

### Introduction

In this section of Scripture tonight we find how quickly life can go down the drain when God's people turn their back on God and try to substitute Him with people, possessions, personal power, or idols!

The story opens with the reign of Rehoboam, the king over the southern kingdom of Judah.

#### **I. WE SEE THE WICKED REIGN OF REHOBOAM! (14:21) Rehoboam's mother was Naamah, an Ammonitess.**

The **Ammonites** were a wicked and cruel people that were born from the incestuous relations that one of Lot's youngest daughter had with their drunken father as they fled Sodom! (The other wicked nation that came from the older daughter was the Moabites.) (Cf. *Genesis 19:30ff*)

The **Ammonites** were known for their worship of the false god **Molech** and were **involved in offering live children on an altar of fire in their sacrifices to their idol.**

**Naamah** was one of the many wives of Solomon that **helped to turn his heart from the LORD God unto idols!**

**Does it matter who one marries? It most certainly does! Oh how different Solomon's life might have been if he had not multiplied wives and if he had just married a wife that loved the LORD!**

But Solomon's actions of marrying multiple heathen wives **fit into the scheme of his diplomacy with heathen kings** rather than **thinking about the effect it was going to have on his spiritual life and the life of his family!**

Sadly, the influence of **Naamah and her idolatry** were a factor in the **reign of her son Rehoboam** just as much as it was a factor in her husband Solomon's reign and the eventual rending of the kingdom out of her son's hands!

**Both parents and grandparents need to realize that they can often wield a great amount of influence upon the values and character of their children and grandchildren by what they teach with the life that they live before them!**

When Naamah married Solomon, **she had the opportunity to leave her idolatry behind her and embrace the LORD of the Israelites!** But it didn't happen! She instead influenced Solomon to pull away from the LORD God and in so doing helped to seal Solomon's fate as well as the fate of her son as it related to ruling the nation of Judah.

#### **II. WE SEE THE WICKED REBELLION OF JUDAH! (14:22-24)** According to *2 Chronicles 11:17*, God's people were faithful to the Lord for three years.

*2 Chronicles 11:17— "So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon."*

When Rehoboam felt secure after the split in the kingdom, he turned his back on the Lord.

*2 Chronicles 12:1,14— "And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him. And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord."*

Pride, cockiness, or overconfidence often create apathy toward the LORD. God-dependence is substituted with self-dependence or independence from the LORD!

**Too many times I have seen young Believers follow this pattern when they graduate, get married, or get a promotion at work? They feel they have no need for the LORD anymore!**

Don't forget Who the Fountain of our blessings truly is! We must realize that when we get away from the LORD, it can lead to ruin!

**SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD  
1 KINGS 14:21-31**

When we begin worshiping the blessings rather than the One Who blesses, we've got a real problem that sets us up for destruction!

Let me ask, Are you seeking the Lord now? Are you obeying what you know of the Word of God? Or have you become so busy that you find yourself having little to no real time for God in your life?

*There was a fellow by the name of C.D. "Bigboy" Blalock who was a boxer in the 1930's who had the fight of his life against a boxer from Mississippi State. "Bigboy" was a very powerful man with a devastating roundhouse swing. He decided to try this move, but at that very moment his opponent stepped too close. Bigboy's arm wrapped around the man's head and swung all the way around. He ended up hitting himself in the face instead of his opponent. He fell back and was down for the count. He is the only boxer in the history of boxing known to have knocked himself out.*

When Christians forsake the LORD, they too can knock themselves out of God's service and a close walk with Him. We need to guard against this happening in our life!

**Notice that Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD.**

God sees what we are doing, good or bad, naughty or nice, glad or sad, sick or well, happy or hurting. He sees us!

*Job 34:21—For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.*

*Proverbs 15:3—The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

*When our son Philip played T-ball and little league baseball growing up, I enjoyed going and watching him play. I was happy for him when he would get a hit or make a great play. And I would feel badly for him if he struck out or made an error.*

Life is not a game, but the LORD is seeing every thing we do!

**SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD  
1 KINGS 14:21-31**

The LORD is watching us as we live our lives. He rejoices when we do well and but He is grieved for us when we don't do well.

The evil that Judah did was idolatry and immorality. The images, the high places, and the immorality they were involved in were poor choices and poor substitutes for the LORD!

No doubt, Judah wanted these things to fulfill their lives and help them have a better life, but it didn't work.

People without the LORD active in their life often rely upon Satan's substitutes for the LORD!

We see that the land of Judah was also corrupted by sodomites. (Another influence that came through Lot and his daughters!) Our own nation has been and continues being corrupted by sodomites as well!

The emphasis on reading, writing, and arithmetic has been switched to topics on sex education, evolution, abortion, and tolerance!

We are about 50 years into the sexual revolution and we are reaping the consequences of so-called "*sex education.*"

Our nation is plagued by a plethora of hedonistic practices that are driven by people trying to fulfill the lust of their flesh, but they are never satisfied and never will be satisfied!

Many in our nation have substituted man's way for God's way and are feeling the sting and the bondage of sin that comes from substituting other things for God!

**III. WE SEE THE ROBBERY OF WICKED JUDAH'S TREASURE!  
(14:25-26)**

Five years after Solomon's death, almost everything was lost. For three years they walked in the ways of David. But in the fourth year they turned their backs on the LORD and in the fifth year, judgment came.

**SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD  
1 KINGS 14:21-31**

Oh how quickly the glory, the power, and the wealth disappeared!  
Glory was changed to gloom!  
Power was turned to puniness!  
Wealth was exchanged for woe!

When corruption set in, they lost everything!

They began feeling the sting of trying to live their lives with substitutes for the living and true God!

Satan is in the robbing business. He is out to rob us of our testimony, our confidence in the LORD, our peace, our joy, our power for service, and our usefulness for the LORD! These things can be lost quickly!

Like dynamite, sin can suddenly explode in our face. When we reject the LORD in our life, all else becomes useless, no matter how valuable it seems. All the defended cities that Rehoboam built were useless.

*Psalm 127:1—Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*

The alliance that Solomon made with Egypt backfired here upon Israel. Israel depended upon Egypt for protection instead of God. Egypt became one of their substitutes for God. As a result, they wound up being plundered by Egypt.

Their security was no longer secure and they felt the sting of substituting other things for the living God!

It is ironic that God used the Jewish nation to plunder Egypt for their idolatry in **Exodus 14**. The tables were now turned. God used Egypt to plunder Israel for their idolatry. This was the first time the Egyptian army crossed the borders and invaded the land. Pharaoh's grip was on the throat of God's people.

**SUBSTITUTES FOR GOD  
1 KINGS 14:21-31**

We must not make the same mistake that Israel did by looking somewhere other than to the LORD for our security!

Understand that when we replace the Lord in our life with other things, we too will feel the sting of substitute living.

**IV. WE SEE THE REGRESSION OF THE SHIELDS! (14:27-31)**

Imagine the heartache that the laborers felt when they saw that their treasured shields were gone. All that work was for nothing.

Sin leads to decline or regression. Sin reduces the gold of our lives to brass. **Gold speaks of glory and brass speaks of judgment!** Rehoboam substituted the gold ceremonial shields used to escort the king to the Temple with brass shields.

For what reason? Was it to cover up the loss to the people!? Was it to keep up an appearance that all was well when it was not!? Was it a desire to have things as they were before their defeat!? Well, things were not the same! The glory of the gold shields was gone.

When we turn our back on God, we can't really cover it up for long. The truth has a way of coming out into the open.

*Proverbs 28:13—He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

We can try to perfume it, but it will stink. We can put on a ruse, but the wrinkle of sin will still show.

We can't fool God. We can hope to have things as they were before, but sin leaves its scars. There is forgiveness, but there are also consequences from sin too!

Don't give in to Satan's substitutes because if you do, you won't like what comes next!!