

Kings and Prophets 13-04-19b

We pick up our study now in First Kings chapter 12. This, by the way, is paralleled over in Chronicles. If you go all the way over to Second Chronicles, chapter 10, that will be a parallel.

You might keep your finger in there. But my question raised at the end of our first class this evening is, can we discern why God would allow someone like Rehoboam to sit on the throne of Israel and would deny a man such as Jonathan, who seems eminently capable of redeeming everything that his father did by way of failure and shortfall. He seems to be the opposite and the better side.

And since God has already allowed a Benjamite on the throne, why not let Jonathan rule and reign? If he's going to eventually switch it over to Judah, fine. But what about Jonathan? Is it a waste of time to be a good guy if you're in the wrong circumstance or the wrong family or you have the wrong father? There's a lot you can say about Jonathan if you rehearse the record of his accomplishments and his relationships both with his father and with David. And the more you study him, the more impressed you become because he was in an extremely awkward situation being the crown prince in Israel and owing allegiance and loyalty and obedience to his father.

And at the same time, recognizing his father's shortcomings and the merit and the anointing of David, Jonathan recognizes that God has anointed David and he's okay with it, which is really amazing. And you think, well, it seems that Jonathan got the short end of the stick and then you've got rascals that do come and sit on the throne. There is a passage, and I quoted this two weeks ago in connection with our Analyze, Ask and Apply study, that when we perform those steps, when we stop and set aside time to humble ourselves and pray and seek God's face, when we go to God and we genuinely pray as David did, try me and see if there be any wicked way in me, show me my secret faults, purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.

When we do those things, you come to the third step of turning from our wicked way. And Jesus painted a very graphic picture of this in the New Testament. We have it in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Gospel of Mark.

It's recorded for us in Matthew 18, verse 7 and following. Woe to the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come. But woe to the man by whom the offense comes.

Why, if your hand or your foot offend you, cut them off and cast them from you. It is better for you to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if your eye offend you, pluck it out and cast it from you.

For it is better for you to enter into life with one eye rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. That's the way it reads in the Old Bible, cast into hell fire. What is Jesus talking about? When we perform those steps and we recognize that there is an area of weakness, there is an

area of fault, there is an area that we really need to turn from and divest ourselves from it.

This can be something integral. It can be something important. It can be something we consider valuable.

We've seen these events over the last week with explosions and people being maimed and coming away literally with amputated limbs. And it is necessary to perform that amputation to save life. If you're going to live, we've got to take this leg off or these legs off.

And it's a hardship. In the same way, it isn't going to be simple. It isn't going to be facile.

It isn't going to be easy sometimes. Once God answers our prayer and identifies here is an area where you've got a serious problem, this friendship, this relationship, this association, this activity, this expenditure or investment of money or of time or of effort is not only unproductive in terms of the kingdom of God, it is detrimental. It is an offense.

And woe to the man by whom offenses come. If we perform this function and find that we are a source of offense, whatever the sacrifice that is required, we must do it. And I was struck in particular by if your hand offends you, cut it off.

It's better to enter into life with one hand. And you say, well, I imagined at the resurrection, you know, there wouldn't be any maimed people limping and crutching their way into the kingdom. If you cut it off in this life, why doesn't he say, cut it off for it will be restored in the next? Wouldn't you think? If your eye offends you, pluck it out.

It is better to go into life and have God restore your eye than to try to keep this bad eye and end up in hell fire. But he doesn't say it. He says, you're going to enter into life minus that hand or minus that eye or minus that foot.

Which, by the way, tells us that this is metaphorical and not literal, because we know that resurrection bodies are whole and entire. We shall be like him and he is whole and entire. Now, so what are we talking about here? And we're still looking at Jonathan in contrast to Rehoboam.

What does Jonathan willingly lay aside? The throne of Israel. He doesn't seek it. He doesn't go after it.

Remember how Solomon tried to hang on to the throne by assassinating Jeroboam, to whom God had given the word that he would be the king of the northern tribes. And Solomon tried to kill him. Shades of Saul trying to kill David, who is the anointed of the Lord.

