

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

2 CHRONICLES 6-10

There are companies that market themselves as “Grand Opening Specialists”.

They promise cost effective, stress-free Grand Openings. They’ll handle the streamers, banners, clowns, searchlights, fireworks, mailings, give-aways, and celebrity appearances... *all that goes into a Grand Opening.*

I suppose Solomon could’ve hired such a company for Opening Day in the Temple... After all, God’s Temple was Solomon’s most illustrious achievement.

In fact, Solomon’s Temple was one of the wonders of the ancient world. The king spent billions of dollars on its construction. The project took his craftsmen 7½ years to finish. I’m sure Solomon wanted the Temple to open with a bang...

But trust me, no amount of marketing pizzazz - and advertising savvy – could have duplicated the Grand Opening God had in mind. The debut of Solomon’s Temple was more than King Solomon could’ve ever dreamed or imagined...

Chapter 5 begins to recount the big day... *Solomon assembled the leaders of Israel... the Ark was taken into the Holy of Holies... the priestly musicians and singers struck up their praise, “For He is good... His mercy endures forever.”*

That’s when, suddenly, the Temple was filled with a cloud - the glory cloud.

The Hebrews called it “*Shekinah*.” It was a physical display of God’s presence. God’s glory was so thick that day – His

holiness hung so heavy in the air - the priests were unable to carry out their duties. All they could do was worship.

In chapter 6 describes the dedication ceremony that ensued...

“Then Solomon spoke: "The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud. I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in forever."

Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. And he said: "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands what He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, 'Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there; and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.' Of course, Saul was king before David, but God didn't choose Saul. King Saul was the people's choice.

Evidently, when it comes to God's will, democracy doesn't always get it right. David was the king God ordained to rule Israel - and Jerusalem his capitol.

"Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart.

Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' "So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke, and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built the temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And there I have put the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel."

Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands (for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high...) It was a metal riser - 7½ feet square, which sat 4½ feet off the ground. Our platform is 28 inches high – so Solomon’s riser was twice as tall as the stage on which I’m standing.

It elevated the king so he could be seen by the huge crowd.

“And (Solomon) had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven)...” He lifts up holy hands. His riser is *a prayer platform*.

“And he said: "LORD God of Israel, there is no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep Your covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled it with Your hand, as it is this day.” I like this... *what God speaks with His mouth, He does with His hands*. When God

makes a promise it's as good as done. He is faithful to bring it to pass.

“Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.' Solomon is quoting the covenant God made with David in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17. "And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.”

Verse 18 reveals Solomon's wisdom, and the greatness of God. "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!”

Solomon is not naïve enough to think that the eternal, Almighty, omnipresent God is going to shrink down and limit Himself to live in a 30' by 90' structure.

This is not another Disney classic, “Honey, I shrunk God.”

Solomon understands the transcendence of the God he serves.

Take the thickness of the page you're reading in your Bible. Pretend that its thickness is the distance from the earth to the sun – *93 million miles*.

Understand the nearest star to our solar system is Alpha Centauri – a mere *4.5 light years* off into the distance – or the equivalent of a stack of paper 71 feet high.

The diameter of our galaxy is *100,000 light years* – in keeping with our analogy that equals a stack of paper 310 miles high... To travel to the edge of the known universe – a distance of *10 billion light years* – given that the thickness of a single page equals the distance from the earth to the sun that would equal a stack of paper 31 million miles high... *In other words, our universe is a very big place.*

Now let's read Isaiah 40:12, “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span?” The oceans fit into God's cupped hand.

The whole universe can fit between God's thumb and pinky. God is a big God. And Solomon is under no illusion that His tiny Temple could hold an infinite God.

Verse 19 “Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: that Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant prays toward this place.” Solomon knows His Temple will never *contain* God, but He wants it to be a place His people can *obtain* God.

He asks God to turn the Temple into a meeting place - the one spot on earth where men and women can turn and be assured of finding the one, true God.

“And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, *forgive.*” He wants the Temple to be a place of reconciliation.

