

# 2 Chronicles 10-11 • From Wisdom to Foolishness

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2 Chronicles chapter 10. Turn there please, with me. The first king of Israel was Saul. He was a, he was head and shoulders taller than any other man. He started off really good. He ended really bad. God raised up another king in Israel. His name was David. And David was certainly a man with problems from time to time. He had challenges but he was a man who loved God. And he was a great king because of that.

And David had a son named Solomon. And Solomon took the throne in his father David's place. Solomon, like the very first king of Israel, started off good and ended badly. And now the son of Solomon, or David's grandson, is now going to become king of Israel. Or as we enter chapter 10, is the king of Israel.

And it begins by saying in verse 1,

*"Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had come to Shechem to make him king. 2 ...as soon as Jeroboam, the son of Nebat heard of it, (for (he had) he was in Egypt where he had fled from King Solomon), then Jeroboam returned from Egypt. 3 And they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and said to Rehoboam, 4 "Your father made our yoke heavy. Now therefore lighten the hard service of your father and his heavy yoke on us, and we will serve you." (ESV)*

Let me explain a little bit, because there's some gaps in the story. Jeroboam, who is introduced to us in this chapter we've not heard of before. You have to go back to Kings to read about him. (1 Kings 11:26-40)

He was a man who surfaced during the reign of Solomon and he became a leader. And Solomon recognized him as a leader, a man who could get things done. And so he brought him into his service. But he eventually became jealous of him over a period of time as Solomon began to walk further from the Lord. And eventually he even persecuted Jeroboam to the point where Jeroboam ran for his life and hid in Egypt.

But he was approached by a prophet, a man by the name of Ahijah. And Ahijah came to him and took his cloak and ripped it into 12 pieces. And he handed 10 of those pieces to Jeroboam and he said, I am about to tear 10 tribes away from David, or the family of David, and I'm going to give them to you. I will allow them to retain two tribes for the sake of my servant, David, because he loved me. But I'm going to snatch 10 tribes out of the hand of David's family because Solomon, his son departed from the Lord and from worshiping God.

And he told Jeroboam, I'm going to make you king of those 10 tribes. And if you follow me, and if you are obedient to me, I will make your name great like that of David, only you need to be faithful to me.

Now Solomon is dead. Jeroboam hears about it from his exile in Egypt. And he comes back to Israel and he rallies the people to meet with king Rehoboam in Shechem, which is where they would have a coronation ceremony for the king. And the purpose of rallying the people by Jeroboam, was to do just what we heard here. And that is, they asked Rehoboam to lighten their yoke.

And when we talk about a yoke, they're talking about something they used to hang over the necks of animals. Put it over their neck so they could pull a cart. Well, they used that term to describe burdens like tax burdens and things like that. And so that's why they say in verse 4, *"Your father made our yoke heavy."* And what they mean by that is, he taxed us.

Solomon was a builder. He started off building the temple, then his own palace. And then he built up all the store cities around Israel. And he just, he was a builder. He loved building. Well, it takes money. He taxed the people. I don't think he really needed to because he had so much gold. We read about that last week, but he did it anyway. And he conscripted the people into labor. The Canaanites were in forced labor and the Israelites were also asked to serve. Not quite in the same way as the Canaanites because they were Israelites. But anyway...

So, it's kind of natural for the people to come to Saul, or to come to Rehoboam at this time and say, we'd like some relief from the way your father dealt with us. And verse 5 tells us Rehoboam's first response. It says,

*"He said to them, "Come to me again in three days." So the people went away. (He wanted time to think it over and get some counsel. And) 6 Then King Rehoboam took counsel (Look at this first thing. It says,) with the old men, (these are the men) who had stood before Solomon his father while he was yet alive saying, "How do you advise me to answer this people?""*

Now, these guys had listened to Solomon spout wisdom from God for years and years and years.

Look at their advice, verse 7. *“And they said to him, (listen) 'If you will be good to this people and please them and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever.'”* They will love you. They will be devoted to you. They will be loyal to you. You go back, and you say a gentle, encouraging word to these people, and they'll love you.

