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Rehoboam Received Many Blessings
Second Chronicles 11: 5-23

Rehoboam received many blessings DIG: Did Jeroboam act out of paranoia or conviction? Why did the priests and Levites migrate to the south? Why are there no "lost tribes" of Isra'el? How did those refugees strengthen public courage against Jeroboam's northern forces?

REFLECT: Would you be willing to lose all of your earthly possessions for your belief in God? Why? Why not? What would you do if you were forced to leave your job, your property or your family because of your faith? Do you believe that God would bless you for your faith?

**If the leaders of God's people imitated the ideal kings,
the nation would receive the blessing of political stability and strength.**

This material divides into three reports which are joined together by the common thread of divine blessing toward **the king**, as is generally the case in **Chronicles**.



Rehoboam Fortifies Judah: Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built up towns for defense in Judah: Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth Zur, Soko, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron. These were fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin. He strengthened their defenses and put commanders in them, with supplies of food, olive oil and wine. He put shields and spears in all the cities, and

made them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his (Second Chronicles 11:5-12 NIV).

To understand the significance of this report, we must remember that ancient Near Eastern royal propaganda in the cultures surrounding **Isra'el** often demonstrated the success of kings by counting their building projects. These building projects usually included Temple construction (as in the case of **Solomon**), was well as fortifications of **cities** (as we see here). This motif was so common in the ancient world that **the Chronicler** felt no need to start the implication that **Rehoboam's** fortifications demonstrated the blessing of **God**.

It is not possible to settle precisely when these **fortifications** occurred. The list of **cities** does not focus on **Rehoboam's** northern border and may therefore reflect a time early in **his** reign before troubles with the north began to rise **(First Kings 14:30)**. Even so, it is possible that these **fortifications** took place throughout **Rehoboam's** reign. The last portion of this section **(Second Chronicles 11:18-23)**, certainly covers events throughout **Rehoboam's** life. In all events, the proximity of this report to **Rehoboam's** reaction to the prophecy of **Shemaiah the man of God (Second Chronicles 11:1-4)**, indicates that **the Chronicler** attributed **the king's** successful **fortifications** to **his** submission to **Shemaiah** (**to see link click Dc – A House Divided: Rehoboam's plan for war averted**). This report certainly would have attracted the interest of **the Chronicler's** post-exilic readers. Their military vulnerability must have led many to wonder how they could find security in their day. The example of **Rehoboam** made this path plain. **Fortification** of **Judah** would come if they submit to the prophetic word.[337]

Rehoboam received many defectors from the north: The second illustration of **God's** blessing for **Rehoboam's** response to **the prophet Shemaiah** is the support **he** received from **the northern defectors**. On several occasions **the Chronicler** reported that faithful **northern Israelites** gave **their** support to the kings of **Jerusalem (Second Chronicles 13:8-11, 15:9,** and **20:10-20)**. The political division of the nation did not utterly destroy connections between the South and North. As these examples demonstrate, religious affections of many **Northerners** led them to shift **their** political loyalties as well. The defection of **Northerners** began with **the priests and Levites**, but **their** example quickly led **other Northerners** to join **Rehoboam**, which resulted in tremendous **benefits** for **the king**.

Rehoboam's support from priests and Levites: The priests and Levites

from all their districts in all Isra'el sided with him. The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests when he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made (2 Chron 11:13-15). The Chronicler didn't estimate the numbers of **priests and Levites** that **sided with Rehoboam,** because **he** mentioned that **they** came from **all throughout Isra'el,** representing all **the northern tribes**. From the time of Moses, the **Levitical** families lived without district territory, but **they** received portions of **land** throughout **the tribes**. **The Chronicler** noted the level of commitment from those **defectors** by mentioning that **they even abandoned their pasturelands and property and came to** join **Rehoboam**.

The reason for this defection is also noted. **The priests and Levites** were displaced from **their** services in **the North** when **Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of ADONAI. Jeroboam** had **appointed his own priests. The Chronicler** omitted the portion of **First Kings** that reports **Jeroboam's** worship centers at **Dan** and **Bethel** (see **Dd – Golden Calves at Dan and Bethel**). As **First Kings** explains, **Jeroboam** feared that permitting **his** people to worship in **Jerusalem** would eventually lead to a political reunification of the nation. **Chronicles** simply mentions that **Jeroboam** had erected **goat and calf idols** and this was unacceptable to **the priests and Levites** who defected. In fact, **the Chronicler** belittled **Jeroboam's golden calves** so much that **he** equated **them** with **the goat idols** so condemned in **Lev 17:7.**

At any rate, it is clear that those who defected to **Rehoboam** did so for religious, not political reasons. As we have seen, in many respects **the northern tribes** were justified in **their** rebellion against **Rehoboam's** tyranny (see **Dc – A House Divided: The decision**). **They** were not free; however, to turn from the true worship of **ADONAI** at **the Temple** in **Jerusalem**. Like the post-exilic readers of **Chronicles**, **they** were obligated to proper worship despite **their** circumstances.

