

I Kings Lesson 15

I Kings Chapter 15

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Memory verses for this week: **Tit 2:1** But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: **Tit 2:2** That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Introduction:

In our study on Chapter 14, we discussed how judgment fell on Israel, first to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom who were under Jeroboam. Later, judgment fell on Judah in the southern kingdom which was ruled by Solomon's son Rehoboam. Neither of these two kings really served the Lord properly and the sin of the kings and the whole nation of Israel brought the judgment of God upon them.

In chapter 15 we have an abstract of history of two of the kings of Judah, Abijam and Asa. Abijam's reign was short and evil. Asa, who reigned well and long. In the northern kingdom, two of the kings of Israel were Nadab and Baasha. Nadab was the son of Jeroboam, and Baasha the destroyer of Jeroboam's house.

I. The Kings of Judah

1Ki 15:1 *Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.*

1Ki 15:2 *Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.*

Abijam followed after King Jeroboam and he followed after the wrong example given by Jeroboam. Abijam is called Abijah in 2 Chronicles 11:20-22. This is not unusual in the Bible to find names changed. Abram changed to Abraham, Jacob changed to Israel, and Saul changed to Paul. The clue is to be found in the meaning of the name. Abijah means "Jehovah is my father" while Abijam means "father of the sea." Verse 1 gives us the time of his reign. Rehoboam reigned seventeen years (2 Chronicles 12:13) and died during his eighteenth year.

2Ch 12:13 *So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess.*

Abijam had a short reign on the throne. Verse 2 tells us the length of Abijam's reign was only three years. It makes you wonder if it was cut short because of sin? Verse 2 also reveals some of his ancestry. Abishalom is Absalom, that beautiful, smooth-tongued, treacherous son of King David. Maachah is Absalom's powerful queen granddaughter, the wife of Rehoboam.

1Ki 15:3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

1Ki 15:4 Nevertheless for David's sake did the LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem:

1Ki 15:5 Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Verse 3 goes right into the sinful character of Abijam's reign. He followed the wrong example set by his father: "The sins of his father," as we studied last week in 1 Kings 14:22-24

1Ki 14:22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

1Ki 14:23 For they also built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.

1Ki 14:24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

If he had been wise, he would have patterned himself after King David, who set a godly example for his descendants and his people. Just as King David, we, too, should be godly examples. We quote this verse in Matthew a lot, but it is God's desire for us to set good examples to the world about us.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1Ki 15:6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

1Ki 15:7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

It was not a peaceful reign for Abijam, as there were constant wars during his reign. The one bright spot in his life is to be found in 2 Chronicles 13:2-20.

2Ch 13:2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.

2Ch 13:3 And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour.

2Ch 13:4 And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel;

2Ch 13:5 Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

2Ch 13:6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord.

2Ch 13:7 And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them.

2Ch 13:8 And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye be a great multitude, and there are with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods.

2Ch 13:9 Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of other lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, the same may be a priest of them that are no gods.

2Ch 13:10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites wait upon their business:

2Ch 13:11 And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also set they in order upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him.

2Ch 13:12 And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

2Ch 13:13 But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.

2Ch 13:14 And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets.

2Ch 13:15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

2Ch 13:16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand.

2Ch 13:17 And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men.

2Ch 13:18 Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers.

2Ch 13:19 And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Bethel with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof.

2Ch 13:20 Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died.

Like so many men, Abijam seemed to start well, but soon departed from God. His grandfather Solomon was one who was so strong early in life, but became less and less faithful as his years progressed. Perhaps Abijam tried to serve two masters? This will not work for anyone.

Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Had he tried to buy the blessings of God? (See verse 15)

1Ki 15:15 And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

In the New Testament, Simon tried to buy the power of God from the apostles.

Act 8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

Act 8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

Act 8:20 *But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.*

Act 8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

1Ki 15:8 And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

1Ki 15:9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

1Ki 15:10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

As we read of man after man, he faced the end of his reign. His life was short and he was buried in the city of David. His son Asa reigned in his stead. Here was one of the few kings who were pleasing in God's sight. Asa followed after the right example.

Asa began his reign in the 20th year of Jeroboam's reign and he reigned a long time, 41 years was he in charge there in Jerusalem. His ancestry is given there in verse 10. Asa was the son of Abijam, and the grandson of Rehoboam and Maachah. Maachah was the daughter of Tamar, the only daughter of Absalom.

1Ki 15:11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.

1Ki 15:12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

1Ki 15:13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.

How refreshing to read verse 11. It says Asa did that was right in the eyes of the Lord. Like King David, he was a righteous character during his reign. (See also 2 Chronicles 14 & 15)

He followed David, the right example. Note the differences in what he did compared to the ones before him. First he removed the sodomites. Asa was obedient to the Scriptures:

Leviticus 18:26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you.

