

## 2 Chronicles 10-15 – Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON CHS. 1-9

#### II. THE REIGN OF THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY CHS. 10-36

##### A. Rehoboam Chs. 10-12

##### 1. Division of the nation into Israel and Judah Ch. 10

**10:1 And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king.**

This is an interesting development. Rehoboam went to Shechem to be crowned because that's where the nation had gathered.

They didn't go to the capital at Jerusalem, they went to a city that was the geographic center of the northern tribes.

The reason why was because the later years of Solomon had grown difficult for many of the people of Israel.

Taxes were oppressive & things were so tightly controlled by the federal bureaucracy, they saw a change in the ruler as a time to push for some *relief*.

They began their appeal by demanding Rehoboam appear at a city of *their choosing* rather than his.

**2 So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon), that Jeroboam returned from Egypt.**

Some time before this, God sent a prophet to Jeroboam with the message he'd become king of the northern 10 tribes.

When word reached him Solomon was dead, he returned quietly to his home near Shiloh.

**3 Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."**

Jeroboam was a gifted leader & one the people looked to, to be their spokesman now.

They demanded Rehoboam lighten the tax & work burden that had been placed on them during his father's reign.

They understood now that he was gone, the massive federal programs that had dominated national life were finished so there was no need for such heavy-handedness on the part of the government.

**5 So he said to them, "Come back to me after 3 days." And the people departed. 6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" 7 And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good**

words to them, they will be your servants forever.”<sup>8</sup> But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him.<sup>9</sup> And he said to them, “What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, ‘Lighten the yoke which your father put on us?’”<sup>10</sup> Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, “Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us’—thus you shall say to them: ‘My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father’s waist!’<sup>11</sup> And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you with scourges!*’ ”

The older, wiser & more experienced counselors understood the situation better than the young guys that the *time was right for a change*.

For years they’d heard the argument that the federal government was bloated & top-heavy & that taxes were crushing the heart out of the people.

They *correctly advised* Rehoboam to heed the people & back off.

But Rehoboam decided to check with his buds, his peers, the guys he’d grown up with, & they gave the *exact opposite* counsel.

These young bucks had, had many discussion over the years about all that was wrong with the older generation.

They boasted how *when they* got the chance they’d do it right.

Here was their chance → & Rehoboam *foolishly decided* to heed their counsel

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Which was to *not given in* to the people’s request.

After all – if the king gave an inch now, the advisers said, they’d soon be back asking for a cubit.

**<sup>12</sup> So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, as the king had directed, saying, “Come back to me the 3<sup>rd</sup> day.”<sup>13</sup> Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders,<sup>14</sup> and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, “My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you with scourges!*”<sup>15</sup> So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.**

When the tribal-leaders returned, Rehoboam said if they thought his dad had been harsh they hadn’t seen the half of it!

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He wasn’t a fool for refusing to listen to the advice of the elders; but because he *never* sought God in all of this. *That’s* Who he ought to have consulted first & foremost.

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All of this was the outworking of God’s judgment on the idolatry of Solomon.

The only reason judgment didn’t fall *in Solomon’s day* was because of God’s promise & favor to David.

**16** Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: “What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, O David!” So all Israel departed to their tents. **17** But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. **18** Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was in charge of revenue; but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted *his* chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem.

When Rehoboam rejected their demands, they rejected his authority & went home.

Continuing in his foolishness, Rehoboam thought a little pressure would make them comply so he sent his *tax-collector* to gather the taxes. They killed him.

Rehoboam realized the rebellion was for real & fled for his life to Jerusalem.

**19** So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

So now we have 2 kingdoms;

Judah in the south w/ 2 tribes, Judah & Benjamin, continued to be ruled by the family of David –

And Israel to the north with the other 10 tribes & ruled by *several* dynasties.

While Judah had some good & godly kings along with some really wicked guys too, Israel had nothing but a long succession of evil rulers.