Jonathan takes David's part in opposition to his own father, in opposition to his own seeming best interest, right? He cuts off this hand. He plucks out this eye. Because Jonathan has his eye on future things.

Does Jonathan really lose out by never gaining the throne? What do you think? If Jonathan had to do over again, would he do it differently? Would he plead with God? Oh, please let me be

king of Israel. Please let me sit on the throne instead of David. Please let me sit here and you can change the lineage of the Christ.

And, you know, all of history can be different. Let me be the one to sit on the throne. Jonathan, as a man of God, has this wonderful view grounded in faith that you see in Hebrews chapter 11.

By faith, he's not specifically listed, but he well could be. By faith, Jonathan, recognizing that David is the anointed, willingly supported him in the face of the hostility of his own father and against his own interest in becoming king. I was thinking about this, and this is sort of a preacher point.

If I was in seminary, I would get a good grade for this if I turned it in. But it strikes me, and I'm going to share it with you anyway. Let's say you did cut off your hand, recognizing that it was a hand of offense and you only had one hand left.

And Jesus says it's better to enter into life with one hand. In a way, from a spiritual point of view, that one handedness seems to me to be an advantage. With two hands, you can lay hold of earthly things with one and heavenly things with another.

And when those two things go their separate way, you are torn. If you eliminate the hand of offense and you have only one hand, it's much easier to concentrate on letting go of the things of this earth and laying hold on eternal life. Now you've just got one hand to worry about.

This is the way you enter into life. You've just got one hand. And in order to lay hold of life, you necessarily have to let go of earthly things, offensive things, mundane things.

And I think of that with respect to Jonathan. Jonathan recognizes that God's will for the nation, God's anointing, God's blessing, the future of the nation, which if you're a good king, what is your heart? You want God's blessing on your nation. And if God says the path of blessing is through David on the throne, Jonathan is perhaps the best king Israel ever had because he never sits on the throne and never tries to.

He supports God's king. Even though from a human point of view, he's got a claim. He has a birthright.

But the greatness in Jonathan is that he turns loose of that earthly kingdom because he's looking ahead to the heavenly kingdom. Where do you think Jonathan will be in the heavenly kingdom? Would you trade a momentary span on an earthly throne for an eternal service on a heavenly throne? This is what Jonathan saw. This is what makes Jonathan great.

God may have blessed Jonathan by sparing him the tribulations and the trials and the inevitable defections and disloyalties. Look at what David went through from his own household in his own family. It's a great deal of hardship.

Jonathan has his eyes on something grander and greater. And it oddly reminds me of what

Jesus said. If there's something that is offensive, Jonathan's other hand is with his father, resting on his father's arm, seeking to establish a Saulide dynasty.

And Jonathan says, here's David and here's God's future eternal kingdom under the son of David that God has anointed, God has prophesied, God has ordained. And I will cut off this hand that rests on my father's arm, that seeks to lay hold of the scepter and the throne. And Jonathan is in the roster of heroes of faith.

He is high on the list of those who will be. Do you think Jonathan would be least in the kingdom or great in the kingdom? I doubt that there will be any greater than Jonathan. There's not a negative word said about him anywhere in scripture.

He's a great man of faith, a great man of spiritual dignity and reverence for God and for the things of God and for the man of God, David, for whom Jonathan puts his life on the line and sets himself against his own father and his own dynastic future. So what separates a Rehoboam and a Jonathan? Rehoboam gets the throne and look at what happens. How much of a blessing is it to him? It is a curse.

Look at what happens to Rehoboam. You can look at it in... Let's turn over to Second Chronicles chapter 10, just so we remember that we've got a parallel going here. Rehoboam went to Shechem for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king.

By the way, Rehoboam has a double distinction. He is the last king of the United Monarchy, and he is the first king of the Southern Kingdom. So he does have sort of a... You know, you used to have those calendars from the insurance company that would hang in your school or the barbershop or whatever, had all those oval portraits of the presidents.

