

2 Chronicles Chapter 11

2 Chronicles 11:1 "And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen [men], which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam."

After he had been at Shechem, and had given his answer to the request of the men of Israel, upon which they revolted from him.

"He gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin":

The parallel (1 Kings 12:21), says more distinctly, "The house of Judah with the tribe of Benjamin."

They of Jeroboam (2 Chron. 10:16), had flung it at Judah: "Now, David, see to thine own house."

Rehoboam, of course, does this very thing.

For the first time formally, Benjamin is now introduced as throwing in its lot with Judah, and the acted prophecy of Ahijah is seen fulfilled.

"A hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors":

According to Joab, in David's time the men able to bear arms of Judah alone were five hundred thousand (2 Sam. 24:9).

Compare the numbers in the next reign (2 Chron. 13:3), and, later on still, in Jehoshaphat's (See 2 Chron. 17:14-18).

Both of these show that Abijah and Jehoshaphat respectively had improved the time given to training much larger armies, whereas now Rehoboam was taken by surprise.

The 180,000 men of war were those who were well-trained in war.

Rehoboam was about to begin a civil war with his brethren, the Israelites.

The prophecy of Ahijah had been fulfilled.

Judah and Benjamin had sided against the other ten tribes.

Verses 2-4

Even though Rehoboam did not consult God about his decision to gather troops and “fight” Jeroboam, God intervened through the prophet “Shemaiah”.

Like many of the prophets (in 2 Chronicles), little is known about Shemaiah except that he was a man of God who declared a warning from God.

2 Chronicles 11:2 "But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,"

"Shemaiah the man of God":

This is the first historical mention (1 Kings 12:22), of Shemaiah.

The second is found in (2 Chron. 12:5, 7), on occasion of the invasion of Judah and Jerusalem by Shishak King of Egypt.

And the third, in the same chapter (verse 15), that he wrote a book respecting the acts of Rehoboam.

(See the note on 1 Kings 12:22).

2 Chronicles 11:3 "Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,"

Intimating that this was determined for the sin of Solomon, and therefore could not be reversed.

But for all explanation of this paragraph (see notes on 1 Kings 12:21-24).

"To all Israel in Judah and Benjamin":

The Chronicler does not hesitate to use the term “Israel” in speaking of Judah.

Thus, the princes of the Southern Kingdom are called “the princes of Israel” (See 2 Chronicles 12:6; 21:4).

The populace as a whole is called “Israel” (2 Chron. 12:1; 15:17).

Jehoshaphat and Ahaz are each called “king of Israel” (2 Chron. 21:2; 28:19), and the sepulchers of the kings at Jerusalem are called the “sepulchers of the kings of Israel” (2 Chron. 28:27).

2 Chronicles 11:4 "Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam."

“For this thing is done of me”:

Through the prophet Shemaiah, the LORD commanded Rehoboam and his army not to invade Israel.

God, in judgment, had ordained the north-south split, so to attack Israel was to oppose God Himself.

This warning from God was enough to stop them.

They would not go into battles against their brothers.

This is the plan of God for taking the ten tribes away from the family of Solomon.

God had warned him of this very thing, because he worshipped false gods.

They are still listening to the Word of the LORD through the prophets at this time.

There would be no war now.

Rehoboam had it in his mind to go and fight against Jeroboam and the ten tribes, but we see in this that the LORD stopped them.

God stopped the battle by sending a message to both sides by Shemaiah, the man of God.

After they had heard the message from God, all of the men went home to their own houses.

God reminded all of these tribes that they were their brethren.

They would not go against the will of God.

There would be no war.

verses 5-12

Since “Rehoboam’s” defensive measure were made with regard to cities in southern and western Judah, they were probably aimed at the rising menace of Egypt (compare 12:2-9).

This information is not mentioned in (1 Kings chapters 12-14).

2 Chronicles 11:5 "And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah."

The metropolis of Judah, and the capital city of his kingdom.

“And built cities for defense in Judah”:

That is, rebuilt, enlarged, and fortified them.

For otherwise they were built before, though neglected before the revolt of the ten tribes.

But now it became necessary to make them more capacious and strong, to protect his people, and defend himself against Israel.

For though he was forbid to act offensively, and therefore contented himself to abide in Jerusalem, and not go forth to war; yet he might lawfully put himself into a condition of defense.

“Built”:

To be understood as built further/strengthened/fortified (compare 11:11-12).