2 Chronicles deals almost solely with Judah.

The only mention of the northern Kingdom as it affects the story of Judah.

## **2. Rehoboam's fortifications and family Ch. 11**

**1** Now when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and Benjamin 180,000 chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.

He's going to try & force things by using military might.

Rehoboam probably thought the rebellion was limited to the leaders of Israel who didn't enjoy widespread popular support.

So a show of force would cause them to knuckle under.

Solomon had put down an insurrection by this guy Jeroboam before; Rehoboam would do the same.

**2** But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, **3** “Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, **4** ‘Thus says the LORD: “You shall not go up or fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me.” ’ ” Therefore they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

Shemaiah was the prophet God used at this time to make His will clear.

He went to the staging ground of the invasion where the army had gathered & delivered his message that they were not to proceed with the attack.

To Rehoboam's credit, he complied.

**5 So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6 And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities.**

These verses look ahead a bit to Rehoboam's mid & late reign.

There's a *reason* he built these 15 fortress cities but we don't learn what it was till later.

These cities were located at critical crossroads & access points leading to the heart of Judah's territory.

They were mostly pairs of fortresses, one on each side of a valley or road leading into the Judean hills.

If one fortress was besieged, its pair could reinforce it or break the siege.

It was an effective method of fortification but was a significant difference from the strategy Solomon had taken in his building of fortresses.

Solomon had placed his fortresses on key trade routes.

Rehoboam's aim was to ensure the safety of the Judean heartland.

He largely abandoned the trade routes. *Why* we'll see a bit later.

**11 And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine.**

Preparing for siege.

**12 Also in every city he put shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side. 13 And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him. 14 For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. 15 Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made.**

As we learn in Kings – Jeroboam had invented a new religion in the northern kingdom.

It was required in the law of Moses that 3 times a year, people worship at the temple in Jerusalem.

Jeroboam was concerned that after a few years, the annual trips south would cause his subjects to *regret* their breaking away from Judah & would move to reunite with them.

So he invented a new religion based on the worship of a golden calf.

He set up one shrine in Dan up north, and one in the south at Bethel – to make it easier for the people to get there. A religion of convenience.

But the loyal priests of Yahweh decried the new religion; they protested.

So Jeroboam fired them. They packed up and moved south where they could still worship & serve the true God.

**16 And after *the Levites left*, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to**

**sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. <sup>17</sup> So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for 3 years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for 3 years.**

When the common people who wanted to remain faithful to God saw that all the real priests had split, they moved to Judah too.

This influx of people whose hearts were loyal to the Lord elevated the spiritual condition of Judah dramatically.

Seeing how the political winds were blowing toward Yahweh, Rehoboam adapted to it and things went well for the next 3 years.

But because his heart wasn't genuinely loyal to God, after 3 years, it began to drift.

**<sup>18</sup> Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliah the son of Jesse.**

Mahalath was Rehoboam's cousin.

**<sup>19</sup> And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. <sup>20</sup> After her he took Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom; and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. <sup>21</sup> Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his wives and his concubines;**

She was his fave among many . . .

**for he took 18 wives and 60 concubines, and begot 28 sons and 60 daughters.**

Rehoboam followed his father's example in this regard, though not as fully.

Also, while Solomon married a bunch of pagan wives, it seems Rehoboam only married Israelites.

**<sup>22</sup> And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maachah as chief, to be leader among his brothers; for he *intended* to make him king. <sup>23</sup> He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and he gave them provisions in abundance. He also sought many wives *for them*.**

Rehoboam continued the practice of his father in having a strong central government.

He ensured this by appointing his own sons to be the chief administrators as the fortresses he built throughout the land.

### **3. Egypt's attack on Jerusalem Ch. 12**

**<sup>1</sup> Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him.**

Rehoboam settled into his reign after its rocky start.

The tension along the border with Israel subsided a bit.

The godly refugees from the north were absorbed and the first 3 years went by without a hiccup.

