

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 11

In this chapter are related the preparations Rehoboam made to regain the ten tribes that revolted from him, but was forbid making the attempt by a prophet of the Lord, which he paid a regard unto, (^{<4100>}2 Chronicles 11:1-4), the fortification of several cities in Judah and Benjamin for his defence, (^{<4105>}2 Chronicles 11:5-12), the resort of several priests and Levites to him from Jeroboam, which served to strengthen his kingdom, (^{<4113>}2 Chronicles 11:13-17), and an account of his wives, and of his children, and of his disposal of them, (^{<4118>}2 Chronicles 11:18-23).

Ver. 1-4. *And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem*, etc.] 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: this and the three following verses are the same with (^{<1122>}1 Kings 12:21-24). (See Gill on “^{<1122>}1 Kings 12:21”).

Ver. 5. *And Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem*, etc.] The metropolis of Judah, and the capital city of his kingdom:

and built cities for defence 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 defence.

Ver. 6. *He built even Bethlehem*, etc.] The place of our Lord’s birth, about six miles from Jerusalem:

and Etam; another city in the tribe of Judah; (see ^{<1362>}1 Chronicles 4:32), there was a rock of this name, (^{<0758>}Judges 15:8) and a fountain from whence waters were conveyed into the pool at Jerusalem, spoken of in Jewish writings ^{f27}:

and Tekoah; of which place Amos the prophet was, and which was about twelve miles from Jerusalem. Rauwolff^{f28} speaks of it as a fortified place now; he says it has a strong and mighty castle, built on a great and high hill.

Ver. 7. *And Bethzur, and Shocho, and Adullam.*] All in the tribe of Judah, of which (see ^{<0655>}Joshua 15:35,58).

Ver. 8. *And Gath*, etc.] Which cannot be that Gath which was one of the principalities of the Philistines, but a city in the tribe of Judah; though of it we nowhere else read; unless this is the same with Moreshethgath, (^{<3000>}Micah 1:14), which is probable, since it follows:

and Mareshah; the birth place of Micah the prophet, (^{<3000>}Micah 1:1,15),

and Ziph; there were two cities of this name in the tribe of Judah, (^{<0654>}Joshua 15:24,55).

Ver. 9. *And Adoraim*, etc.] Called by Josephus^{f29} Adora, which he mentions along with Mareshah, or Marissa:

and Lachish: a royal city in the time of the Canaanites, and which fell to the lot of Judah, (^{<0621>}Joshua 12:11 15:39),

and Azekah; a city situated in the plain of Judah, (^{<0600>}Joshua 10:10 15:35).

Ver. 10. *And Zorah*, etc.] The same with Zoreah, (^{<0653>}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, (^{<0602>}Joshua 10:12 19:42), 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, (^{<0654>}Joshua 15:54 20:7),

which are in Judah and in Benjamin fenced cities; as they were now made by Rehoboam.

Ver. 11. *And he fortified the strong holds*, etc.] 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.

Ver. 12. *And in every several city he put shields and spears,* etc.]

Furnished them with these and perhaps other pieces of armour, 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.

Ver. 13. *And the priests and the Levites, that were in all Israel,* etc.] 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.

Ver. 14. *For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession,* etc.] The cities and the fields adjacent to them, which were given them in the several tribes, and were in all forty eight; (see ^{<6200>}Joshua 21:1-41) 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.

Ver. 15. *And he ordained him priests for the high places,* etc.] Of such who were not of the tribe of Levi, and family of Aaron; (see ^{<4302>}1 Kings 12:31)

and for the devils; demons in the shape of goats, as this word signifies, in which form many of the Heathen deities were worshipped; idols of whatsoever kind are so called; for whosoever worships them worships not God, but devils, (^{<4302>}1 Corinthians 10:21) the images which Jeroboam set up may be meant, and the next clause may be rendered as explanative of them:

even for the calves which he had made; one of which he set up at Dan, and the other at Bethel, (^{<1128>}1 Kings 12:28,29).

Ver. 16. *And after them out of all the tribes of Israel*, etc.] 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 favour, 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.

Ver. 17. *So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah*, etc.] Made it more numerous, and in a better condition to defend itself:

and made Rehoboam 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, (^{<411>}2 Chronicles 12:1).

Ver. 18. *And Rehoboam took him Mahalath, the daughter of Jerimoth, the son of David, to wife*, etc.] 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. (^{<09713>}1 Samuel 17:13,28). She must be a granddaughter or great-granddaughter of his.

Ver. 19. *Which bare him children*, etc.] Or, "and she bore him"^{f30}; 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.

Ver. 20. *And after he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom*, etc.]

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, (^{<10427>}2 Samuel 14:27), and the name of this man is different from his; he is called Abishalom, (^{<11152>}1 Kings 15:2)

and Uriel of Gibeah; (^{<14132>}2 Chronicles 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, (^{<11431>}1 Kings 14:31) of the rest we nowhere else read.

Ver. 21. *And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines*, etc.] Who is called Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel, (^{<14132>}2 Chronicles 13:2),

for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines; led thereunto by the example of his father Solomon, contrary to the command of God, (^{<15717>}Deuteronomy 17:17)

and begat twenty eight sons and sixty daughters; to have many children was reckoned a great blessing, but it was not honourable to have them in such a way.

Ver. 22. *And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maacah the chief*, etc.]

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 intrusted 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.

Ver. 23. *And he dealt wisely*, etc.] Acted a prudent part, in order to execute his scheme, and particularly by disposing of his other sons in different parts of his kingdom, as follows: or “he made him his son Abijah to understand”^{f31}; he taught and instructed him in the art of government, took a particular care of his education, that he might be fitted for it; and he might instruct him how to behave towards his brethren, for the present and hereafter, as well as towards all the people in general: or “he (Abijah) understood”^{f32}; had more understanding and wisdom than all the children of Rehoboam; though it seems best to interpret it of Rehoboam himself, since it follows:

and disposed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city; to be governors thereof, in whose hands he could better trust them than in any other; or else, by thus separating them, they would not be able to enter into combination against Abijah; but then he must at the same time appoint some persons to watch and observe them; or otherwise, having such, strong places in their possession, they might rebel against him; the Targum is,

“he built and repaired the cities, and appointed of all his children throughout all the countries of the house of Judah, to all the fortified cities;”

that is, to have the command of them:

and he gave them victual in abundance; that they might have no reason to complain, and might be able to hold out a siege against an enemy, should they be attacked:

and he desired many wives; either for himself, or rather for his son, since he himself had many; or “Abijah desired, or asked”^{f33} many wives” of their parents, or of those who had the dispose of them, in imitation of his father.