Rehoboam Mustered the House of Judah

Rehoboam Fortified Judah

Rehoboam’s Family

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Text:

2 Chronicles 11:1-23,

1. When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he summoned 180,000 skilled warriors from Judah and Benjamin to attack Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.  
2. But the Lord told Shemaiah the prophet,  
3. “Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin,  
4. ‘The Lord says this: “Do not attack and make war with your brothers. Each of you go home, for I have caused this to happen.’”’ They obeyed the Lord and called off the attack against Jeroboam.  
5. Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem; he built up these fortified cities throughout Judah:  
6. Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa,  
7. Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam,  
8. Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,  
9. Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah,  
10. Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These were the fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin.  
11. He fortified these cities and placed officers in them, as well as storehouses of food, olive oil, and wine.
12. In each city there were shields and spears; he strongly fortified them. Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.
13. The priests and Levites who lived throughout Israel supported him, no matter where they resided.
14. The Levites even left their pasturelands and their property behind and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons prohibited them from serving as the Lord’s priests.
15. Jeroboam appointed his own priests to serve at the worship centers and to lead in the worship of the goat idols and calf idols he had made.
16. Those among all the Israelite tribes who were determined to worship the Lord God of Israel followed them to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their ancestors.
17. They supported the kingdom of Judah and were loyal to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years; they followed the edicts of David and Solomon for three years.
18. Rehoboam married Mahalath the daughter of David’s son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse’s son Eliab.
19. She bore him sons named Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.
20. He later married Maacah the daughter of Absalom. She bore to him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.
21. Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than his other wives and concubines. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines; he fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.
22. Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as the leader over his brothers, for he intended to name him his successor.
23. He wisely placed some of his many sons throughout the regions of Judah and Benjamin in the various fortified cities. He supplied them with abundant provisions and acquired many wives for them. (NET)

Introduction:

I. “It was impossible for Rehoboam to recover from the stupid blunders he had already made,” Coffman wrote.

A. Coffman was of the opinion that, had Rehoboam gone to war with Jeroboam, Rehoboam would have lost and Jerusalem would have been devastated.

II. Parallel reference:

A. 1 Kings 12:21-33, When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he summoned 180,000 skilled warriors from all of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin to attack Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam son of Solomon. But God told Shemaiah the prophet, “Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah, and to all Judah and Benjamin, as well as the rest of the people, ‘The Lord says this: “Do not attack and make war with your brothers, the Israelites. Each of you go home, for I have caused this to happen.”’ They obeyed the Lord and went home as the Lord had ordered them to do. Jeroboam built up Shechem in the Ephraimite hill country and lived there. From there he went out and built up Penuel. Jeroboam then thought to himself: “Now the Davidic dynasty could regain the kingdom. If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the Lord’s temple in Jerusalem,
their loyalty could shift to their former master, King Rehoboam of Judah. They might kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah.” After the king had consulted with his advisers, he made two golden calves. Then he said to the people, “It is too much trouble for you to go up to Jerusalem. Look, Israel, here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” He put one in Bethel and the other in Dan. This caused Israel to sin; the people went to Bethel and Dan to worship the calves. He built temples on the high places and appointed as priests people who were not Levites. Jeroboam inaugurated a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival celebrated in Judah. On the altar in Bethel he offered sacrifices to the calves he had made. In Bethel he also appointed priests for the high places he had made. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month (a date he had arbitrarily chosen) Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar he had made in Bethel. He inaugurated a festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to offer sacrifices. (NET)

B. There is no parallel in 1 Kings to 2 Chronicles 11:18-23.

III. The Chronicler accepted the fact that the Northern Israel had gone its own way and concentrated on events of Southern Israel, except where Northern Israel’s history affected Southern Israel (Judah), Coffman wrote.

A. Following this national division, neither the north nor the south had the power nor influence among the nations enjoyed by Solomon.
Commentary:

**Rehoboam Mustered the House of Judah**

2 Chronicles 11:1, When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he summoned 180,000 skilled warriors from Judah and Benjamin to attack Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam. (NET)

I. When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he musteed (gathered) the house of Judah and Benjamin – a hundred and eighty-thousand fighting men . . .

A. It was Rehoboam’s intention to gather an army, march north and return by force the ten defecting tribes to his domain.