And back when I was a child, you know, it ended with Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon and... But they just had them all. Well, in the history of Israel, when you put those little oval portraits of the kings, you've got Saul, you've got David, you've got Solomon, and you have Rehoboam and then it splits. And ever after, you've got to have a Northern Kingdom and a Southern Kingdom list.

So Rehoboam is the last king of the United Monarchy, and he is the first king of the Southern Kingdom in the divided monarchy. And his reign is not really that long. All Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king.

All Israel. United Monarchy. So it happened when Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, heard he was down in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon, because Solomon had gone so rotten that he was trying to kill the king that got anointed.

Jeroboam returned from Egypt. Egypt keeps rearing its ugly head here, and it's going to happen again. First appearance of Egypt in this line of story we've been following was what? Solomon marries the daughter of Pharaoh.

Second appearance, Jeroboam flees to Egypt and comes back. And there are some synchronicities and some harkings backward and forward that we'll explore in the future. But for now, Jeroboam goes to Egypt and comes back.

But Jeroboam is not a good guy. He's not like a type of Christ. Out of Egypt I have called my son.

This would be out of Egypt I've called my anti-son. Right? Or out of Egypt I have called my generation that's going to drop in the wilderness for their disobedience and apathy and faithlessness. So he echoes, in a way, the history of the generation that fails to enter the land.

He's going to fail to enter into the potentials and the promises of God just the way Israel did when they came up out of Egypt. Jeroboam comes back up. So they sent for him and called him.

And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam saying, 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. Come back to me after three days.

After three days. You're going to have three days. A decision will be made.

Well, you remember this story. There was the advice from the elders, advice from the youngers, and no advice from our prophet, Ahijah. No consultation whatsoever.

Now, the prophet's name is Ahijah. What does that mean? We saw what Rehoboam's name mean. What does Ahijah mean? Ach, A-C-H, is the word in Hebrew that means brother.

Ach, men-den-ah, men-de-jab over there. Arabic roots are the same as Hebrew and that part of his name probably means brother. He probably harks back to that same old Semitic root.

Ach, whenever you see Ach, man-den, and Ach, anything, A-C-H in old Hebrew, in Aramaic, means brother. Ah-he is my brother. Or it is a connector that goes to the next consonant or the next syllable rather, which is yah.

His full name was probably Ah-he-Yah-hoo, which means brother of Yahweh, or my brother is the Lord, or the Lord is my brother. It kind of works both ways. You say, wait a minute.

How can you say the Lord's, who would name somebody this? The Lord's brother? The Lord doesn't have brothers. The Lord our God is one Lord. You know, we have the Father and the Son.

We don't have brothers. Why would it say this? Well, brother in the first case is used more generally in the ancient world. It doesn't always mean an actual, we both have the same parents relationship.

Brother of something often means kinship, kindred spirit. But the idea is kinship and fellowship, close association. You know, the Indians used to say, oh, you know, the wind is my brother, or the wolf is my brother, or the buffalo is my brother.

What do they mean? They don't mean we have the same parents. They mean we have a kinship and a close favorable association. In the New Testament, we as believers call each other Adolfoi, brethren.

Jesus told the disciples in the upper room, I no longer call you servants. I call you friends. I call you brothers.

You are brothers, Adolfoi. This is the idea. Ahijah is kindred to and similar to and in close fellowship with the Lord.

That's the idea. He is the prophet. Our study is kings and prophets.

He's the prophet. And he's the one person that Rehoboam does not consult. And behold, Rehoboam did send for Ahijah and say, ask the Lord for me.

What shall I do in this situation? He doesn't do that. He's looking for human counsel. So much for the idea that in the multitude of counselors, there is safety.

Remember that? People say, oh, get godly counsel. That's the way to find the will of the Lord. This guy got all the counsel in the world, and neither one of the answers actually was a seeking like we talked about two weeks ago.

Humble yourself, pray and seek my face. Turn from your wicked ways and I will heal. I will restore, God says.

Well, Rehoboam's got no such thought. This is the Ammonite side of him coming out. So they say, what share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.

This is second Chronicles 10, 16. Now cedar your own house, oh, David. You think this son of David is going to sit on the throne? Fine.