What did they recommend? They recommended an attitude of servanthood, didn't they? And that's exactly what Jesus taught us about how a real leader ought to be. Jesus told His disciples, He says, the Gentiles, they like to, they're, they like to lord it over people. And anybody that has any kind of authority, they really enjoy having people under their thumb. Hey, that's an order you go do this or you go do that. And they like... He says, but not so with you. The one who would be greatest among you, He said, must be the least of all... And He said, and you must be the servant of all. And Jesus, of course, came and exemplified that as well. (Matthew 20:25, Mark 10:42)

But that advice wasn't to Rehoboam's liking. We're told in verse 8 that,

*“But he abandoned the counsel that the old men gave him, and (he) took counsel with the young men (with those) he had grown up with... and stood before him. 9 And he said to them, 'What do you advise that we answer this people who have said to me, 'Lighten the yoke that your father (has) put on us'?'” 10 And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, "Thus shall you speak to the people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you lighten it for us'; thus shall you say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's thighs. 11 And now, whereas my father laid on you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions.'”*

So there! Probably about the worst advice he could have received. Because what the younger men are suggesting is leadership, not by servitude, but by intimidation. Something you might expect from a group of younger guys who don't have good experience, much wisdom, if any at all.

*“12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king said, "Come to me again the third day." 13 And the king answered them harshly; and forsaking the counsel of the old men, 14 King Rehoboam spoke to them according to the counsel of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it. My father disciplined you with whips, but I will*

*discipline you with scorpions." (And) <sup>15</sup> So (they) did not listen to the people, for it was a turn of affairs brought about by God that the LORD might fulfill his word, which he spoke by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat."*

That's why I told you about that prophecy that Ahijah had given to Jeroboam. Because you don't hear about it here in Chronicles. You have to go back to Kings to get it. But the writer of Chronicles mentions it nonetheless. And says, so that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled this all came about.

Well, let's see how the people respond.

*"<sup>16</sup> And when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, "What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Each of you to your own tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David."*

Which is... That's basically a way of saying you obviously don't care about us, we're not going to care about you. You look to your house. We'll look to our house. You stay out of our business. We'll stay out of your business, but we reject your leadership over us. We reject your throne.

And so it says at the very end of verse 16 that *"...all Israel went to their tents."* And again, that's kind of a euphemism to say, they came out from under with an attitude of rebellion. They came out from under the rulership of Rehoboam and said, we're done.

*"<sup>17</sup> But (it says that) Rehoboam reigned over the people of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah."* And we're going to find out that also includes the tribe of Benjamin. Yeah, and we'll talk about that here in a little bit.

The end result was that Rehoboam, effectively split the kingdom. Right? And people turned away from his leadership. And of course, all this underscores the importance of, who the people are who are chirping in your ear. That's a very important question. Who is chirping in your ear? Who is speaking into your heart?

There's a proverb that some people like to quote as it relates to people chirping. We call them counselors. Let me put it up on the screen for you from Proverbs chapter 11. It says,

### **Proverbs 11:14 (ESV)**

*Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

*Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

And that is fundamentally true. But remember, the Book of Proverbs is a book of observations, based in wisdom. And the observation, in a general sense, is that, if you don't get guidance that's usually a bad thing. And if you do get guidance, that's usually a good thing.

But the passage in Proverbs assumes the quality of the people from whom you're getting guidance. Okay? It's not saying that you're going to be safe if you have a lot of counselors all the time. Because you might, like Rehoboam, have bad counselors who give you bad counsel. And if you do, it's, you're going to, you're going to pay the price.

As we see in Rehoboam's case, his counselors actually did him a disservice by telling him what they did. And Rehoboam paid dearly. He lost more than half the kingdom. The great lesson for us in this, I guess the first lesson that we're kind of looking at here is once again, who are your counselors. Who do you talk to when you're going through some challenging situations? Who do you talk to? Who do you get feedback from? Who's chirping in your ear, because it's incredibly important who influences us.

I got to thinking about this. And I thought, and as I was putting together my notes I thought to myself, what if someone asked me to list the 5 qualities that I would look for in a counselor? And when I mean a counselor, I'm not talking about a professional counselor necessarily. You don't have to go to a professional to get counsel. You can go to anyone. Well, not anyone. Well, yeah, you can go to anyone, but you're not necessarily going to get good counsel from everyone. But a counselor is simply someone who gives counsel.