And what a worthy ambition for this church!

Hey, we too are not the least bit superstitious about our building – as if God is contained by these four walls. Often Christians refer to a church building as “*the house of God.*” But that doesn’t mean when we walk out on Sundays we leave God behind to tuck Himself in... God isn’t limited by this building or any other.

God doesn’t camp out on concrete. Your home is as much God’s house as this building. But this is a house of God in that we pray for God to meet us here. We desire for this to be a place where folks can gain forgiveness and obtain God.

In verses 22-42 Solomon mentions different scenarios in which Israel will be inclined to pray... And as they pray toward the Temple, Solomon asks God to answer them from heaven... The Temple was the *touch point* on earth...

For the remainder of their history – the wandering Jew would always look to the Temple as true north. On the compass of the Jew the Temple points to God.

Let’s summarize some of the occasions that will provoke the Jews to pray...

Verse 22, "If anyone sins against his neighbor..."

Verse 24, "If Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy..."

Verse 26, "When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain..."

Verse 28, "When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemies

besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness there is...”

Verse 32, "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but who comes from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple...” Solomon asks God to answer the prayer of the foreigner...

Verse 34, "When Your people go out to battle against their enemies...”

Verse 36, "When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity...” This exact scenario occurred 350 years later when the Babylonians took Judah captive, and marched them back to Babylon.

Solomon’s prayer stirred the heart of an exiled Jew named Daniel to open his windows and pray toward Jerusalem three times a day a prayer of repentance.

Verse 40, “Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and let Your ears be attentive to the prayer made in this place. "Now therefore, arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let Your saints rejoice in goodness.

"O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed..." "Anointed" means *Messiah* or *Christ*. Apparently, even Solomon had hope of a Savior.

Verse 42, "Remember the mercies of Your servant David."

The Temple's Grand Opening continues in chapter 7...
"When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple." Talk about Fireworks at a Grand Opening – God provides supernatural fireworks...

Fire falls from heaven and laps up the sacrifices that were on the altar.

Understand, three times in Scripture, a Temple, a dwelling place, is dedicated.

And each time God filled the temple with His glory, and sent fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. It happened when Moses dedicated the **Tabernacle** in the wilderness. And it happens here when Solomon dedicates the **Temple**.

It also happened a 3rd time, Acts 2 when Jesus dedicated the New Testament Temple – the **Church**. Remember what occurred at the Feast of Pentecost...

The Holy Spirit and the glory of God filled the 120 disciples in the upper room - and tongues of fire appeared flickering over their heads. Again fire fell from heaven to consume the sacrifice. A new Temple was dedicated.

God had a new dwelling place – a new meeting place on earth – the Church.

There is a difference though in the New Testament Temple. The sacrifices aren't slaughtered – they serve. God desires living sacrifices not dead ones.

Verse 2, “And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house.” Notice, **God's glory replaced human activity.** This is a great definition for revival! God is the star – not man. The attraction was God not some personality, or performance, or act of piety.

“When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever." You'd think after such an awesome manifestation of God's power the people would remark of God's majesty, or greatness, or strength, or judgment – but to the contrary, they were overwhelmed with His mercy.

That such a pure, holy God would want to meet with them...
God is good!

Verse 4 “Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 bulls and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.” This was a colossal BBQ.

“And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD, saying, "For His mercy

endures forever," whenever David offered praise by their ministry.

The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.

Furthermore Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat." The bronze altar couldn't accommodate all the sacrifices. Temporary altars were set up.

Deep in his heart, Solomon understood the need for a sacrifice - that the wages of sin is death. Sin is deadly. When a sin is committed it costs a living thing its life.

Almost instinctively, Solomon kept offering animals until he was exhausted.

He knew the need, but there was not enough. At the end of the feast he looks up and 22,000 bulls are dead - 120,000 sheep carcasses lie on the ground... yet the king's conscience still torments him. Solomon knows his guilt remains.

The thousands of sacrifices he offered pointed to one, still distant sacrifice.

