

CHAPTER 10

This chapter is copied almost verbatim from ~~<1121>~~1 Kings 12:1-19, where it was opened at large. Solomon's defection from God was not repeated, but the defection of the ten tribes from his family is, in this chapter, where we find,

- I.** How foolish Rehoboam was in his treating with them (v. 1, 5-14).
- II.** How wicked the people were in complaining of Solomon (v. 2-4). and forsaking Rehoboam (v 16-19).
- III.** How just and righteous God was in all this (v. 15). His counsel was thereby fulfilled. With him are strength and wisdom; both the deceived and the deceiver (the fool and the knave) are his (~~<1826>~~Job 12:16), that is, are made use of by him to suit his purposes.

~~<400>~~2 CHRONICLES 10:1-11

REHOBAM SUCCEEDS SOLOMON

We may observe here,

1. The wisest and best cannot give every body content. Solomon enriched and advanced his kingdom, did all (one would think) that could be done to make them happy and easy; and yet either he was indiscreet in burdening them with the imposition of taxes and services, or at least there was some colour of reason to think him so. No man is perfectly wise. It is probable that it was when Solomon had declined from God and his duty that his wisdom failed him, and God left him to himself to act in this impolitic manner. Even Solomon's treasures were exhausted by his love of women; and probably it was to maintain them, and their pride, luxury, and idolatry, that he burdened his subjects.

2. Turbulent and ungrateful spirits will find fault with the government, and complain of grievances, when they have very little reason to do so. Had they not peace in Solomon's time? They were never plundered by invaders, as formerly, never put in fear by the alarms of war, nor obliged to hazard

their lives in the high places of the field. Had they not plenty — meat enough, and money enough? What would they more? *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint!* — *O happy, if they knew their happy state!* And yet they complain that Solomon made their yoke grievous. If any complain thus of the yoke of Christ, that they might have a pretence to break his bands in sunder and cast away his cords from them, we are sure that he never gave them any cause at all for the complaint, whatever Solomon did. *His yoke is easy, and his burden is light.* He never made us serve with an offering, nor wearied us with incense.

3. Many ruin themselves and their interests by trampling upon and provoking their inferiors. Rehoboam thought that because he was king he might assume as much authority as his father had done, might have what he would, and do what he would, and carry all before him. But, though he wore his father's crown, he wanted his father's brains, and ought to have considered that, being quite a different man from what his father was, he ought to take other measures. Such a wise man as Solomon may do as we will, but such a fool as Rehoboam must do as he can. The high-mettled horse may be kicked and spurred by him that has the art of managing him; but, if an unskilful horseman do it, it is at his peril. Rehoboam paid dearly for threatening, and talking big, and thinking to carry matters with a high hand. It was Job's wisdom, as well as his virtue, that he *despised not the cause of his man-servant or maid-servant*, when they argued with him (~~Job~~ Job 31:13), but heard them patiently, considered their reasons, and gave them a soft answer. And a similar tender consideration of those in subjection, and a forwardness to make them easy, will be the comfort and praise of all in authority, in the church, in the state, and in families.

4. Moderate counsels are generally wisest and best. Gentleness will do what violence will not do. Most people love to be accosted mildly. Rehoboam's old experienced counsellors directed him to this method (v. 7): “*Be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, and thou art sure of them for ever.*” Good words cost nothing but a little self-denial, and yet they purchase good things.

5. God often fulfils the counsels of his own wisdom by infatuating men, and giving them up to the counsels of their own folly. No more needs to be done to ruin men than to leave them to themselves, and their own pride and passion.

2 CHRONICLES 10:12-19

REHOBAM'S FOLLY

We may learn here,

1. That when public affairs are in a ferment violent proceedings do but make bad worse. Rough answers (such as Rehoboam here gave) do but stir up anger and bring oil to the flames. The pilot has need to steer steadily in a storm. Many have been driven to the mischief they did not intend by being too severely dealt with for what they did intend.
2. That, whatever the devices and designs of men are, God is, by all, doing his own work, and fulfilling the word which he has spoken, no iota or tittle of which shall fall to the ground. The cause of the king's obstinacy and thoughtlessness was *of God, that he might perform the word which he spoke by Ahijah, v. 15*. This does not at all excuse Rehoboam's folly, nor lessen the guilt of his haughtiness and passion, that God was pleased to serve his own ends by them.
3. That worldly wealth, honour, and dominion, are very uncertain things. *Solomon reigned over all Israel*, and, one would think, had done enough to secure the monarchy entire to his family for many ages; and yet he is scarcely cold in his grave before ten of the twelve tribes finally revolt from his son. All the good services he had done for Israel were now forgotten: *What portion have we in David?* Thus is the government of Christ cast off by many, notwithstanding all he has done to bind the children of men for ever to himself; they say, *We will not have this man to reign over us*. But this rebellion will certainly be their ruin.
4. That God often visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Solomon forsakes God, and therefore not he, but his son after him, is forsaken by the greatest part of his people. Thus God, by making the penal consequences of sin to last long and visibly to continue after the sinner's death, would give an indication of its malignity, and perhaps some intimation of the perpetuity of its punishment. He that sins against God not only wrongs his soul, but perhaps wrongs his seed more than he thinks of.
5. That, when God is fulfilling his threatenings, he will take care of that, at the same time, promises do not fall to the ground. When Solomon's iniquity

is remembered, and for it his son loses ten tribes, David's piety is not forgotten, nor the promise made to him; but for the sake of that his grandson had two tribes preserved to him. The failings of the saints shall not frustrate any promise made to Christ their Head. They shall be chastised, but the covenant not broken, ~~1881~~ Psalm 89:31-34.