

## Rehoboam's Mistake

Have you ever messed up? Maybe you had a big decision to make and you asked your friends and they gave you some advice and you asked your parents and they gave you some advice, and you went with your friend's advice instead of the advice of your parents. Later you look back and you tell yourself "What a bonehead I am". You should have known your parent's advice was better, but you wanted to be cool with your friends. Sometimes you can go back and make it up, but sometimes it not only messes you up, it messes everybody up and there is no going back.

That's what happened to Rehoboam. His trouble started when he went to Shechem for Israel to make him king. What he didn't know was Jeroboam had come back from Egypt. Rehoboam's father, Solomon, and Jeroboam hadn't exactly gotten along and since Rehoboam's father was king, Jeroboam took the advice of his daddy, Nebat, and fled to Egypt. Jeroboam hadn't been seen him in a while and frankly, Rehoboam had pretty much forgotten about him. So Rehoboam was surprised when Jeroboam showed up with the people of Israel making demands. Jeroboam came to the new king and said "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." Rehoboam liked the idea of everybody serving him, but he wasn't sure about this lightening of the yoke thing. However, Rehoboam decided it would be best to appear thoughtful on the matter so as to not to rile the people up. Everybody knew he wasn't as smart as his father, since King Solomon was like the smartest person to ever live. Try having people give you respect when your father is the smartest man ever and was a very great king whose exploits were known all over the world. So Rehoboam told Jeroboam and the people to "come back to me after three days". He figured three days was just about right to look like he was taking them serious, but not so long as to lose their attention and have them forget that he, Rehoboam, was the king. Jeroboam and the people departed, and Rehoboam set about making one of the biggest decisions of his life.

Now, sometimes when you are king you have to do stuff just because that is what you are supposed to do, not because you necessarily want to do it. For Rehoboam, this was one of those times. Even though he had friends, guys he had grown up with that he wanted to impress, it was expected by everybody that he would ask advice of the old men who had advised his father. So Rehoboam, to look good in front of all the people, consulted with the elders who had stood before his father while Solomon was still alive. Rehoboam asked them "How do you advise me to answer these people". The elders said to Rehoboam "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever." Doesn't that just sound like something a lot of old men would say? It sounded weak to Rehoboam, he was afraid that Jeroboam and the people wouldn't be nearly impressed enough with his importance if he answered them like that. So Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders and consulted the young men he had grown up with. He figured they would have some strong sounding advice, and he wasn't disappointed. Rehoboam asked them "What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?" Then the young men who had grown up with Rehoboam said "Thus should you speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make it lighter on

us'-thus you shall say to them: 'My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist! And now, whereas my Father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!'" Now that was strong advice! Rehoboam liked it, thinking that by talking tough he would put Jeroboam in his place and get himself some respect from the people. So he decided to go with his friend's advice instead of the advice of the elders who had advised his father. I know, I know, boneheaded. That's easy for you to say, but you have the advantage of seeing what happened.

So, Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day as he had told them. Rehoboam answered them roughly, like his friends had suggested, saying "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scourges!" Rehoboam figured by not listening to the people he would show them who was boss and they would fear him and have to do what he wanted them to do. What Rehoboam didn't know was, this turn of events was from the LORD, so that the word of the LORD spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam would be fulfilled.

Now, when the people saw that Rehoboam wasn't going to listen to them, things got nasty! The people answered Rehoboam by saying "What share have we in David? We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, O David!" And all the people went to their tents except for the children of Israel who lived in the cities of Judah, they stood with Rehoboam. Rehoboam didn't know what to do; this was not what he was expecting to happen. Then someone suggested he send Hadoram to talk with the rebels since everybody respected Hadoram because he was the elder in charge of the revenue and people tend to want to stay on the good side of the treasurer. So Rehoboam sent Hadoram, but things got even worse. The children of Israel stoned Hadoram and he died! Then Rehoboam knew things were way out of control, so he mounted his chariot and made haste, as they say, to Jerusalem. Rehoboam's stupid mistake has never been undone. Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day. I would guess that Rehoboam forever after wished he had listened to the elders instead of his friends.