B. For the first time since the political division of the nation, Benjamin is mentioned as having remained loyal to Rehoboam. (Pulpit Commentary)

1. In this is seen the fulfillment of Abijah’s prophecy.

a. 1 Kings 11:29-40, At that time, when Jeroboam had left Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the road; the two of them were alone in the open country. Ahijah was wearing a brand new robe, and he grabbed the robe and tore it into twelve pieces. Then he told Jeroboam, ‘Take ten pieces, for this is what the Lord God of Israel says: ‘Look, I am about to tear the kingdom from Solomon’s hand and I will
give ten tribes to you. He will retain one tribe, for my servant David’s sake and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. I am taking the kingdom from him because they have abandoned me and worshiped the Sidonian goddess Astarte, the Moabite god Chemosh, and the Ammonite god Milcom. They have not followed my instructions by doing what I approve and obeying my rules and regulations, like Solomon’s father David did. I will not take the whole kingdom from his hand. I will allow him to be ruler for the rest of his life for the sake of my chosen servant David who kept my commandments and rules. I will take the kingdom from the hand of his son and give ten tribes to you. I will leave his son one tribe so my servant David’s dynasty may continue to serve me in Jerusalem, the city I have chosen as my home. I will select you; you will rule over all you desire to have and you will be king over Israel. You must obey all I command you to do, follow my instructions, do what I approve, and keep my rules and commandments, like my servant David did. Then I will be with you and establish for you a lasting dynasty, as I did for David; I will give you Israel. I will humiliate David’s descendants because of this, but not forever.” Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam escaped to Egypt and found
refuge with King Shishak of Egypt. He stayed in Egypt until Solomon died. (NET)

2. This is remarkable in view of the fact that Benjamin was the blood uncle of Ephraim, a close territorial neighbor. (The Pulpit Commentary)

3. This choice is also remarkable in that Benjamin had not always been in agreement previously. (The Pulpit Commentary)

a. 2 Samuel 2:12-32, Then Abner son of Ner and the servants of Ish-bosheth son of Saul went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. Joab son of Zeruiah and the servants of David also went out and confronted them at the pool of Gibeon. One group stationed themselves on one side of the pool, and the other group on the other side of the pool. Abner said to Joab, “Let the soldiers get up and fight before us.” Joab said, “So be it!” So they got up and crossed over by number: twelve belonging to Benjamin and to Ish-bosheth son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. As they grappled with one another, each one stabbed his opponent with his sword and they fell dead together. So that place is called the Field of Flints; it is in Gibeon. Now the battle was very severe that day; Abner and the men of Israel were overcome by David’s soldiers. The three sons of Zeruiah were there—Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. (Now Asahel was as quick on his
feet as one of the gazelles in the field.) Asahel chased Abner, without turning to the right or to the left as he followed Abner. Then Abner turned and asked, “Is that you, Asahel?” He replied, “Yes it is!” Abner said to him, “Turn aside to your right or to your left. Capture one of the soldiers and take his equipment for yourself!” But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from following him. So Abner spoke again to Asahel, “Turn aside from following me! I do not want to strike you to the ground. How then could I show my face in the presence of Joab your brother?” But Asahel refused to turn aside. So Abner struck him in the abdomen with the back end of his spear. The spear came out his back; Asahel collapsed on the spot and died there right before Abner. Everyone who now comes to the place where Asahel fell dead pauses in respect. So Joab and Abishai chased Abner. At sunset they came to the hill of Ammah near Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. The Benjaminites formed their ranks behind Abner and were like a single army, standing at the top of a certain hill. Then Abner called out to Joab, “Must the sword devour forever? Don’t you realize that this will turn bitter in the end? When will you tell the people to turn aside from pursuing their brothers?” Joab replied, “As surely as God lives, if you had not said this, it would have been morning before the people would have
abandoned pursuit of their brothers!” Then Joab blew the ram’s horn and all the people stopped in their tracks. They stopped chasing Israel and ceased fighting. Abner and his men went through the Arabah all that night. They crossed the Jordan River and went through the whole region of Bitron and came to Mahanaim. Now Joab returned from chasing Abner and assembled all the people. Nineteen of David’s soldiers were missing, in addition to Asahel. But David’s soldiers had slaughtered the Benjaminites and Abner’s men—in all, 360 men had died! They took Asahel’s body and buried him in his father’s tomb at Bethlehem. Joab and his men then traveled all that night and reached Hebron by dawn. (NET)

