

Lecture #27 – Exposition of II Chronicles 10-20

Chapter 10 – Rehoboam Splits the Kingdom

vs. 1-15 – Rehoboam’s Rashness

↪ I Kings 12:1-15

Rehoboam’s harsh actions lead to the division of the kingdom.

vs. 16-19 – The Kingdom Divides

↪ I Kings 12:16-24

We have another occurrence of “unto this day” in vs. 19, paralleling I Kings 12:19. Seems to be the same situation as II Chronicles 5:9.

Chapter 11 – Rehoboam’s Reign

vs. 1-12 – Fortifying the Kingdom

Rehoboam prepares for war and gathers 180,000 soldiers from Judah and Benjamin. The prophet Shemaiah prevents Rehoboam from taking military action against the rebellious tribes. For having made such awful decisions that led to the division, Rehoboam at least listens to the prophet here. Instead, he focuses on fortifying his cities and strengthening his forces.

vs. 13-17 – Defection of Levi

Jeroboam’s creation of a counter-religion caused the tribe of Levi to move wholly into Judah. This is a dramatic shift that removes the Godly influence from the Northern Kingdom and strengthens the spiritual state of the Southern.

vs. 18-23 – Rehoboam’s Family

The wives of Rehoboam are also of the house of Jesse, probably to reinforce his claim to the throne. Mahalath (“stringed instrument”)¹ is a daughter of Jerimoth (“heights”) who was a son² of David. Abihail (“father of, that is, possessing, strength”)³ is the granddaughter⁴ of David’s brother Eliab. Maachah (“oppression”),⁵ his favorite wife, was a descendant⁶ of Absalom.

He followed in the path of Solomon by taking many wives. He controlled palace intrigues by placing his children in different cities to govern.

Chapter 12 – Egypt Attacks

vs. 1 – Rehoboam’s Apostasy

↪ I Kings 14:22-24

Rehoboam again follows the pattern of his father Solomon in turning away from God once his kingdom was established.

vs. 2-12 – Egypt Invasion

↪ I Kings 14:25-28

Much more detail is given on this Egyptian incursion than in I Kings 14. This defeat is clearly stated to be a judgment against Rehoboam and the nation for turning from God. The prophet Shemaiah appears and tells them that Egypt will conquer them, which brings about repentance. However, judgment would still fall as the nation would be spoiled by the Egyptians.

vs. 13-16 – Death of Rehoboam – 959 B.C.

↪ I Kings 14:21, 29-31

Rehoboam dies and is succeeded by his son Abijah.

¹ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

² He is nowhere else mentioned. It is assumed he is either a son by a concubine or this is a secondary name.

³ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

⁴ A case where “daughter” almost certainly means “descendant” due to the chronology.

⁵ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

⁶ Most references say she was his granddaughter.

Chapter 13 – Abijah’s Reign

vs. 1-2 – Abijah’s Reign Begins

↪ I Kings 15:1-2

Called Abijam in I Kings.

Abijah’s short reign of three years is not given much space (only 8 verses) in I Kings, but here he is given a full chapter.

vs. 3-20 – Abijah’s Wars Against Jeroboam

The civil war between Judah and Israel continued. Gaebelein writes:

“Chronicles gives an account of Abijah’s war with Jeroboam. The two armies of Judah and Israel faced each other; Abijah had 400,000 men and Jeroboam 800,000. There is no reason to doubt the accuracy of these figures, as some critics have done. Both sides were confident of victory. Jeroboam had twice as many men as Abijah, and they were ‘mighty men of valor.’ He trusted in his superior number. It was different with Abijah, King of Judah. Before the battle began the king delivered a remarkable address in which he expressed his confidence in Jehovah. The LORD had given the kingdom to David and to his sons by a covenant of salt, said Abijah. The covenant of salt refers to a very ancient custom. When a guest had been entertained in a tent and partaken of salt with his host, the obligation of the latter towards his guest was one of inviolable sanctity. The covenant of Jehovah with David was like a covenant of salt, that is, inviolable. Abijah believed in that covenant. Then he mentioned Jeroboam, whom sarcastically he calls ‘the servant of Solomon,’ his revolt, his idolatry, his opposition to the priesthood. He closed his address with a confident statement. ‘Behold, God Himself is with us for our captain, and His priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you.’ Then the warning: ‘O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper.’ Abijah won the battle. When they were encircled by the enemy they cried to Jehovah in their hour of need, and He was faithful to His own word (Numb. 10:9). When the priests sounded with the trumpets, when they shouted, no doubt in faith and anticipation of Jehovah’s interference, then God smote Jeroboam and all Israel and delivered them into their hands. They had prevailed because they relied upon the LORD God, and so shall we prevail if we trust in the Lord. With that battle Jeroboam’s strength was broken. The wicked king, whose awful idolatry was the ruin of Israel, never recovered his strength. The LORD struck him and he died.”⁷