It's amazing that one drop of Jesus' blood had more healing power than 142,000 bulls and sheep. Jesus was a spotless lamb with sinless blood.

There are pastors and churches today that downplay the need for a sacrifice. They seldom talk about sin or the cross. They've tried to sanitize Christianity.

They've heard the scoffers call Christianity a bloody religion, a slaughterhouse faith – and their refined and sophisticated tastes are embarrassed by the cross.

But make no mistake about it – *there is no salvation without sacrifice*. At the Grand Opening of the Temple Solomon dramatized this truth in a profound way.

Verse 8 “At that time Solomon kept the feast 7 days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt.

And on the 8th day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar 7 days, and the feast 7 days. On the 23rd day of the 7th month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel.”

It's ironic that the dedication of the Temple occurred in the month of Tishri – at the Feast of Tabernacles. Just as God revealed Himself to the Hebrews in the wilderness in the Tabernacle, He would now dwell in Solomon's Temple.

“Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house (he also built a palace); and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD and in his own house.

Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night...” This was another dream.

Earlier in Gibeon, at his inauguration, God spoke to Solomon in a dream telling him to ask for whatever he wanted. A young man wisely asked for wisdom.

But now Solomon is at a different station in life. He's older, more experienced. He has a few successes under his belt. And God visits him again – a second time.

Spurgeon once said, "I commend to those of you who are getting on in life, that while you thank God for the past, and look back with joy to his visits to you in your early days, you now seek and ask for a second visitation of the Most High." We need new and continual fillings of the Spirit – fresh experiences with God.

Now God appears to Solomon in a dream – a second time - "and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people..." God is a faithful father who disciplines His children when they stray... But his discipline isn't forever...

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." This is the verse that's often applied to America, and quoted as a formula for revival.

I've heard people claim that if the Christians in our country humble themselves, and repent, and ask God to heal America He promises to do so... *Knowing God, I wouldn't put it past*

Him. But I cringe a little whenever we take a promise that was made to Israel and apply it to America, or the church. *The shoe doesn't always fit.*

We need to model this verse... The corrupt condition of America is largely the fault of a proud and lukewarm church. We should humble ourselves - repent of our wicked ways - ask God to bring revival and healing to our country...

Hey, this is a principle for America - but it was a promise to Israel.

Verse 15 "Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually.

As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall never fail to have a man as ruler in Israel.'

"But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?' "Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought

them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.' " Sadly, what was a warning to King Solomon ended up a summary of later Jewish history. Idolatry becomes the blight that robs Israel of its blessing.

Chapter 8, "It came to pass at the end of 20 years, in which Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house, that the cities which Hiram had given to Solomon, Solomon built them; and he settled the children of Israel there.

And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it.

He also built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the storage cities which he built in Hamath. He built Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon (west of Jerusalem), fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars, also Baalath and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities of the cavalry..."

Here's a hint that all is not well in Solomon's heart....

Deuteronomy 17 prohibited the king of Israel from accumulating 3 things: *horses, wives, and gold*. God wanted the king to trust in Him not his cavalry.

Solomon violated God's command, and started horsing around. He built chariot cities in Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. His first flirtation was with horses, but soon we'll see him adding quite a harem, and accumulating large bank accounts.

Verse 6 tells us the king not only built his chariot cities, but "all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion."

“All the people who were left of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who were not of Israel – the Gentiles living in the land of Israel. “That is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel did not destroy - from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day.

But Solomon did not make the children of Israel servants for his work. Some were men of war, captains of his officers, captains of his chariots, and his cavalry. And others were chiefs of the officials of King Solomon: 250, who ruled over the people.” The reign of Solomon was a time of great prosperity for all Israel.

“Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, “My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy.” Here’s a second hint that Solomon’s heart is straying from the Lord.

He marries the Pharaoh’s daughter in a diplomatic move. But apparently, she refused to embrace the God of Israel and held on to her pagan idols. So much so, that to bring this woman home to live in David’s palace seemed like a desecration.

