thing is of me," underscored the divine purpose. Rehoboam and his people obeyed Jehovah in this matter.

A brief summary of Rehoboam's reign follows. Probably because he feared threats against the security of Judah especially from Egypt, he fortified several villages in Judah and Benjamin. The relative locations of the villages which concerned the king are indicated here.

Bethlehem — About five miles south of Jerusalem, Etham — Ten miles west of Hebron, Tekoa — Seven miles south east of Bethlehem, Beth-zur — Five miles north of Hebron, Soco — Thirteen miles west of Bethlehem, Adullam — Fourteen miles north west of Hebron, Gath — Twenty miles north west of Hebron, Mareshah — Fifteen miles north west of Hebron, Ziph — Four miles south of Hebron, Adoraim — Five miles west of Hebron, Lachish — Twenty miles west of Hebron, Azekah —

Ten miles north west of Hebron, Hebron — Twenty miles south of Jerusalem, Zorah — Fifteen miles west of Jerusalem, Aijalon — Thirteen miles north west of Jerusalem. The distances stated here are not measured with absolute accuracy. The key cities were Jerusalem and Hebron. All of these villages were equipped with soldiers, weapons, and food supplies.

Verses 13-17 describe the migration of priests and Levites into the southern kingdom. The primary reason for this development was Jeroboam's rejection of Jehovah worship. Jeroboam was Jehovah's choice to be king of Israel. He certainly had the potential to become an effective leader. According to I Kings 11:26-28, Jeroboam had been a servant of Solomon. He had charge over the house of Joseph in the fortification of Jerusalem, working on the citadel of Millo. He was described as a very industrious person and as a mighty man of valor. He had the credentials to become a great king; but when the time came for his kingdom to be set up, he feared Rehoboam and his efforts to unify the kingdom. Jeroboam set up Baal worship in Bethel (southern border of his kingdom) and Dan (northern frontier of the kingdom). He determined to make religion convenient for his people. He did not want them to return to the Temple in Jerusalem. He made priests out of any who wanted to serve without regard to Levitical connection (I Kings 12:28-33). He changed the date for the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles from the seventh month and the fifteenth day to the eighth month and the fifteenth day. He set up idolatry throughout his kingdom. Reacting to these developments, priests and Levites and a remnant of representatives from the northern tribes moved into Judah and the southern kingdom. This influx of Hebrews with deep religious convictions provided a certain stability to Rehoboam's government for about three years. Even Rehoboam himself, ruled wisely through these fleeting months. "The way of David and Solomon" in this context refers to a genuine concern for Jehovah's will.

II Chronicles 12:1 reports Rehoboam's forsaking the law of Jehovah. His subjects made no attempt to put him off the

throne. They followed his leadership. Rehoboam married Mahalath who was the daughter of Jerimoth, son of David. In the lists of David's sons Jerimoth is not named. He could have been the son of one of David's concubines. "Jerimoth" could have been another name for Ithream who is listed among David's sons. Abihail was a second cousin to Mahalath and she was also Mahalath's mother. Eliab was Jesse's eldest son. The sons of Rehoboam through Mahalath were Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. Rehoboam also married Maacah who was Absalom's grand-daughter. Maacah's mother was Tamar, Absalom's daughter. The relationships of "son" and "daughter" are not always used as exactly as we use them. They do indicate a direct lineal descent. Absalom was David's rebel son. Rehoboam's sons through Maacah were Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. Rehoboam broke Jehovah's law respecting Hebrew kings and the multiplication of wives (Deuteronomy 17:17). He went his own way. Eighteen wives, sixty concubines, twenty eight sons, and sixty daughters composed the king's harem and family. Of all the wives, he loved Maacah best. Her son, Abijah, was groomed by Rehoboam to be his successor of Judah's throne. Rehoboam demonstrated human wisdom in placing his sons in positions of trust throughout the kingdom and in making liberal material provisions for them. Rehoboam failed Jehovah and would have to suffer the consequences of his failures.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON SIXTEEN II Chronicles, Chapters 9-11

567. What was the basic reason for the visit of the queen of Sheba?
568. Carefully locate Sheba.
569. What did the queen bring with her?
570. How was she received by Solomon?
571. List the particulars which were carefully observed by the queen of Sheba.

572. Explain the reference to the "ascent" in 9:4.
573. How did the queen of Sheba express her evaluation of Solomon's world?
574. What did the queen say about Jehovah?
575. How was the material from the gum trees used?
576. What did Solomon do for the queen of Sheba?
577. How much gold annually was coming into Solomon's treasury?
578. What is a buckler?
579. Where was much of this gold placed?
580. Describe Solomon's throne.
581. Why were lions used?
582. What does this record say regarding the use of gold and silver?
583. Carefully locate Tarshish.
584. Why would apes and peacocks be imported?
585. Why did many kings seek an audience with Solomon?
586. What did Solomon do with horses?
587. How extensive was Solomon's kingdom?
588. Explain the reference to "silver as stones" and "cedars as sycamore trees"
589. Name the persons who wrote Solomon's history. Identify these persons carefully.
590. How long did Solomon reign?
591. Where was Solomon buried?
592. Who succeeded Solomon on the throne of Israel?
593. Locate Shechem and indicate why Rehoboam went to that place.
594. Who was Jeroboam?
595. Why was Jeroboam in Egypt?
596. What petition did the Israelites present to Rehoboam?
597. Why did Rehoboam request a three day interval?
598. Summarize the counsel of the young men.

599. Summarize the word of the experienced counselors.
600. Describe the proverbial expression in 10:10.
601. What is a scorpion?
602. What did Rehoboam tell the people at the appointed meeting?
603. Why did Rehoboam take this course of action?
604. Who was Ahijah?
605. Locate another incident when the question was asked, "What portion have we in David"?
606. Name the tribe over which Rehoboam retained control.
607. Identify Hadoram and explain what happened with regard to him.
608. Upon returning to Jerusalem what was Rehoboam's first action?
609. Carefully identify Shemaiah.
610. Explain the phrase in 11:4, "for this thing is of me".
611. Locate Bethlehem and Tekoa.
612. Locate Gath and Hebron.
613. Name the two tribes which were in the Southern Kingdom.
614. Why was there a mass movement of the Levites to the Southern Kingdom?
615. Who appointed priests for the high places?
616. What kind of influence did the Levites have on the Southern Kingdom?
617. How many wives and concubines belonged to Rehoboam?
618. Who was the mother of Abijah?
619. How did Rehoboam use his sons?