

# 1 Kings 15 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[1 Kings Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

## THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

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(NOTE: Many consider Amaziah and Hezekiah as "good" kings)  
SEE ALSO:  
[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)  
[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)  
[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

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## 1 Kings 15:1 Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah.

- 1Ki 14:31 2Ch 13:1-22
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 12:16 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David; and his son Abijah became king in his place.

## ABIJAM SUCCEEDS REHOBOAM IN JUDAH

Note that 1 Kings 14:21-15:24 focuses on the Kings of Judah. 1 Kings. 15:25-16:33 then deals with the kings of Israel. Note that one must read 2Ch 13:1-22 to get a fuller picture of Abijam's reign.

**Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Abijam** ([see names below](#)) **became king over Judah** - Note that Abijam (Abijah 2Ch 13:1) is NOT the same Abijah who were Jeroboam's son (1Ki 14:1). **Abijam** was not Rehoboam's oldest son, but he was the son of his favorite wife Maachah. Names were important in the OT but did not always give an accurate assessment of character. **Abijah** means "Jehovah is my father," (used in 2Ch 11:20, 22, 2Ch 12:16, 2Ch 13:1-4,15,17,19, 20-22, 14:1) but he did not emulate the heavenly Father but his earthly father (1Ki 15:3). He is called **Abijam** ( 'my father is Yam.') in 1 Ki. 14:31; 1 Ki. 15:1; 1 Ki. 15:7; 1 Ki. 15:8. **Abijah** is the name retained in the lineage of the Messiah Matthew 1:7+ recording "Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asa."

**Warren Wiersbe** on **Abijam/Abijah** - He was from David's line through both parents, for David's infamous son Absalom was Abijah's paternal grandfather. Abijah may have had David's blood flowing in his veins, but he didn't have David's perfect heart beating in his breast. Abijah's father, Rehoboam, had kept up a running war with Jeroboam, and Abijah carried on the tradition. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**Dillard** has an interesting thought on the various names of Abijam noting that "Chronicles spells his name **Abijah**, which means 'Yahweh is my father.' Kings spells the name **Abijam**, which means 'my father is Yam.' Yam was a Canaanite sea-god. (**ED**: In Canaanite religion, Yam [Yamm, Yamu, or Yaw] was the god of the sea, chaos, and primordial waters. He was often depicted as a powerful and turbulent deity, associated with storms, floods, and untamed waters.) Could it be that he started out as Abijah, a follower of Yahweh, and ended up as Abijam, a follower of a false god?" (See [The Preacher's Commentary - Vol. 09: 1 and 2 Kings - Page 11](#))

**Iain Provan** points out that in chapter 15 "We remain for the moment in Judah, with Rehoboam's immediate successors. Abijam is the characteristically bad Judean king, indulging in the idolatry of Solomon's later years and of Rehoboam. Asa is the characteristically good Judean king, behaving relatively faithfully like David and the younger Solomon. These two between them set the pattern for all subsequent Judean kings, who are measured in terms of whether they have been "like David" or not." (See [1 & 2 Kings - Understanding the Bible Commentary Series - Page 78](#))

**Peter Pett**: We are never told the age of Abi-yam, but the Chronicler tells us that he had fourteen wives, twenty two sons and sixteen daughters (2 Chronicles 13:21), so that he was well matured when he began to reign, possibly approaching forty.

**Bob Utley**- "eighteenth year" 1 Kings 14:21 has "seventeen." The difference may be in the way the two kingdoms counted the reign of a king. See Edwin R. Thiele, See [The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings, p. 80](#).

**Warren Wiersbe** points out that "The Northern Kingdom of Israel had nine dynasties in about 250 years while the Southern Kingdom faithfully maintained the Davidic dynasty for 350 years, and that was the dynasty from which the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, would come (Matt. 1:1). With all of its faults, the kingdom of Judah was identified with the true and living God, practiced authorized worship in the temple, and had kings who came from David's family. Two of these kings are named in these chapters—Abijah and Asa." ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**ISBE on Abijah (aka Abijam)** - The son of Rehoboam, whom he succeeded on the throne of Judah (1 Chr. 3:10). He is also called Abijam (1 Kings 14:31; 15:1-8). He began his three years' reign (2 Chr. 12:16; 13:1,2) with a strenuous but unsuccessful effort to bring back the ten tribes to their allegiance. His address to "Jeroboam and all Israel," before encountering them in battle, is worthy of being specially noticed (2 Chr. 13:5-12). It was a very bloody battle, no fewer than 500,000 of the army of Israel having perished on the field. He is described as having walked "in all the sins of his father" (1 Kings 15:3; 2 Chr. 11:20-22). It is said in 1 Kings 15:2 that

"his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom;" but in 2 Chr. 13:2 we read, "his mother's name was Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." The explanation is that Maachah is just a variation of the name Michaiiah, and that Abishalom is probably the same as Absalom, the son of David. It is probable that "Uriel of Gibeah" married Tamar, the daughter of Absalom (2 Sam. 14:27), and by her had Maachah. The word "daughter" in 1 Kings 15:2 will thus, as it frequently elsewhere does, mean grand-daughter.

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Abijah in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - King **Abijah**, also called King **Abiah** or King **Abijam**, was the son of [King Rehoboam](#) and father of [King Asa](#). Abijah reigned for only three years (913–911 BC) in Judah before he died. Abijah was a wicked king: "He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been" (1 Kings 15:3). King Abijah attempted to reclaim the northern ten tribes of Israel as part of his kingdom, and so there was war between Abijah and [Jeroboam](#) throughout Abijah's lifetime (verse 6).

King Abijah had some victories over Israel to the north. 2 Chronicles 13 describes a battle in which Abijah and his 400,000 men triumphed over Jeroboam with his 800,000 men. King Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim and spoke out to Jeroboam and Israel about God's covenant with David, Jeroboam's rebellion against Rehoboam, and Jeroboam's ridding Israel of the Levites and allowing anyone to become a priest of false gods. Abijah concluded, "God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. People of Israel, do not fight against the Lord, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed" (2 Chronicles 13:12). The troops of Israel had come behind those of Judah to ambush them, intending to attack them from both front and rear. But the men from Judah cried out to God, the priests blew their trumpets, and "at the sound of their battle cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah" (2 Chronicles 13:15). Abijah also took the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, Ephron, and their surrounding villages from Jeroboam. From that time, King Jeroboam's strength lessened: "Jeroboam did not regain power during the time of Abijah. And the Lord struck him down and he died. But Abijah grew in strength. He married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters" (Chronicles 13:20–21).

Abijah's mother was Maakah (Maacah), and she apparently held a position of authority as queen mother throughout Abijah's reign and into the reign of her grandson Asa. After Abijah's death, there was peace between Israel and Judah for ten years (2 Chronicles 14:1), and Abijah's son, King Asa, instituted wide reforms throughout Judah. One of Asa's reforms was to depose his grandmother Maakah (Maacah) because of her promotion of [Asherah](#) worship (1 Kings 15:13). 2 Chronicles 14:2 says, "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God."

Abijah's short reign was unfortunately marked by doing evil in the eyes of the Lord. Even though God had granted him victory over Israel, Abijah continued the same error as his father, Rehoboam—not being fully devoted to God (2 Chronicles 12:14; 1 Kings 15:3).