Solomon built this princess of the Nile her own palace where she could worship as she pleased. Eventually, Solomon’s wives turn his heart to follow other gods.

Verse 12 “Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the

vestibule, according to the daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the three appointed yearly feasts - the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles.” There were other Jewish feasts, but these were the three that required all Jewish males to come to Jerusalem.

“And, according to the order of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, the Levites for their duties (to praise and serve before the priests) as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate; for so David the man of God had commanded.

They did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter or concerning the treasuries. Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.

Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the seacoast, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent him ships by the hand of his servants, and servants who knew the sea.” The Phoenicians were famous sailors of the ancient world. And with the help of his Phoenician friend, Hiram, Solomon launched a merchant marine. They docked on the Gulf of Aqaba, in the Red Sea, at “Elath.”

Today “Elath” is “Eliat” - an Israeli resort and European vacation destination.

“They went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir (deep in the Orient), and acquired 450 talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.” A talent equaled 100 pounds. Solomon became a very rich man.

Chapter 9 “Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions, having a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.

So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for Solomon that he could not explain it to her.” It was common in the ancient orient for wise men to challenge each other to a battle of wits. They would test their wisdom against each other – it was *a showdown of the sages*.

It reminds me of the wife who was tempted to match wits with her husband? She declined. She said it just wasn't fair to do battle with an unarmed man.

Not so with the queen of Sheba. She travels from what is today, Yemen, in Southern Arabia - 1200 miles to Jerusalem to match wits with Solomon.

And Solomon wins the battle. The Queen of Sheba has no question he can't answer. The queen witnesses King Solomon and his kingdom firsthand.

“And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table,

the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.”

In other words, “it took her breath away.” Solomon’s glory turns a woman speechless – *no small task*. The queen had heard of Solomon’s greatness – his wealth and his wisdom - but both were more than she had expected.

She confesses to Solomon in verse 5, “Then she said to the king: “It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me.

You exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy are your men and happy are these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom!”

Notice, it wasn’t just Solomon’s wealth that impressed her, but Solomon’s prosperity had trickled down to his servants. Even his servants had a smile.

She probably thought you had to be tyrant to command such respect, but Solomon had won over his servants with wisdom and love. He ruled with such skill that even his most menial servants were endeared to him.

And notice the Queen gives God glory for Solomon’s greatness. “Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne to be king for the LORD your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them

forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness."

This is Old Testament evangelism at work. God wanted to bless Israel to such a degree that the world would conclude that Israel's God was the one, true God!

Verse 9 "And she gave the king 120 talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones; there never were any spices such as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon." The Queen of Sheba spiced up Solomon's life.

Perhaps in more ways than one... tradition has it that she wanted to take back to Arabia a son by Solomon. He cooperated and the boy's name was Menilek.

Until modern times the kings of Ethiopia traced their lineage to Menilek.

The rest of chapter 9 discusses Solomon's *treasure, throne, and trading*.

"Also, the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who brought gold from Ophir, brought algum wood (a very hard wood) and precious stones..."

And the king made walkways of the algum wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house..." Credit Solomon with inventing hardwood floors...

"Also harps and stringed instruments for singers (algum also had a sheen to its finish); and there were none such as these seen before in the land of Judah."

“Now King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked (perhaps even a son), much more than she had brought to the king.

So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.”

Verse 13, “The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was 666 talents of gold, besides what the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.”

Solomon’s annual wages were 666 talents of gold. Imagine an annual salary of \$426 million. In 2007 Wal-Mart took in \$351 million. They made \$11.2 in profits.

Solomon’s base salary was \$75 million more than Wal-Mart’s revenues.

Of course, I’m sure you recognize the number 666 as the number of the beast mentioned in Revelation 13:18. Which brings up the question... *is there any association between Solomon and the Antichrist?* The answer is “*Maybe*”.

I think Solomon is an interesting type of Satan’s henchman in the last days...

Both start out as good men, and are loved by the Jews. Both show keen business prowess and amass great wealth. Both are skilled at political maneuvering and strike peace treaties.