We no longer support you. Civil war, we're splitting. And in fulfillment of Ahijah's prophecy to Jeroboam, the 10 northern tribes exit stage north.

So all Israel departed to their tents, but Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah. Then King Rehoboam sent Hadorim, who was in charge of revenue. Time to collect taxes up north.

So the tax man goes up and says, hey, the king would like you to, you know, pay up. How foolish is Rehoboam, this costs Hadorim his life. The children of Israel stoned him with stones and he died.

Therefore, King Rehoboam mounted his chariots in haste to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. And it gives you a little bit of a time reference for when this particular portion of Chronicles was put together.

It's in the days of the divided kingdom and before the captivity that this record was set down. Now, Rehoboam is going to raise an army. If you look ahead in chapter 11, he's going to go up there and try to pull a Lincoln.

We'll bring the South back. You know, this is kind of reverse. He's in the South.

He's going to try to bring the North back under the government the way Lincoln in the North fought a war to bring the South back under. Lincoln succeeded. Rehoboam is stopped because a second prophet brings a word from the Lord.

And one of the few things Rehoboam does right is he listens to this second prophet. The word of the Lord, verse two, came to Shemiah, the man of God. Shemiah, the man of God.

Shemiah, Shema, this means to hear. It has the idea of communication. The Shema is the name of the Lord.

Shema is the verb that means to hear. This is the root of the name Shemuel. The Lord hears.

Asked of the Lord, the Lord hears. The asking and the hearing are all in view in Shema. Hannah names her son this because she asked the Lord and he heard her request and granted her this son.

Shemiah, the Lord hears, or the one who has heard of the Lord, or the one who calls on the Lord. He calls, the Lord answers. He calls upon the name of the Lord.

All of it is bound up in this Shema word. It is communication between God and the petitioner. What did we study two weeks ago? Humble yourself, pray, and seek my face.

That's Shemiah. So Shemiah, we'll call him, receives the word of the Lord saying, speak to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah. Notice he doesn't get the appellation son of David as many of the later descendants will, including the Lord Jesus.

He's not a son of David. He's a son of Solomon. This is not without significance.

He is both literally the son of Solomon and he is spiritually the son of Solomon. The latter day Solomon, the failed Solomon, end of the kingdom, Shlomo. Son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin saying, thus says the Lord, you shall not go up or fight against your brethren.

Wouldn't it have been something if Ahijah had been the one to bring this word? Brother of the Lord. But brethren here is a form of the same word. Ah, your brethren.

Let every man return to his house for this thing is from me. This division is from me, God says. Therefore, they obeyed the words of the Lord and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

Doesn't specifically say Rehoboam changed his mind, but the people, because Shemiah

prophesied to all Judah and Benjamin. And there are enough people still on the right track in Judah and Benjamin that when God says this is from me, they hear and they obey. Now think about this.

Good people with a bad king. Sound familiar? Good people with a bad king. But the good people, when they hear the word of the Lord, they still heed it and they obey it.

And for that, they're going to be blessed. They don't go through a bloody civil war. So verse five, Rehoboam, this again is 11 of second Chronicles.

Second Chronicles 11, five, Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem and built cities for defense in Judah. Now this is Rehoboam's big idea. Well, since I can't go on the offense, I'm going to go on the defense.

So he builds cities for defense in Judah. He built Bethlehem. And this doesn't mean built in the sense that they didn't previously exist.

It means he fortified them. He built them up. He added walls and gates and forts and so on.

So he fortified the cities of Bethlehem, Etom, Tekoa, Bezur, Soko, Adulim, Gath, Moreshah, Ziph, Aduraim, Lakish, Azekah, Zorah, Eihelon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. He fortified the strongholds and put captains in them and stores of food, oil, and wine. Also in every city, he put shields and spears and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

Now, Rehoboam has ignored the Lord. He has ignored the prophet of God. The only thing he does right is when all of his Judah and Benjamin troops say, well, we're not going to go against the word of the Lord.

He gives up and doesn't try to attack the North. So instead, he fortifies. You say, well, this has got to be a good thing.