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#### **John Kitto** - Abijah—II Chronicles 13:1–20; I Kings 15:1–9

It is observable, that although Rehoboam had fewer wives than his father—only eighteen wives and sixty concubines, he had a far more numerous progeny—no less than twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters,—a somewhat singular disproportion of sexes. Even this comparatively modern harem was adverse to the judgment and habits of his subjects; for the historian remarks that he "desired many wives,"—implying that so far he contravened the restriction imposed by the law against a king "multiplying wives unto himself." Of all Rehoboam's wives, the one who had most influence with him was Maachah, who appears to have been a grand-daughter of Absalom by his daughter Tamar, who married one Uriel of the house of Saul. This special attachment to the mother induced Rehoboam to determine that her son Abijah (otherwise called Abijam) should be his successor; and the solicitude he is described as evincing in this matter, and the means he took to secure this object, seem to show that Abijah was not his eldest son. To obviate the competition of his brothers, and to prevent them from forming an interest in rivalry to his at the seat of power, Rehoboam took much the same course as Abraham took to secure the undisputed heritage to Isaac. He provided for them, and gave them employment during his life-time, by making them governors of cities—thus dispersing them through his dominions for their own advantage, while preventing them from any combined operations to the detriment of the heir. This is an early scriptural example of the same kind of policy which has only within the present age been adopted in the courts of Persia and Turkey, where the princes were shut up in the harem till the death of their father, and then either imprisoned, killed, or incapacitated for public life (in Persia by blinding), when their brother mounted the throne. Now, at least in Persia, they are sent into the provinces, where they administer the civil and military local government for the king—collect the crown dues, and remit them to court after deducting their own expenses and the local charges. These princes, in their lesser spheres, reflect the royal dignity, maintaining courts on the royal model, but on a smaller scale; administering justice like the king, and appearing, when required, with the military force to be raised within their districts. Doubtless the sons of Rehoboam performed the same functions in their respective districts; but the smallness of the territory over which so many princes were distributed, must have given a proportionately diminished scale to their establishments; and if they, as princes of the blood, affected, as is likely, more magnificence than ordinary governors, this must have rendered the task of

supporting the courts of so many royal governors rather burdensome to the people. The crown also probably found it unprofitable in the end, a large proportion of the public imposts being in such cases absorbed, before they reached the royal treasury, in the expenses of local government,—and the king being obliged to allow expenses for his sons, and to admit excuses on their behalf, which would not be endured in an ordinary functionary.

The precautions of the king were, however, successful; and at his death the son he had designated succeeded to the throne without opposition. This young man, of the same name with Jeroboam's lost son, took up the cause of the house of David with the ardor natural to a lofty-minded youth just come to the throne. He purposed to himself to reestablish the dominion of his house over the ten tribes; and no priest or prophet interfered this time to discourage the undertaking. This was not now necessary, seeing that the kingdom of Israel was now fully equal to its own defence against Judah; and now, moreover, Jeroboam had forfeited all claim to the Lord's interference, and his house had indeed been sentenced to deprivation.

Abijah took the initiative, and marched into the territory of Jeroboam, at the head of a general military levy of his kingdom. Jeroboam was, however, too able and experienced a commander to be taken unprepared, and he met the king of Judah with a force that greatly outnumbered his own.

The circumstances of this first great action between the two kingdoms are very interesting, and well deserve careful consideration, from the light they cast upon the state of feeling with which the house of David at this time regarded the rival kingdom. This we are able to collect from the harangue which king Abijah addressed to the enemy opposed to him, before they came to blows, according to a custom which strikes us as somewhat strange, but of which there are numerous ancient examples. The staple of such harangues always has consisted, and always does consist in the East, of self-praise on the part of the orator, and dispraise and abuse of the enemy. Of this we find enough in the speech of Abijah, the tone of which seems to us not in all respects so gratifying as it has appeared to many.

The oration consists properly of five parts—political, and religious or theocratic. The political part is based entirely on the divine-right principle, which was certainly not sanctioned by the Hebrew constitution. Wholly overlooking the offence of Solomon, the judgment of Heaven, the Divine appointment of Jeroboam, the constitutional conduct of the people, the aggravating folly of Rehoboam, and the Lord's recognition of the separation,—Abijah talks loftily of the rights of the house of David, and treats the tribes as unreasonable and causeless rebels,—servants who had turned against their master when they found the opportunity in the accession of the “young and tender-hearted” Rehoboam, and whom it behooved now, at his son's call, to return to their allegiance. The egregious foolishness of all this seems to have been scarcely exceeded by that which Rehoboam himself had manifested, and must have been heard with calm disdain by the veterans of Israel. The purely dynastic and party view of the great question, was such as a not and not over-wise young prince of the house of David was likely to take, and is in itself perfectly intelligible. But we know that there was another side of the question which found no expression; and the reader may do well to supply for himself the answer which Jeroboam could have given if he had liked.

The remainder of Abijah's harangue was, however, in substance unanswerable, although one is not over-satisfied at the self-righteousness of its tone, its inordinate appreciation of ritual observances, and the absence of more spiritual grounds of confidence than it indicates. He animadverted on the measures, the corruptions, and arbitrary changes by which Jeroboam had endeavored to secure his kingdom; and, with not unbecoming pride, contrasted this disorder and profanity with the beautiful order in which, according to the law, and the regulations of David and Solomon, the worship of the Lord was conducted by the Levitical priesthood, in “the holy and beautiful house which the Divine King honored with the visible symbol of his inhabitation.” “We keep the charge of Jehovah,” he declared, “but ye have forsaken him. 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 not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper.”

By the time he had finished, Abijah found himself, to his great amazement, surrounded by the enemy; and that he hath purchased the satisfaction of making a speech at the cost of allowing a large body of the enemy to move quietly round the hill, so as to take his force in the rear, while the main body still confronted him. This difficult and bold maneuver had well nigh decided the action; for the Judahites raised a cry of dismay, and a serious panic would probably have followed, had not the priests at that moment sounded their silver trumpets, at which old and inspiring signal, the more stout-hearted men raised a cry to the Lord for help, and rushed upon the enemy, inspiring by their example the more timid and wavering. The embattled host of Israel could not withstand the force of this terrible shock. Their ranks were broken, they fled, and the slaughter inflicted upon them was most awful, and can only be explained by reference to the peculiar animosity and bloodiness of wars of kindred. Besides, the conquerors were in the enemy's country, and in numbers much the weaker party—too weak for mercy.<sup>540</sup>

Notwithstanding this decisive success, Abijah was too well advised, to pursue his original design of reducing the ten tribes, and was content to re-establish his authority over certain border towns and districts, which had originally belonged to Judah or Benjamin, but which Jeroboam had found means to include in his portion of the divided kingdom. This was but a poor result from the shedding of so much blood, and for the increased alienation which must have ensued between the subjects of the two kingdoms, which still formed but one nation. All that can be said is, that as much blood has often been shed with as little real advantage to the

conquerors.

## THE VARIOUS NAMES OF ABIJAH

### ABIJAM

- 1 Kings 14:31 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. And **Abijam** his son became king in his place.
- 1 Kings 15:1 Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, **Abijam** became king over Judah.
- 1 Kings 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.
- 1 Kings 15:8 And **Abijam** slept with his fathers and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son became king in his place.

### ABIJAH

- 2 Chronicles 11:20 After her he took Maacah the daughter of Absalom, and she bore him **Abijah**, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith.
- 2 Chronicles 11:22 Rehoboam appointed **Abijah** the son of Maacah as head and leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king.
- 2 Chronicles 12:16 And Rehoboam slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David; and his son **Abijah** became king in his place.
- 2 Chronicles 13:1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, **Abijah** became king over Judah.
- 2 Chronicles 13:2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. Now there was war between **Abijah** and Jeroboam.
- 2 Chronicles 13:3 **Abijah** began the battle with an army of valiant warriors, 400,000 chosen men, while Jeroboam drew up in battle formation against him with 800,000 chosen men who were valiant warriors.
- 2 Chronicles 13:4 Then **Abijah** stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, "Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel:
- 2 Chronicles 13:15 Then the men of Judah raised a war cry, and when the men of Judah raised the war cry, then it was that God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before **Abijah** and Judah.
- 2 Chronicles 13:17 **Abijah** and his people defeated them with a great slaughter, so that 500,000 chosen men of Israel fell slain.
- 2 Chronicles 13:19 **Abijah** pursued Jeroboam and captured from him several cities, Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages and Ephron with its villages.
- 2 Chronicles 13:20 Jeroboam did not again recover strength in the days of **Abijah**; and the LORD struck him and he died.
- 2 Chronicles 13:21 But **Abijah** became powerful; and took fourteen wives to himself, and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.
- 2 Chronicles 13:22 Now the rest of the acts of **Abijah**, and his ways and his words are written in the treatise of the prophet Iddo.
- 2 Chronicles 14:1 So **Abijah** slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David, and his son Asa became king in his place. The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days.
- Matthew 1:7 Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of **Abijah**, and Abijah the father of Asa.