⁷ Annotated Bible by A.C. Gaebelein. E-Sword module.

vs. 21-22 – Abijah’s Death

☪ I Kings 15:7-8

No doubt these marriages and children have to include those that predate his short three years on the throne. Reese calculates that he was 36 when he died.⁸

Abijah is succeeded by Asa.

Chapter 14 – Asa’s Reign

vs. 1-5 – Reign of Asa

☪ I Kings 15:9-11

Asa leads in a revival and turns away from the ways of his father and grandfather.

vs. 6-7 – Fortifications

Asa uses the ten years of peace and revival to strengthen his defenses and hold on territory.

vs. 8-15 – Ethiopian Incursion

Asa fields an army of 300,000 spearmen from Judah and 280,000 archers from Benjamin. These are called to defend against Zerah⁹ the Ethiopian and his 1,000,000-man army. The armies meet at Mareshah (“crest of a hill”)¹⁰ and God gives Judah a great victory.

⁸ Reese’s Chronological Bible, p. 607

⁹ No reliable, historical identification has been made. Some say it was the Egyptian Osorkon II and others that he may have actually been an Arabian chieftain. Knapp think that if it was Osorkon II then the invasion could have been because Asa had ceased paying tribute to Egypt as demanded by Shishak.

¹⁰ Smith’s Bible Dictionary. Located on the western border of Judah, was one of the town fortified by Rehoboam (I Chronicles 11:8)

Chapter 15 – Asa’s Reforms

vs. 1-7 – Azariah’s Prophecy

The prophet Azariah appears with a message from God for Asa following his great victory. Carroll writes:

“The time we need to be most watchful is in the moment of a great victory. When the times are hard, when we are pressed to the wall, we are apt to be humble and look to God; but when it looks like everything is going our way, the danger is that we will be puffed up. Now the prophet of God met that army coming, with all those spoils and said, ‘Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the Lord is with you while you be with him; if ye seek him he will be found of you; if ye forsake him he will forsake you.’ What a warning, that! ‘God is with you while you are with God; but if you turn away from God, he will turn away from you.’”¹¹

vs. 8-18 – Religious Reforms

☪ I Kings 15:12-15

The gathering in vs. 10 appears to be Pentecost.¹² The zeal with which they recommitted themselves to follow God is remarkable. They shouted and sounded trumpets! They decided those who would not follow God should be put to death!¹³ Idolatry was purged from the land and the wicked queen-mother was deposed!

vs. 19 - Peace

The time marker of the 35th year has confused some. Many believe this cannot be taken at face value since Asa and Baasha battled throughout their reigns (I Kings 15:16). Some suggest this must be an error or perhaps be interpreted as the 35th year of the kingdom of Judah. However, there really is not discrepancy at all. Whatever skirmishes happened between Judah and Israel were not all out war and did not involve foreign powers. Because the beginning of this time of peace is marked by the defeat of a foreign army (Zerah and his men), it makes sense to say that the ending of it would be with another case of foreign involvement. What we see in the next chapter is foreign involvement – Syrian mercenaries.

¹¹ An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Divided Kingdom and Restoration Period, by B.H. Carroll. p. 36

¹² So says Poole and Gill.

¹³ Deuteronomy 17:2.

Chapter 16 – Asa’s Battles

vs. 1-6 – Defeats Israel with Syrian Aid

☪ I Kings 15:17-22

Baasha and Israel had fortified Ramah in attempt to control the area north of Jerusalem, likely in part to stop those of the Northern Kingdom from going to worship at Jerusalem. Asa has a lapse of faith and instead of relying on God he seeks foreign mercenaries from Syria. Benhadad and his forces then attack Israel on their common border north of the Sea of Galilee. Baasha has to turn north to deal with this new threat, allowing Asa to dismantle Ramah and fortify the area himself.

vs. 7-10 – Hanani’s Warnings

The prophet Hanani (“gracious”)¹⁴ confronts Asa for his actions in allying with the Syrians. Asa has him thrown in prison, and evidently does the same to others who say likewise.

vs. 11-14 – Overview of Asa’s Reign

☪ I Kings 15:23-24

In Asa’s last battle – his health – he again fails to turn to God as he ought.