It is going to do him no good. The reason for this is because his heart has departed from the Lord, because he did not listen to the recorded prayers of his father Solomon at the dedication of the temple, because he has not followed those steps of humbling himself, praying and seeking God's face and turning from his wicked ways. He has internal division, discord, strife, and disloyalty.

The departure of ten twelfths, five sixths of the kingdom he loses and external strife, because what is going to happen in the days of Rehoboam is the Egyptians. This is the third time Egypt shows up now. Rehoboam has got a sort of a stepmother, if you will, in the person of the daughter of Pharaoh that Solomon married.

And then Jeroboam comes up from Egypt, and he's the one that's going to lead the ten northern tribes out from under the throne in Jerusalem. And now Egypt appears a third time.

What happens? Egypt, look at chapter 12 of Second Chronicles, came to pass when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself.

He forsook the law of the Lord and all Israel along with him. And it happened on the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem because they had transgressed against the Lord. With twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number, who came with him out of Egypt, the Lubim and the Sukim and the Ethiopians.

And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem. He took the fortified cities. All of that fortification we read about, all of those shields and spears, all of that planning and putting the oil in the wine, and it doesn't matter, all the cities got taken.

Now, there is secular archaeological evidence for this campaign. And, you know, there's opinions about chronology and who this was, but I personally am convinced that in this particular case, the standard chronology is correct. And this is Shishonq, S-H-E-S-H-O-N-Q.

And there's a number of reasons why. I don't have time to go into it in great detail. David Roll and Velikovsky and some others have proposed an alternate chronology, and they've given their reasons.

But I've looked into that. I've looked into the standard. I've looked at refutations of the new chronology.

And there are some real serious problems with the new chronology. And those that have an interest, we can talk about it later. But suffice it to say that in this case, I'm going to say this is Shishonq.

And the interesting thing is you've heard of the temple at Karnak in Egypt. Well, there's a gate at that temple called the Behistun Gate. And there are inscriptions on that wall of this temple in Karnak.

And it details the military campaigns of Shishonq. I've got a picture of it here that I can show you, I think. Here it is.

I'll pass this around. Those of you that aren't present with us in the room, just look this up. Look up the Bubastis Gate.

Not Behistun, that's an inscription. Bubastis, B-U-B-A-S-T-I-S. Or look up the Karnak Temple and look up Shishonq, campaigns of Shishonq.

What you'll find is this picture. There's a great big picture of the pharaoh, and surrounding him are all these little guys. There's 150 little guys just for this one campaign that we're talking about.

Just hand that around. Look down around the guy's waist and knees. You can see all the little

people, little tiny people.

These are conquests. Each of these little diminished-sized people represent a city in Israel, in Judah. There's 150 of them.

Now this thing is weathered. It's been outdoors and it's been there a long time. But some of them are still decipherable.

Let me read you some of these names. These have been transliterated from the Hebrew, I'm sorry, from the Egyptian, and they match the Hebrew names. This is Shishak.

This is 2 Chronicles chapter 12. The cities that are included, and these are just the ones they can read. Rabeeth, Tanakh, Shunem, remember the Shunemite? Shunem is one of the ones he destroyed.

Beth-shan, Rehov, Gibeon, Beit Horon, Ejelon. Did we just see that Rehoboam fortified Ejelon? And it says Shishak took those fortified cities. Well, it's on the list.

Just of the ones we can decipher, there's only about a dozen they can really clearly decipher. But among them is Ejelon, Megiddo, Aruna. Did you see back there in the list? We had Soko in verse 7. It says Beit Zur, Soko.

Soko is on the list. S-K-H is on the list that the Shishak overcame. And then there's Hebron, Hebron, Arad, Ein Paran, and some others.

But on the inscription, these are the cities that Shishak overcame. Now, one of the arguments that is made by the New Chronology guys is, well, Jerusalem is not on the list. Well, in the Bible, Shishak did not capture Jerusalem.