Leviticus 18:29 For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people.

Next Asa removed the idols.

Deuteronomy 11:16-17 Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; And then the LORD'S wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit; and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

Asa also removed the Queen mother. (God never established the office for a Queen of Israel.) The idol of the groves was Asherah, the goddess of fertility. Asherah is derived from the Assyrian Ashtoreth. Abominable immorality was practiced in this worship. Godly courage and strength are needed for success in God's service, and Asa demonstrated those traits.

Deuteronomy 31:6 Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Psalms 68:35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.

1Ki 15:14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.

1Ki 15:15 And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.

As most men, he also had some failure in his reign. It says the high places were not removed. These high places were for the worship of God, but he should have removed them. God established His altar at His temple to be the only place of worship.

1 Samuel 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

God was pleased with Asa and it says his heart was perfect with the Lord all of his days. Because of this, we see the prosperity and devotion of his reign. We too are able to prepare dedicated things of silver and gold for the honor of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 3:11-16 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

*1Ki 15:16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.
1Ki 15:17 And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.*

While Asa walked pleasing to the Lord, there were still wars in King Asa's time. We as Christians need to know we too will face battles in our walk day by day. We have Satan who is against us and anything that stands for righteousness.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
Eph 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;
Eph 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;
Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.
Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:
Eph 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;
Eph 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,
Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

I think it is important to notice in Ephesians that all that armour is on the front side of the body. God wants us to be strong in courage and going forth in battle, not turning and running when a little skirmish comes up.

Baasha was king of Israel in the northern kingdom, and he was a threat to Asa and the kingdom of Judah. Ramah was built 5 or 6 miles north of Jerusalem and

it's purpose was to blockade Jerusalem and Judah.

1Ki 15:18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

1Ki 15:19 There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

1Ki 15:20 So Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

Asa showed some unbelief and lack of faith in God as we read about in verse 18 and 19. He misuses all of national wealth. He has his servants take the money down to use on the king of Syria. Basically this was used for bribery of the Syrian king. Benhadad responds and makes an unholy alliance with King Asa.

Note: This reminds us of the CARNAL WEAPONS that are being used in God's work today. We should do God's work God's way, and trust the results to Him!

Here was a man who had faith, but had a moment of weakness and turned for help in the world. We need to understand that WHATEVER we are facing, God can provide. We may not understand, but God knows all about our situation.

1Ki 15:21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

1Ki 15:22 Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

1Ki 15:23 The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.

1Ki 15:24 And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

When King Baasha heard of the alliance Asa had made with Benhadad, it says he left off of the building of Ramah. They attack Ramah and it is demolished. They took the stones and timber of the city and built the cities of Geba and Mizpah built. Asa's scheme was a success, but it earned the displeasure of God.

We need to think about what we are doing, and make sure what we do is not in conflict with the word of God. In the end, Asa had a problem. Verse 23 says he had diseased feet. Rather than looking to the Lord for help, he turned to the physicians. Sometimes that is how we are. We try everything and then turn to the Lord. We should pray first and seek the Lord, and then use the physicians if needed. Here in II Chronicles it says he NEVER sought the Lord on this issue.

2Ch 16:12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

2Ch 16:13 And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

He put his faith in physicians instead of the Lord. It is likely he could not walk. Many today cannot walk with God because they have been made spiritually lame by sin. After a long and successful reign, King Asa came to the end of his reign after 41 years.

II. The Kings of Israel

1Ki 15:25 And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

1Ki 15:26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

Note: There were 8 dynasties in Israel, but only one in Judah. Nadab was the son of Jeroboam who came into power in the second year of Asa's reign in the southern kingdom. Verse 25 records that he reigned only 2 years. The example of his father set was bad and he followed after it and did evil. In the northern kingdom, there is no record that God was pleased with a single one of the kings.

1Ki 15:27 And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.

1Ki 15:28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

1Ki 15:29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

1Ki 15:30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

Baasha was the son of Ahijah, and he conspired against King Nadab. Baasha was able to destroy the house of Jeroboam.

This fulfills the prophecy of 1 Kings 14:9-11.

1Ki 14:9 But hast done evil above all that were before thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me behind thy back:

1Ki 14:10 Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

1Ki 14:11 Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Baasha establishes a new dynasty. We can learn from this over and over about sin. It is a warning to all: sin provokes God to anger.

Psa 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

1Ki 15:31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1Ki 15:32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

1Ki 15:33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.

1Ki 15:34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

The bible records about Baasha's wicked ways. In this case, God uses evil to destroy evil. Baasha abolished a sinful family, but did nothing to abolish his own sins. We know that God can direct even the heart of an evil king to accomplish His will and His purposes.

* Additional Comments added by E.L. Bynum in Dec. 2013.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.