Knapp writes:

“It is easily seen why the chronicler should write of Asa’s acts ‘first and last’ (2 Chron. 16:11). ‘Ye did run well: who did hinder you?’ might be asked of many besides the Galatians and Asa. Important as a good beginning is, it is not all: we are called to run with endurance the race that is set before us. But when God’s people become diseased in their feet, they cease to run well; and though they may try various expedients, such as ritualism, revivalism, the union of churches, etc., to recover themselves, they are every one of them physicians of no value. ‘Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation,’ wrote a notable backslider (Psa. 51:12). It is Jehovah who says through His prophet, ‘I will heal their backslidings.’

“There was a great funeral made over Asa, and he appears to have been sincerely lamented by his people.

“And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign. And they buried him in his own sepulchers, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and

¹⁴ Smith’s Bible Dictionary

laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him (2 Chron. 16:13-14).

“Asa’s history reveals his weaknesses: God, in His comments on his character, gives no hint of them (2 Chron. 20:32; 21:12). He loves to commend whatever is lovely in His servants’ lives, and only when necessary exposes their failures and follies. May we in this, as in all things else, be ‘imitators of God’ (Eph. 5:1).

“Jer. 41:9 refers to a pit (or cistern) made by Asa ‘for fear of Baasha king of Israel.’ God would thus, in this incidental way, remind us by this last historical notice of king Asa what was the beginning of his decline—‘the fear of man [which] bringeth a snare’ (Prov. 29:25).”¹⁵

His son Jehoshaphat succeeds him.

Chapter 17 – Jehoshaphat’s Good Reign

vs. 1-19 – A Good Life

Carroll speaks of the reign of Jehoshaphat and the measures he used:

“The glorious seventeenth chapter of 2 Chronicles has no parallel in Kings, and well illustrates the valuable supplementary character of the later history. The history opens with Jehoshaphat devising military measures of defense against Israel. He placed regular garrisons in all the fortified cities of Judah, established and garrisoned new military posts in all the territory captured from Ephraim by his father, Asa, and grandfather, Abijah. This was the very beginning of his reign.

“His moral measures of defense are far more sublime. They constitute a great lesson worthy of study in all subsequent ages. On this section, therefore, we must place our greatest emphasis. What, then, were these moral measures of defense adopted by Jehoshaphat?

“(1) ‘He walked in the first ways of his father David’ – David, the ideal king, not Solomon, was his model. And the first ways of David are followed, not the last. ...

“(2) ‘He sought not unto Baalim’ – that is the Hebrew plural, like Seraph – Seraphim; cherub – cherubim; so Baal – Baalim. ‘He sought not unto Baalim, but sought unto the God of his fathers.’ He whom one worships is more important than whom he makes his model....

“(3) The record tells us that he refused to find in Israel an example for his people, which under the house of Omri, turned to these infamous Phoenician deities, the Baalim-Baal and Ashtoreth.

“(4) The record says that his heart was lifted up in the ways of Jehovah. That is a strong expression in the original. It is not a perfunctory service; he gloried in it; his heart exulted in it; his fervor glowed like a furnace.

¹⁵ The Kings of Judah by C. Knapp. p. 51-52

“(5) In such a spirit and zeal there could be no compromise; hence the record says, ‘He took away the high places and the Asherim¹⁶ out of Judah.’...

“(6) He made abundant and systematic provision for the instruction of the people of God in the Pentateuch, ‘The book of the law of Jehovah.’ Princes, priests, and Levites, were constituted as itinerant teaching corps. Up and down, to and fro, through all the land this great traveling faculty carried and taught the one great textbook, the Law of Moses. The word of God was not bound. Its precepts were brought by the mightiest and most honorable in the land into every village and home. And as the priests and Levites of all the tribes were assembled into one tribe, magnifying the teaching force of that tribe, Judah, under this itinerant system of instruction) became one great religious university – an itinerant theological seminary.

“(7) He established a graded judicial system for the determination and enforcement of civil, criminal, and ecclesiastical law (10:5-8)...

“Now, imagine the effect of such a trained force of teachers going over Judah teaching that law, and then such a judicial system interpreting and enforcing that law. I repeat again that mere human law, separated from the idea of responsibility to God, can never challenge respect nor be righteously enforced....”

