



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
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1 KINGS 15:1-24

Related Topics: Divided Kingdom; Jeroboam; Rehoboam; Abijah; Asa; Idolatry; homosexual prostitutes; Asherah; Baasha; Buying Security with things consecrated to God; God's loving Correction; Blowing off God's Message; Blasting God's Messenger; Finishing Well; Fresh Faith; Nadab; Elah; Zimri; Suicide; Omri; Ahab; Jezebel

Chapter 15

The chapter begins in the Southern kingdom Judah.

¹Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam began to reign over Judah. ²He reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. ³And he walked in all the sins that his father did before him, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father.

⁴Nevertheless, for David's sake the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem, ⁵because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Let's start with the Holy Spirit's reference to King David.

It is interesting to see how many times David's name appears in Kings and Chronicles

QUOTE: F.B Meyer *How long after David's sun had set did the light of his life shine over his house.*

Because David Loved God so much; Worshipped God so fervently, the glow of his life remained upon his family line for many generations.

KEY APPLICATION: What we enjoy and have as Christians is the result of those who have gone before us and have prayed for us and given of themselves. What we have here as a fellowship is because there have been people that prayed for a work of God here and looked forward to a work of God here.

QUOTE: F.B. Meyer — *We are probably all inheriting more than we know from the prayers and tears of those who have gone before us.*

Our relationship with God has long term effects for years after us. I want my life and this fellowship to leave such a legacy!

Now there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

This war was an ongoing series of battles and skirmishes between the Northern and Southern kingdoms. The author states the conflict in these terms to emphasize the connection between and the hostility between the houses of Rehoboam and Jeroboam that began with the events of **1 Kings 12**.

2 Chronicles 13 fills in more details about the reign of Abijam and in particular this war. He is called Abijah in Chronicles. It tells us how there was war between Jeroboam, king of Israel and Abijam, king of Judah, and how Abijam challenged the illegitimacy of Jeroboam's kingdom.

2 Chronicles 13:4-12 *"Hear me, O Jeroboam and all Israel! ⁵Ought you not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant.... ⁸"And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David, because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for*

gods. ⁹Have you not driven out the priests of the Lord, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made priests for yourselves like the peoples of other lands? Whoever comes for ordination with a young bull or seven rams becomes a priest of what are no gods. ¹⁰But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him. We have priests ministering to the Lord who are sons of Aaron, and Levites for their service.¹¹ . . . For we keep the charge of the Lord our God, but you have forsaken him. ¹²Behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the Lord, the God of your fathers, for you cannot succeed.”

Jeroboam responded with a surprise attack, and victory seemed certain for Israel over Judah, but Abijam cried out to the LORD, and God won a victory for Judah that day.

2 Chronicles 13:18 says of that war, *Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.*

Yet Chronicles also tells us that in the midst of his victory and good leadership for Judah, he never had the relationship with the LORD he should have had. **Verse 13** proves that he had sanctioned idolatry.

REMEMBER — God does not measure lives on the basis of human success or achievement. God looks on the heart. It should be the great desire of our hearts that that Jesus would motivate, influence, and receive the glory for all that we do.

⁷The 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. ⁸And Abijam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his place.

⁹In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa began to reign over Judah, ¹⁰and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. From 910 to 869 b.c.

His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom.

¹¹And Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as David his father had done. ¹²He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land

These state-sanctioned homosexual idol-temple prostitutes were introduced into Judah during the reign of Rehoboam (1 Kings 14:24). Asa's father Abijam didn't remove these perversions and idols, but King Asa did

and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

¹³He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah.

Asherah — A female pagan deity believed to give fertility to crops, animals and humans. Worship of this goddess involved every kind of sexual sin.

abominable image — The Hebrew word is closer in meaning to frightening, horrible, or abominable. Paul says this in regards to things sacrificed to idols.

1 Cor. 10:19-20 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God.

I think of some of the demonic imagery in today's movies. I often wonder, what are these guys into to come up with such frightening creatures. We might also read ***abominable*** as "*obscene*." Some commentators believe it was some sort of phallic symbol consistent with the fertility cult of Asherah."

And Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron.

Asa is a man that we will study in greater detail in Chronicles. He was dedicated to the Lord. Even to the extent of dealing with his own mother.

Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Our love for Jesus must be so intense that our love for anyone or anything else is hatred in comparison to our love for him

¹⁴But the high places were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was wholly true to the Lord all his days.

NOTE: Even though he did not complete the task, his heart was perfect towards the Lord. Not morally perfect — but fully towards the Lord — loyal to the true and living God. The Lord looks on the heart above all else. Let that be a comfort to you when people condemn you or misunderstand you. Now we must never say without prayerful consideration — *“The Lord knows my heart.”* We must always do as the psalmist —

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! ²⁴ And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

If you have sincerely done that and you have a clean conscience before the Lord, know that no matter what man might say, the Lord knows your heart! Having said that, Asa was strong in regards to idolatry, but weak in faith when it came to the threats against Judah’s national security that came from Israel.

