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2CHRONICLES 11: 1 When Rehoboam had come to Jerusalem, he assembled the house of Judah and Benjamin, one hundred eighty thousand chosen men, who were warriors, to fight against Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam.

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Rehoboam raises an array, purposing to reduce the ten tribes; but is prevented by Shemaiah the prophet, 2Chr 11:1-4. He builds several cities of defense, and fortifies others, 2Chr 11:5-12. The priests and Levites being turned out by Jeroboam, come to Rehoboam, 2Chr 11:13, 2Chr 11:14. Jeroboam's gross idolatry, 2Chr 11:15. The pious of the land join with Judah, and strengthen the kingdom of Rehoboam, 2Chr 11:16, 2Chr 11:17. His wives, concubines, and numerous issue, 2Chr 11:18-21. He places his own sons for governors in the different provinces, 2Chr 11:22, 2Chr 11:23.

Verse 1

Gathered of the house of Judah - See this account 1Kgs 12:21-24 (note), and the notes there.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 2 But the LORD's word came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying,

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

2CHRONICLES 11: 4 'Thus says the LORD, "You shall not go up, nor fight against your brothers! Return every man to his house; for this thing is of me."'" So they listened to the LORD's words, and returned from going against Jeroboam.

2CHRONICLES 11: 5 Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem, and built cities for defence in Judah.

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Verse 5

And built cities for defense in Judah - He was obliged to strengthen his frontiers against the encroachments of the men of Israel; and Jeroboam did the same thing on his part to prevent the inroads of Judah. See 1Kgs 12:25.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 6 He built Bethlehem, and Etam, and Tekoa,

2CHRONICLES 11: 7 Beth Zur, and Soco, and Adullam,

2CHRONICLES 11: 8 and Gath, and Mareshah, and Ziph,

2CHRONICLES 11: 9 and Adoraim, and Lachish, and Azekah,

2CHRONICLES 11: 10 and Zorah, and Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and in Benjamin, fortified cities.

2CHRONICLES 11: 11 He fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, and oil and wine.

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Verse 11

Store of victual - In these places he laid up stores of provisions, not only to enable them to endure a siege; but also that they might be able, from their situation, to supply desolate places.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 12 He put shields and spears in every city, and made them exceeding strong. Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

2CHRONICLES 11: 13 The priests and the Levites who were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their border.

2CHRONICLES 11: 14 For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons cast them off, that they should not execute the priest's office to the LORD;

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Verse 14

The Levites left their suburbs - They and the priests were expelled from their offices by Jeroboam, lest they should turn the hearts of the people to the true God, and then they would revolt to Judah, 1Kgs 12:26; and therefore he established a new worship, and made new gods.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 15 and he appointed him priests for the high places, and for the male goats, and for the calves which he had made.

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Verse 15

And he ordained him priests - for the devils - שְׂעִירִים seirim, the hairy ones; probably goats: for as the golden calves, or oxen, were in imitation of the Egyptian ox-god, Apis; so they no doubt paid Divine honors to the goat, which we know was an object of religious veneration in Egypt.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 16 After them, out of all the tribes of Israel, such as set their hearts to seek the LORD, the God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD, the God of their fathers.

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Verse 16

Such as set their hearts to seek the Lord - All the truly pious joined him out of every tribe, and the whole tribe of Levi, being deprived of their functions, joined him also. Thus he had Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, and probably a part of Simeon; for he had Etam, which was in that tribe, and the truly religious out of all the other tribes, for they could not bear Jeroboam's idolatry.

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

Verse 17

For three years they walked in the way of David - During this time he prospered; but for fourteen years after this he and the people were unfaithful to the Lord, except at such intervals as the hand of God's judgments was upon them.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 18 Rehoboam took him a wife, Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, and of Abihail the daughter of Eliab the son of Jesse;

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Verse 18

Took him Mahalath - By marrying thus in the family of David, he strengthened his right to the Jewish throne.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 19 and she bore him sons: Jeush, and Shemariah, and Zaham.

2CHRONICLES 11: 20 After her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom; and she bore him Abijah, and Attai, and Ziza, and Shelomith.

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Verse 20

Maachah the daughter of Absalom - See the note on 1Kgs 15:10. She is called Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel, 2Chr 13:2. For this the Targum gives the following reason: "Abijah reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Michaiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeatha. She is the same as Michah, the daughter of Absalom; but, because she was an upright woman, her name was changed into the more excellent name Michaiah, and her fathers name into that of Uriel of Gibeatha, that the name of Absalom might not be remembered.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 21 Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and sixty concubines, and became the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.)

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Verse 21

Eighteen wives and threescore concubines - Bad enough, but not so abandoned as his father. Of these marriages and concubinage the issue was twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters; eighty-eight children in the whole, to the education of the whole of whom he could pay but little attention. Numerous families are often neglected; and children by different women, must be yet in a worse state.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 22 Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah to be chief, the prince among his brothers; for he intended to make him king.

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Verse 22

Made Abijah - the chief - Abijah certainly was not the first-born of Rehoboam; but as he loved Maachah more than any of his wives, so he preferred her son, probably through his mother's influence. In Deu 21:16, this sort of preference is forbidden; but Rehoboam had a sort of precedent in the preference shown by David to Solomon.

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2CHRONICLES 11: 23 He dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his sons throughout all the lands of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city: and he gave them food in abundance. He sought for them many wives.

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Verse 23

He dealt wisely - It was true policy to disperse his own sons through the different provinces who were not likely to form any league with Jeroboam against their father.

He desired many wives - He was much addicted to women; yet we do not find that he formed any heathenish alliances of this nature. And as no particulars are given, we do not know how far he indulged himself in this propensity. He probably strengthened his political connections by these means.