2 Chronicles 11:6 "He built even Beth-lehem, and Etam, and Tekoa,"

And "he built":

I.e., fortified.

"Beth-lehem”:

Beit-lahm, on a rocky eminence, two hours south of Jerusalem (Gen. 35:19; Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:6).

The birthplace of David and of Christ.

"Etam":

Different from the place mentioned in (1 Chron. 4:32 and Judges 15:8), which lay in Simeonite territory.

"Tekoa":

Teku’a; Ruins on a hill two hours south of Bethlehem (See Joshua 15:59).

2 Chronicles 11:7 "And Beth-zur, and Shoco, and Adullam,"

"Beth-zur": Beit-sûr; a ruin midway between Urtâs and Hebron (Joshua 15:58).

"Shoco":

Hebrew, in Wady Sumt, three and a-half hours’ south-west of Jerusalem (Joshua 15:35; 1 Sam. 17:1).

"Adullam":

Joshua 15:35.

Perhaps Aid-el-Mieh.

2 Chronicles 11:8 "And Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph,"

"Gath":

Uncertain.

Perhaps in the Wady-el-Gat north of Ascalon.

See 1 Kings 2:39 and 1 Chron. 18:1, from a comparison of which it appears that, under Solomon, Gath was ruled by a vassal king.

"Mareshah":

Marash; a ruin two miles south of Beit-jibrin, Eleuthero-polis (Joshua 15:44; 2 Chron. 14:9).

"Ziph": Tel Zif; ruins about one hour and a quarter south east of Hebron (Joshua 15:55; 1 Sam. 23:14).

Another Judean Ziph is mentioned (Joshua 15:24).

2 Chronicles 11:9 "And Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah,"

"Adoraim":

A village about seven and a-half miles south west of Hebron.

Called Αδωρα, and often mentioned by Josephus in connection with Marissa (Mareshah).

The name is not found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

"Lachish":

A ruined city on a round hill, seven hours west of Beit-jibrîn, on the road from Hebron to Gaza (Joshua 10:3; 15:39).

"Azekah":

Near Socoh (1 Sam. 17:1; Joshua 10:10; 15:35).

2 Chronicles 11:10 "And Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which [are] in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities."

"And Zorah":

The same with Zoreah (Joshua 15:33).

"And Aijalon":

There was a city of the tribe of Dan of this name, in the valley of which the moon stood still in the times of Joshua (Joshua 10:12).

But whether the same with this, and now belonging to Judah, or another of the same name, is not certain.

"And Hebron":

A city in the mountainous part of Judah, and a city of refuge, about twenty miles from Jerusalem (Joshua 15:54).

"Which are in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities":

As they were now made by Rehoboam.

All of these cities were surrounding Jerusalem.

The enemy would have to pass through these cities, before they could get to Jerusalem.

Out of the 15 cities of defense he built, 12 were south and west of Jerusalem to defend against any attack from Egypt.

These cities were built with walls around them and fortified with weapons of defense.

Beth-lehem had been called Ephrath.

It was one of the oldest cities in the area.

It was re-built, instead of being built entirely.

It is less than 5 miles out of Jerusalem.

Many of these cities are still in existence today.

All of Rehoboam's efforts were turned to Judah and Benjamin, since he did not have to fight a war.

2 Chronicles 11:11 "And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine."

Of these and other cities.

"And put captains in them":

Garrisons of soldiers, with captains over them to defend them.

"And store of victual, and of oil and wine":

That they might be able to hold out a siege, should they be attacked.

He had prepared these cities to withstand a long battle if necessary.

The food, oil and wine would keep them from starving if someone surrounded them.

There were many chariots and horses that Solomon had gathered.

They were a very well-equipped army.

2 Chronicles 11:12 "And in every several city [he put] shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side."

Furnished them with these and perhaps other pieces of armor.

These being put for all, to defend themselves with against an enemy, and to annoy them.

"And made them exceeding strong":

So that they could not be easily taken.

"Having Judah and Benjamin on his side":

Which tribes cleaved to one another, and to Rehoboam, and to the kings of the house of David, in later times, as well as to the true religion.

The weapons of war that Solomon had gathered, still belonged to Rehoboam.

Most of them had been located in and around Jerusalem.

Judah and Benjamin would have been hard to separate, because Jerusalem was in the hands of Judah and the immediate area around it belonged to Benjamin.

Soon, both Judah and Benjamin would be spoken of as Judah.