**1 Kings 15:2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom.**

- **his mother's:** 1Ki 15:13 2Ch 11:20-22
- **Maachah:** 2Ch 13:1-2, Micaiah the daughter of Uriel
- **Abishalom:** 2Ch 11:21, Absalom
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

**ABIJAM'S BRIEF  
REIGN OVER JUDAH**

**He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom**- This can become somewhat confusing because in 2Ch 13:2 Abijam's "mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." 2Ch 11:20 says Rehoboam "took Maacah the daughter of Absalom, and she bore him Abijah." It is clear that **Micaiah** is the another name for **Maacah**. And then you add in the name **Abishalom** which is actually the same as Absalom. Finally in 2Ch 13:2 we read Abijam's "mother's name was **Micaiah** the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah." (See dictionary note below to help resolve "Uriel the Gibeah.") Now are you confused? Just to add to your confusion the mother of David's son Absalom was also name Maacah (2Sa 3:3 - clearly a different "Maacah" then in 1Ki 15:2).

**J Vernon McGee** - There is something quite interesting that you will find all through this section: every time a king is mentioned his mother is also mentioned. That is unusual. We are generally told who a man's father was and whom he succeeded, but in this portion the mother's name is given again and again. Why? It is because each mother had a great deal to do with influencing the life of her son. My position here is that the reason God recorded the name of the mother along with each king's name (and these are bad kings) is because she is partially responsible for the way he turned out. Also when the king was a good king, the mother was partially responsible. She must accept responsibility for him....I have taken some extra time on this subject because, candidly, it will occur again and again. Every time we have a bad king, his mamma's name is given -- I think God is trying to tell us something. If he was a good king, his mother's name is also given; she will get credit for that. I just would not want to be the mother of some of the rascals we are going to find here in Scripture. It would disturb me a great deal to have a son like most of these kings. (See [Thru the Bible: History of Israel 1 and 2 Kings](#))

**ISBE on MAACAH** - The daughter of Absalom, the favorite wife of Rehoboam, and mother of Abijah (1 Ki 15:2; 2 Ch 11:20, etc.). Evidently "daughter" must here be understood as "granddaughter," according to a common oriental usage. Tamar was the only daughter of Absalom. If Tamar married Uriel of Gibeah (2 Ch 13:2), then Maacah was her daughter. In that case the name **Micaiah** in this passage would be either a copyist's error or a variant of **Maacah**. She must have been a woman of strong personality. Unfortunately, her influence was cast upon the side of idolatry. She maintained her position in the palace, however, till the reign of her grandson Asa. Possibly she acted as regent during his minority. Ultimately, she was degraded by him for an act of peculiar infamy (1 Ki 15:13; 2 Ch 15:16).

**1 Kings 15:3 He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David.**

NET 1 Kings 15:3 He followed all the sinful practices of his father before him. He was not wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD his God, as his ancestor David had been.

CSB 1 Kings 15:3 Abijam walked in all the sins his father before him had committed, and he was not completely devoted to the LORD his God as his ancestor David had been.

ESV 1 Kings 15:3 And 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.

NIV 1 Kings 15:3 He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been.

NLT 1 Kings 15:3 He committed the same sins as his father before him, and he was not faithful to the LORD his God, as his ancestor David had been.

NRS 1 Kings 15:3 He committed all the sins that his father did before him; his heart was not true to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David.

NJB 1 Kings 15:3 In everything he followed the sinful example of his father before him; his heart was not wholly with Yahweh his God, as the heart of David his ancestor had been.

NAB 1 Kings 15:3 He imitated all the sins his father had committed before him, and his heart was not entirely with the LORD, his God, like the heart of his grandfather David.

YLT 1 Kings 15:3 and he walketh in all the sins of his father, that he did before him, and his heart hath not been perfect with Jehovah his God, as the heart of David his father;

- **all the sins:** 1Ki 14:21-22
- **and his heart:** 1Ki 3:14 1Ki 11:4,33 2Ki 20:3 2Ch 25:2 31:20,21 Ps 119:80
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:21-22+ (**REHOBAM'S EVIL EXAMPLE BEFORE HIS SON ABIJAM**) Now Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. And his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 22 **Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done, with the sins which they committed.**

1 Kings 8:61+ (SOLOMON TO THE PEOPLE) "Let your **heart** therefore be **wholly devoted** ([shalem](#)) to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and to keep His commandments, as at this day." (ED: It is ironic and tragic that the truth of this prayer Solomon prayed for the people was one he himself failed to realize as described in the verse below.)

1 Kings 11:4+ For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and **his heart was not wholly devoted** ([shalem](#)) to the LORD his God, **as the heart of David his father had been.**

1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the **heart** of Asa was **wholly devoted** ([shalem](#)) to the LORD all his days.

2 Kings 20:3 "Remember now, O LORD, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a **whole** ([shalem](#)) **heart** and have done what is good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

2 Chronicles 16:9+ "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose **heart** is **completely** ([shalem](#)) His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

1 Chronicles 12:38 All these, being men of war who could draw up in battle formation, came to Hebron with a **perfect** ([shalem](#)) **heart** to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest also of Israel were of one mind to make David king.

1 Chronicles 28:9 "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a **whole** ([shalem](#); Lxx = teleios - - [see word study](#)) **heart** and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

## LIKE FATHER LIKE SON ABIJAM LIKE REHOBAM

**He walked** (conducted himself) **in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him** - **Walked** is a metaphor for one's lifestyle or general conduct and reflects obedience to God's Word or in Abijam's case, the converse (disobedience)! Rehoboam, Abijam's father, "did evil because (term of explanation) he did not **set his heart** to seek the LORD." (2 Chronicles 12:14) Rehoboam had a "cardiac condition," and his son Abijam inherited that same condition! This verse emphasizes the impact father's can have on the lives of their sons, either for good or for evil. In this case the effect was for evil. See the chart of kings above and note Abijam (Abijah) is not listed in bold font indicating a godly king. In fact there were only 8 godly kings out of a total of 20 kings of Judah (counting Queen Athaliah). The chart fails to put Uzziah and Hezekiah in bold but they did have godly elements in their reigns.

**and his heart was not wholly devoted** ([shalem](#); Lxx - [teleios](#) = having attained the end or purpose) **to the LORD his God** - This is an interesting verse because from 2Ch 13:14-15 it does appear he at least knew who to cry out to in distress. So there must have been some elements of his heart that sought the LORD, but clearly the general direction of his life was away from God. **Wholly** is an adjective which is often used of complete devotion to God and His covenant (i.e., 1 Kgs. 8:61; 11:4; 15:3,14; 2 Kgs. 20:3; 1 Chr. 28:9; 29:19; 2 Chr. 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 25:2; Isa. 38:3). Here we see the heart of the problem of Abijam's sinful lifestyle was the problem with his heart. The heart is the control center of our being, much like an air traffic controller functions to see that planes land safely and avoid catastrophes. Proverbs 4:23 commands us to "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." The heart of man will not "default" to good if left unattended but will default to evil! A heart that is not wholly devoted to the LORD indicates a heart that is at best only partially obedient (See [Geisler below](#))

*Abijam stands as a warning  
against compromise and half-heartedness.*

**THOUGHT** - Beloved all of us are at risk of our heart "wandering" from God because our "heart is more

deceitful than all else and is desperately sick." (Jer 17:9). Therefore, a great prayer to consider making part of your daily devotional time are the words of David in Psalm 86:11NIV "Teach me Your way, O LORD, and I will walk in Your truth; **give me an undivided heart**, that I may fear Your Name." Note the spiritual dynamic that an undivided heart fosters a godly fear which in turn energizes turning away from evil, for Proverbs 3:7b says "Fear the LORD and turn away from evil." (read Pr 8:13, Pr 16:6, Job 1:1, Eccl 12:13-14, 2Cor 7:1+).