¹⁶And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

The rule of Asa continued into the rule of Baasha, the third king of the northern kingdom. The struggle for dominance between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah rolls on.

¹⁷Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

Baasha was able to gain the upper hand in the days of Asa because he effectively blocked a main route into Judah at the city of Ramah. He hoped this military and economic pressure on Judah would force Asa into significant concessions.

¹⁸Then 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 gave them into the hands of his servants.

REMEMBER — these treasures were dedicated to the Lord for the worship of God in the house of the Lord. The treasures of the king's house represented the glory of the Lord in His goodness to Israel.

And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who lived in Damascus, saying, ¹⁹“Let there be a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me.” ²⁰And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel and conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. ²¹And when Baasha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah, and he lived in Tirzah. ²²Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah, none was exempt, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building, and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

Asa took things that were reserved solely for the glory and worship of God to buy help from Ben-Hadad, king of Syria. He not only took what belonged to the Lord, he did because he didn't believe in the loving protection of God for the throne of David

QUOTE: Matthew Poole — *He did this out of carnal fear and distrust of*

that God whose power and goodness he had lately experienced.

He didn't need to take those treasures. He didn't have to buy protection from the king of Syria. He only needed to look to the God of Israel; trust in the Lord.

Here's the critical thing, Asa probably thought he was doing a good thing here, as good a thing as ridding the land of the *male cult prostitutes* and removing all the *idols* that his fathers had made and removing his mother from being queen mother because she had made that *abominable* image for Asherah. He was trying to preserve the throne of David. But in his fear and unbelief he doubly insulted God.

2 Chronicles 16 tells us that this didn't exactly thrill God. God sent the prophet Hanani, not to blast Asa, but to inform and instruct Asa, so that Asa could repent and believe!

***2 Chronicles 16:7b-9** "Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you. ⁸Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he gave them into your hand. ⁹For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars."*

Asa did not respond well to this message. When you have a problem with God's message it's because you have a problem with God. If you have a problem with God you are going to have a problem with God's messenger!

***2 Chronicles 16:10** ¹⁰Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time.*

He not only doubly insulted God, but when God threw Asa a lifeline, Asa threw it back in the face of God. He refused to hear God's correction and then punished God's messenger. Anyone here ever done that? God sends you a lifeline, gives you a loving and merciful word of correction, and then you blow it off and blast the messenger? (Husbands? — Kids?)

²³Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

2 Chronicles 14-16 provides many more details regarding the reign of Asa.

- He encouraged the southern kingdom to seek the Lord: *He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment.* (2 Chronicles 14:4)
- He built fortified cities and presided over a long period of peace (2 Chronicles 14:6)
- When faced with a huge Ethiopian army that came against Judah he sought the Lord and found victory (2 Chronicles 14:9-13)
- Asa led a national re-commitment to the covenant (2 Chronicles 15:10-15)

But in his old age he was diseased in his feet. ²⁴And 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 place.

Some think that Asa's foot ailment was gout

QUOTE: Wiseman — *"but gout was uncommon in Palestine and ancient Egypt and it is more likely, in very of Asa's age, the severity of the disease and death within two years, to have been a peripheral obstructive vascular disease with ensuing gangrene."*

The Holy Spirit saw fit to give an interesting detail in regards to Asa's illness and death in **2 Chronicles**

***2 Chronicles 16:12** In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but sought help from physicians.*

The very next thing that we read is

***2 Chr 16:13** And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the forty-first year of his reign.*

What is the point? It is not that Asa sought help from doctors. It is that he never sought the Lord. It is not wrong to go to doctors. They are a blessing, a gift from God. But, it is wrong if my faith and hope is in doctors instead of God. If you have need of physical healing, then seek the Lord... even while you are in the doctor's office.

The tragedy of Asa's life is that in many ways he ruled well. He sought the LORD for many years, yet when he faced a real challenge of faith, when he was out of his depth, he acted in unbelief and fear. It was apparently within his ability to trust God to deal with idolatry. It was within his ability to trust God when facing a massive invading force from Ethiopia. But when it came to his conflict with the Northern kingdom, he was overcome with fear and the possibility of falling to the 10 Northern Tribes. He wastes resources that belonged to God and the worship of God to find an earthly source of security. He didn't *trust in the Lord with all his heart*. He leaned on his own understanding — *I'm out matched by Baasha — I know what I can do — I can buy a military equalizer*.

If we want to finish well, we must always have fresh faith. We must always stay fresh in our relationship with the Lord. We need to recognize the areas of our life that are most susceptible to fear and unbelief and allow the Lord to speak to us about them.

Sadly, the last years of his life were marked by unbelief, hardness against God, oppression against his people, and disease. Age and time do not necessarily make us better; they only do if we continue to follow God in faith.

IN THE NEXT VERSE WE MOVE TO THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.

We actually **backtrack** to the king that preceded Baasha. We begin a **fast track** downhill from Nadab to Ahab.

Read ahead for next week