Verses 13-14

The priests and Levites from all the northern 10 tribes were rejected by Israel's king.

Jeroboam (ca. 931 – 910 B.C.), who saw them as a threat because of their loyalty to Jerusalem and the temple.

He appointed his own idol priests and all true priests moved south and found refuge in Judah with Rehoboam.

2 Chronicles 11:13 "And the priests and the Levites that [were] in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts."

In the ten tribes, in the cities assigned to them therein.

"Resorted to him out of all their coasts":

As to their rightful sovereign, and chiefly for the sake of the service of the sanctuary at Jerusalem.

The priests were associated with the temple in Jerusalem.

They could not separate themselves from the worship in the temple in Jerusalem, so they came to Judah and Benjamin.

They could not accept the golden calves that were the symbol of worship in Israel.

Verses 14-15

Second Chronicles focuses mainly on the southern kingdom, Judah; however, here the chronicler describes the idolatrous northern kingdom, ruled by "Jeroboam".

The "Levites" fled to Jerusalem, where they could still worship the LORD according to God's laws (e.g., Deut. 12:10-11).

2 Chronicles 11:14 "For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD:"

The cities and the fields adjacent to them, which were given them in the several tribes, and were in all forty-eight (see Joshua 21:1).

And came to Judah and Jerusalem; to the cities of Judah, which belonged to the Levites.

And to Jerusalem, where they exercised their functions.

"For Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from exercising the priest's office unto the LORD":

Neither suffering them to go to Jerusalem in their courses, as they used to do by turns.

Nor to perform their office in their own dwellings, according to the law of God, in teaching and instructing the people.

See the notes on (1 Kings 12:27-29 and 12:31-32).

Jeroboam would not let them come to Jerusalem for worship.

They just left, because they could not participate in the worship of the false gods that Jeroboam erected.

The two golden calves were an abomination as far as the priests and Levites were concerned.

2 Chronicles 11:15 "And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils, and for the calves which he had made."

"He ordained him":

This is in reference to Jeroboam (compare 1 Kings 12:25-33), who established idolatry in the north.

"Devils" is another term for idols (compare Lev. 17:7).

Jeroboam chose men of the tribes, who were not Levites, and anointed them to work in the places of worship.

Verses 16-17

God's blessing rested on Rehoboam for 3 years because the people's commitment to the ways of God was patterned after David and Solomon.

The chronicler is concerned to show that God rewards those who will listen to Him.

"Rehoboam" was "strong" for the "three years" he heeded the words of Shemaiah the prophet.

2 Chronicles 11:16 "And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers."

Besides the priests and Levites, and after their example, many of the common people, out of all the ten tribes.

"Such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel":

To seek his face and favor, where he was to be found.

To worship him according to his revealed will, and to receive doctrine or instruction from him, as the Targum.

"Came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers":

To sacrifice where only sacrifices were to be offered up, and by the priests of the LORD.

Who were gone thither, and to their fathers' God, whom the ten tribes had revolted from.

This is speaking of those who refused to be associated with the worship of false gods.

2 Chronicles 11:17 "So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon."

Made it more numerous, and in a better condition to defend itself.

"And made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years":

Established him on the throne, strengthened the government in his hands, and were the means of preserving him in the pure worship of God for the space of time mentioned.

The reason of which follows:

"For three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon":

In their good ways, which were according to the rule of the divine word.

And which, as they refer to the whole of David's life and reign.

Some particular actions excepted, so to the former part of Solomon's reign, before he fell into idolatry.

And to the latter part of it after his repentance.

For that he did repent is by some concluded from hence.

And may be more strongly from the book of Ecclesiastes, written by him in his old age.

This is to be understood both of Rehoboam and his people, who after three years forsook the law of the LORD (2 Chron. 12:1).

For three years, it seems that Rehoboam and the people followed the way of the LORD and prospered.

They tried to live as David and Solomon had taught them in the beginning.

Verses 18-23

A summary of Rehoboam's life is given with special emphases on succession to the throne.

This is not a commendation of polygamy or concubinage, which violated God's law for marriage (compare Gen. 2:24-25), and resulted in severe trouble and disaffection toward God.

Never is polygamy commended in Scripture, and usually its tragic results are recorded.

2 Chronicles 11:18 "And Rehoboam took him Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David to wife, [and] Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse;"

Of which son of David we nowhere else read.

Perhaps he might be the son of one of his concubines, or he might have two names.