b. 2 Samuel 3:1-27, However, the war was prolonged between the house of Saul and the house of David. David was becoming steadily stronger, while the house of Saul was becoming increasingly weaker. Now sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon, born to Ahinoam the Jezreelite. His second son was Kileab, born to Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. His third son was Absalom, the son of Maacah daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. His fourth son was Adonijah, the son of Haggith. His fifth son was Shephatiah, the son of Abital. His sixth son was Ithream, born to David’s wife Eglah. These sons were
all born to David in Hebron. As the war continued between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner was becoming more influential in the house of Saul. Now Saul had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. Ish-bosheth said to Abner, “Why did you have sexual relations with my father’s concubine?” These words of Ish-bosheth really angered Abner and he said, “Am I the head of a dog that belongs to Judah? This very day I am demonstrating loyalty to the house of Saul your father and to his relatives and his friends! I have not betrayed you into the hand of David. Yet you have accused me of sinning with this woman today! God will severely judge Abner if I do not do for David exactly what the Lord has promised him, namely, to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and to establish the throne of David over Israel and over Judah all the way from Dan to Beer Sheba!” Ish-bosheth was unable to answer Abner with even a single word because he was afraid of him. Then Abner sent messengers to David saying, “To whom does the land belong? Make an agreement with me, and I will do whatever I can to cause all Israel to turn to you.” So David said, “Good! I will make an agreement with you. I ask only one thing from you. You will not see my face unless you bring Saul’s daughter Michal when you come to visit me.” David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth son of Saul with
this demand: “Give me my wife Michal whom I acquired for a hundred Philistine foreskins.” So Ish-bosheth took her from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. Her husband went along behind her, weeping all the way to Bahurim. Finally Abner said to him, “Go back!” So he returned home. Abner advised the elders of Israel, “Previously you were wanting David to be your king. Act now! For the Lord has said to David, ‘By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel from the Philistines and from all their enemies.’” Then Abner spoke privately with the Benjaminites. Abner also went to Hebron to inform David privately of all that Israel and the entire house of Benjamin had agreed to. When Abner, accompanied by twenty men, came to David in Hebron, David prepared a banquet for Abner and the men who were with him. Abner said to David, “Let me leave so that I may go and gather all Israel to my lord the king so that they may make an agreement with you. Then you will rule over all that you desire.” So David sent Abner away, and he left in peace. Now David’s soldiers and Joab were coming back from a raid, bringing a great deal of plunder with them. Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, for David had sent him away and he had left in peace. When Joab and all the army that was with him arrived, Joab was told: “Abner the son of Ner came to the king; he sent him away,
and he left in peace!” So Joab went to the king and said, “What have you done? Abner has come to you! Why would you send him away? Now he’s gone on his way! You know Abner the son of Ner! Surely he came here to spy on you and to determine when you leave and when you return and to discover everything that you are doing!” Then Joab left David and sent messengers after Abner. They brought him back from the well of Sirah. (But David was not aware of it.) When Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside at the gate as if to speak privately with him. Joab then stabbed him in the abdomen and killed him, avenging the shed blood of his brother Asahel. (NET)

c. 2 Samuel 20:1, Now a wicked man named Sheba son of Bicri, a Benjaminite, happened to be there. He blew the trumpet and said, “We have no share in David; we have no inheritance in this son of Jesse! Every man go home, O Israel!” (NET)

4. However, Jerusalem and the temple were on Benjamin’s border with Judah and surely affected Benjamin’s decision. (The Pulpit Commentary)

a. Joshua 15:8, It then went up the Valley of Ben Hinnom to the slope of the Jebusites on the south (that is, Jerusalem), going up to the top of the hill opposite the Valley of Ben Hinnom to the west, which is at the end of
the Valley of the Rephaite to the north. (NET)

b. Joshua 18:16, The border then descended to the edge of the hill country near the Valley of Ben Hinnom located in the Valley of the Rephaite to the north. It descended through the Valley of Hinnom to the slope of the Jebusites to the south and then down to En Rogel. (NET)

c. Jeremiah 20:2, When he heard Jeremiah’s prophecy, he had the prophet flogged. Then he put him in the stocks which were at the Upper Gate of Benjamin in the Lord’s temple. (NET)

C. While one-hundred, eighty-thousand soldiers may appear to be a large number, it was relatively small as Rehoboam was taken by surprise by Jeroboam’s actions and this mustering of troops was done quickly.

1. 2 Samuel 24:9, Joab reported the number of warriors to the king. In Israel there were 800,000 sword-wielding warriors, and in Judah there were 500,000 soldiers. (NET) (Pulpit Commentary)

2. 2 Chronicles 13:1-3, In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel from Gibeah. There was war
between Abijah and Jeroboam. Abijah launched the attack with 400,000 well-trained warriors, while Jeroboam deployed against him 800,000 well-trained warriors. (NET)

3. 2 Chronicles 17:14-18, These were their divisions by families: There were a thousand officers from Judah. Adnah the commander led 300,000 skilled warriors, Jehochanan the commander led 280,000, and Amasiah son of Zikri, who volunteered to serve the Lord, led 200,000 skilled warriors. From Benjamin, Eliada, a skilled warrior, led 200,000 men who were equipped with bows and shields, and Jehozabad led 180,000 trained warriors. (NET)

II. to make war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam.

A. Rehoboam was still of the same persuasion as presented in 2 Chronicles 10.

1. He was determined to force the northern tribes by war to remain under his rule.

B. Preparations were being made for civil war!

2 Chronicles 11:2, But the Lord told Shemaiah the prophet, (NET)

I. But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God: . . .
A. Shemaiah came again onto the scene when Rehoboam was facing Shishak’s invasion.