(This story is based on 2 Chronicles 10.)

Discussion questions:

1. How can you tell whose advice it is wise to listen to?
  - a. Ask God to help you decide what is best.
  - b. Rely on advice that corresponds with what God has already taught through the Bible.
  - c. What kind of person is the one giving advice, people who love Jesus are more likely to give good advice.
  - d. What do they know about the subject, successful business people are more likely to give good business advice than someone who just “talks” but never actually did much in creating a successful business.
  - e. Older experienced people often give better advice than younger people who haven’t experienced as many situations.
2. Are people more likely to listen to you when you speak respectfully and kindly towards them?
  - a. A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger. Proverbs 15:1.
  - b. Who do you tend to listen to, someone who respects you or someone who talks down to you?
  - c. When you are a leader, remember to treat the ones you guide with respect.
3. Did the people have a reason to resent the way they had been treated by Solomon?
  - a. A good leader treats their people kindly.
  - b. A good leader considers what is best for the people they lead, not necessarily what is best for the leader.
  - c. If you are mistreated, does someone saying they will mistreat you even more make you feel better.
  - d. Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. Matthew 7:12

PBA Questions: (Ask at least 2 or 3, more if you have enough time)

1. According to 2 Chronicles 10:1, who went to Shechem for Israel to make him king?

ANS: Rehoboam

2. 2 points. According to 2 Chronicles 10:3, who spoke to Rehoboam?

ANS: Jeroboam and all Israel

3. According to 2 Chronicles 10:4, what did the children of Israel say they would do for Rehoboam if he lightened the burdensome service and heavy yoke of his father?

ANS: "we will serve you"

4. According to 2 Chronicles 10:5, what did Rehoboam say to the people after they asked to have their burden and yoke lightened?

ANS: "Come back to me after three days"

5. According to 2 Chronicles 10:14, whose advice did Rehoboam take?

ANS: the young men

6. 3 points. According to 2 Chronicles 10:7, the elders advised Rehoboam that the people would be his servants forever if he did what three things?

ANS: be kind to them, please them, speak good words to them

7. 2 points. According to 2 Chronicles 10:10, the young men advised Rehoboam to say to the people "My little \_\_\_ shall be thicker than my father's \_\_\_!?"

ANS: finger, waist

8. According to 2 Chronicles 10:18, who did Rehoboam send to the children of Israel?

ANS: Hadoram

9. According to 2 Chronicles 10:19, who has Israel been in rebellion against until this day?

ANS: the house of David

10. According to 2 Chronicles 10:2, who was the father of Jeroboam?

ANS: Nebat

11. According to 2 Chronicles 10:17, who did Rehoboam reign over?

ANS: the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah

12. According to 2 Chronicles 10:16, where did all Israel depart to?

ANS: their tents

13. According to 2 Chronicles 10:15, the turn of events was from God, so the LORD could fulfill His word which He had spoken through the hand of whom?

ANS: Ahijah the Shilonite

14. According to 2 Chronicles 10:6, whom did Rehoboam first consult with about how he should respond to the Israelites?

ANS: the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he lived

15. According to 2 Chronicles 10:13, how did Rehoboam answer the people?

ANS: roughly

16. According to 2 Chronicles 10:12, when did Jeroboam and all the people come to Rehoboam?

ANS: on the third day

17. According to 2 Chronicles 10:8, after rejecting the advice of the elders, who did Rehoboam consult?

ANS: the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him

18. 3 points. According to 2 Chronicles 10:11, the young men advised Rehoboam to answer the people "And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your \_\_\_\_; my father chastised you with \_\_\_\_, but I *will chastise you* with \_\_\_\_!"

ANS: yoke, whips, scourges

19. According to 2 Chronicles 10:9, what did Rehoboam ask from the young men who had grown up with him?

ANS: advice