**Then** Rehoboam's heart began to drift. The revival that had come with the

refugees cooled.

And the worship of the idols Solomon had built altars to around Jerusalem was renewed.

Idolatry had been subdued for a time during the revival brought by the refugees from the north – but now it resurfaced.

**2 And it happened in the 5<sup>th</sup> year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, 3 with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt— the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians.**

Judah's 3 years of loyalty to God were followed by 2 years of idolatry.

Then, just as Solomon had prayed over some 40 years before, God raised up a foreign power to chasten His wayward people.

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The 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty of Egypt was weak – one of the reasons why Israel was able to raise to prominence during the time of David & Solomon.

In fact, Solomon had married the last pharaoh of the 21<sup>st</sup> dynasty's daughter, forging an alliance between the two kingdoms.

But the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty came to the throne during Solomon's later years & broke off relations with Israel.

The first pharaoh of the new dynasty was this guy Shishak – Sheshonk in the Egyptian records.

He reformed Egypt and embarked on an ambitious campaign to return his kingdom to the glory & power of previous times.

Crucial to that would be to reclaim control of the lucrative trade routes that stretched through Israel.

That Israel had just had a civil war that split the nation into 2 far lesser kingdoms fit his plans well.

Uniting with some of his neighbors, he launched a massive campaign to reclaim the main trade routes to the north.

From records found in the ruins of his palace, we know the Egyptians marched north along the Via Maris, all the way up into the Valley of Jezreel, conquering the fortress cities Solomon had built along this route – including Megiddo.

Then, he moved back south and laid siege to lesser fortresses along the secondary trade routes.

**4 And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem. 5 Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak.' "** **6 So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "The LORD is righteous."** **7 Now 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. My wrath shall not be**



poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. <sup>8</sup> Nevertheless they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations.” <sup>9</sup> 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 everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made. <sup>10</sup> Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed *them* to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king’s house. <sup>11</sup> And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard would go and bring them out; then they would take them back into the guardroom. <sup>12</sup> When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy *him* completely; and things also went well in Judah.

We covered these verse in depth a few Sundays ago.

<sup>13</sup> **Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned.**

It was AFTER the Egyptian invasion that Rehoboam embarked on his fortress building campaign.

You see – the Egyptians were now firmly in control of the fortresses along the coast & the Via Maris.

Rehoboam made new fortresses to forestall an army being able to repeat what the Egyptians had done – lay siege to Jerusalem.

**Now Rehoboam was 41 years old when he became king; and he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother’s name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. <sup>14</sup> And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD. <sup>15</sup> The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And *there were* wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. <sup>16</sup> So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then Abijah his son reigned in his place.**

We covered these verses 2 Sundays ago – specifically the phrase; “he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.”

### **B. Abijah Ch. 13**

We looked at vs. 1-18 last Sunday.

During the short 3 years that Abijah ruled in Judah, the border clashes between Israel and Judah heated up into a full-on war.

Though outnumbered & outmaneuvered, because the men of Judah relied on God, they prevailed.

<sup>19</sup> **And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephraim with its villages.**

This was a real blow to Jeroboam because Bethel had been his southern base of

operations.

It had been the southern center of worship of the golden calf as well as the political capital of Israel.

**<sup>20</sup> So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died. <sup>21</sup> But Abijah grew mighty, married 14 wives, and begot 22 sons and 16 daughters. <sup>22</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings are written in the annals of the prophet Iddo.**

### **C. Asa Chs. 14-16**

#### **1. Asa's obedience to the Lord Ch. 14**

**<sup>1</sup> So Abijah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for 10 years. <sup>2</sup> Asa did *what was good and right* in the eyes of the LORD his God, <sup>3</sup> for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke down the *sacred pillars* and cut down the wooden images.**

Asa was a good king. He did something that had needed to be done for a long time.

He tore down all the altars & shrines Solomon & others had built to idols around Jerusalem and everywhere else in Judah.

He understood that the worship of God is *exclusive*; He brooks no competition. In covenant with God, there can be no others.

Israel was God's wife. That's why over & over in the prophets, God calls idolatry **ADULTERY**.

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John & Mary have been married for 5 years.

They each have a wedding ring on their finger.

John adores his wife & is passionately loyal to her.

Mary, on the other hand, wears her wedding ring and lives at home with John, but she stills runs around with her old boyfriends.

Some nights she stays out late with them, over at their apartments, partying, drinking, carousing.

John's told her how it hurts him that she's not broken off those relationships. She should. After all she's married and made a vow to forsake all others & cleave only to him.

Not only should she cut off contact with all her old boyfriends,

She ought to take all the cards they sent her in the past, and all the notes they wrote and any gifts they gave as signs of their affection, & she ought to toss it all in the trash.

Marriage is a covenant that tolerates not only no competition for affection, but even any *appearance* of it.

It had been Asa's father Abijah's error in thinking that God was pleased with them, even though the worship of idols was going on all over, just because the priests were still doing their job at the temple & God was being worshipped → **TOO!**

Asa understood that the altar of God allows no *other* altars.

God will not just be one of many lovers.

The love of God is exclusive & all-encompassing.



**4 He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. 5 He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him.**

God rewarded all of Judah because of Asa's reforms.

**6 And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest. 7 Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.**

Note that – while Asa was primarily spiritually minded – he understood the need to be practical as well.

He knew the real strength of the nation lay not in walls & arms but in its whole-hearted devotion to God.

But that wasn't an excuse to be lazy – they built the walls too!

Sometimes, the best safeguard to peace is a strong military.

It gives pause to those who would do evil when they see a strong force ready to meet them.

Many wars have been started by a lack of strength rather than its presence.

It's a well-known axiom of history that → **Weakness invites aggression.**

**8 And Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin 280,000 men who carried shields and drew bows; all these were mighty men of valor.**

In order to be able to field an army of this size meant that Judah was prospering pretty well at this time.

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**9 Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah.**

If Judah was loyal to the Lord, why did this invasion occur?

While there's no specific, explicit reason given, it's not difficult to discern why this invasion came.

Up to this point, Judah's been blessed because **Asa's** been diligent to adopt a policy of devotion to Yahweh.

The other leaders of the nation went along with him because he was the king.

It was the politically expedient thing to do.

But the heart of the people wasn't really behind the reforms.

They just went along with them because—what else could they do, really? Unlike his grandfather Rehoboam, who'd allowed the worship of idols because he knew it's what the people wanted, Asa was a man of principle who was more concerned with doing what was right than being popular.

God knew what was in the people's heart. So He moved to secure a more whole-hearted devotion to Him by allowing this invasion.

Though Israel had an army of over a half million, with a formidable fortress-complex – the Ethiopians attacked with a force of twice Israel's number.

That they only had 300 chariots for such a massive force means this was less an

ordered army as it was a bunch of raiders.

The Ethiopians were allies of Egypt at this time.

Pharaoh knew that after their previous invasion Judah had rebuilt and set up a new defensive base.

He feared that Judah's king would try to reclaim the trade routes, so more than likely he urged Zerah, the leader of the Ethiopians to make this attack.

With Egyptians assistance, Ethiopians had established a colony centered at Gerar, located in the Negev.

This was the launching point of their invasion.

They marched along the Via Maris all the way to a cross roads that led between 2 of the fortresses Rehoboam had built – one of them was Mareshah.

**10 So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!"**

Though Asa brought forth the army to face the Ethiopians, he knew their success lay in God's help.

He prayed a prayer of total dependence on God.

**12 So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people who were with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army.**

Not how that's worded – it's key!

It doesn't say – "They were broken before Asa & his army," but "before the LORD & His army."

