

1 Kings Chapter 15 Commentary

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!

9 ¶ "And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. 10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. 11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father. 12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 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. 14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days. 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. 16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days."

We notice that Asa's mother's name is the same as Abijam's mother. We also notice that we are told that Asa did as his father David. We point this put to say: it is sometimes very confusing to our minds how lineages are given. The terms mother and father are used in scripture to cover many generations of lineage sometimes. Mother may actually be grandmother, aunt, or just one who is of the lineage of the mother named. Father may be grandfather.

Asa, the good king, comes on the scene before Jeroboam king over Israel died. The name Asa means *healer*. Asa reigned in Jerusalem and did right in the sight of God, as did David his father. Thus, God is still keeping His promise to King David that the lineage of David would reign on the throne forever.

Asa did away with the sodomites and removed the idols his fathers had made. Asa does what we would call a purge of the southern kingdom over which he reigned. This is essential for the blessings of God and the prosperity of any nation. We notice the first thing he did was to remove the sodomites. We are not told exactly how Asa did this in this chapter, but if we go to **2Ch 15:13 "That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of**

Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman." We find that those who did not seek the Lord were put to death. Therefore, we can ascertain that Asa had the sodomites slain to remove the abomination from the nation and appease the wrath of God. We know some nations today that should practice this purging of the nation, starting with the United States of America.

King Asa removed all the idols from the land and destroyed them. He revoked the queenship of his mother (grandmother) because she was engaged in idolatry. Asa destroyed her idol, but the high places were not removed. We find out that God gave Asa opportunity to do these things in ***2Ch 14:1-7; 1 ¶ "So 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. 2 And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God: 3 For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: 4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. 5 Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. 6 And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest. 7 Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So, they built and prospered."***

We can apply this to ourselves in a personal way. We are all sinners by nature, but once we are reborn, we are required by God to remove all the idols from our hearts, minds and souls, that God may pour upon us the abundance of His blessings, as seen in ***1Co 5:6-8; 6 "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7 ¶ Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."*** And even more clearly in ***2Ti 2:19-21; 19 ¶ "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. 20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. 21 If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."*** We can also apply this principle to individual church congregations, associations, and denominations.

There was war between Kings Asa and Baasha all their days. We understand that this is not all out war, but skirmishes between them along their borders. There will be a big war near the end of King Asa's reign seen in ***2Ch 16:1 ¶ "In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah."***

How do we apply this principle to our lives as children of God? There is war between our new nature in Christ, and our old nature of sin, which we inherited from fallen mankind, simply by being born into the world.

We would note here that there was continual war between the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel. This is the picture of one nation, which is divided into two parts, fighting against each other. This shows us that this principle of infighting, among the people claiming to be children of God, still exists today. We point out that most of the troubles in churches come from within, not from the world outside. The devil has already got those outside the church in his grasp, wherefore, he is seeking to take away the joy and fellowship of God's people with one another.

Paul described this continual warfare for us in ***Ro 7:9-25; 9 "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. 12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. 13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 14 ¶ For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. 15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. 16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. 17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. 19 For the good that I***

would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

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

Baasha starts building a city to shut off traffic to King Asa attempting to overthrow the southern kingdom. Asa sends money to the king of Syria getting him to break his league with Baasha and become confederate with Asa. The king of Syria accepts this offer and begins to make war upon the northern kingdom, and Baasha has to leave off building the city and go fight for his own kingdom. Asa commands all of Judah to tear down the city of Ramah that Baasha had begun to build. He takes the things thereof and builds the cities of Geba and Mizpah.

We note that political allegiance in the world usually goes to the highest bidder. Although, we are sure that God providentially intervened to keep Asa and Judah safe, for the sake of the promise God made to King David. However, we find that God was not pleased with King Asa. Why? Because Asa did not trust fully in the Lord to be delivered and was punished for this as King David was punished for his sins with the sword being against his house for the rest of his life. Asa's punishment is seen in **2Ch 16:7-9; 7 ¶ "And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore, from henceforth thou shalt have wars."**

We notice that both kings received practically the same punishment. Asa had the further judicial judgment of being diseased in his feet in his old age. I believe this demonstrates to us: if we turn aside from following God to trusting in the flesh, our spiritual walks may be hindered, being diseased with sinful affections of the flesh. However, we remind one another, King David fully repented of his sins, and God forgave them and did not hinder his walk with God in this way.

This same principle is true in the life of every child of God. We cannot have a compact with God and the devil, as seen in **Lu 16:13 "No servant 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."** In other words: if we are children of God and servant to God and Christ, through the Holy Spirit in us, this is a spiritual servitude. Wherefore, we cannot resort to worldly, or political, means as a source of protection. Our protection is from the Lord. If worldly means are needed, God will provide them, timely, through His providential care.

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. 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. 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. 28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. 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: 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. 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? 32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days."

We were told in **1Ki 14:20** *"And the days which Jeroboam reigned were two and twenty years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead."* We see how man left to himself cannot do good.

Matthew Henry's Commentary: "We are now to take a view of the miserable state of Israel, while the kingdom of Judah was happy under Asa's good government. It was threatened that they should be as a reed shaken in the water (1Ki 14:15), and so they were, when, during the single reign of Asa, the government of their kingdom was in six or seven different hands, as we find in this and the following chapter. Jeroboam was upon the throne in the beginning of his reign and Ahab at the end of it, and between them were Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, and Omri, undermining and destroying one another. This they got by deserting the house both of God and of David."

After Baasha had slain Nadab, Baasha slew all the house of Jeroboam, fulfilling God's judicial judgment against Jeroboam for his sins which he made Israel to sin, even idolatry, which God had proclaimed through Ahijah the prophet back in **1Ki 14:7-11**; **7 ¶** *"Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, 8 And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes; 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: 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. 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."* This simply reminds us that God is faithful to do what He says he will.

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. 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."*

Baasha moved the capital of the northern kingdom to the city Tirzah, and it remained the capital city for a very long time. Tirzah was located in the southern territory occupied by the half tribe of Manasseh, not in the northern territory occupied by the other half of the tribe of Manasseh.

Baasha is a bad king and continues in the idolatry of Jeroboam, doing evil in the sight of the Lord. This is a continuing theme for the ten tribes of Israel, the northern kingdom, except for Jehu whose reign was mixed with good and bad. What a great warning to follow the commandment of God as it was reiterated by Jesus in **Mt 22:37-39**; **37** *"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."*

May God help the New Testament church to purge herself of all ungodliness, and abominations, before God, and walk in faithfulness to God until the return of Jesus Christ, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen!