**What evidence has been found of the Egyptian king, Shishak?**

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| http://www.christiananswers.net/0.gif | http://www.christiananswers.net/0.gif | http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/egypt1.gif  Copyright 1995, Jeff Sturgeon  **The first Egyptian king to be mentioned by name in the bible**  The name of [David](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/david.html), Israel's second king, ca. 1010-970 BC, appears in two ninth century BC texts, the Tel Dan Inscription and the [Moabite stone](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/moabitestone.html). [[1](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-abr/abr-a017.html#1)] [Shishak](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/shishak1.html) was the first [Egyptian](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/egypt.html) [king](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/king.html) to be mentioned by name in the Bible and is the first foreign king in the Bible for whom we have extra-Biblical evidence.  StudyWebTM Award Logo  This page is a StudyWeb award winner.  Prior to the tenth century BC, it was customary for the kings of Egypt to be referred to simply as "[Pharaoh](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/pharaoh.html)." After the tenth century, however, a proper name was included with the title (*Bible and Spade*, Autumn 1993, p. 98). This practice was followed in the Bible as well. The first [pharaoh](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/pharaoh.html) to be identified with a personal name is [Shishak](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/shishak1.html), who ruled during the time of [Solomon](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/solomon.html) and his son [Rehoboam](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/rehoboam.html). We first meet Shishak in [1 Kings 11:40](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1ki11.html#40). Because of [Solomon's](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/solomonsongof.html) [idolatry](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/idolatry.html), God decreed through the [prophet](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/prophet.html) [Ahijah](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/ahijah.html) that He was going to take ten [tribes](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/tribe.html) from Solomon and give them to [Jeroboam](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/jeroboam.html), an official in Solomon's court ([1 Kings 11:26-39](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1ki11.html#26)). As a result, Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam. Jeroboam fled to Egypt where Shishak gave him refuge ([1 Kings 11:40](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1ki11.html#40)).  After Solomon's death, Jeroboam returned and became leader of the breakaway Northern Kingdom, while Rehoboam ruled over the Southern [kingdom of Judah](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/judahkingdomof.html) ([1 Kings 12:1-17](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1ki12.html#1)). Shortly thereafter, Shishak came with his army and invaded [Judah](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/judahkingdomof.html) and [Israel](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/israelkingdomof.html). The Biblical record is brief:  In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He carried off the treasures of the Temple of the Lord and the treasures of the royal [palace](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/palace.html). He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made ([1 Kings 14:25-26](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1ki14.html#25)).  The Chronicler expands on this by recording:  With 1,200 [chariots](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/chariot.html) and 60,000 [horsemen](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/horseman.html) and the innumerable troops of [Libyans](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/libya.html), [Sukkites](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/sukkiims.html) and [Cushites](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/cushite.html) that came with him from Egypt, he [Shishak] captured the fortified [cities](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/city.html) of Judah and came as far as [Jerusalem](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/jerusalem.html) ([2 Chronicles 12:3-4](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/2chr12.html#3)).  [Jerusalem](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/jerusalem.html) was spared destruction only because the leaders of Judah humbled themselves before the [Lord](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/lord.html) ([2 Chronicles 12:5-8](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/2chr12.html#5)).  In Egyptian records, Shishak's name is spelled Sheshonq. Since there were later Sheshonqs, the Biblical Shishak/Sheshonq is known as Sheshonq-I.  