1. 2 Chronicles 12:5-8, Shemaiah the prophet visited Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who were assembled in Jerusalem because of Shishak. He said to them, “This is what the Lord says: ‘You have rejected me, so I have rejected you and will hand you over to Shishak.’” The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, “The Lord is just.” When the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, he gave this message to Shemaiah: “They have humbled themselves, so I will not destroy them. I will deliver them soon. My anger will not be unleashed against Jerusalem through Shishak. Yet they will become his subjects, so they can experience how serving me differs from serving the surrounding nations.” (NET)

2. 1 Kings 12:22, But God told Shemaiah the prophet, (NET)

3. 2 Chronicles 12:15a, The events of Rehoboam’s reign, from start to finish, (NET)

4. 2 Chronicles 12:5, 7, 15, Shemaiah the prophet visited Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who were assembled in Jerusalem because of Shishak. He said to them, “This is what the Lord says: ‘You have rejected me, so I have rejected you and will hand you over to Shishak.’” When the Lord saw that they humbled
themselves, he gave this message to Shemaiah: “They have humbled themselves, so I will not destroy them. I will deliver them soon. My anger will not be unleashed against Jerusalem through Shishak. The events of Rehoboam’s reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Annals of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the Seer that include genealogical records. (NET)

B. The expression “man of God” is a special designation found forty-six (46) times in the Old Testament and refers to such renowned people as Moses. (Pulpit Commentary)

2 Chronicles 11:3, “Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin,

I. “Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon King of Judah and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin, . . .

A. The expression “all the Israelites” in this verse evidently refers to all the Israelites from whatever tribe who now resided in the territorial allotments assigned to Judah and Benjamin. (See The Pulpit Commentary)

1. 1 Kings 12:23, “Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah, and to all Judah and Benjamin, as well as the rest of the people, (NET)

2. 2 Chronicles 11:17, They supported the kingdom of Judah and were loyal to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years; they followed
the edicts of David and Solomon for three years. 
(NET)

2 Chronicles 11:4, ‘The Lord says this: “Do not attack and make war with your brothers. Each of you go home, for I have caused this to happen.”’ They obeyed the Lord and called off the attack against Jeroboam. (NET)

I. ‘This is what the Lord says: Do not go up to fight against your brothers. . . .

   A. This serious national division could not be healed quickly and, in fact, was never healed prior to the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities. (See The Pulpit Commentary.)

II. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.’’

   A. To fight against God’s will was futile.

      1. Judah realized this and returned home.

III. So they obeyed the words of the Lord and turned back from marching against Jeroboam.

   A. Rehoboam was evidently undeterred by Shemaiah’s prophecy.

      1. The army was already marching against Jeroboam.

      2. Perhaps even Rehoboam had a change of heart once he heard Shemaiah’s word from God.
B. The people had to choose between obeying God and obeying Rehoboam.

1. They made the right choice by obeying God.

2. Acts 4:19-20, But Peter and John replied, “Whether it is right before God to obey you rather than God, you decide, 20 for it is impossible for us not to speak about what we have seen and heard.” (NET)

3. Rehoboam had no choice but to acquiesce in the army’s decision.

C. This averted the present conflict, but there were continuing conflicts between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

1. 1 Kings 14:30, Rehoboam and Jeroboam were continually at war with each other. (NET)

2. 2 Chronicles 12:15b, are recorded in the Annals of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the Seer that include genealogical records. (NET)

Rehoboam Fortifies Judah

2 Chronicles 11:5, Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem; he built up these fortified cities throughout Judah: (NET)

I. Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built up towns for defense in Judah: . . .
A. Rehoboam now accepted the fact that the kingdom had divided and that, to preserve what was left, he had to strengthen his control over his remaining territory.

B. He does this, Hicks wrote, in three ways; viz.,

1. by fortifying the cities.

2. by encouraging the priests and Levites.

3. by appointing family members as administrators throughout Judah and Benjamin.

C. These actions were primarily designed to keep Judah and Benjamin from rebelling against him rather than as defenses against the North. (See Hicks.)

D. However, Clarke wrote that these fortifications were defenses against possible attacks from Jeroboam from the North.

1. Clarke stated that Jeroboam built similar fortifications to protect his territory from possible attacks from Rehoboam from the South.

a. 1 Kings 12:25-26, Jeroboam built up Shechem in the Ephraimite hill country and lived there. From there he went out and built up Penuel. 26 Jeroboam then thought to himself: “Now the Davidic dynasty could regain the kingdom. (NET)
E. The Pulpit Commentary observes that the majority of these cities were located south and west of Jerusalem and may have also been fortified as a defense against an Egyptian invasion which did indeed occur under Pharaoh Shishak.

1. Jeroboam had fled to Shishak and had lived in Egypt until Solomon’s death.

2. Could Jeroboam have influenced Shishak to invade Judah?

2 Chronicles 11:6, Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, (NET)

I. Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, . . .

