

# CHAPTER 11

We are here going on with the history of Rehoboam.

- I.** His attempt to recover the ten tribes he has lost, and the letting fall of that attempt in obedience to the divine command (v. 1-4).
- II.** His successful endeavours to preserve the two tribes that remained (v. 5-12).
- III.** The resort of the priests and Levites to him (v. 13-17).
- IV.** An account of his wives and children (v. 18-23).

## <410>2 CHRONICLES 11:1-12

### REHOBOAM FORBIDDEN TO MAKE WAR

How the ten tribes deserted the house of David we read in the foregoing chapter. They had formerly sat loose to that family (<400>2 Samuel 20:1, 2), and now they quite threw it off, not considering how much it would weaken the common interest and take Israel down from that pitch of glory at which it had arrived in the last reign. But thus the *kingdom* must be corrected as well as the *house* of David.

- 1.** Rehoboam at length, like a bold man, raises an army, with a design to reduce the revolters, v. 1. Judah and Benjamin were not only resolved to continue their allegiance to him, but ready to give him the best assistance they could for the recovery of his right. Judah was his own tribe, that owned him some years before the rest did; Benjamin was the tribe in which Jerusalem, or the greatest part of it, stood, which perhaps was one reason why that tribe clave to him.
- 2.** Yet, like a conscientious man, when God forbade him to prosecute this design, in obedience to him he let it fall, either because he revered the divine authority or because he knew that he should not prosper if he should go contrary to God's command, but instead of retrieving what was lost would be in danger of losing what he had. It is dangerous undertaking any thing, but especially undertaking a war, contrary to the will of God. God calls him (v. 3), *Rehoboam the son of Solomon*, to intimate that this was

determined for the sin of Solomon, and it would be to no purpose to oppose a decree that had gone forth. They *obeyed the words of the Lord*; and though it looked mean, and would turn to their reproach among their neighbours, yet, because God would have it so, they laid down their arms.

**3.** Like a discreet man, he fortified his own country. He saw it was to no purpose to think of reducing those that had revolted. A few good words might have prevented their defection, but now all the forces of his kingdom cannot bring them back. The think is done, and so it must rest; it is his wisdom to make the best of it. Perhaps the same young counsellors that had advised him to answer them roughly urged him to fight them, notwithstanding the divine inhibition; but he had paid dearly enough for being advised by them, and therefore now, we may suppose, his aged and experienced counsellors were hearkened to, and they advised him to submit to the will of God concerning what was lost, and to make it his business to keep what he had. It was probably by their advice that,

**(1.)** He fortified his frontiers, and many of the principal cities of his kingdom, which, in Solomon's peaceable reign, no care had been taken for the defence of.

**(2.)** He furnished them with good stores of victuals and arms, v. 11, 12. Because God forbade him to fight, he did not therefore sit down sullenly, and say that he would do nothing for the public safety if he might not do that, but prudently provided against an attack. Those that may not be conquerors, yet may be builders.

## <4113> 2 CHRONICLES 11:13-23

### THE PRIESTS ADHERE TO REHOBOAM

See here,

**I.** How Rehoboam was strengthened by the accession of the priests and Levites, and all the devout and pious Israelites, to him, even all that were true to their God and their religion.

**1.** Jeroboam cast them off, that is, he set up such a way of worship as he knew they could not in conscience comply with, which obliged them to withdraw from his altar, and at the same time he would not allow them to

go up to Jerusalem to worship at the altar there; so that he totally *cast them off from executing the priest's office*, v. 14. And very willing he was that they should turn themselves out of their places, that room might be made for those mean and scandalous persons whom he *ordained priests for the high places*, v. 15. Compare <sup><1123></sup>1 Kings 12:31. No marvel if he that cast off God cast off his ministers; they were not for his purpose, would not do whatever he might bid them do, would not *serve his gods, nor worship the golden image which he had set up*.

**2.** They thereupon *left their suburbs and possessions*, v. 14. Out of the lot of each tribe the Levites had cities allowed them, where they were comfortable provided for and had opportunity of doing much good. But now they were driven out of all their cities except those in Judah and Benjamin. One would think their maintenance well settled, and yet they lost it. It was a comfort to them that the law so often reminded them that the *Lord was their inheritance*, and so they should find him when they were turned out of their house and possessions. But why did they leave their possessions?

**(1.)** Because they saw they could do no good among their neighbours, in whom (now that Jeroboam set up his calves) the old proneness to idolatry revived.