**Like the heart of his father David** - This is an important term of comparison ([simile](#)), for here the Holy Spirit holds up the life of David as the model to be imitated. And as **Iain Provan** says "all subsequent Judean kings...are measured in terms of whether they have been "like David" or not." (See [note](#)) David was clearly a sinner, but his heart was broken and contrite when he sinned against God (Ps 51:17) and he confessed and repented (Ps 32:5). God knows that fallen men will invariably fall short of *perfection*, but He does call us to live life in a certain direction (a heavenly direction) and for believers this is a walk that can only be attained by learning to daily depend on the Spirit's supernatural power (Gal 5:16+).

What was the character of David's heart? See Acts 13:22 noting especially what a devoted heart looks like = "who will do all my will", cp 1Sa 13:14 = Samuel's verdict to disobedient Saul, cp Caleb in Nu 14:24 where "different spirit" parallels "wholehearted devotion", 2Ki 23:25 - Josiah = "turned to Yahweh with all [Hebrew word "kol" speaks of the totality of] his HEART and with **all** [*ko*] his soul and will all [*ko*] his might" see also NT parallels of how important Jesus considers this teaching regarding our hearts! = Mt 22:36, 37, Mk 12:28, 29, 30).

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**Wholly devoted** (complete, whole, full) ([08003](#)) **shalem** is an adjective which describes something that is full, whole, made ready, perfected, complete. **Shalem** is occasionally used to mean safe or unharmed (Ge 33:18). As noted above in the discussion of **Shalom**, the Hebrew root **sh-l-m** implies completion, fulfillment, an entering into a state of wholeness and unity.

**Shalem** describes iniquity which was not full or **complete** (Ge 15:16), stones which were **whole** (uncut) (Dt 27:6, Josh 8:31), stones that were whole or **finished** (for the Temple 1Ki 6:7), a weight that is **full** (Dt 25:15, Pr 11:1), wages that were **full** (abounding) (Ru 2:12), a heart that was **whole** (wholly devoted, complete, perfect - 1Ki 8:61, the antithesis = 1Ki 11:4), an army at **full** strength (Nah 1:12), a population, as **entire** or **whole** (taken captive) (Amos 1:6, 9), of hearts that were whole or undivided, wholly centered on the Lord

Beloved, considering that there are **14** uses (>50%) of the adjective **shalem** in passages dealing with the heart (the "control center" of a our being - see [kardia](#)) it would behoove each of us to read over these Scriptures (see list below) prayerfully pondering ([meditating](#)) in our own heart (doing a spiritual checkup as to our "heart condition") how we are relating to the LORD God Almighty. Is the condition of our heart one of "shalem" toward God? If the Spirit convicts us of sin (missing the mark of God's will for our life), then may He also strengthen us in our inner man with the will ("want to") and the power ([Php 2:13-note](#)) so that we may be enabled to repent and return to Jehovah and experience the times of refreshing found only in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**NOTE THE CONCENTRATION OF SHALEM IN TIME OF THE KINGS - STUDY THE PASSAGES AND NOTE THE FREQUENT ASSOCIATION WITH THE HEART** - 27 V - blameless(1), complete(1), completed(1), completely(1), entire(2), friendly(1), full(4), just(1), perfect(2), prepared(1), safely(1), uncut(2), whole(5), wholeheartedly\*(1), wholly devoted(4). Gen. 15:16; Gen. 33:18; Gen. 34:21; Deut. 25:15; Deut. 27:6; Jos. 8:31; Ruth 2:12; 1 Ki. 6:7; 1 Ki. 8:61; 1 Ki. 11:4; 1 Ki. 15:3; 1 Ki. 15:14; 2 Ki. 20:3; 1 Chr. 12:38; 1 Chr. 28:9; 1 Chr. 29:9; 1 Chr. 29:19; 2 Chr. 8:16; 2 Chr. 15:17; 2 Chr. 16:9; 2 Chr. 19:9; 2 Chr. 25:2; Prov. 11:1; Isa. 38:3; Amos 1:6; Amos 1:9; Nah. 1:12

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**ILLUSTRATION OF A HEART WHOLLY DEVOTED TO THE LORD** - J. Wilbur Chapman, a popular Presbyterian evangelist at the turn of the twentieth century, once had the opportunity to meet Methodist preacher and founder of the Salvation Army, General William Booth, while in London. By this time, the old humanitarian was past eighty years of age and somewhat reflective. Chapman's most memorable inquiry during their exchange was direct but sincere: "What has been the secret of your tremendous success? How have you managed to make such impact and influence on this world?" The question moved the aged minister. General Booth hesitated for a moment, and then, as tears came into his eyes and rolled down his cheeks, he answered, "I will tell you the secret. God has had all there is of me. There have been men with greater brains than me, men with greater opportunities, but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do with these men, I made up my mind that God would have all of William Booth there was. If there is anything of power in the Salvation Army today, it is because God has all the adoration of my heart, all the power of my will, and all the influence of my life." Chapman left the meeting that day with a single truth burning in



his heart: "The greatness of a man's power is in the measure of his surrender" (King's Business, 511; emphasis added). Indeed. Total surrender to God is more powerful than any human planning or scheming. The principle, while easy to understand, is just as difficult to live by today as it was in the years after the Babylonian oppression of Judah ended. (Source: [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Chronicles](#))

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God is in the business of idol removal. He has the power to break down the gods our families have worshiped, freeing us to offer our lives in service to him. A good example of this kind of freedom comes from the life of Mary Bosanquet. Mary came from a wealthy English family. She was born in a beautiful house and grew up wearing fine clothing and sparkling jewels. When she was still a young woman, Mary gave her heart to Jesus. Her father was so incensed that he disinherited her. But by the grace of God, the bondage of greed had now been broken in Mary's life. She took what little she had and moved into a two-room house with borrowed furniture. It is said that Mary's story inspired Henry Lyte to write this famous hymn:

Jesus, I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee.  
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou from hence my all shall be.  
Perish every fond ambition, all I've sought or hoped or known.  
Yet how rich is my condition! God and Heaven are still mine own. (Philip Ryken - [1 Kings](#))

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Here are some ways to describe a **heart not wholly devoted to the LORD**..

### **Biblical Descriptions**

- Divided heart – Torn between God and worldly desires (Hosea 10:2).
- Lukewarm heart – Neither fully committed nor fully rejecting (Revelation 3:16).
- Wavering heart – Unstable in faith and obedience (James 1:8).
- Half-hearted devotion – Serving God outwardly but lacking true commitment (Isaiah 29:13).
- Adulterous heart – Spiritually unfaithful, chasing after other "loves" (Ezekiel 6:9).

### **Metaphorical Descriptions**

- A ship with two rudders – Pulled in different directions, unable to stay on course.
- A flickering candle – The flame of devotion is weak and inconsistent.
- A foot in two worlds – Trying to serve both God and personal desires.
- A tree with shallow roots – Easily swayed by the winds of life, not deeply grounded in faith.