A. Bethlehem was located five (5) or six (6) miles south of Jerusalem and is famous as the birthplace of Jesus Christ, the burial site of Rachel and the place Samuel anointed David as Saul’s successor, etc. (Youngblood)

B. Etam was located between Succoth and the Wilderness of Sinai (Youngblood) near Bethlehem. (Pulpit Commentary)

C. Tekoa was the birthplace of the prophet Amos and was located about six (6) miles southeast of Bethlehem. (Youngblood)

2 Chronicles 11:7, Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam, (NET)

I. Beth Zur, Soco, Adullum, . . .
A. Beth Zur was located in the mountains of Judah on the road from Beersheba to Jerusalem (Youngblood) about five (5) miles north of Hebron. (The Pulpit Commentary)

B. Soco was located fourteen (14) miles southwest of Bethlehem. (Youngblood)

C. Adullum was a city in the Shephelah, or lowland, of Judah, situation southwest of Jerusalem. (Youngblood)

2 Chronicles 11:8, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, (NET)

I. Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, . . .

A. Gath was a city of the Philistines, home of the Anakim (Youngblood) the exact location of which is not definitely known. (The Pulpit Commentary)

B. Mareshah was a city in the Shephelah, lowlands, of Judah. (Youngblood)

C. Ziph was a city in the Negev of Judah, “toward the border of Edom in the south.” (Joshua 15:24) Ziph was located some twenty-five (25) to thirty (30) miles southwest of the Dead Sea (Youngblood) and a little southeast of Hebron. (The Pulpit Commentary)

2 Chronicles 11:9, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, (NET)

I. Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, . . .

A. Adoraim (two heaps) was a city in southwest Judah located five (5) miles southwest of Hebron. (Youngblood)
This is the only mention of Adoraim in the Bible. (The Pulpit Commentary)

B. Lachish was located in the lowlands of Judah located thirty (30) miles southwest of Jerusalem and about fifteen (15) miles west of Hebron. (Youngblood)

C. Azekah was located in Judah near Socoh, situated in the lowland country (Shephelah) between Lachish and Jerusalem. (Youngblood)

2 Chronicles 11:10, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These were the fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin. (NET)

I. Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron. (Youngblood)

A. Zorah was a city in the Shephelah, or lowland, of Judah (Youngblood) and is associated with Manoah and Samson. (The Pulpit Commentary)

B. Aijalon was a city in the Shephelah, the lowlands west of Jerusalem. Aijalon was located about fourteen (14) miles northwest of Jerusalem. The area surrounding Aijalon was the scene of the famous battle between Joshua and the five Amorite kings in which the sun stood still. (Youngblood)

C. Hebron was located in the hill country of Judah some nineteen (19) miles southwest of Jerusalem on the road to Beersheba and served as David’s capital during the first seven (7) years of his reign. (Youngblood)

II. These were fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin.
A. These fifteen (15) cities were located in middle, western and southern Judah rather than in northern Judah.

1. This led Hicks to conclude that Rehoboam’s primary purpose in fortifying these cities was to solidify his control over Judah and Benjamin rather than to defend his kingdom against an attack from Jeroboam.

**2 Chronicles 11:11, He fortified these cities and placed officers in them, as well as storehouses of food, olive oil, and wine. (NET)**

I. He strengthened their defenses and put commanders in them, with supplies of food, olive oil and wine (victuals).

   A. Provisions were stored in view of possible sieges and to supply the needs of surrounding desolate people. (See Clarke)

**2 Chronicles 11:12, In each city there were shields and spears; he strongly fortified them. Judah and Benjamin belonged to him. (NET)**

I. He put shields and spears in all the cities, and made them very strong.

   A. Rehoboam was now set for the defense of his domain against invasion by Jeroboam or, for that matter, any other military force.

II. So Judah and Benjamin were his (Rehoboam’s), on his side.
A. Because Judah was the bigger and stronger of these two tribes and because the kings were of the tribe of Judah, the southern kingdom came to be known as that of Judah.

2 Chronicles 11:13, The priests and Levites who lived throughout Israel supported him, no matter where they resided. (NET)

I. The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with him (That is, Rehoboam.).

A. Jeroboam was going headlong into sinful apostasy by rejection of the priests and Levites and by building idols in the forms of goats and calves.

1. 1 Kings 12:31, He built temples on the high places and appointed as priests people who were not Levites. (NET)

B. Be it said to the lasting credit of these priests and Levites that they remained faithful to God, the temple, the Mosaic sacrificial rituals and to David’s lineage.

2 Chronicles 11:14, The Levites even left their pasturelands and their property behind and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons prohibited them from serving as the Lord’s priests. (NET)

I. The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property, and came to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the Lord.
A. At first the reader may have gotten the impression that all the priests and Levites moved to Judah solely because of deep devotion to God and their service at the temple as well as loyalty to the lineage of David.

B. Now, in verse 14, we learn that Jereboam had terminated, fired them!

1. The priests and Levites went where the work was.

2. This is not to say, however, that they were anything other than sincere in their priestly and levitical services.

C. This verse also points to a major step by Jeroboam and his sons into total apostasy!

1. Jeroboam feared the priests and Levites, by way of their sacrifices and services at the temple in Jerusalem, would lead to the people’s forsaking him and returning their loyalties to Rehoboam. (See Clarke.)

   a. 1 Kings 12:26, 31, Jereboam then thought to himself: “Now the Davidic dynasty could regain the kingdom. He built temples on the high places and appointed as priests people who were not Levites. (NET)

   b. Jereboam was far more interested in preserving his power than following God’s way.

   c. 1 Kings 13:33, After this happened, Jereboam still did not change his evil ways; he continued to appoint common people as
priests at the high places. Anyone who wanted the job he consecrated as a priest. (NET)

d. 2 Chronicles 13:9, But you banished the Lord’s priests, Aaron’s descendants, and the Levites, and appointed your own priests just as the surrounding nations do! Anyone who comes to consecrate himself with a young bull or seven rams becomes a priest of these fake gods! (NET)

e. Exodus 29:37, For seven days you are to make atonement for the altar and set it apart as holy. Then the altar will be most holy. Anything that touches the altar will be holy. (NET)

2 Chronicles 11:15, Jeroboam appointed his own priests to serve at the worship centers and to lead in the worship of the goat idols and calf idols he had made. (NET)

I. And he (Jeroboam) appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made.

   A. Jeroboam demanded that his priests be “politically correct.”

   B. References:

      1. Leviticus 17:7, So they must no longer offer their sacrifices to the goat demons, acting like prostitutes by going after them. This is to be a
perpetual statute for them throughout their generations. (NET)

2. 1 Kings 12:26-33, Jeroboam then thought to himself: “Now the Davidic dynasty could regain the kingdom. If these people go up to offer sacrifices in the Lord’s temple in Jerusalem, their loyalty could shift to their former master, King Rehoboam of Judah. They might kill me and return to King Rehoboam of Judah.” After the king had consulted with his advisers, he made two golden calves. Then he said to the people, “It is too much trouble for you to go up to Jerusalem. Look, Israel, here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt.” He put one in Bethel and the other in Dan. This caused Israel to sin; the people went to Bethel and Dan to worship the calves. He built temples on the high places and appointed as priests people who were not Levites. Jeroboam inaugurated a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like the festival celebrated in Judah. On the altar in Bethel he offered sacrifices to the calves he had made. In Bethel he also appointed priests for the high places he had made. On the fifteenth day of the eighth month (a date he had arbitrarily chosen) Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar he had made in Bethel. He inaugurated a festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to offer sacrifices. (NET)

C. Hicks observed that Jeroboam’s apostasy is placed in contrast with Levitical faithfulness.
D. Both the idol goats (devils, hairy ones) and calves were objects of Egyptian veneration. (See Clarke.)

1. Remember that Jeroboam fled to Egypt from Solomon and remained there until the beginning of Rehoboam’s reign.

2 Chronicles 11:16, Those among all the Israelite tribes who were determined to worship the Lord God of Israel followed them to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their ancestors. (NET)

I. Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the Lord, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the Lord, the God of their fathers.

A. This speaks most highly of these devoted followers of the Lord who left jobs, property and friends rather than forsake God’s way.

B. Other faithful, pious Israelites came south and separated themselves from the apostasy of the north. (Hicks)

C. Jeroboam’s apostasy was repugnant to the faithful.

2 Chronicles 11:17, They supported the kingdom of Judah and were loyal to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years; they followed the edicts of David and Solomon for three years. (NET)

I. They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon three years, . . .
A. The priests and Levites supported Rehoboam three (3) years.

1. Rehoboam thereafter forsook the Lord and punishment came upon Judah in the invasion of Shishak.

a. 2 Chronicles 12:1-12, After Rehoboam's rule was established and solidified, he and all Israel rejected the law of the Lord. Because they were unfaithful to the Lord, in King Rehoboam's fifth year, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. He had 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and an innumerable number of soldiers who accompanied him from Egypt, including Libyans, Sukkites, and Cushites. He captured the fortified cities of Judah and marched against Jerusalem. Shemaiah the prophet visited Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who were assembled in Jerusalem because of Shishak. He said to them, “This is what the Lord says: ‘You have rejected me, so I have rejected you and will hand you over to Shishak.’” The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, “The Lord is just.” When the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, he gave this message to Shemaiah: “They have humbled themselves, so I will not destroy them. I will deliver them soon. My anger will not be unleashed against Jerusalem through Shishak. Yet they will become his subjects,
so they can experience how serving me differs from serving the surrounding nations.” King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the Lord’s temple and of the royal palace; he took everything, including the gold shields that Solomon had made. King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned them to the officers of the royal guard who protected the entrance to the royal palace. Whenever the king visited the Lord’s temple, the royal guards carried them and then brought them back to the guardroom. So when Rehoboam humbled himself, the Lord relented from his anger and did not annihilate him; Judah experienced some good things. (NET)

B. Selman via Hicks saw “Rehoboam as a fundamentally evil king who enjoyed blessings in his early years due to the humility of the priests and Levites who joined the south.”

