

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 11

Rehoboam Secures His Kingdom

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. 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 against Jeroboam. 5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem, and he built cities for defense in Judah. 6 He built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, fortified cities that are in Judah and in Benjamin. 11 He made the fortresses strong, and put commanders in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 And he put shields and spears in all the cities and made them very strong. So he held Judah and Benjamin.

11:1–23 Verses 1–4 are parallel to 1Ki 12:21–24; vv. 5–23 are largely unique to Chronicles. The Chronicler’s account of Rehoboam is a good example of his emphasis on immediate retribution (see Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Purpose and Themes). Ch. 11 traces the rewards for obedience to the command of God (vv. 1–4): Rehoboam enjoys prosperity and power (vv. 5–12), popular support (vv. 13–17) and progeny (vv. 18–23). Ch. 12 demonstrates the reverse: Disobedience brings judgment. (CSB)

11:1–4 Battle between Rehoboam and Jeroboam was averted by Rehoboam’s obedience to the word of Yahweh spoken by Shemaiah the prophet. This same prophet makes a second appearance during the reign of Rehoboam in the Chronicler’s expansion of the war with Shishak (12:5–8) and in the citation of sources (12:15). (TLSB)

11:1 *180,000*. Rehoboam’s force is small compared with the 1,100,000 men of military age in David’s census (1Ch 21:5), the 580,000 under Asa (2Ch 14:8), the 307,500 under Uzziah (2Ch 26:13), the 300,000 under Amaziah (2Ch 25:5), or the 1,160,000 troops under Jehoshaphat (2Ch 17:14–18). (TLSB)

11:2 *Shemaiah*. The function of the prophets as guardians of the theocracy (God’s kingdom) is prominent in Chronicles; most of Judah’s kings are portrayed as receiving advice from prophets. The wording found in 1Ki 12:23, in accordance with the Chronicler’s interest in “all Israel.” (CSB)

Seceding tribes may be called Israel to distinguish them politically from the people “in Judah and Benjamin” (cf 10:3, 16). The kingdom of Judah would become the people of the promise (cf 2Sm 7). (TLSB)

11:4 *your relatives*. The Lord sought to avert the massive blood feud by reminding the people that, beyond the politics, they are family. Luth: “When Rehoboam wanted to bring back the Ten Tribes, he was forbidden to do it... God also at times allows the Turk and the pope to go on a rampage, and again, when it is His will, He represses both. For He who has set a limit for the sea

has also appointed definite boundaries for the ragings of the devil and the world, just as Christ says in the garden (Luke 22:51): ‘Let them have their way for now.’ But God permits all these things to be done that He may teach us to pray, cry out, and groan” (AE 6:223). (TLSB)

11:5–23 The Chronicler develops three themes in this section: Rehoboam’s building program (vv 5–12), his religious policy (vv 13–17), and his large family (vv 18–23). All three themes are marks of divine favor. By heeding the Lord’s word through His prophet Shemaiah, Rehoboam brought prosperity to himself and Judah. (TLSB)

11:5–12 Rehoboam’s building program. Such building marked periods of prosperity and blessing from God because of obedience to Him (1Ch 11:8–9; 2Ch 8:1–6; 11:5–12; 14:6; 17:12; 26:9–10; 27:3–4; 32:5–6a; 33:14). Each period of building in Chronicles is accompanied by a note that the reigning king either did what was right in the eyes of the Lord or, having sinned, repented, and was restored. (TLSB)

11:5–10 This list of cities is not found in Kings. Rehoboam fortified his eastern, western and southern borders, but not the north, perhaps demonstrating his hope of reunification of the kingdoms, as well as the threat of invasion from Egypt. (CSB)

11:5 *cities for defense*. King fortified the approaches to Jerusalem from the south and southwest, the direction from which an Egyptian invasion came (12:1–12). Circumstances suggest that these events are not set down in chronological order. Rehoboam may have strengthened these existing border defenses in order to prevent another attack from the same enemy. (TLSB)

11:6–10 Defended territory incorporated only the Shephelah and the Judean hills, but the sites chosen for fortification were strategic because they were located along major roads. The list of fortified cities formed lines of protection on the eastern flank from north to south (Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth-zur), on the southern flank from west to east (Lachish, Adoraim, Ziph, Hebron), and on the western flank from north to south (Aijalon, Zorah, Gath, Azekah, Soco, Adullam, Mareshah). The northern flank lacked a line of defense, perhaps because Rehoboam wished to keep open the possibility of reunion with the north, or he may not have felt threatened from that direction.