### **Practical Descriptions**

- Inconsistent in faith – Sometimes trusting God, other times relying on self or the world. (ED: THIS ONE REALLY CONVICTS ME!)
  - Distracted by idols – Devoted to other priorities (money, success, relationships) more than God. (cf 1Ki 18:21)
  - Reluctant obedience – Following God's commands out of duty rather than love. (ED: I CALL THAT LEGALISM NOT LOVE!)
  - Compromised loyalty – Allowing sin or worldly influences to take precedence over God. (cf Mt 6:24)
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### **Norman Geisler - 2 CHRONICLES 13:4–22—Was Abijah a wicked or a righteous king?**

**PROBLEM:** According to 1 Kings 15:3, Abijah was a wicked king who "walked in all the sins of his father." However, in 2 Chronicles he is represented as giving a speech against idolatry and in defense of God's appointed priests and temple in Jerusalem.

*His deeds did not match his words*

**SOLUTION:** Abijah is not the first, nor will he be the last, politician on record who could give an occasional pious speech when it

served his purposes. The fact is, his deeds did not match his words. That is, in general, whatever occasional exceptions there may have been, he was an evil king, just as 1 Kings 15:3 declares. ([When Critics Ask](#))

See also Gleason Archer's discussion in the [New Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#) (go to page 205) - "In the light of his dealings with Bathsheba and her husband, Uriah, how could David be regarded by the Lord as a servant whose heart was "perfect" before Him?"

**1 Kings 15:4 But for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem;**

NET 1 Kings 15:4 Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God maintained his dynasty in Jerusalem by giving him a son to succeed him and by protecting Jerusalem.

CSB 1 Kings 15:4 But because of David, the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem to raise up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem.

ESV 1 Kings 15:4 Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem,

NIV 1 Kings 15:4 Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him and by making Jerusalem strong.

NLT 1 Kings 15:4 But for David's sake, the LORD his God allowed his descendants to continue ruling, shining like a lamp, and he gave Abijam a son to rule after him in Jerusalem.

NRS 1 Kings 15:4 Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem;

NJB 1 Kings 15:4 However, for David's sake, Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, with a son to succeed him, so keeping Jerusalem secure;

NAB 1 Kings 15:4 Yet for David's sake the LORD, his God, gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, raising up his son after him and permitting Jerusalem to endure;

YLT 1 Kings 15:4 but for David's sake hath Jehovah his God given to him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem,

- **for David's:** 1Ki 11:12,32 Ge 12:2 19:29 26:5 De 4:37 2Sa 7:12-16 Isa 37:35 Jer 33:20-26 Ro 11:28
- **gave him:** 1Ki 11:36 2Ch 21:7 Ps 132:17 Lu 1:69-79 2:32 Joh 8:12 Rev 22:16
- **lamp:** Ps 18:28
- **establish:** Ps 87:5 Isa 9:7 14:32 62:7 Jer 33:2 Mic 4:1,2 Mt 16:18
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 21:17 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall not go out again with us to battle, **so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel.**"

1 Kings 11:36 But to his son I will give one tribe, **that My servant David may have a lamp always before Me in Jerusalem,** the city where I have chosen for Myself to put My name.

2 Kings 8:19 However, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David His servant, since **He had promised him to give a lamp to him** through his sons always.

2 Chronicles 21:7 Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since **He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.**

### THE PROMISE OF A LAMP TO DAVID

**But** - Term of contrast, another one filled with divine mercy!

**For David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem- NET** = "Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God maintained his dynasty in Jerusalem by giving him a son to succeed him and by protecting Jerusalem." The key phrase is **for David's sake**. Ultimately this speaks of God's faithfulness to the covenant He made with David which would eventually bring forth the Messiah. Note the writer does call Jehovah "**his God**," at least implying that Abijah may have been a believer in Yahweh, despite following in the evil footsteps of his father. Heaven will be quite interesting - we will likely be surprised at who is there and who is not there! In context **lamp** is a metaphorical description that the "light" of the Davidic dynasty would not be extinguished (1Ki 11:36), even when individual kings were unfaithful. God preserved David's lineage by allowing his descendants to remain on the throne. In context the "lamp" represents God's covenant promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-16, where God vowed that David's dynasty would last forever and from which would come the Messiah.

**Donald Wiseman:** Abijah ('My father is Yah-[weh]') continued the war with his contemporary Jeroboam of Israel. He is here censured for his religious corruption and divided loyalty to the Lord God yet, for David's sake and in response to his faith, he was allowed a spectacular victory over the encircling Israelites whom he had challenged, for being even more apostate than he (2 Chr. 13:3-20). His position and power was increased in Jerusalem (v. 4), and by the annexation of Bethel, Jeshanah and Ephraim (Ophrah) and their environs in the hill-country, he pushed the boundary northwards. This is an instance of God blessing the unworthy for the sake of the worthy. (See [1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary - Page 166](#))

**William Barnes** notes that "Often, the southern kings are evaluated in reference to their ancestor David (see 9:4-5; 11:4-6, 38-39; 14:8; 15:11; 2 Kgs 14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2)." (See [1-2 Kings - Page 134](#))

**to raise up his son after him and to establish Jerusalem - NET** = "by giving him a son to succeed him and by protecting Jerusalem." **His Son** refers to godly king Asa. Despite Abijah's unfaithfulness, God preserved the Davidic dynasty for David's sake by raising up Asa. An ungodly father brought forth a godly offspring reflecting the outworking of the sovereign hand of God.

**1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.**

- **David:** 1Ki 15:3 14:8 2Ki 22:2 2Ch 34:2 Ps 119:6 Lu 1:6 Ac 13:22,36
- **except in the case:** 2Sa 11:4,15-17 12:9,10 Ps 51:1
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## **THE REASON GOD GAVE ABIJAH A LAMP IN JERUSALEM**

**Because** - Term of explanation. What is the writer explaining?

**David did what was right in the sight of the LORD-** The idea is that David generally did what was pleasing to Jehovah. This anthropomorphic description of God is frequently found in the OT and in some contexts spoke of good or pleasing to God (e.g., Asa in 1Ki 15:11) but in other contexts to behavior that was evil and not pleasing to God (e.g., Baasha in 1Ki 16:7). In the list below notice the frequent use of this phrase in the Scriptures that describe the kings of Israel and Judah.

**IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD** - 93X/92V - Gen. 38:7; Gen. 38:10; Lev. 10:19; Num. 32:13; Deut. 4:25; Deut. 6:18; Deut. 9:18; Deut. 12:25; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 13:18; Deut. 17:2; Deut. 31:29; Jdg. 2:11; Jdg. 3:7; Jdg. 3:12; Jdg. 4:1; Jdg. 6:1; Jdg. 10:6; Jdg. 13:1; 1 Sam. 12:17; 1 Sam. 15:19; 1 Sam. 26:24; 2 Sam. 11:27; 2 Sam. 15:25; 1 Ki. 3:10; 1 Ki. 11:6; 1 Ki. 14:22; 1 Ki. 15:5; 1 Ki. 15:11; 1 Ki. 15:26; 1 Ki. 15:34; 1 Ki. 16:7; 1 Ki. 16:19; 1 Ki. 16:25; 1 Ki. 16:30; 1 Ki. 21:20; 1 Ki. 21:25; 1 Ki. 22:43; 1 Ki. 22:52; 2 Ki. 3:2; 2 Ki. 3:18; 2 Ki. 8:18; 2 Ki. 8:27; 2 Ki. 12:2; 2 Ki. 13:2; 2 Ki. 13:11; 2 Ki. 14:3; 2 Ki. 14:24; 2 Ki. 15:3; 2 Ki. 15:9; 2 Ki. 15:18; 2 Ki. 15:24; 2 Ki. 15:28; 2 Ki. 15:34; 2 Ki. 16:2; 2 Ki. 17:2; 2 Ki. 17:17; 2 Ki. 18:3; 2 Ki. 21:2; 2 Ki. 21:6; 2 Ki. 21:16; 2 Ki. 21:20; 2 Ki. 22:2; 2 Ki. 23:32; 2 Ki. 23:37; 2 Ki. 24:9; 2 Ki. 24:19; 1 Chr. 2:3; 2 Chr. 14:2; 2 Chr. 20:32; 2 Chr. 21:6; 2 Chr. 22:4; 2 Chr. 24:2; 2 Chr. 25:2; 2 Chr. 26:4; 2 Chr. 27:2; 2 Chr. 28:1; 2 Chr. 29:2; 2 Chr. 29:6; 2 Chr. 33:2; 2 Chr. 33:6; 2 Chr. 33:22; 2 Chr. 34:2; 2 Chr. 36:5; 2 Chr. 36:9; 2 Chr. 36:12; Ps. 116:15; Isa. 49:5; Jer. 52:2; Mal. 2:17; Lk. 1:15; 2 Co. 8:21

