

1st Kings Chapter 15

- During this time in Israel's there were kings and common people on both sides of the divided kingdom, both of whom had departed from the Lord to serve idols.
 - The priests still continued with the temple ministry in Jerusalem.
 - During the 345 years from Rehoboam to Zedekiah only 8 of Judah's 19 kings were classified as "good", and of Israel's 20 kings none were called "good".
 - The focus of **1st & 2nd Kings** is primarily the Northern kingdom, whereas the focus of **1st & 2nd Chronicles** is mostly the Southern kingdom of Judah. Here in 1st Kings, Judah is mentioned for the most part only as they relate to issues with the Northern kingdom, the same is true in Chronicles that Israel is only mentioned as it relates to things happening in Judah.
 - As we get past the back and forth issues of the various kings and their respective reigns in these two chapters the story will begin to focus much more on the Northern kingdom and the prophets Elijah and Elisha who try to warn them of impending doom.
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V: 1 Reference point: **18th year of King Jeroboam**. As the history of the divided nation flips back and forth between the Southern kingdom of Judah and the Northern kingdom of Israel - it gets confusing only because they didn't have a common dating system like we do now.

- Abijam reigns from **913-910 BC**. **Time lines** often help to bring clarity and understanding as these different kingdoms are always referenced in relation to the reign of another king as it goes back and forth.
- Jeroboam reigns for 22 years, Rehoboam is gone now, his son is reigning, meaning that Rehoboam died 4 years before Jeroboam.

V: 2-3 He reigned a fairly short period of time, 3 years - and the reason given: **he walked in the sins of his father** - his heart was not "**perfect**" toward the Lord.

- He wasn't "**blameless**", he didn't follow the Lord "**wholeheartedly**" - which is being gracious if he walked in the pagan ways of his father.

V: 4-5 Abijam was only there because of God's grace towards David.

- Mention of David's sin concerning Uriah is for our sake, God see's him as forgiven and perfect.

- God is keeping his promise to David, that his descendants would continue to reign in Jerusalem.

V: 6-8 There was war between the Northern and Southern tribes through the reigns of Rehoboam, Abijam, and Asa who is now introduced as successor to Abijam who rests with his fathers and is given a decent burial.

2 Chronicles 13:2-20 In one particular battle, Abijah was set in battle against Jeroboam. While Abijah was giving a long winded speech - and not paying very good attention to the enemy; Jeroboam surrounded Judah in the field with his much larger army.

- Seeing their predicament Abijah cried out to God for help and God intervened on behalf of Judah giving them the victory - and over 500,000 men from the Northern kingdom were killed.
- The war between North and South is described with more detail in 1st and 2nd Chronicles.
- Abijam passes from the scene and his son Asa reigns in his place.

V: 9-15 In the 20th year of Jeroboam, still being used as the reference point, Asa began to reign in Jerusalem, which lasted 41 years - from 910-869 BC, obviously with God's blessing.

- Asa is the great grandson of king David, and has the distinction of being recorded as doing that which is right in the eyes of the Lord.
- Asa took the bold step of removing Maachah who is mentioned again, Asa's "mother" or actually his "grandmother", the "Queen mother" for her idolatry.

Asa did what Jesus talked about:

Matthew 10:37 "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

2 Chronicles 14:1-5 "1So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. 2And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God: 3For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: 4and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him."

Map

2 Chronicles 14:9-15 Not long after this Judah came under attack by over 1 million Ethiopians

2 Chronicles 14:11 “And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.”

- The Lord smote the Ethiopians and gave Judah a great victory.
- As Asa was returning from this victory God sends a prophet to speak to him:

2 Chronicles 15:2 “And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.” (Warning Asa...)

- Asa is described as having a heart that was perfect towards the Lord “all his days” and this had a good and purifying effect upon the nation.

V: 16-21 (Map) There had been war between Judah and Israel for many years, now Baasha, king of Israel sought to make Ramah (modern Er Ram) a fortress city to keep supplies from coming into Judah from the North - he was going to use this city to enforce an embargo, cutting off their supplies.

- Asa doesn't ask God for help, (25 years later) he develops his own strategy which includes robbing the Temple and God; he hires the Syrians to come against Baasha from farther north towards Dan, Galilee, and the Golan.
- His tactic works, Baasha quits Ramah and responds to the threat from the North; but this physical victory comes across as a spiritual defeat and compromise for Asa.

V: 22-24 Asa then drafts the nation to respond to Ramah and take all the stone and timber, the materials for fortification and brings them back to Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah, he fortifies these two cities, preparing for the next war.

- All of this takes place in the 36th year of Asa's reign, towards the end of his 41 year reign.
- It is noted that Asa suffered physically in his old age.

2 Chronicles 16:7-12 Asa ends up being rebuked by the prophet Hanani, Asa gets angry and throws him in jail, then God strikes Asa with a disease of his feet. Sadly Asa sought the help of physicians and not the Lord.

- The implication from this passage in 2 Chronicles is that had Asa sought the Lord, the Lord would have healed him and extended his reign.

Philippians 4:6-7 “⁶Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.
⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

1 Peter 5:7 “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

- Overall Asa was a good king, he sleeps with his fathers and is buried in the city of David, which is an honorable end.
- Jehoshaphat his son takes over as king. (“The Lord has Judged”)
- We’ll see later that Jehoshaphat was considered a good king as well.

V:25-26 Switching back to the Northern kingdom, and backing up a little historically.