The Holy Spirit is, the Counselor, capital C. But, sometimes we look for people to speak the Word of the Lord to us. So, I'm going to put these up on the screen here: Five qualities of a good counselor, And the first one that I'm going to put up here is that I think it's necessary that this person be experienced in life. Can we go...

**Five qualities of a good counselor:**

- Experienced in life

Yep, there we go, Experienced in life. That pretty much takes out Saul, Rehoboam's counselors. They just didn't have experience. They were younger men. I'm not saying that younger people can't be a good counselor, necessarily. What I'm saying is they haven't lived a whole lot of life. They haven't experienced a whole lot of life. And so, usually it is a good idea to find someone who has some years on them, because they've learned from experience, from life and so forth.

**Five qualities of a good counselor:**

- Experienced in life
- Mature, godly believer

The next thing is just as important. I believe they should be a Mature and godly believer. Mature in the Lord and godly. Godly, meaning, you see in them the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Okay? The fruit of the Spirit, which we're going to talk about in our upcoming Galatian study on Sunday morning. You see this in their lives. They didn't just start walking with the Lord a year or two ago. They've been walking with the Lord for a number of years.

Next,

**Five qualities of a good counselor:**

- Experienced in life
- Mature, godly believer
- Track record of wise choices

I think that you should look for somebody with a Track record of wise choices. In other words, you see in their life that they have made good choices down the road. You can see it. You can see the fruit of it.

Next,

**Five qualities of a good counselor:**

- Experienced in life
- Mature, godly believer
- Track record of wise choices
- Thoughtful, not reactive

I believe that you should find someone who is Thoughtful, not reactive. Here's what I mean by that: people who are too reactive and they hear something and (Pastor Paul makes a reactive sound/gesture) they react quickly. They don't think it through. A good counselor might even say to you, let me go home and pray about that for a couple of days and let me get back to you. You may not like that from the standpoint of your own personal impatience, but that's a good quality for somebody to be willing to say, let me pray about that. And before I just blurt out an answer or a suggestion or some counsel, I want to pray, I want to pray about it.

A reactive person listens and goes, oh man, whoa! I can't believe what you're telling me. And I'll tell you what I would do... It's not really what you're looking for. I want somebody who's going to simmer on this thing for a while. I don't need any excuses to be reactive myself. So, I'm probably not going to want to look for that in my counselor.

And then, and this kind of goes along with it.

**Five qualities of a good counselor:**

- Experienced in life
- Mature, godly believer
- Track record of wise choices
- Thoughtful, not reactive
- Committed to prayer

The fifth thing is that person is Committed to prayer. Not just prayer for how they respond to you, but praying with you about whatever issue you are about, which you are seeking counsel; committed to praying ongoingly.

A counselor should be someone who will say, well, that's my two cents, but you know what? Hey, I'm going to keep you in prayer about this. I'll be praying here before you make your decision. And leading up to the time that you need to do this or whatever. I'll be praying for you, be asking God to guide you and direct you.

I want those things out of a counselor. And I just made these five things up all off the top of my head from based on how, what I would want to look for. I actually got online before I did this. And I put in, top qualities of a counselor. And, Oh mercy! It was nonsense. Most of it was pure unadulterated nonsense. I thought, you know what? Shut that off, I can do better than that by myself. I just started writing those out. And I thought, this is what I want. This is what I want to look for.

In these 5 things that you see here, you might be wondering why I didn't perhaps add a sixth. That being, talk to someone or get counsel from someone who loves you, who you know that loves you. I didn't include it because sometimes people who love you make the worst possible counselors.

And the reason is because they love you, they want to see your problems go away. And I, often see loved ones give very poor counsel because, they are willing many times to compromise the Word of God just to get their loved one out of trouble or to bring relief. They have a greater empathetic connection to the person to whom they're giving counsel. And when that person is hurting they will give counsel to stop the hurting, even if it's un-Biblical counsel.