**And had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite** - The exception refers to David's adultery with Bathsheba and his commissioning of the murder of her husband Uriah (2Sa 11:1-12:25+). This passage parallels Acts 13:22+ where God says "I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will." In my opinion, one might sum up the reason that David's life was pleasing to God with the phrase "It is not about **perfection**, but about **direction**!" (See [Norman Geisler](#) below)

**THOUGHT** - This begs the simple question of each of us, if others look at my life, what would they say is the general direction of my life? Of course the only "opinion" that matters is God's because He sees perfectly, even discerning the motives for why we do what we do. We can fool others, even as have some recently fallen pastors (e.g., [Steve Lawson](#)) even for years! We cannot fool God. It follows that we do well to have one of David's prayers frequently on our lips "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way." (Ps 139:23-24+).

Dale Ralph Davis: One wonders whether 'on account of David' (v. 4a; or, 'for the sake of David') means 'on account of David's fidelity' (as v. 5 may suggest) or whether it means 'on account of Yahweh's promise to David' (2 Sam. 7:12–16). I think 2 Kings 8:19 (cf. also 1 Kings 11:13, 32, 34) favors the latter option. Hence there may be a double rationale for the kingdom's continued existence: Yahweh's covenant commitment (v. 4) and David's covenant consistency (v. 5). The latter was not perfect (note the 'except'—clause) but typical. If Jeroboam was poison and death to his kingdom (1Ki 14:15–16), David was blessing and life to his. . .

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**Norman Geisler - 1 KINGS 15:5—Is this the only sin David committed? - See [When Critics Ask](#)**

**PROBLEM:** According to this verse, David was without sin except on one occasion—the sin involving Bathsheba! It claims David "had not turned aside from anything that He [God] commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." But, this is both contrary to general statements about fallen human beings (cf. Gen. 6:5; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:10–23) and specific condemnations of David on other occasions. David himself said, after God convicted him for numbering Israel (1 Chron. 21:1), "I have sinned greatly" (v. 8).

**SOLUTION:** The statement in question is by no means a pronouncement of David's virtual sinlessness for several reasons. First of all, it is a general and true characterization of David's life. Just as Job was not sinless, but was called "blameless and upright" (Job 1:1), even so David's life was without major fault. Second, this commendation of David is not absolute, but relative to all the sins Abijam had committed (cf. 1 Kings 15:1, 3). David did, with one major exception, "that which was right in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 5). Third, even when he sinned, he did what was right, namely repented immediately when confronted by God (cf. 2 Sam. 12:1ff and 1 Chron. 21:8). Fourth, the exception clause ("except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite") is not found in many manuscripts of the OT, including the Vatican Ms. Without it, the point that this was only a general commendation of David has even stronger force. Fifth, the phrase "had not turned aside" indicates that God is speaking of the generally steadfast direction of David's life, not every specific sin in it. This would account for why David's other sins are not mentioned, since they did not turn him from the generally forward direction of his life in serving the Lord to this point.

#### **1 Kings 15:6 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.**

- **there was war:** 1Ki 14:30
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Kings 14:30 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.

1 Kings 15:16; 32 Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. 32 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

**There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life** Most Hebrew manuscripts read "Rehoboam" but a few Hebrew manuscripts and the Syriac read "Abijam." This pattern of warfare between the northern and southern kings is an oft repeated refrain (see 1Ki 15:16, 32). So much for the brief respite of peace brought about by the prophet Shemaiah in 1Ki 12:21-24+.

#### **1 Kings 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.**

- **the rest:** 1Ki 14:29 2Ch 13:2,21,22
- **there was war:** 2Ch 13:3-20
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## RUMBLINGS CONTINUE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

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 - We read one description of north-south war in 2Ch 13:2-20+.

[ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) - there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (v6)...between Abijam and Jeroboam (v7). This puzzling juxtaposition is presumably designed to emphasize the continuity between the two wars; the feud between the houses of Rehoboam and Jeroboam that began with the events of ch. 12 is still rumbling on.

William Barnes is right in remarking "What a melancholy reminder of how God's people often fight with each other, rather than with their common foes." ([1-2 Kings - Page 135](#))

**THOUGHT** - You don't experience ongoing skirmishes in your church do you? That's primarily rhetorical!

**1 Kings 15:8 And Abijam slept with his fathers and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son became king in his place.**

- **Abijam:** 1Ki 14:1,31 2Ch 14:1
- **Asa:** 1Ch 3:9 Mt 1:7,8
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:31 And **Rehoboam slept with his fathers** and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. And Abijam his son became king in his place.

## ABIJAM'S HONORABLE BURIAL

**And Abijam slept with his fathers and they buried him in the city of David and Asa his son became king in his place** - There are 2 manifestations of Yahweh's mercy, the first being an honorable burial for an evil king and the second being a godly king in place of an evil king. Look at the list of kings above and note that Asa is the first king of Judah that is recorded as a "good" king (1 of 8 Judean kings, no good kings in the north).

**1 Kings 15:9 So in the twentieth year of Jeroboam the king of Israel, Asa began to reign as king of Judah.**

- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## ASA BEGINS TO REIGN IN JUDAH

**So in the twentieth year of Jeroboam the king of Israel**(northern kingdom - 931/930 BC through 911/910 BC - [source](#)), **Asa began to reign as king of Judah** - The approximate date of the beginning of Asa's reign is 912/911 BC and the end is 871/870 BC ([Source](#)).

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**F B Meyer** - 1 Kings 15:9-24 Asa's good reign. --

This reign was not only good but it was also long (Ps. 91:16). A bad father may have a good son. Let no one feel that a noble life is impossible because of the difficulties of his birth or home surroundings. Through all drawbacks the true life emerges into the light; as a water lily from the muddy sediment of the pond. There were some things which might have been better even in Asa's reign (1 Kings 15:14), yet Asa's heart was perfect with God; from which we may infer that the perfect heart is that which lives up to the limit of its light.

He began, where we must all begin the work of reformation, by putting away evil. He first struck at immorality, then at idolatry. There must be a slaying of the members on the earth, before we put on the new nature (Col. 3:5-10). His grandmother -- for such

Maachah evidently was (comp. 1 Kings 15:2 and 1 Kings 15:10) -- was not tolerated, because she persisted in idolatry. He removed her from the court (Deut. 33:9). He brought into God's house the appointed portion from the spoils of the Ethiopians (2 Chron. 14:13). But he surely made a great mistake in seeking the help of a heathen monarch. How subtle is unbelief! How prone we are to depart from the living God!

The Book of Chronicles gives some further interesting details of Asa's life, which show the war of good and evil, and how at last he succumbed to mistrust.