1. Rehoboam was faithful to God for these years, but thereafter his relationship with God left much to be desired. (See Clarke.)

   a. Proverbs 14:34, Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people. (NET)

   b. Isaiah 33:6, He is your constant source of stability; he abundantly provides safety and
great wisdom; he gives all this to those who fear him. (NET)

II. Walking in the ways of David and Solomon during this time.

A. Major credit for Judah’s walking in the ways of David and Solomon during this time is due to the faithfulness of the Israelite priests and Levites.

Rehoboam’s Family

2 Chronicles 11:18, Rehoboam married Mahalath the daughter of David’s son Jeremoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse’s son Eliab. (NET)

I. Rehoboam married Mahalath, who was the daughter of David’s son Jeremoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse’s son Eliab.

A. Rehoboam’s family.

Jesse  

David  Eliab  

Solomon  Jeremoth  Abihail  

Rehoboam  Mahalath  

B. Rehoboam married Mahalath and Abihail.

1. Mahalath and Rehoboam were first cousins.
2. Abihail was Rehoboam’s aunt.

3. Clarke stated that Rehoboam, “by marrying . . . in the family of David, . . . strengthened his right to the Jewish throne.”

Note: Jeremoth was, Jerome concluded, the son of a concubine of David. **1 Chronicles 3:9, These were all the sons of David, not counting the sons of his concubines. Tamar was their sister.** (NET) Jeremoth (Jeremoth) and Ithream may have been two names for the same person. Abihail may have been Eliab’s granddaughter.

Note: The Pulpit Commentary reads, “It is not quite clear whether Abihail was the wife of Jerimoth and mother of Mahalath, or a second wife now mentioned.”

**2 Chronicles 11:19, She bore him sons named Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham.** (NET)

I. She (Mahalath) bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham.

**2 Chronicles 11:20, He later married Maacah the daughter of Absalom. She bore to him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith.** (NET)

I. Then he married Maacah daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith.

A. **1 Kings 15:10, He ruled for forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother was Maacah daughter of Abishalom.** (NET)
B. 2 Chronicles 13:1, 2, In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel from Gibeah. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. (NET)

C. The Targum via Clarke explained, “Abijah reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother’s name was Michaiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeathah. 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 father’s name into that of Uriel of Gibeathah, that the name of Absalom might not be remembered.”

D. Abijah (Abia, Abijam) was king of Judah following the death of Rehoboam. (Youngblood)

1. He reigned three years and was succeeded by his son Asa.

Note: Information on the sons of Rehoboam other than Abijah is very limited other than was is recorded in 2 Chronicles 11.

E. Maacah (Maachah) was the granddaughter of Absalom through his daughter Tamar, wife of Uriel.

1. 2 Chronicles 13:2, He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel from Gibeah. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. (NET)
2. 1 Kings 15:2, He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom. (NET)

3. 2 Samuel 14:27, Absalom had three sons and one daughter, whose name was Tamar. She was a very attractive woman. (NET)

2 Chronicles 11:21, Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than his other wives and concubines. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines; he fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. (NET)

I. Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than any of his other wives and concubines.

II. In all, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

   A. Coffman wrote, “One may only imagine the intrigues, jealousies, outright hatreds, and bitter rivalries that resulted from a large compound filled with a total of seventy-eight women competing with each other for their husband’s affections, and secretly hating the King for his partiality, first to one, and then to another.”

   B. Deuteronomy 17:17, Furthermore, he must not marry many wives lest his affections turn aside, and he must not accumulate much silver and gold. (NET)

   C. Deuteronomy 21:15, Suppose a man has two wives, one whom he loves more than the other, and
they both bear him sons, with the firstborn being the child of the less loved wife. (NET)

D. However, Solomon set Rehoboam quite an example in the area of wives and concubines . . . one not to be emulated.

2 Chronicles 11:22, Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as the leader over his brothers, for he intended to name him his successor. (NET)

I. Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah to be the chief prince among his brothers, . . .

A. Clarke was certain that Abijah “was not Rehoboam’s firstborn, but as he loved Maachah more than any of his other wives, so he preferred her son, probably through his mother’s influence.”

