

# Chronicles Series • 2 Chr. 12:1-12 • “Pride & Humility”

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *James McDougall*

1. James McDougall was interning as a pastor for a large church in Scotland
2. He was given the opportunity to preach one Sunday and prepared what he thought was an exceptionally fine sermon
3. In seminary he had been quite successful in all his classes, specially those concerned with the pulpit
4. He had often been commended for his fine presence, strong voice, and eloquence
5. So with great confidence and a *visible* air of self-assurance he entered the pulpit that morning, knowing he would make a good impression on the congregation
6. But no sooner did he open his mouth to speak than he realize he had completely lost his composure
  - a. he could not remember either his text or his subject
  - b. his mind was wiped clean
  - c. so he stammered, and murmured, and proceeded to make a fool of himself in front of the people
7. When the torment was over, he turned and made his way off the platform with slumped shoulders and head hung low in humility
8. In the hush that followed, one sage elder of the church sitting near the front was heard to say,
9. “Aye laddie, if ye had gone up as ye came doon, you’d have come doon as ye went up.”

### B. *Today*

1. Our text today deals with the very practical issue of *pride*
2. There is not a person in this room for whom these words will not apply
3. Though they speak to us of an event that occurred nearly 3000 years ago in a land over 6000 miles away
4. They remind us that the more things change, the more they stay the same

### C. *Disclaimer*

1. But I must my make this disclaimer:
2. I do not want to give anyone the impression that I am qualified to speak on the subject of pride because I have overcome it
3. Yes, in fact, I have so well vanquished pride from my own life that I have written a soon to be released self-help book title, “Pure Humility: How I Attained It.”
4. ABC and the Newsmagazine TV show 20/20 are doing a segment on me called “Slaying the Giant Pride: The Lance Ralston Story”

5. No!
6. One thing became increasingly clear as I prepared for this morning: I am constantly struggling with pride

## II. TEXT

### A. V. 1

**{1} 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.**

1. Rehoboam was the son of Solomon and the grandson of David
2. The beginning of his reign was marked by an incredibly foolish decision
3. You see, the people had appealed to him to lighten the tax burden that Solomon his father had placed on them
  - a. Solomon had beefed up the military
  - b. and had engaged in dramatic building projects
  - c. but with his passing, those social and military programs came to an end
  - d. so the people asked for a tax roll back
4. The elders of the nation all agreed and counseled Rehoboam to ease the burden
5. But he pridefully rejected their counsel and threatened to not only enforce the current requirement, but to make it even stiffer
6. The result was;
  - a. of the 12 tribes of Israel, the 10 northern ones rebelled against the Rehoboam
  - b. and seceded to become their own independent nation
7. Rehoboam's *pride* led to the splitting of the once great nation into two minor territories

### B. *Pride Defined*

1. The essence of *pride* is the desire to *live for self*
2. When a person is *prideful*, self is at the center of their universe
  - a. they reject God's right to rule over them
  - b. and they demand autonomy - which means "self-rule"
3. The opposite of pride is *humility*
  - a. humility is living with God at the center
  - b. rather than rejecting His right to rule over self
  - c. God is enthroned in the place of self

- 
4. The proud person evaluates everything on the basis of it's relation to self
  5. The one who is humble considers everything in terms of God's plan for it
- 
6. The proud person looks at life through the lens of magnifying self
  7. The humble person uses all of life to glorify God

### C. *Rehoboam*

1. Rehoboam's life is one that is characterized by pride
2. His career began with a near fatal failure through pride

3. But he didn't learn his lesson; three years later, he was right back at the same spot
4. As we come to verse 1, three years have passed since he was made king and the nation was split in two
5. But overcoming that set back, he was able to establish the kingdom and secure his place as king without challenge
6. No sooner did he secure his borders and the throne, than he turned his back on God
7. Rehoboam was one of those who never learned by his mistakes
  - a. in his first failure, God had confronted him with his arrogance, and he had backed down
  - b. but here he is again in verse 1, drinking at the well of pride
8. Everyone sins; everyone makes mistakes and fails in obedience to God
9. But common sense tells us that we should learn from our mistakes so that we do not repeat them
10. Still, every once in a while, you meet someone who doesn't seem to get it
11. In fact, you may have shaved or shampooed one of those people this morning!
12. They are like the guy with a hammer
  - a. when someone asked him why he was hitting himself in the head with it
  - b. he said, "Because it feels so good when I stop."
13. When the kingdom was in danger from invasion from the north, Rehoboam had trusted in God
14. But as soon as the borders were secure, Rehoboam's trust faltered and failed
15. And he forsook the Lord and His holy law
16. When he turned away, the nation also turned away
17. Friends - we can never underestimate the power of our leader's moral and religious character in terms of it's influence on the nation
18. When Rehoboam turned his back on God, the people saw it as permission to do the same

#### **D. Vs. 2-4**

**{2} And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD,**

**{3} with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt; the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians.**

**{4} And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.**

1. 11:17 tells us that after Rehoboam's initial blunder, he remained true to the Lord for three years
2. And all throughout this time the nation was strong and prospered
3. But after three years, he forsook the Lord
4. It wasn't until 2 years later that Shishak invaded
5. God gave Rehoboam two full years to wake up to the fact that he had forsaken Him
6. But because everything *appeared* okay on the outside, there was nothing to

- prompt them to repent
7. God allowed the armies of Egypt to press His people so that they might come to their senses and realize they had forsaken Him
  8. There may be some here today who once walked with the Lord, but today finds you far from Him
    - a. for whatever reason, you turned your back on God and walked away
    - b. let's be honest, like Rehoboam, pride has captured your heart and lied to you
    - c. telling you you don't need to follow Him
    - d. and it may be that you are doing quite well
    - e. you are still secure and things are fine - or so it seems from outward appearances
    - f. friend, you are only in this "in-between" time
    - g. it's a time of grace when God is sending His Holy Spirit to urge you to repent and return to Him
    - h. if you don't, know this--the enemy is even now preparing to launch an invasion on your life
    - i. don't wait till he has marched across the territory God has given you and lain claim to the best parts of your life
    - j. Proverbs 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."
    - k. know this: where pride is, ruin is soon to follow

#### **E. Vs. 5-8**

**{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."**

1. The word of God came to Rehoboam and the leaders of the people, laying bare their sin
2. Their distress was not the result of Shishak's invasion
3. It was the result of their forsaking God
4. It was the result of their pride, for thinking that they didn't need God
5. And knowing the root cause, they applied the remedy - they humbled themselves
6. They removed self from the center of their lives and the nation
7. And they turned their universe back around so that it once again revolved around God
8. There is something very important to note here
  - a. God knew that Rehoboam and the others would only be open to listening to Shemaiah's message when they were in trouble

- b. if the prophet had come when the nation was strong and secure, they never would have listened
  - c. but trouble opened their ears
  - d. even Shishak's invasion was a manifestation of God's grace
  - e. for it gave Rehoboam ears to hear from God
9. And what was it Rehoboam needed to hear? We find that in the verse 8
- {8} “Nevertheless they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations.”**
10. This is the verse that ties all of this together
11. God is saying in verses 7 & 8 that He will *deliver* the city of Jerusalem from His wrath
- a. Shishak will *not* destroy it
  - b. Rehoboam will escape and the nation will continue
12. But, from then on, Judah will not be independent; it will now be a vassal to others
- a. first to Egypt,
  - b. and later to others
  - c. the glory days of her independence and prosperity are over
13. And they all ended because of the foolish pride of her people