I have had situations where someone has come to me and said, "I need to know what to do about my marriage. And... Because my marriage is having struggles."

And then they'll say, "cause I'm just... My whole family is telling me to divorce this guy."

And I come back and I say, "hmm, now there hasn't been any unfaithfulness in the marriage." Right?

"No, nothing like that. But we're just having a hard time getting along and stuff like that."

"And your family's telling you to divorce him. Right?"

"Yeah, they are."

"And your families are believers, aren't they?"

"Yeah, yeah, they're believers."

"Really?"

"In other words, they leapfrogged over the Word of God because they wanted you to stop hurting."

Rather than giving godly advice, many times people who love us want to go for the quick fix. Be careful talking to people who love you.



Now that's not to say within the context of marriage, you can't seek advice. I have to confess that after almost 40 years of marriage, my wife is the most delightful counselor in my life. It's, I joke, but with a grain of truth, I say to people, I have a hard time distinguishing Sue's voice from the Holy Spirit's. And again, that's a little tongue in cheek, but it's also kind of true. Because she is careful not to give me advice.

And my wife is an interesting character. I mean, I love her to death, but she's not the kind of person that's going to sidestep the Word to counsel me. I mean, she... I know that she loves me, but she's going to tell me straight. In fact, she usually tells me what I don't want to hear. And that's how I know it's from the Lord. But... And she'll just kind of lay it out for me and just say, well, here's the deal, Paul, like it or lump it. This is... And I say, thanks hon. Anyway, I can say that cause she's not here.

Rehoboam gets some really rotten counsel. Let's see where it goes from here. The people, respond by saying, "We're done with you, Bud! Verse 18,

*"Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was (the) taskmaster over the forced labor, and the people of Israel stoned him to death with stones. And King Rehoboam (barely) got away. It says he) quickly mounted his chariot to flee to Jerusalem. 19 (So) Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day."*

Isn't it incredible how quickly you go from wisdom to foolishness? Rehoboam's father was the wisest man ever, save that of Jesus Christ. And the wisdom that came out of his mouth was something that drew kings and queens from all around the known world to come and hear him speak.

And Rehoboam is about as dumb as a doorknob when it comes to dealing with people and situations and he loses all the people. Right? And so he figures, I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to send my task master out and he'll get them." It really just kind of goes to show how out of touch this man was with the people of his kingdom. They pick up stones and they kill the guy that he sends. And Rehoboam's off in the distance watching all this melee happening. And he's like, get out of here! Fire this thing up! And he takes off in a shot just in time.

You would think that maybe Rehoboam had learned some valuable life lessons from these experiences? Chapter 11.

*"1 When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 chosen warriors, to fight against Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam."*

Here's Rehoboam's plan B. Right? He starts by talking cruelly to them and wonders why they don't want him to be their king. Then he goes out and tries to intimidate them into subjection or submission. That doesn't work. What's the next chance, or what's the next option? We're going to war. And so he rallies all the fighting men in Judah and Benjamin. That's for the first time we hear that the southern kingdom is Judah and Benjamin.

Here we go.

*"2 But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, the man of God: 3 "Say to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, 4 "Thus says the LORD, You shall not go up or fight against your relatives. Return every man to his home, for this thing is from me." So they listened to the word of the LORD and returned and did not go (up) against Jeroboam."*

Well, okay. To Rehoboam's credit, when the Lord sends this prophet named Shemaiah and gives a prophecy saying, this is from God, this is from Me. Don't go to war. They listened and obeyed. And the battle didn't happen. Good thing.

Now, some of you might be a little confused here about something that we read in verse one. I want you to look in verse one, one more time with me. If you would, please. It says, *"when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 chosen warriors, to fight against Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam."*

Some of you might be scratching your heads and saying, "Wait a minute, he wanted to fight against Israel? I thought he was the king of Israel." Well, this is where we need to deal with the divided kingdom. From this point on, Israel is a divided kingdom. And it will never come together fully again. Not in the way that it was originally intended.

Let me show you a map on the screen here.