- Nadab, Jeroboam’s son began his 2 year reign in the 2nd year of king Asa.
- Time line
- He was of low character, like his father and did evil in the sight of the Lord, causing Israel to sin.

V: 27-30 (Map) Baasha, of the tribe / house of Issachar conspires against Nadab and kills him and his whole family in fulfillment of the prophecy given to Jeroboam’s wife from the prophet Ahijah. God’s Word always comes true.

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.”

- Mention is made that they were laying a siege against Gibbethon, the same thing will be mentioned again later in Chapter 16.
- Gibbethon was currently in the hands of the Philistines, but Israel was trying to take it back, it was a Levitical city that belonged to the tribe of Dan. (**Joshua 19:43-45, 21:23**)

V: 31-34 Nadab’s short reign is recorded in the book of Chronicles. King Asa in Judah, and King Baasha now reigning in Tirzah for 24 years, from 908-886 BC, they are set up as rivals.

- Baasha was not really any different than Jeroboam or Nadab - he did evil in the sight of the Lord and led the nation into further sin.

This brings us to 1st Kings Chapter 16....

1st Kings Chapter 16

V: 1-7 The Word of the Lord through Jehu the prophet. “Jehu” means “The Lord is He”. Jehu is the son of Hanani, the prophet who speaks to King Asa.

- The fact that God is still speaking to these disobedient men is interesting.
- This is a testimony to the long suffering or patience of our God, in this we see His compassion and His mercy.
- If God is still speaking then there is still an opportunity to repent, to change course and do the right thing.

2 Peter 3:9 “... The Lord... is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- God says that He exalted or promoted Baasha to his present position as king.

Psalm 75:6-7 “⁶For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. ⁷But God is the judge: He putteth down one, and setteth up another.”

- God raised Baasha up, and now He’s going to take him down - because he walked in the idolatrous ways of Jeroboam provoking God to anger.
- Like Jeroboam’s family they will not see a decent burial, the dogs and vultures will eat their bodies.
- Baasha dies and his son Elah reigns in his place, waiting for the fulfillment of the prophesy of Jehu upon their household.
- They don’t have to wait too long.

V: 8-10 Reference point: 26th year of King Asa’s reign (886 BC) Elah begins his short 2 year reign.

- While in a drunken state he is assassinated by Zimri, one of his captains / servants

V: 11-14 At soon as Zimri sat upon the throne he went through and killed all of Baasha’s family and friends in fulfillment of God’s word.

V: 15-20 Zimri reigns for a week when the rest of the army figures out what has happened who had been encamped against the Philistines at Gibbethon, they

choose Omri as their king and return to take Tirzah which was the capital of the Northern Kingdom at that time.

- Zimri figures out that he's toast and went to the king's house and burned it down around himself.
- Zimri is described as walking in the ways of Jeroboam, meaning that things aren't improving.
- **Zimri ends up being best known for his short reign and treason.**

V: 21-22 After Omri begins to reign there is a division amongst the people along with another rival to the throne, Tibni - who dies leaving the Northern kingdom under Omri's reign.

V: 23-24 Omri begins his reign in the 31st year of Asa's reign, and he reigned for 12 years. (Time line)

- Omri initially reigned in Tirzah, but bought the hill of Samaria and moved the capital of the Northern kingdom to Samaria.

V: 25-28 That consistent phrase for all the kings of Israel: they "**wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him.**"

- Omri dies and his son Ahab reigns in his place.

V: 29-33 Again, King Asa of Judah is the point of reference, in the 38th year of his reign, Ahab begins his reign over Israel, now from Samaria.

- **Ahab did even worse than all the rest, including marrying Jezebel who we will see is a wicked woman, the most wicked woman described in the Bible, the daughter of a Zidonian king, together they worshipped Baal.**

V: 34 In the days of Ahab, Hiel - a Bethel-ite began to re-build Jericho.

- In those days, worshippers of Baal would at times take their new born children and place them in a clay jar, then build them into the walls of their homes, or in this case the walls to their city and the city gates.
- This practice was of course an abomination unto the Lord.
- This is a fulfilled prophecy all according to the Word of the Lord spoken by Joshua the son of Nun some 500 years prior.
- After conquering and destroying Jericho:

Joshua 6:26 "And Joshua adjured them at that time saying, cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall

lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it.”

- *As this chapter ends with this fulfilled prophesy, it is interesting to note how many fulfilled prophesies have been fulfilled in the last few chapters.*
- God tells Solomon that the kingdom will be taken from his descendants - and it is.
- Ahijah tells Jeroboam that he will receive the 10 Northern tribes - and he does.
- Ahijah tells Jeroboam that he'll lose it all and that his family will be destroyed - and it is.
- Jehu tells Baasha that he's done and his family will be destroyed like Jeroboam - and it is.
- As this chapter ends with Joshua's prophesy we're reminded of something else that Joshua testified to:

Joshua 23:14 “And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof.”

- This is all very exciting in light of other prophesies by Daniel, Ezekiel, and Isaiah about the times that we're living in right now.
- A number of currently prophetic events are unfolding even as we are gathered here this morning:

Isaiah 19:1-3a “¹The burden of Egypt. Behold, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt: and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. ²And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom. ³And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof...”

Isaiah 17:1 “The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.”

- Next week we'll be introduced to the prophet Elijah, and then to Elisha as we continue through the books of the kings.