#### **F. The Bondage Of Pride**

1. God said all of this had transpired,
- ... that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations ...**
2. As long as they had humbly served and obeyed God, they had known freedom
3. But when they forsook the Lord, they fell in to bondage
4. The pattern of Israel's history is the story of each individual in the human family
5. When we love and serve God, we experience freedom
- a. when we humbly put God at the center of our lives,
  - b. when we simply follow His commands,
  - c. life works and we know the surpassing joy of being free from the pain and sorrow of sin
6. But when we pridefully turn our backs on God and demand to live by our own desires and rules, we fall into bondage
- a. we lie captive to fashion
  - b. captive to luxury
  - c. to pleasure, to lust
7. Consider Adam & Eve:
- a. they enjoyed perfect freedom as they centered their lives in the Garden around their relationship with God
    - 1) so free, naked and not ashamed
  - b. but when they disobeyed God and chose their own way, they fell into bondage
    - 1) life was marked by pain and sorrow

- 2) toil, sweat, and tears
- c. and it all began with pride; with the exaltation of self over God
- 8. And the worst part is that the proud man is blind to his own bondage
- 9. He thinks he is free and it is only those who live the humble life of obedience to God who are bound
- 10. Let me tell you my own story:
  - a. I grew up hearing about God, my mother - Bible
  - b. knew the gospel, when 11, gave my life to Christ
  - c. but in my late teens, turned my back on God and went *my own way*
  - d. I sought all the pleasures the world has to offer
  - e. and man, I had fun, fun, fun till my daddy took the T-bird away
  - f. I am not going to say sin isn't fun; I'm not going to say that it isn't pleasurable-that would be a lie, it is!
  - g. but while sin may be *fun*, for a time; and it may be *pleasurable*, for a season
  - h. IT DOESN'T SATISFY!!!!!!!!!!!!
  - i. and the more I sinned, and the more pleasures I pursued and enjoyed, the more *empty* I became
  - j. then one morning I woke up, and found I was chained to someone who was a proud fool - His name was Lance
  - k. for the first time I realized that I was in *bondage to self*
  - l. the chains of sin held me
  - m. and it was then that the words of Jesus I had learned years before came flooding in to my memory
  - n. "If you abide in My word, you are my disciples, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" [John 8:31-32]
  - o. so then & there I humbled myself, and returned to the Lord
  - p. and while there have been seasons of struggle and failure since that day I can honestly say this today
  - q. in Christ, I have found true *satisfaction*
  - r. in serving God I have found peace and contentment
  - s. I would not trade my worst day now for the best day then
- 10. In the service of God is liberty / but in the service of self there is nothing but bondage
- 11. Who do you serve?
  - a. do you humbly serve God?
  - b. or are you pridefully serving self?
  - c. are you experiencing the freedom of the Kingdom of God?
  - d. or are you in bondage to the kingdoms of this world?
- 12. Friend, it matters not what form the chains of pride take - they still hold you in bondage
  - a. one man is held by the rusty iron chains of drug addiction
  - b. another is held by the shiny platinum chains of sensual luxury
  - c. it doesn't matter what forms one's chains take: they are all forged in the furnace of pride
- 13. Some years ago, a small band of thieves broke into a Winery and stole a

- cask of very expensive wine
- a. but rather than sell it, they decided to drink it themselves
  - b. so they each drank till full
  - c. they congratulated each other on their success and the fun they were having in their drunkenness
  - d. but soon each of them began to grow ill
  - e. and within two hours, they were all dead
  - f. it was then discovered that there was a poisonous snake in the cask which had released its poison into the wine when it died
  - g. these men, had joyfully imbibed their own death
14. What an apt picture of the those who pridefully pursue worldly pleasures with no concern for God

### **G. Vs. 9-12**

**{9} So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made.**

**{10} 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.**

**{11} 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.**

1. The wealth of Solomon is proverbial, even to this day!
2. He filled Jerusalem with gold and silver and precious treasure
3. But in just one generation, it was all lost when Shishak came up against the city
4. The Jewish leaders took the treasures Solomon had amassed and gave them to Shishak as tribute and a bribe to not lay waste to the city
5. The only thing spared from this sacking was the temple furniture itself
6. How great is the devastation of pride - how far reaching its effect in stealing away the precious things the Lord gives
7. But it is verse 12 I want to close with today