**(2.)** Because they themselves would be in continual temptation to some base compliances, and in danger of being drawn insensibly to that which was evil. If we pray, in sincerity, not to be led into temptation, we shall get and keep as far as we can out of the way of it.

**(3.)** Because, if they retained their integrity, they had reason to expect persecution from Jeroboam and his sons. The priests they made for the devils would not let the Lord's priests be long among them. No secular advantages whatsoever should draw us thither, or detain us there, where we are in danger of making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

**3.** They *came to Judah and Jerusalem* (v. 14) and *presented themselves to Rehoboam*, v. 13, *margin*. Where should God's priests and Levites be, but where his altar was? Thither they came because it was their business to attend at the times appointed.

**(1.)** It was a mercy to them that they had a place of refuge to flee to, and that when Jeroboam cast them off there were those so near that would

entertain them, and bid them welcome, and they were not forced into the lands of the heathen.

(2.) It was an evidence that they loved their work better than their maintenance, in that they *left their suburbs and possessions in the country* (where they might have lived at ease upon their own), because they were restrained from serving God there, and cast themselves upon God's providence and the charity of their brethren in coming to a place where they might have the free enjoyment of God's ordinances, according to his institution. Poverty in the way of duty is to be chosen rather than plenty in the way of sin. Better live upon alms, or die in a prison, with a good conscience, than roll in wealth and pleasure with a prostituted one.

(3.) It was the wisdom and praise of Rehoboam and his people that they bade them welcome, though they crowded themselves perhaps to make room for them. Conscientious refugees will bring a blessing along with them to the countries that entertain them, as they leave a curse behind them with those that expel them. *Open the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth truth, may enter in;* it will be good policy. See ~~2311~~ Isaiah 26:1, 2.

4. When the priests and Levites came to Jerusalem all the devout pious Israelites of every tribe followed them. Such as *set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel*, that made conscience of their duty to God and were sincere and resolute in it, left the inheritance of their fathers and went and took houses in Jerusalem, that they might have free access to the altar of God and be out of the temptation to worship the calves, v. 16. Note,

(1.) That is best for us which is best for our souls; and, in all our choices, advantages for religion must take place of all outward conveniences.

(2.) Where God's faithful priests are his faithful people should be. If Jeroboam cast off God's ministers, every true-born Israelite will think himself obliged to own them and stand by them. *Forsake not the Levite, the out-cast Levite, as long as thou livest. When the ark removes do you remove and go after it,* ~~4188~~ Joshua 3:3.

5. They *strengthened the kingdom of Judah* (v. 17), not only by the addition of so many persons to it, who, it is likely, brought what they could of their effects with them, but by their piety and their prayers they procured a blessing upon the kingdom which was a sanctuary to them. See

~~3125~~ Zechariah 12:5. It is the interest of a nation to protect and encourage religion and religious people, and adds more than any thing to its strength. They made him and his people *strong three years*; for so long they *walked in the way of David and Solomon*, their *good way*. But when they forsook that, and so threw themselves out of God's favour and protection, the best friends they had could no longer help to strengthen them. We retain our strength while we cleave to God and our duty, and no longer.

**II.** How Rehoboam was weakened by indulging himself in his pleasures. He *desired many wives*, as his father did (v. 23), yet,

**1.** In *this* he was more wise than his father, that he does not appear to have married strange wives. The wives mentioned here were not only daughters of Israel, but of the family of David; one was a descendant from Eliab, David's brother (v. 18), another from Absalom, probably that Absalom who was David's son (v. 20), another from Jerimoth, David's son.

**2.** In *this* he was more happy than his father, that he had many sons and daughters; whereas we read not of more than one son that his father had. One can scarcely imagine that he had no more; but, if he had, they were not worth mentioning; whereas several of Rehoboam's sons are here named (v. 19, 20) as men of note, and such active men that he thought it his wisdom to *disperse them throughout the countries of Judah and Benjamin* (v. 23), either,

**(1.)** That they might not be rivals with his son Abijah, whom he designed for his successor, or rather,

**(2.)** Because he could repose a confidence in them for the preserving of the public peace and safety, could trust them with fenced cities, which he took care to have well victualled, that they might stand him in stead in case of an invasion. After-wisdom is better than none at all; nay, they say, "Wit is never good till it is bought;" though he was dearly bought with the loss of a kingdom.