You see, as the battle was joined that day, with Asa's prayer still ringing in the ears of the men of Judah, when they saw the Ethiopians melt away before them like a smoke before a breeze, they knew God was real and devotion to Him the only way.

In that moment, with that realization – they became God's army & were able to go forth to complete victory.

**And they carried away very much spoil.**

This story is a great insight into spiritual warfare.

When the son or daughter of God realizes just how real He is & how much a part of His plan they are, God can enlist them in His spiritual army to overcome spiritual strongholds and loot the enemy of his treasure.

**14 Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. 15 They also attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.**

The Ethiopian colony that had been built in this area was totally destroyed.

## 2. Asa's reforms Ch. 15

**<sup>1</sup> Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. <sup>2</sup> And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.**

The prophet Azariah came out with a message from God to seal the lesson the kingdom had learned that day.

They prevailed because they depended on the Lord.

As long as they continued to keep God a first & only – they continue to enjoy His blessing.

There was a way to *ensure they maintained their dependence* on God. →

**<sup>3</sup> For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; <sup>4</sup> but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them.**

While kings like Solomon, Rehoboam & Abijah had continued the offering of *sacrifices* in the temple, the priests had been removed from their roles as teachers & guides to the moral & cultural life of the nation.

They were consigned to a narrow little religious corner and told it was fine for them to do their religious thing, as long as they stayed out of civic life – that was the realm of the politicians and merchants.

But Israel, AS A NATION, was built on the WORD OF GOD.

It was the Law of Moses – given by God, that framed the entire nation.

Their birth lay in the giving of the Scriptures.

Without the Word of God, there was no Israel – not as God intended.

The role of the teaching priest was essential to the survival & success of the nation.

David certainly understood that. Psalm 119 makes that clear.

Solomon thought to rule by wisdom rather than the Word – and so began the long slow turn from God.

[The same is true for us.]

**<sup>5</sup> And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. <sup>6</sup> So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. <sup>7</sup> But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!" <sup>8</sup> And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet,**

There's a phrase missing here in the Authorized King James that's found in many ancient manuscripts, including the Septuagint – "Azariah, the son of" before the name Obed.

**he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that was before the vestibule of the LORD.**

This was a second reform movement that was more far-reaching than the first because now the people were behind it.

**9 Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.**

There was a growing number of people in Israel that had become upset with their kingdom's departure from God.

Then they witnessed the revival taking place under Asa, they said, "That's it, " and moved south.

**10 So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the 3<sup>rd</sup> month, in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Asa. 11 And they offered to the LORD at that time 700 bulls and 7,000 sheep from the spoil they had brought. 12 Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; 13 and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.**

Wow! That's pretty drastic.

Notice it doesn't say that they **DID** execute anyone – only that they made a serious vow to follow the Lord only - and that if anyone refused to, they would be put to death as the Law of Moses said in Deut 17:2-7.

Listen, when you're in a national covenant with God where your peace & safety is directly proportional to the faithfulness of the members of the community, it isn't just a personal choice anymore when a person decides to reject God & worship idols.

That person becomes a dangerous presence who imperils the well-being of the entire community.

**14 Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. 15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with → all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.**

Let it never be forgotten that this marvelous national revival began with one man – Asa.

**16 Also he removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah; and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron.**

Both Asa's father & mother were idol worshippers.

Asa had taken to heart the lesson of the victory over Israel that took place during his father's reign and became a whole-hearted follower of Yahweh.

**17 But the high places were not removed from Israel.**

Though Asa was able to bring a measure of reform to the northern kingdom as well, the high places where people went to worship on their own were not removed as they were in Judah.

**Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days. <sup>18</sup> He also brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. <sup>19</sup>**

**And there was no war until the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Asa.**

Typical of his religious posturing, Asa's father Abijah had promised a certain amount of treasure from the royal coffers to be given to the temple but had never transferred it.

Asa made sure it was sent over as well as his own contribution.

Slowly but surely, the good kings of Judah refilled the treasury of the temple that had been sacked by Shishak.