11:9 *Lachish*. Archaeological remains show a hilltop location, an outer wall, an inner wall, a six-chambered gate, and an inner fortress that also may have served as a palace. Some of these mighty fortifications may date from Rehoboam’s work. (TLSB)

11:13–17 The Chronicler assumes the reader’s familiarity with 1Ki 12:26–33. This material is unique to Chronicles and reflects the author’s concern both with the temple and its personnel and with showing that the kingdom of Judah was the remnant of all Israel. (CSB)

The Chronicler introduces for the first time the theme of religious infidelity in the north and describes how the faithful there came to worship at Jerusalem. Periods of prosperity inevitably involve religious reform and revival. (TLSB)

11:13 *presented themselves*. Border between the two kingdoms remained open (see note, vv 6–10). Priests, Levites, and others in all Israel who refused to take part in the false worship at Bethel and Dan (1Ki 12:28–30) crossed over “to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD” (v 16). (TLSB)

him. Rehoboam. (TLSB)

Priests and Levites Come to Jerusalem

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. 16 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.

11:14 *cast them out.* The northern apostasy is demonstrated by their rejection of the priests and Levites. Jeroboam appointed his own priests in their place (1Ki 12:32; 13:33 report that he appointed priests from among the people who were not of the Levites). (TLSB)

11:15 The north was committed to idolatry; the south, to the true worship of Yahweh. The Chronicler reinforces this by reporting more about Jeroboam's idolatry, also recorded in 1Ki 12:25–33. (TLSB)

goat idols...calves. The account in Kings mentions only the golden calves (for the worship of goat idols or satyrs see Lev 17:7. (CSB)

Demons were thought to be in the form of male goats. (TLSB)

11:17 *three years.* Rehoboam later “abandoned the law of the LORD” (12:1). (TLSB)

11:13–17 Priests, Levites, and citizens of Israel seek the Lord at His temple in Jerusalem, despite the personal and professional hardships it brings. When faithfulness to the Lord comes with challenges, still choose to follow the way of faithfulness, seeking the fellowship of the faithful in the Church. Your Lord, who is always faithful, will strengthen and sustain you in the fellowship of His Word and Sacraments. • Deliver us from evil, O Lord, and grant us faithful leaders and fellow believers who can help us in our time of need. Amen. (TLSB)

Rehoboam's Family

18 Rehoboam took as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse, 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). 22 And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as chief prince among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. 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.

11:18–23 Rehoboam's large family (18 wives, 60 concubines, 28 sons, and 60 daughters) indicates divine favor in the Chronicler's writings (cf 1Ch 3:1–9; 14:2–7; 25:4–5; 26:4–5; 2Ch 13:21; 21:1–3). (TLSB)

11:18–22 The report on the size of Rehoboam’s family is placed here as part of the Chronicler’s effort to show God’s blessing on his obedience . The material is not in chronological sequence with the surrounding context but summarizes events throughout his reign. The Chronicler uses numerous progeny as a sign of divine blessing (see 13:21. (CSB)

11:18 *Jerimoth*. Not mentioned in the list of David’s sons (1Ch 3:1–8). May have been the son of a concubine. (TLSB)

11:20 *Maacah daughter of Absalom*. She was likely the granddaughter of Absalom, through his daughter Tamar (2Sa 14:27; 18:18), who was married to Uriel (2Ch 13:2). (CSB)

According to 2Sm 14:27, Absalom had only one daughter, Tamar. Hbr words for son and daughter may also refer to grandchildren. (TLSB)

11:21–22 These verses explain why the eldest son was not appointed Rehoboam’s successor. (CSB)

11:21 *eighteen wives*. Rehoboam’s polygamous marriage relations no doubt accounted for the fact that “he abandoned the law of the LORD” (12:1; cf 1Ki 11:4). (TLSB)

11:22 *chief prince*. If the order of birth is that of the order in the text, Rehoboam bypassed his older sons born of Abihail (vv 18–19). The law of Dt 21:15–17 sought to protect the rights of the firstborn and specifically prohibited the transferal of rights to a younger son born of a woman more loved by the husband. Normally, the right of a firstborn son of a king included the crown (cf 21:3). However, the firstborn had been set aside before (Gn 17:19–21; 48:13–20; 2Sm 3:2–4; 1Ki 1:32–37; 1Ch 26:10). (TLSB)

11:23 *distributed some of his sons*. Rehoboam may have sought to secure the succession of Abijah by assigning other sons to outlying posts, perhaps to avoid the difficulties faced by David, whose sons at court (Adonijah and Absalom) had attempted to seize power. (CSB)

11:18–23 Rehoboam cleverly exploits family relationships to strengthen his hold on Judah. Yet his purposes conflict with the Lord’s purposes for families. A family is not a political tool but a gift from our gracious heavenly Father, whereby we may nurture one another in His love. Thanks be to God, He works within our families to strengthen faith and extend His peace through mutual care in His Word. • Make me a blessing to my family, O Lord, by word and by deed. Amen. (TLSB)