Because what happens? Keep reading. When Shishak comes up and attacks in chapter 12, Shammai the prophet in verse 5 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. Therefore, I have left you in the hand of Shishak.

So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves, and they said, The Lord is righteous. The Lord is just. Now, when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, does this ring a bell? They humbled themselves.

The word of the Lord came to Shammai. What's Shammai's name mean? The Lord hears. They humbled themselves.

Therefore, I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on, what? Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. And guess what? In those 150 cartouches of cities in Judah that were taken by Shishak, you know the one that's conspicuously not there? Jerusalem.

Now, they say, Oh, but it is on there because there's one called Shalem. If you look at the cities on each side of Shalem, Shalem is a city up in Galilee, and the cities on each side of it are Galilean cities, including Cana, K-N-H, where there was one time a very famous wedding, where the apostle Thomas was born. Cana is right next to Shalem.

It's up in the Galilee. And if you look at a map of the campaign of Shishak, here's the top. I don't know if you can see, you probably can't see this, but this is up above the Sea of Galilee, and these are the named cities on those inscriptions that he took, and it's all up in that area, and Shalem is right in the middle of the list.

And being the capital city with the Cana and all that, it would have had a larger person or a larger cartouche or whatever. Shalem is just another one of the little men, another one of the little guys. So, Shishak does not claim to have captured Yerushalayim.

He captured Shalem, and there's a known little village up there with Cana and the rest of them up in the Galilee. So, this militates against one of the arguments of the New Chronology, and it's one of the reasons I think Shishak and Shishank are the same guy. It corresponds too closely to be out of sync.

But because they humbled themselves, God says, look, you only did the first step. You didn't necessarily pray and seek my face, but you've humbled yourself. You haven't even necessarily turned.

It's not like you tore the idols down and got rid of the... But you've made a good start. So, for that reason, I'm going to give you a partial deliverance. As much of those three steps as you've done, that far I will give you deliverance.

You've at least humbled yourself, and God is leaning so far forward to try to bring them back to faithfulness and obedience and to full covenant blessing that as soon as they do any part of it, He starts sending deliverance. And so, Jerusalem does not fall to Shishak. Nevertheless, verse 8, they will be his servants, that they may distinguish my service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations.

So, Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord. You don't treasure the worship of God. You've turned to idolatry and you don't honor the prophet and you're not really seeking God on a regular basis as a pattern.

And when the heat's not on, well, temple's going to be diminished. So, they take the treasures out of the king's house, took everything he carried away, the gold shields which Solomon had made. So, King Rehoboam had bronze shields made in their place and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard which guarded the doorway to the king's house.

So, the glory begins to depart. Remember, we saw in Ezekiel, the glory of God departing. The glory began to depart just a generation after Solomon.

No longer gold, it's just bronze. Still shields, but the brightness, the greatness, the reflection, what does gold do so much better than bronze? You ever seen a bronze statue in a park or a museum someplace? What's the difference in gold and bronze when it comes to reflecting light and glory? It's, you know, this is why when you come in third, you get the bronze medal, right? It's good, but it ain't great. The Medal of Honor is not made of bronze, it's made of gold.

Right under it is the silver star. Under that, you got the rest of your decorations, bronze star, Navy Cross, so on. Gold, silver, bronze, comes down two notches.

Why? They humbled themselves, but they didn't do the other two steps. So, you get the bronze medal for that, the bronze shield. That's my take on it anyway.

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 guard house. So, they don't have the freedom and the luxury to reflect the glory of God except on special occasions. And even then, it's only in bronze.

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. Can we draw any sort of interpretation and application from this? It doesn't matter where you start.

Who do you think has greater glory, Jonathan or Rehoboam? You know, Saul humbled himself a few times and hung on to the kingdom a while longer. God was gracious. God was faithful to his promise, even to the limited extent that Saul's repentance permitted.

But ultimately, it all failed. And it's gonna be the same with Rehoboam. He can't sustain it.

He will not sustain it. He chooses not to sustain his humility, much less turning to God on a regular basis, turning from his evil ways, his wicked ways on a regular basis. He doesn't do it.

