

2Chronicles 10:1 ¶ And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.

2Chronicles 10:2 And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt.

2Chronicles 10:3 And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

The IVP Old Testament Commentary makes a statement on the date of these events. "The year of these events is pretty firmly established at 931 B.C."

It seems that Shechem was the place chosen for all of Israel to accept and acknowledge Rehoboam as their new king. Guzik makes this observation: "All in all, it showed that Rehoboam was in a position of weakness, having to meet the ten northern tribes on *their* territory, instead of demanding that representatives come to Jerusalem."

JFB adds this note: "Shechem lay thirty miles north of Jerusalem in Ephraim, on the border of Manasseh (Jos 17:7). It formed a center for the northern tribes and after this event became their first capital (1Ki 12:25)."

The Chronicler notes that Jeroboam, son of Nebat, had fled from Solomon and sought refuge in Egypt. Once his friends notified him in some way that Solomon was dead, he returned to Israel to take part in the gathering at Shechem. Jeroboam and all the people of Israel wanted to know one thing from Rehoboam before accepting him as their king.

The record in 1Kings provides more of the backstory to these events. It tells us that Solomon married many foreign wives, and they succeeded in turning his heart away from the LORD to follow after their "gods." This made God angry, and He deemed it necessary to judge Solomon by taking much of the kingdom away from his son. The LORD told Solomon that He would not take action against him out of respect for how his father David had served Him.

1 Kings 11:11–13 "Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

The record in Kings also tells us that the LORD had chosen Jeroboam to be the ruler of the 10 tribes that would become known as the Northern Kingdom. Solomon found out about this in some way and sought to kill Jeroboam; so he fled to Egypt.

1 Kings 11:29–35 & 40 "And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad

himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel.) Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes....Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon."

2Chronicles 10:4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee.

2Chronicles 10:5 And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed.

The people complained to Rehoboam that his father had ruled them with a heavy hand. They asked that he promise to ease their burden; if he did, they would agree to serve him. Rehoboam told them he would give them an answer after three days.

I would think that his response already signaled that he did not want to comply.

2Chronicles 10:6 And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye *me* to return answer to this people?

2Chronicles 10:7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.

The new king sought the counsel of the older men that had served as advisors to his father. They told him that if he chose to show kindness to the people and give them an answer that pleased them, they would become his loyal servants.

2Chronicles 10:8 But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him.

2Chronicles 10:9 And he said unto them, What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us?

2Chronicles 10:10 And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* somewhat lighter

for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

2Chronicles 10:11 For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you with scorpions*.

Solomon evidently didn't like the answer of the older, more experienced men. He decided to seek the counsel of the young men with whom he had grown up and now were in his service. When he asked them how he should answer the people, they advised that he declare his intention to make their burdens even heavier. They suggested he show himself to be even more severe and demanding than his father.

This is obviously the advice that he wanted to hear. This is just another example of how even perceived power can corrupt a man's thinking. He did not realize that he did not have the power and authority to enforce his decision, as we will see in the following verses.

Another good observation from Guzik: "This is a common phenomenon today - what some call *advice shopping*. The idea is that you keep asking different people for advice until you find someone who will tell you what you want to hear. This is an unwise and ungodly way to get counsel. It is better to have a few trusted counselors you will listen to even when they tell you what you don't want to hear."

2Chronicles 10:12 ¶ So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.

2Chronicles 10:13 And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men,

2Chronicles 10:14 And answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you with scorpions*.

2Chronicles 10:15 So the king hearkened not unto the people: for the cause was of God, that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Jeroboam and all the people returned on the third day to hear how the king would answer them. He chose to ignore the counsel of the older, wiser men and follow the advice of his peers. Rehoboam boldly declared that he would rule them much more harshly than had his father.

It's significant to note that the Chronicler revealed that this all happened in accordance with God's will, giving evidence that God is sovereign even as He works through the choices of men. He ensured that the prophecy declared by Ahijah (related in the verses from 1Kings 11 above) be fulfilled. I liked the way Spurgeon expressed it: "God is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon's sin and Rehoboam's folly; yet God was in it: This thing is from me, saith the Lord. God had nothing to do with the sin or the folly,

but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, God was in it all."

This reminds me of a verse in Proverbs, a book of wise sayings credited to Solomon.

Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."

2Chronicles 10:16 And when all Israel *saw* that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and *we have* none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel: *and* now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents.

2Chronicles 10:17 But *as for* the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

2Chronicles 10:18 Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram that *was* over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to *his* chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

2Chronicles 10:19 And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

When the people heard the king's answer, they basically declared that they refused to recognize Rehoboam as their king and went home. He was, however, able to maintain his ruling authority over those that lived in the cities of Judah.

Rehoboam obviously did not realize the consequences of his decision or understand the determination of the people. When he sent Hadoram, the supervisor over the forced labor required by the tribute, the people of Israel stoned him to death. When the king found out, he fled to Jerusalem in his chariot.

The Chronicler notes that kingdom was still not unified at the time of his writing. The house of David only retained authority in Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

It should be noted that the focus of the Chronicler is on the kingdom of Judah (the Southern Kingdom) and the royal line of David. He will not have much to say about Israel (the Northern Kingdom).