**1 Kings 15:10 He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom.**

- **mother's:** 1Ki 15:2,13 2Ch 11:20,21 13:2
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## THE LENGTHY REIGN OF KING ASA

**He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem** - Why might his reign have been so lengthy? The next verse says Asa did right in the sight of the LORD, so that a long reign would reflect the good hand of the LORD on godly Asa. While this is generally true it should be noted that Manasseh reigned 55 years and was often a very wicked king.

**And his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom** - His mother's name actually refers to his grandmother Maacah who herself is not truly the **daughter of Abishalom** but the actually the granddaughter. And **Abishalom** is better known as Absalom, the son of David. Absalom's daughter was Tamar and she was the mother of Maacah. Maacah was the wife of Rehoboam and mother of Abijah/Abijam. Abijah/Abijam's son was Asa, the next king of Judah.

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**Warren Wiersbe:** There were three major divisions to Asa's life and reign.

(1) Peace and victory (1 Kings 15:9-11; 2 Chron. 14:1-15:7).

(2) Reformation and renewal (1 Kings 15:12-15; 2 Chron. 15:8-19).

(3) Relapse and discipline (1 Kings 15:16-24; 2 Chron. 16:1-14). ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**1 Kings 15:11 Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father.**

- **Asa:** 1Ki 15:3 2Ch 14:2,11 2Ch 15:17 2Ch 16:7-10
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was **right** ([yashar](#)) in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

2 Chronicles 14:2+ Asa did good and right in the sight of the LORD his God,

2 Chronicles 14:11+ Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You."

**Asa did what was right** ([yashar](#)) **in the sight of the LORD** - Asa's conduct was not perfect but his general tenor was godward. Regarding that phrase **in the sight of the LORD** as Solomon wrote "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good." (Pr 15:3+)

**THOUGHT** - Nothing escapes the watchful gaze of Jehovah. No secret sin is ever truly "secret" for God always sees it. This truth should motivate each of us to pursue holiness (Heb 12:14) and discipline ourselves for godliness (1Ti 4:7), for the glory of our great God.

**WHAT IS RIGHT (IN GOD'S SIGHT)** - Ex. 15:26; Dt. 6:18; Dt. 12:25; Dt. 13:18; Dt. 21:9; 1Ki. 11:33; 1Ki.

**Like David his father** - Term of comparison ([simile](#)) indicates the reign/conduct of kings would be compared to the "gold standard," King David. As we have stated before King David was a sinner. He is the pattern not because of perfection but because of direction of his life which was Godward.

**William Barnes:** In sum, Asa was a godly king who pleased his Lord. He significantly cleansed the land of idolatry, and he acted decisively to protect his capital city. Such protection was costly, but apparently necessary and apparently in God's will. Even his foot disease did not disqualify him from being reckoned positively as only 8 out of 19 southern kings (and no northern kings) would be. God does work in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform. (See [1-2 Kings - Page 138](#))

**Tony Merida** - Only Hezekiah and Josiah receive higher praise than Asa. This is what matters in life: personal godliness. Are you living before the eyes of God with loving faithfulness to Him? You see, Asa chose to live differently from his fathers. Perhaps you grew up in a hard family. Don't let this reality keep you from living for the glory of God. Kings doesn't promote [fatalism](#). God is sovereign, but you're responsible. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings](#))

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**Right** (upright) ([03477](#)) [yashar](#) from the verb **yashar** = to be smooth, straight or right) is an adjective that means straight; reliable, level, pleasing; upright; righteous. **Yashar** only rarely is used literally of that which is straight (Ezek 1:7). **Yashar** can refer to something physical like a path, but even in those uses is often a metaphorical description of one's conduct or behavior (Ps 107:7). Most uses refer to that which is right in an ethical or an emotional sense, as agreeable or pleasing. It is fitting that God is the standard of yashar (what is "straight") (Ps 92:15, called the "Upright One" - Isa 26:7). God's Word is described as **upright** (right) (Ps 19:7) as are His judgments (Ps 119:137) and His way (Ps 107:7). "God made men **upright** (Ge 1:27), but they have sought out many devices." (Eccl 7:29)

**ALL USES OF YASHAR IN KINGS AND CHRONICLES** - 1 Ki. 11:33; 1 Ki. 11:38; 1 Ki. 14:8; 1 Ki. 15:5; 1 Ki. 15:11; 1 Ki. 22:43; 2 Ki. 10:3; 2 Ki. 10:15; 2 Ki. 10:30; 2 Ki. 12:2; 2 Ki. 14:3; 2 Ki. 15:3; 2 Ki. 15:34; 2 Ki. 16:2; 2 Ki. 18:3; 2 Ki. 22:2; 2 Chr. 14:2; 2 Chr. 20:32; 2 Chr. 24:2; 2 Chr. 25:2; 2 Chr. 26:4; 2 Chr. 27:2; 2 Chr. 28:1; 2 Chr. 29:2; 2 Chr. 29:34; 2 Chr. 31:20; 2 Chr. 34:2;

When God tore the kingdom from Solomon for his failure to obey, and gave it to Jeroboam he reminded Jeroboam that he was not like David "who followed Me with all his heart, to do only that which was **right** (yashar) in My sight." (1Ki 14:8). God had given Jeroboam a promise conditioned on whether he would "do what is **right** [yashar]" in God's sight - 1Ki 11:38. Again we read "David did what was **right** (yashar) in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite." (1Ki 15:5).

**Yashar** is frequently used to describe our moral/ethical **heart** as "**upright in heart**" (Ps 7:10, 11:2, 32:11, 36:10, 64:10, 94:15, 97:11, 111:1, 125:4). Indeed, the **upright** "will behold His face" (Ps 11:7), will experience gladness (Ps 97:11), will be gathered together in the assembly (Ps 111:1), will be blessed (Ps 112:2), will be given light in times of darkness (Ps 112:4), will dwell in God's presence (Ps 140:13, cp Pr 2:21), have access to God's sound wisdom (Pr 2:7), will experience intimacy with the Most High God (Pr 3:32), will be guided by their integrity (Pr 11:3), will be delivered by their righteousness (Pr 11:6), will be delivered by their words (Pr 12:6), will see their tents flourish (Pr 14:11). "The highway of the upright is to depart from evil." (Pr 16:17)

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**F B Meyer** - 1 Kings 15:11 Asa did ... right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father.

It is a great thing to have such a testimony as this. We may do right in our own eyes; yet the eye of the Lord may detect evil which neither our associates nor we have seen. We may deceive ourselves, we may deceive others; but we cannot deceive God. In the home or business, in situation or factory, let us live as under the searching gaze of God.

Asa's life was one of religious activity: he destroyed the idols of his father, and even deposed his queen-mother, "because she made an idol in a grove." It needs Divine courage so to live for God that at home or afield men shall take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. This is what the world is languishing for— reality, consistency under all circumstances, and before all men.

There are, however, two clouds overhanging this otherwise bright life. "The high places were not removed" (1 Kings 15:14). Though idols were destroyed, the groves in which they were erected remained. They were no scare to him; and he took care that during his life they should not ensnare others; but after his death, in the reign of Jehoshaphat his son, "the people offered and burned incense" in them (1 Kings 22:43). We must not only cleanse our way before the Lord, but remove any evil thing which may cause others to stumble.

The other cloud is indicated in 2 Chronicles 16:12: "He was diseased in his feet... Yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." Strange that in affliction he should not have turned to the Great Physician. The enemy of souls is ever on the watch. Pray that amid the pains of death, you may not act unworthily.

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**ILLUSTRATION OF ROTTEN FATHER FATHERING A RIGHTEOUS SON!** The last thing anyone expected from Edward VI was a reformation of religion. Edward took the throne of England when he was only nine years old. The boy's father, Henry VIII, had broken with the pope in Rome, but this was more for personal and political reasons than out of any sincere desire to follow a biblical pattern for the church. Henry's failure to obey the Scriptures is especially evident from his disastrous family life: he had six wives, and was faithful to none of them.