**{12} 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.**

8. Our story does not end with ruin, but with hope
9. The turning point in all this was when Rehoboam *humbled himself*
10. And that is the key - he humbled *himself*
11. Over and over in scripture we see the call to humble *ourselves*
  - a. 2 Chr 7:14

**"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.**

- b. James 4:10

**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**

- c. 1 Pet 5:6

**Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,**

12. The exhortation is that we must humble OURSELVES!
  - a. it is something *we* must do
  - b. and it is the very essence of what repentance is all about
  - c. to repent means to have a complete change of mind
  - d. it means to turn around from our present direction and go in precisely the opposite direction
  - e. the root of all sin is pride - the determination to go our own way, do our own thing, rather than yield to God
  - f. therefore the road away from pride means that we have to humble ourselves
  - g. to not go our own way, but to turn around and go God's way
13. The only time we find *God* humbling someone is when He brings circumstances to bear in their life to show them the futility of pride
14. He humbles them by letting them experience the natural result of their sin and rebellion
15. But the onset of trouble does not necessarily mean that a person will in fact humble *themselves*
16. In fact, there are many, who are so filled with pride, that when trouble does disturb them, they grow bitter toward God and demand to know why He let this happen to them
17. We often sing a song that goes: Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord - and He will lift you up
18. This is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life
  - a. the way up, is down
  - b. if we humble ourselves, God will exalt us in His time - James 4:10

**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.**

- c. but if we exalt ourselves, we will fall - Proverbs 16:18

**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**

19. Here is an amazing thing:
  - a. God has created man, and holds man's entire existence in His hand
    - 1) man's breath, his very life is all God's gift
    - 2) God both sustains and provides every moment for that man's being
  - b. God's greatest gift to man is his freedom to choose whether he will or will not live for that God
  - c. whatever the man chooses, God honors
  - d. what is amazing is this; that a man, whose whole being is created and sustained by God, will then exercise his choice and reject that God and set himself up as though he was his own god
20. The essence of the Christian life is humble repentance from this self-centered existence
  - a. it is turning around from self, back to God
  - b. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."
  - c. humble repentance is not a once for all act - it is a daily commitment
  - d. the real struggle for us who follow Christ is the struggle with self
  - e. we do not really struggle with sin but with self; sin is merely the



symptom

21. There are several of us here today who are believers who are struggling with various sins
  - a. smoking, overeating, drugs, anger, lust, alcohol
  - b. the reason why we are caught and seem to get no victory over these things is because we are only dealing with the symptom
  - c. the real problem is SELF!
22. In James 4:7 we read this "Submit to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you."
  - a. the ability to resist the devil comes from submitting to God
  - b. you see, the core of the devil's strategy against you is to get you to think that you can do your own thing
  - c. the essence, the foundation of his evil was his desire to be God
  - d. when he seduced Even and convinced her to rebel against God, what was the offer?
  - e. you can be your own god!
23. That is a lie - no I can't be god
  - a. I am a man
  - b. only God is and can be God

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### ***A. Applies To Both***

1. Whether you are a Christian or not, the application of today's message is the same
2. HUMBLE YOURSELF!
3. Christian =
  - a. To follow Jesus means to die to self and to surrender to God
  - b. in Matthew 11:29 Jesus said

**"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

4. Non-christian =
  - a. you must humble yourself
  - b. or you will perish
  - c. God will honor your choice to reject Him
  - d. and He will let you pass in to an eternity of where you will enjoy the result of trying to be your own god
  - e. you will join countless others who are concerned with only one thing - themselves
  - f. what a hell that will be
5. But if you will today, humble yourself, and repent of your self-centeredness and surrender to God, then you can know real freedom and satisfaction