Rehoboam's support from other Northerners: Those from every tribe of Isra'el who set their hearts on seeking ADONAI, the God of Isra'el, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to ADONAI, the God of their ancestors (2 Chron 11:16 NIV). The Chronicler widened **his**

view for a moment and mentioned that **the priests and Levites** were not alone. People **from every tribe of Isra'el** followed **their** example and came **to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to ADONAI.** To highlight the character of those **defectors the Chronicler** mentioned that **they** came to worship **the God of their ancestors**. This traditional terminology characterized **their** worship as true and acceptable in contrast with the false worship begun by **Jeroboam**. Moreover, **the Chronicler** noted that **they** had **their hearts on** sincerely **seeking God** for **His** blessing. Those **defectors** were the faithful **Israelites** whose **hearts** were devoted to pursuing the worship of **God** as **He** had ordained it. Thus, there are no "lost tribes" of **Isra'el**.

Rehoboam's benefits: **They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam, son of Solomon** for **three years, following the ways of David and Solomon during this time (Second Chronicles 11:17 NIV). The Chronicler** closed with an explicit statement of **his** main purpose in this section. **He** first noted that **the defectors strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam**. The event was a great blessing to all of **Judah**. This historical fact certainly encouraged the post-exilic readers to reflect on what benefits would come to them as they responded appropriately to the prophetic wordand welcomed the faithful from **the North** in their day. **The defectors** benefited **Rehoboam for three years** so long as he was **following the ways of David and Solomon.** After that, **Rehoboam's** situation would change for the worse (see **Di – Rehoboam King of Judah**). At this time, however, **Rehoboam** imitated the ideal **kings David** and **Solomon** and tasted the widespread national support similar to that of the united monarchy. The lesson for the readers was plain enough. **David** and **Solomon** served as ideals for **his** readers to follow. If the leaders of **God's people** imitated the ideal **kings**, as **Rehoboam** did, the nation would receive the blessing of political stability and strength.[338]

Rehoboam's Enlarged family: **Rehoboam married Mahalath, who was the daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. She bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham. Then he married Ma'acah daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. Rehoboam loved Ma'acah daughter of Absalom more than any of his other wives and concubines. In all, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters (Second Chronicles 11:18-21). The Chronicler** added yet a third illustration of the

blessings **Rehoboam** received because of **his** submission to **the prophet Shemaiah.** At this point, **he** focused on the increase of **Rehoboam's** family. Two of **Rehoboam's** wives are mentioned by name: **Mahalath** and **Ma'acah,** the one **Rehoboam loved more. Their sons** were named as well. Then **the Chronicler** calculated the total. **Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.** The large numbers of **children** were signs of **God's** favor toward **Rehoboam**.

Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maakah as crown prince among his brothers, in order to make him king. He acted wisely, dispersing some of his sons throughout the districts of Judah and Benjamin, and to all the fortified cities. He gave them abundant provisions and took many wives for them (Second Chronicles 11:22-23). To close off this section, **Chronicles** also mentions that **Rehoboam acted wisely** with regard to **his sons**. In contrast to the opening episode of the king's reign (see **Dc – A House Divided: Right and wrong advice**), **he** is now characterized as **a wise king**. **His** wisdom was illustrated in **his** appointment of **Abijah** as successor to the throne, and the distribution of territories to **his** other **sons**. By making these arrangements, **Rehoboam** spared the next generation from the turmoil often associated with the transfer of power. The increase of **Rehoboam's** family and the security **he** provided the next generation spoke directly to the needs of the post-exilic readers. They lived in a day of many uncertainties. If the nation would adhere to prophetic instruction, it would enjoy the kind of prosperity and security that **Rehoboam** experienced at this time.[339]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that you bless those who love and follow **You** with the greatest blessing there could be – an eternal loving relationship with **You**! **For God Himself has** said: **I will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5c). You** are with me now to help and to guide, and **Yeshua** is preparing an eternal home for me with **You** in heaven**. Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you may also be (John 14:1-3)**. How wonderful heaven will be! My trials now will seem so insignificant compared to the great eternal joys of heaven! **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** May I never stray from keeping my heart and*

*eyes fully fixed on the joy of **Your** eternal love as I praise and worship **You** throughout all eternity! In the holy name of **Yeshua** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*