"And Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse":

Who was David's eldest brother (1 Sam. 17:13).

She must be a granddaughter or great-granddaughter of his.

Mahalath was the first of 18 wives of Rehoboam.

Mahalath was the grand-daughter of David, then.

Abihail was the niece of David.

2 Chronicles 11:19 "Which bare him children; Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham."

Or, "and she bore him"; for it is said only of one of them, the other perhaps died without children.

This may refer to the last mentioned, Abihail, whose children were.

"Jeush, and Shamariah, and Zaham":

Who perhaps all died in their father's lifetime, since the firstborn of a later wife succeeded him.

Most scholars give these three children to Abihail.

It is possible, however that some could belong to Mahalath.

Since it is not extremely important which they belong to, we will go on.

2 Chronicles 11:20 "And after her he took Maachah the daughter of Absalom; which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith."

Thought by some to be Absalom the son of David, his father's brother, and his uncle, and so married his cousin.

But Absalom seems to have had but one daughter, whose name was Tamar (2 Sam. 14:27), and the name of this man is different from his.

He is called Abishalom (1 Kings 15:2).

"And Uriel of Gibeah (2 Chron. 13:2), of the tribe of Benjamin.

Whereas Absalom was of the tribe of Judah.

"Which bare him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith":

Abijah the firstborn, and who was successor in the kingdom, is the same with Abijam (1 Kings 14:31), of the rest we nowhere else read.

For "Maachah" (see the note on 1 Kings 15:1-3).

Maachah was probably the grand-daughter of Absalom by his daughter, Tamar.

2 Chronicles 11:21 "And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)"

The chronicler did not include the similar summary of Solomon's wives (compare 1 Kings 11:3), but clearly Rehoboam learned this disastrous marital style from his father Solomon.

Even David was a polygamist.

Polygamy was often practiced by the kings to secure alliances with nearby nations.

We see that Rehoboam had 18 wives.

He had 60 concubines.

From these wives and concubines, he had 28 sons and 60 daughters.

It is interesting that he loved Maachah above all these other ladies.

The following Scripture speaks against having many wives.

Deuteronomy 17:17 "Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."

2 Chronicles 11:22 "And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, [to be] ruler among his brethren: for [he thought] to make him king."

The chief of all his sons.

Head over them, being the son of his most beloved wife, and her firstborn however.

And perhaps might be of a greater capacity than the rest of his children.

"To be ruler among his brethren":

Or over them; gave him greater authority, and entrusted him with more power.

Set him above them, and treated him as heir apparent to the crown.

For he thought to make him king":

Either to take him into partnership in the throne with him in his lifetime, or to appoint and declare him to be his successor.

This is very similar to David choosing Solomon, of all of his brothers, to rule in his stead.

David had several sons older than Solomon.

He loved Bath-sheba more than his other wives and made her son king in his stead.

Rehoboam made Abijah king in his stead, because he loved Maachah more than the other wives.

2 Chronicles 11:23 "And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives."

Despite his wisdom in administering the various parts of his kingdom through his sons, he perpetuated the folly of Solomon, his father, in desiring "many wives" (compare with 1 Kings 11:1-4).

This dispersing of his children in the cities was so the cities would stay loyal to him.

By providing separate places for his children, there would be less jealousy between each other as well.

He was very rich from Solomon's wealth, so he provided abundantly for them all.

2 Chronicles Chapter 11 Questions

1. How many men of war did Rehoboam gather in Jerusalem?
2. What tribes were they from?
3. What prophecy had been fulfilled?
4. A Word of prophecy came for these people from what man of God?
5. What was the prophecy?
6. What effect did that have on Rehoboam's plans?
7. What did God remind all of these tribes of?
8. Where did Rehoboam live?
9. Name the cities he built for defense.
10. How many cities were there?
11. Where were most of them built?
12. What was an earlier name for Beth-lehem?
13. What did he put in the cities?
14. What were the weapons of war?
15. Soon, Benjamin and Judah would be spoken of as _____.
16. What did the priests and the Levites do?
17. Who did Jeroboam choose for priests?
18. Verse 16 is speaking of whom?
19. What happened to the kingdom of Judah?
20. How many years did Rehoboam do right in God's sight?
21. Who was Rehoboam's first wife?

22. How many wives did he have?
23. How many concubines did he have?
24. How many sons were born to him?
25. How many daughters did he have?
26. Which of Rehoboam's sons did he make chief?
27. Where did his families live?