So, he has a short period where he gets to go to the temple and see the bronze shields briefly come out and then go back into storage. And this is what happens with so many of us as believers. When the heat is on or on a few rare occasions, we go and a bronze shield will come out and then the bronze shield goes back into storage.

What kind of metal is our shield of faith made of? Is it a gold shield that blinds the enemy with the brightness of the glory of the Lord? Is it a silver shield that does so to a lesser extent? Or is it the dull turning green in the rain bronze shield? Nothing against anybody that's ever earned a bronze medal. I mean, that's great. But we're talking about comparatively speaking, what is the biblical imagery here? Bronze is not what you want when you're the King of Israel.

What a diminishment, what a step down, what a let down. Look at the end of the reign of Rehoboam. King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned.

It doesn't say God strengthened him. He strengthened himself. Cursed is the man, what's our memory verse? Cursed is the man who trusts in man who makes flesh his strength.

Why? He shall be like a shrub. Shrub is alive, it's a plant, but it's not the mighty oak. It's not a towering cedar.

It's a shrub in the desert. And what's the rest of it? Shall not see good when it come. He was 41 years old when he became King and he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem.

David reigned how many years? 40. Solomon reigned how many years? 40. What's a third of 40? If you round it off, 17.

Well, three times 17 is 51, right? It's a third of the time. It's cut by more than half. 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 Naama, not An-Ammonitus. In Hebrew, this is the Ammonitus. And he did evil because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.

If there's a thing you can circle to sum up our study tonight, circle that verse. He did evil because he did not prepare his heart. What did he do? He strengthened himself.

He strengthened cities. He fortified cities and fortified himself and it did no good. He didn't draw his strength from the Lord.

He didn't go to the prophet. He didn't pray and seek God's face and he did not turn from his wicked ways. So he has a measly, diminished, divided, attacked, rebel-infested 17-year reign.

The Acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer? I looked all through the index to my Bible and I could find neither of these books in the same way that I couldn't find the Acts of Solomon. Somewhere in the deep, dark past, there was a bigger Bible, there was a bigger collection at least, a library that had a book called the Acts of Solomon, that had a book of Iddo the seer and had a book of Shemaiah the prophet. What did Shemaiah write about? The days and the Acts of Rehoboam and it's a footnote in this account.

Most of what Rehoboam did is lost to history, even though two different guys wrote it down because if you're not in God's book, it doesn't count. There were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days, all their days. Well, I think the application is self-explanatory.

We have been given so much. We have access to so much through Jesus Christ, the son of David. We are brethren.

We are literally Ahijah, are we not? He is the firstborn among many brethren. Are we truly Ahijah? Are we truly kindred? Those who share inheritance with the Lord Jesus? We can be, there's nothing stopping us, but whether we prepare our heart and seek the Lord, that's what makes the difference. Jonathan did that and it doesn't matter that he didn't sit on the throne of Israel.

You think where Jonathan is gonna be for all eternity. How close do you think he'll be to David? He's gonna be closer to King David in the resurrection in the millennial kingdom and in the kingdom of the father than nearly all of David's sons and grandsons and descendants. Jonathan is gonna be at David's right hand.

He's gonna be in a place of privilege and blessing and opportunity and inheritance, far surpassing anything he could have received from his father in this life. He'll be a lot closer and a lot more prosperous in the golden realms of glory than Rehoboam, who is the grandson of David, the son of Solomon, and frittered it all away. Think about these crown princes.

We are royal family of God. We are a royal priesthood. We are related to the Lord Jesus Christ as brethren.

What is our inheritance going to be? What is our future going to be? You can be Jonathan, you can be Rehoboam. Name is not enough. It's preparation of heart.

Do we analyze? Do we ask? And do we apply? Let's close here in prayer. Father, thank you for this wonderful illustration of the beauty of your grace and your compassion and your provision and the opportunities that you give to us through the Lord Jesus. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit will keep these things in the forefront of our mind to keep us in remembrance of who we are and why we're here and what tremendous potential we have to reflect your glory both now and in the ages to come.

We pray it in Jesus name, amen.