The whole, both of those colored areas, the red and the yellow, that's the whole area that David and Solomon ruled over. That was all Israel. And that's why it says in the text, "*and he ruled over all Israel.*" But after Rehoboam walked in pride and stupidity, the kingdom was ripped in two. And now you have a southern kingdom called Judah. And it's basically made up of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin.

Now, I don't know how much to get into this with you. If you look on maps, those kind of maps you see in the back of your Bible, you'll see that the tribe of Simeon was also planted in the southern part of Judah. But they were wanderers and they never stayed put. So, at some point they moved northward; we don't know when. And the southern kingdom was made up of just Judah and Benjamin. And that's the way it stayed.

Jeroboam was the king of the northern kingdom. That's what we refer to it as Israel. And Israel's capital city became Samaria. The whole region eventually, simply became known as Samaria.

The southern kingdom of which was called Judah by the time of Jesus. The Greek pronunciation was Judea, and that was all there was essentially of Israel because of the northern kingdom being taken into captivity.

It says in verse 5 that, *"Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem, and he built cities for defense in Judah"* Why does Rehoboam have to build cities for defense? Because he has a new enemy on his northern border. Guess who his enemy is? Israel. And so now he figures, okay, he's resigned himself to the fact that the nation is split. I got to be prepared if they attack. He begins to build up cities.

And it tells us in verses 6, and 7, and 8, and 9, and 10, the names of many of these cities, which, include Bethlehem and Hebron and so forth. It says in verse 11, *"He made the fortresses strong, and put commanders in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 ...he put shields and spears in all the cities and made them very strong. So he held Judah and Benjamin."* (That's the two tribes that he ruled over. The other ten are under the control of Jeroboam.)

*13 And the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel presented themselves to him from all places where they lived. 14 For the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of the LORD, 15 and he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat idols and for the calves that he had made."*

Now, we're not given a whole lot of information here about Jeroboam, but Jeroboam made up his own religion for the Northern Kingdom. He did it out of fear. He figured the temple is in Jerusalem, eventually my people are going to think, "well, we got to go down there to worship." And they're going to probably leave. They'll think, well, that's the only place you can worship God. And they'll... I'm going to start losing my subjects. Ah, I know what I'll do. I'll make up a religion.

And that's what he did. He made, he literally made up a religion. It had... He made two calf idols. He put one in the north and one in the south. It was convenient for people to go and worship. And he said, Israel, these are your gods. And basically with that switch to paganism or at least a form of it... Anyway, it was not a good situation.

But you see, there were Levites, meaning descendants of the tribe of Levi, living all throughout Israel and Judah. They wanted to be true to the Lord and their calling. And so they... You remember the Levites were not given any land.

They didn't receive an allotment of land like all the other tribes. They were given cities within tribes.

They left their homestead, they left their cities, they left their jobs, they left their farms, wherever they were living, the ones that were living up in Israel. And they came down to Judah. And they said, this guy's gone crazy. He's made up a religion of calf idols and goat idols, and we don't want anything to do with it. We're going to move down to Judah and worship the Lord.

Look at verse 16. It says, *"And those who had set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD, the God of their fathers."*

*17 They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made Rehoboam the son of Solomon secure, for they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon."* You know what that means? They came down and it was all very cool, but only short lived. They only served God for 3 years. And then they began to unravel just like their neighbors now to the north.

The chapter ends by simply telling us kind of about the rest of Rehoboam's reign. Then he *"18...took as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse, (These are people within the Davidic family.) 19 and she bore him sons, Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. 20 After her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21 Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and concubines (he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters). (Yes, that's ungodly, not quite as ungodly as his father, but still ungodly.) 22 And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as chief prince among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. (And we'll find out, we won't get to it tonight, but we'll find out in the next chapter that Abijah did become king for a whopping three months. Things unraveled really quickly.) 23 And he dealt wisely and distributed some of his sons through all the districts of Judah and Benjamin, in all the fortified cities, and he gave them abundant provisions and procured wives for them."*

And essentially, politically speaking, Rehoboam made some prudent moves to advance his children, his sons, into positions of authority. Which of course is another way of just holding on to power. He would have been better served to seek the God of his fathers, but he didn't do that. He did it through worldly methods and so forth. And he made some good decisions from a socio-political standpoint, but he was not a godly man.