“(8) He did not isolate himself from his people, living luxuriously in a palace and leaving subordinates to watch over the affairs of the kingdom. But the text says that ‘he dwelt at Jerusalem, and went out again among the people from Beersheba [the most southern part] to the hill country of Ephraim [the most northern part] and brought them back unto Jehovah the God of their fathers.’ When kings become missionaries like that, and the princes become itinerant teachers like that, happy is the land.

“(9) He organized and trained a vast militia corps, or war reserve, not indeed as a standing army, but ready at all times to respond to a call to arms in any emergency. ...

“The glorious results of these measures are thus set forth in the text: first, Jehovah was with Jehoshaphat, and established his kingdom; second, fear of Jehovah fell on all the kingdoms that were round about Judah, so they made no war on Jehoshaphat; third, all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat tribute; fourth, some of the Philistines brought to Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute; fifth, the Arabs brought him flocks of 15,400 rams and goats; sixth, and Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance, and waxed great exceedingly, and built in Judah castles and cities of stone, and he had many works in the cities of Judah.”¹⁷

¹⁶ A popular interpretation of the Hebrew word *asherah* (Strong’s H842). I am not inclined to agree with it because I think such groves were likely used for other deities, so limiting them to Ashteroth is probably incorrect.

¹⁷ An Interpretation of the English Bible: The Divided Kingdom and Restoration Period, by B.H. Carroll. p. 44-49. I tried to edit it down some for space.

Chapter 18 – Jehoshaphat and Ahab

vs. 1-12 – The Lying Prophets

↪ I Kings 22:1-12

Jehoshaphat makes a terrible mistake in allying himself with Ahab. The two royal houses intermarry the sins of Ahab will be planted in Judah and bear a bitter harvest.

See the parallel passage for notes.

vs. 13-27 – The Prophecy of Micaiah

↪ I Kings 22:13-28

See the parallel passage for notes.

vs. 28–34 – Defeat and Death of Ahab

↪ I Kings 22:29-40

A wonderful detail is added in vs. 31. Jehoshaphat cried to God when pressed by the Syrian chariots. God heard that cry and caused the Syrians to turn aside. While these actions are recorded in I Kings, the Divine Providence behind them is not highlighted.

Chapter 19 – Jehoshaphat’s Government

vs. 1-3 – Jehu’s Rebuke

The prophet Jehu rebukes Jehoshaphat for allying with Ahab.

vs. 4-11 – Appoints Judges

See points 7 and 8 from the B.H. Carroll quote in chapter 17.

Chapter 20 – Invasion by Moab-Ammon

vs. 1-2 – Invasion

The combined forces of the nations of Moab, Ammon, and Edom (?)¹⁸ began to make an incursion around the southwest corner of the Dead Sea.

vs. 3-13 – Prayer

With the enemy some 25 miles away,¹⁹ the king fears but does not panic. He proclaims a fast and special prayer. The king offers a public prayer in the Temple, calling on God's faithfulness, power, and promises to intervene. He closes, "neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee."

vs. 14-19 – Jahaziel's Message

God responds through a Levite named Jahaziel ("whom God watches over").²⁰ God reveals the place where the enemy will be and commands the army to march there but not engage.

vs. 20-29 - Victory

As they marched to meet the enemy, singers were appointed to go before them singing God's praises. The enemy armies turn on one another and defeat one another. The army of Judah spends three days gather the spoils before gathering on the fourth day to celebrate at the valley of Becachah ("blessing")²¹

vs. 30-34 – Final Days and Overview of Jehoshaphat

☪ II Kings 22:41-45

The two stains on Jehoshaphat's record are his alliance with the house of Ahab and that he did not completely eradicate idolatry from the land. Though much progress was made on that front, the people's hearts were not fully turned to God.

¹⁸ Mt. Seir is mentioned in vs. 10.

¹⁹ The Kings of Judah by C. Knapp. p. 60

²⁰ Smith's Bible Dictionary

²¹ Smith's Bible Dictionary

vs. 35-37 – Trade Partnerships with Israel

↻ II Kings 22:44-49

Jehoshaphat made an alliance with Ahaziah to build boats to trade with Tarshish. God rebukes this action through the prophet Eliezer (“God his help”)²² and the ships were destroyed before trade could begin.

²² Easton’s Bible Dictionary