Shishak descended from a line of chieftains of the [Libyan](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/libya.html) tribe of the Meshwesh who had settled in [Egypt](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/egypt.html) at the end of the New Kingdom. He rose to prominence as commander-in-chief of the Egyptian army under the last [pharaoh](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/pharaoh.html) of the 21st Dynasty, Psusennes II. Shishak gained a connection to the throne by marrying his son Osorkon to Psusennes' daughter. When Psusennes died with no son to take his place, Shishak took over the throne and ruled ca. 945-924 B.C., thus beginning 230 years of Libyan rule (the 22nd Dynasty).  There was a minor resurgence of Egyptian glory under Shishak. He inaugurated major building programs in the Delta, [Memphis](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/memphis.html), Herakleopolis and Thebes.  Map of Egypt and Israel. Copyrighted.Shishak evidently had his eye on his northern neighbor for some time. By harboring [Jeroboam](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/jeroboam.html), he was contributing to the division of [Israel](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/israel.html). When the split occurred, it was an opportune time for him to deal a major blow to the two now weakened kingdoms, so he launched a campaign. The underlying cause seems to have been to break Israel's commercial monopoly in the north and to obtain much needed [booty](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/booty.html), rather than to annex the area.  Shishak's campaign is documented in Egypt as well as in the Bible. Upon his return, he constructed a large festival court in front of the great Temple of Amun at Thebes in southern Egypt. The project was no doubt financed by plunder from Judah and Israel. On one of the walls of the court, Shishak commissioned a commemorative relief of his Palestinian campaign. Unfortunately, it is badly damaged. Enough remains, however, to show that he not only attacked Judah, as the Bible records, but also the northern [kingdom of Israel](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/israelkingdomof.html).  The scene depicts Shishak on the right side about to club a group of [foreigners](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/foreigner.html), most likely Israelites given the context of the relief. The figure of Shishak is all but destroyed. On the left side is the chief Egyptian god Amun leading captive cities by means of ropes.  Each city is represented by an oval cartouche containing the name of the city, with a bound prisoner on top. The list mainly contains place names in Israel, the Judahite section being almost totally obliterated. Jerusalem does not appear in the list. One of the Israelite towns is Megiddo. At the site of Megiddo a portion of a commemorative stela of Shishak was found by the Oriental Institute excavations in 1926. His name can be clearly read and the stela is without doubt from the 925 B.C. campaign.  Coffin of Sheshonq-II. Copyrighted. Courtesy of ABR.  Solid silver coffin of Shishak's grandson Sheshonq-II. It was discovered in 1939 by Pierre Montet at Tanis in the Egyptian delta. The silver used to make the coffin possibly came from Judah and Israel as a result of Shishak's 925 BC campaign.  One footnote to the story of Shishak's campaign. When Shishak's son Osorkon-I took the throne, he gave huge amounts of [gold](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/gold.html) and [silver](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/silver.html) (383 tons!) to the temples of Egypt. What is more, he buried his son Sheshonq-II in a [coffin](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/coffin.html) made of pure silver. Where did all of this wealth come from? The only plausible explanation is that it came from the treasuries of the Temple and royal [palace](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/palace.html) at [Jerusalem](http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/jerusalem.html) ([1 Kings 14:26](http://www.christiananswers.net/bible/1ki14.html#26)), and other cities of Judah and Israel, in Shishak's campaign of 925 B.C.  **Reference**   1. These texts were discussed in the pages of *Bible and Spade* (Autumn 1993, pp. 119-121, and Summer 1995, pp. 91-92).   **For further reading**   * Further information on [biblical archaeology](http://www.christiananswers.net/archaeology/home.html) [[Go](http://www.christiananswers.net/archaeology/home.html)] * Charles F. Aling, Shishak and the Wealth of Solomon, *Institute for Biblical Archaeology Newsletter*, Oct.-Dec. 1993, pp. 4-5. * Kenneth A. Kitchen, Where Did Solomon's Wealth Go?, *Bible and Spade*, Autumn 1994, pp. 108-109, reprinted from Biblical Archaeology Review 15/3, May/June 1989, p. 30. * Kenneth A. Kitchen, Shishak's Military Campaign in Israel Confirmed, *Biblical Archaeology Review* 15/3, May/June 1989, pp. 32-33.   Author: Bryant G. Wood of [Associates for Biblical Research](http://www.biblearchaeology.org/)  [Copyright ©](http://www.christiananswers.net/copyrite.html) 1996, 1999, Associates for Biblical Research, All Rights Reserved - except as noted on attached [“Usage and Copyright”](http://www.christiananswers.net/copyrite.html) page that grants ChristianAnswers.Net users generous rights for putting this page to work in their homes, personal witnessing, churches and schools. |