

1 Kings Chapter 15 Commentary Verses 1-8

1Ki 15:1 ¶ "Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. 2 Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom."

Abishalom is another spelling of Absalom, a son of David. It has been pointed out, by J. Vernon McGee, that when a bad king's lineage is given, usually his mother's name is mentioned. Although this is not always the case, it is quite usual.

In this case it points out that God is still fulfilling his promise to keep one of the lineage of David on the throne. Currently over Judah, the kingdom has been rent into the northern and southern nations. Ten tribes serving under King Jeroboam, because of God's judicial judgment, for the sins of Solomon in marrying strange wives, and turning to idolatry in his old age.

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."

Abijam followed in the footsteps of his father, Jeroboam, in doing evil in the sight of God, and living in idolatry. This is a warning to us that we should do that which is right in the sight of God, or expect that we shall suffer God's judicial wrath, not only on ourselves but upon our children, as seen in the lineage of Jeroboam.

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: 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."

This simply tells us that King David's main fault in his life, the one that was blatant and stood out as a mark against him, was in the adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, and then having Uriah murdered. King David suffered much loss and had much grief the rest of his life after this happened. It was God's judicial judgment against him for this error in his life.

6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 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. 8 And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead."

Again, we are told that there was war between Jeroboam, king of the northern kingdom which is called Israel, and Rehoboam, king of the southern kingdom, which is called Judah, all their lives. When Rehoboam dies and Abijam his son reigns in his stead, the war continues between him and Jeroboam.

The war between Abijam and Jeroboam is an outright war, which we read of in Chronicles, where we have a much fuller explanation of what happened. **2Ch 13:1 ¶ Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. 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. 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. 4 And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; 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? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord. 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. 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. 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. 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: 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. 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. 13 ¶ But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them. 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. 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. 16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand. 17 And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men. 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. 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. 20 Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died. 21 But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters. 22 And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo."

Notice that Abijam's name here is Abijah. We believe this is an indication that he started out after the sins of his father, but his name was changed when he stood up for the Lord and his covenant promise to King David that one of his lineage would always be on the throne. God helped Abijah to conquer Jeroboam and gained much of Israel back under the reign of the King of Judah. Abijam only lived as king for three years and he died because he was an idolator as his father was and was not a good king. His son Asa reigned in his stead, and he will be a good king and follow God with all his heart.

We had pointed out in our study in chapter 14 that we believed that the Levites had continued in their continual worship of God in Jerusalem, keeping the ceremonial law as commanded. We see that confirmed here in Chronicles.

We will not expound upon the cited Chronicles text until we get to it in our study.

May God help us to be good kings to him and rule our lives under the Lordship of our King Jesus! Amen!