1. This favoritism, preferential treatment was divinely forbidden.

a. Deuteronomy 21:15-17, Suppose a man has two wives, one whom he loves more than the other, and they both bear him sons, with the firstborn being the child of the less loved wife. In the day he divides his inheritance he must not appoint as firstborn the son of the favorite wife in place of the other wife’s son who is actually the firstborn. Rather, he must acknowledge the son of the less loved wife as firstborn and give him the double portion of all he has, for that son is the beginning of his father’s
procreative power—to him should go the right of the firstborn. (NET)

b. However, this reminds the reader of David’s preference for Solomon.

II. in order to make him King.

   A. Abijah was personally selected to be the heir to the throne.

2 Chronicles 11:23, He wisely placed some of his many sons throughout the regions of Judah and Benjamin in the various fortified cities. He supplied them with abundant provisions and acquired many wives for them. (NET)

I. He acted wisely, dispersing some of his sons throughout the districts of Judah and Benjamin, and to all the fortified cities.

   A. Rehoboam’s sons would not likely defect to Jeroboam.

   B. He acted wisely; that is, with deep and calculating policy. (Jamieson, Fausett and Brown)

   C. By separating his sons and developing their allegiance to the places they governed, Rehoboam lessened the likelihood of their contending with each other for the position of king. (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown)

II. He gave them abundant provisions and took many wives for them.
A. The NIV reads as above indicating Rehoboam took many wives for his sons.

B. The AKJV reads, “And he (Rehoboam) desired many wives.”

**Conclusion:**

I. Rehoboam’s success was short-lived.

   A. In the fifth (5th) year of Rehoboam’s reign, Pharaoh Shishak removed his wealth and power showing him how weak he really was. (Hicks)

II. Rehoboam considered attempting to retake by military force the sovereignty which he had foolishly squandered, but God forbade this course of action. (See Matthew Henry.)

   A. The division of the kingdom was permanent.

   B. There was no remedy for Jeroboam’s blunders.

III. Jeroboam rushed head long into apostasy.

   A. God meant nothing to Jeroboam.

   B. Consolidating and making secure his power and kingdom were all that mattered to Jeroboam.

IV. The priests and Levites and certain other Israelites remained loyal to God albeit to have done otherwise was not a practical, viable option.
V. Rehoboam indulged himself with many wives as his father Solomon had done.

VI. Rehoboam acted wisely in respect to fortifying and strengthening control over his remaining territory.

A. Perhaps he had learned something through the years.

B. Nobody, it has been said, is all bad!
Questions

2 Chronicles 11:1-23

1. Coffman wrote, “It was ____________ for ______________ to ______________ from the ______________ ______________ he had already made.”

2. What blunders have you made from which you have found no way to recover? _______________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

3. If Rehoboam had gone to war with Jeroboam, who would have won? In your opinion, what would have happened then? ______
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

4. Comparatively speaking, how large was the army Rehoboam mustered? ____________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________
5. Why did Benjamin side with Judah instead of Ephraim? 
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

6. When and how was Abijah’s prophecy (1 Kings 11:29-40) fulfilled?  
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

7. Who was Shemaiah?  Give all the information you can about Shemaiah. 
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

8. Why, in your opinion, did Judah believe and follow God’s word through Shemaiah?  
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
9. What is the significance of the phrase, “man of God”? _______
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

10. Did Rehoboam’s not attacking Jeroboam on this occasion end the military conflict between North and South? Explain your answer. ________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

11. Why did Rehoboam fortify certain towns in Judah and Benjamin? ____________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

12. Why did the priests and Levites side with Rehoboam? ______
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

13. In what ways did Jeroboam depart from the way of the Lord? What steps did Jeroboam take in departing from God? ________
14. Why did Jeroboam depart from the way of the Lord? __________

15. What did the priests and Levites sacrifice by moving south? __________

16. What did the priests and the Levites gain by moving south? __________

17. “Those from every _____________ of _____________ who _____________ their _____________ on _____________ the _____________, the _____________ of _____________, followed the _____________ to _____________ to offer _____________ to the _____________, the _____________ of their _____________.”
18. Whom or what are you following in life? Answer thoughtfully.
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

19. Why is it said that the priests, Levites and faithful Israelites supported Rehoboam for “three years”? What is the significance of the phrase “three years”? _____________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

20. In your view, what kind of person was Rehoboam? ________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

21. How was Rehoboam related to Mahalath and Abihail who became his wives? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________

22. How many wives and concubines did Rehoboam have? Was this pleasing to God? ___________________________________  
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________  

23. What led to Abijah’s being selected as the “chief prince” and later king? Was he the best qualified? . . . Rehoboam’s firstborn? ___________________________________  
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________  

24. In what ways, according to verse 23, did Rehoboam act wisely? Why were these actions wise? _____________________  
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________  

25. What lessons, principles to live by, have you learned from your study of 2 Chronicles 11? ____________________________  
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________  