Both end up worshipping idols and bringing them home to Israel.

It's an intriguing study to note all the similarities between King Solomon and the Antichrist – and of course, the most obvious is the number 6-6-6.

“And King Solomon made 200 large shields of hammered gold; 600 shekels of hammered gold went into each shield. He also made 300 shields of hammered gold; 300 shekels of gold went into each shield.” Gold is a soft metal and would make for a flimsy shield. These shields were primarily ornamental.

“The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon.”

“Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold.

The throne had six steps, with a footstool of gold, which were fastened to the throne; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom.” Notice what you saw when you faced Solomon's throne – 6 lions, 6 steps, then 6 lions – 6,6,6...

“All King Solomon's drinking vessels were gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon.” There was so much gold in Solomon's day silver had little value. Even his *everyday dishes* were gold.

“For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram. Once every 3 years the merchant ships came, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys.”

Solomon even kept exotic animals around the palace. When you've got that much money you got to find something new and different to spend it on.

“So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom...”

And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. Solomon had 4000 stalls for horses and chariots, and 12,000 horsemen whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.

So he reigned over all the kings from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which are in the lowland. And they brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat?

Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel 40 years. Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.”

Of course, the one glaring omission from Ezra's account of Solomon's life was his harem of foreign wives – the sin that led him into idolatry.

Recall though the purpose of Chronicles was encouragement. Ezra wrote after the Jews spent 70 years in exile for their idolatry - *why pour salt of fresh wounds?*

Chronicles is *reviving hope*, not *heaping guilt*. Yes, sin has consequences, but our past doesn't have to cripple our future. *God wants to lead Judah to a fresh start!* And let us remember that principle when we interact with each other.

Chapter 10 introduces us to Solomon's son and successor, Rehoboam... *who must've been a Democrat* – he wanted to raise taxes... **“And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard it (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon), that Jeroboam returned from Egypt.”**

Everybody has a critic. And Solomon's antagonist was a man name Jeroboam.

The contention between the two men erupted in hostility. Solomon banished his rival to Egypt. When Solomon dies, Jeroboam returns to challenge his son.

Verse 3 **“Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, “Your father made our yoke heavy...”** Evidently, Solomon had paid for much of his greatness by taxing people...

“Now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your

father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you." Jeroboam is throwing some tea in the harbor. He's appealing to the new king, Rehoboam, for a little tax relief.

"So (Rehoboam) said to them, "Come back to me after three days." And the people departed." As soon as he's inaugurated, he's faced with a major crisis.

"Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever."

Folks like to be *loved* not *shoved*. Be kind and they will repay you with loyalty.

"But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him." Apparently, King Rehoboam is doing what someone has called, "advice shopping." He keeps asking different people until he finds someone who agrees with him.

"And he said to 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 him..." The only life Rehoboam had lived was a life of luxury. His aristocratic buddies were also spoiled brats.

And they “spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should 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!" In other words, if you think dad was tough I plan to be tougher.

“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!" "

A scourge was a whip laced with shards of metal or bone. The insecure king tries to prove himself a man – and he mistakenly does it by turning into a tyrant.

“So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the 3rd day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the 3rd day. Then the king answered them roughly. He listened to the young guns. He got rough. *“I’ll put the ax in tax.”*

Hey, there are many lessons in this story – but one stands out, “*be careful where you get your advice.*” Listen to the wrong people and it can be tragic.

Verse 15 “So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn of events was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, 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!" So all Israel departed to their tents.

But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah." A breach occurs. The northern tribes break from the southern tribe of Judah. A Civil War is on the horizon. And this time the rebels are the north.

King Rehoboam's next move proves just how dense he proved to be. Taxation had caused the north to revolt, so who does he send to restore peace? "And King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was in charge of revenue (He sends the head of the IRS); but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died.

Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem." All this time, Rehoboam was still in Shechem – the site of his inauguration.

Rehoboam loses half his kingdom three days after he takes office. "So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day..." For the next 200 years the Hebrews will remain a divided kingdom – north versus south.