It was against expectation, then, that his son Edward VI advanced the Reformation in England. During Edward's short reign as king, an English Bible was placed in every parish church. So that people could hear and understand the Word of God, sermons were to be preached in English every Sunday, by order of the king. For priests who did not know how to preach, the church provided a Book of Homilies, which included a sermon that began with the basic doctrine of the Reformation: "The first entry unto God, good Christian people, is through faith: whereby we be justified before God." Laypeople were allowed to join their priests in receiving the full sacrament of the Lord's Supper (both the bread and the cup). People were discouraged from praying to the saints, and images of Mary were removed from the church, lest they become objects of worship.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of these and many other reforms, by 1553 the English Reformation was complete. Since Edward was so young, these reforms were partly due to the influence of Thomas Cranmer and other advisers. But they also represented the convictions of Edward's own heart. When the boy died at the tender age of 15, his dying prayer was that the Lord God would defend his realm from false worship and maintain true religion in England. From a line of unworthy rulers, God had raised up a king after his own heart.

Edward's example is a strong encouragement to anyone from a questionable background. We are not crippled by the past. The Holy Spirit can intervene to do a powerful work of grace in our lives and our families. What is weak can be made strong. What is wounded can be healed. What is lost can be saved. Even if no one else in our family has ever been faithful to God, we can do something to serve his kingdom—maybe more than anyone before us. The future is full of spiritual possibilities. (Philip Ryken - [1 Kings](#))

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### **A Life Worth Remembering**

Asa did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight. 1 Kings 15:11

Not all epitaphs are as sad as the one given to king Solomon by God. Some people have a great sense of humor about their death.

"Rayford had no fear of death itself or of the afterlife. Providing heaven for his people was a small feat for the God who now manifested himself miraculously every day." The Remnant

Dr. James Dobson once asked his mother what she'd like to have written on her gravestone, and she jokingly answered, "I Told You I Was Sick!"

Spend some time browsing through cemeteries, and you'll be surprised at some of the funny things people have recorded on their gravestones. Johnny Yeast was buried in Ruidoso, New Mexico, and his gravestone reads: "Pardon Me for Not Rising." Bonnie Anderson had a similar sense of humor. Her grave is in Los Angeles, California, and the headstone reads: "I Don't Want to Talk about It Now."

But one of my favorite headstones is that of Thomas Murphy, in Vancouver, British Columbia. His simply says: "Sh-h-h."

You get the feeling that some people aren't as worried about death as the rest of us. It's a good sign when you can leave life on a laughing note. Maybe that's a sign of someone who understands that death is just a passageway to a better life. Those who know that their eternal fate is secure in God's hands.

King Asa was such a person. He became king of Judah after his father, Abijam, died. His first order of business was to undo the evil policies of his predecessors. Asa was a man who feared God and understood that life was too short to waste in sinful pursuits. He had his sights set on eternity, and it kept his life in perspective. At the end of Asa's life, God gave him a glowing final epitaph: "Asa did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight, as his ancestor David had done.... Asa remained faithful to the Lord throughout his life" (1 Kings 15:11, 14).

Now that's a legacy worth leaving. Imagine getting to the end of your life and hearing God say about you, "He remained faithful to me throughout his life." Who wouldn't want that kind of letter of reference waiting for them at the pearly gates? God loves to honor those who have honored him with their lives. Such lives do not go unnoticed—in heaven or on earth.



Reflection How did king Asa honor God in today's reading? Are you living in a way that honors God?

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1 Kings 15:11 (OUR DAILY BREAD) 15:11

Asa did ... right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father.

It is a great thing to have such a testimony as this. We may do right in our own eyes; yet the eye of the Lord may detect evil which neither our associates nor we have seen. We may deceive ourselves, we may deceive others; but we cannot deceive God. In the home or business, in situation or factory, let us live as under the searching gaze of God.

Asa's life was one of religious activity: he destroyed the idols of his father, and even deposed his queen-mother, "because she made an idol in a grove." It needs Divine courage so to live for God that at home or afield men shall take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. This is what the world is languishing for— reality, consistency under all circumstances, and before all men.

There are, however, two clouds overhanging this otherwise bright life. "The high places were not removed" (1 Kings 15:14). Though idols were destroyed, the groves in which they were erected remained. They were no scare to him; and he took care that during his life they should not ensnare others; but after his death, in the reign of Jehoshaphat his son, "the people offered and burned incense" in them (1 Kings 22:43). We must not only cleanse our way before the Lord, but remove any evil thing which may cause others to stumble.

The other cloud is indicated in 2 Chronicles 16:12: "He was diseased in his feet... Yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians." Strange that in affliction he should not have turned to the Great Physician. The enemy of souls is ever on the watch. Pray that amid the pains of death, you may not act unworthily.

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## A BETTER DAY DAWNS

Again we meet with those references to David that we found in the previous chapter. See 1 Kings 15:3-5; 1 Kings 15:11. His name lingers as sweet fragrance in the air, or as the after-glow of sundown. But Abijam's mother was descended from Absalom, and it is hardly surprising that the unhappy ancestry conflicted with the other and holier influence. Though the lamp burned low, however, it was not entirely extinguished. What a pathetic touch that is in 1 Kings 15:5! One moment of passion may be a long regret to God and to the soul! Yet there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared, Psalms 130:4.

For Asa's reign, we must turn to the book of Chronicles, where further evidence is given of his truly religious character—at least during the earlier portion of his rule. Even his grandmother was removed from her position. Compare 1 Kings 15:2; 1 Kings 10:1-29; the words father and mother are used loosely, as may be seen in 1 Kings 15:3. On the whole, Asa's policy was directed to the overthrow of the heathen worship, but he seems to have shrunk from a root-and-branch extermination of the evil, 1 Kings 15:14; and the result was personal deterioration and the springing up again of idolatry. Our Lord asks us never to compromise. The right hand that offends must be cut off. The brood of the viper must be stamped out to the last egg.

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## ASA'S GOOD REIGN

We have a fuller account of this reign in 2 Chronicles 13. He was not wholehearted with God; but he was maintained in his kingdom for David's sake (Ps. 132:10, 11).

How long after David's sun had set did the light of his life glimmer over his house! (1 Kings 15:4) God keeps His covenant and mercy unto thousands of generations. We are probably all inheriting more than we know from the prayers and tears of those who have gone before us.

What a pathetic sigh of regret that mention of Uriah is! One moment of indulged passion may cast a shadow over long years. God forgives sin, yet it grieves Him to the heart. Oh, that there may be no need for God to make such an exception in the case of any of us! And that we might never turn aside from anything He commands all the days of our life!

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**[Summary of King Asa](#) - 2 Chr. 14:2 "Asa did good and right in the sight of the Lord"** This is a recurrent theme in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 6:18; 12:28; 13:18). This chapter lists several things he did to merit this evaluation (cf. 2 Chr. 15:8-15,16-18).

### 1. removed

1. foreign altars, 2 Chr. 14:3
2. high places, 2 Chr. 14:3,5 (cf. 2 Chr. 15:17; see Roland deVaux, *Ancient Israel*, "High Places," pp. 284-288)
3. incense altars, 2 Chr. 14:5 (associated with *Ba'al* worship, cf. Lev. 26:30; 2 Chr. 34:4,7)

2. destroyed (cf. Deut. 12:2-3)
  1. sacred pillars (i.e., raised stone which was a symbol of the male deity, cf. Exod. 23:24)
  2. Asherim (i.e., a live tree or carved stake which was a symbol of the female deity, cf. Exod. 34:13; 2 Chr. 15:16)
3. demanded his people
  1. to seek YHWH
  2. to observe His law

The Chronicler expands (i.e., three chapters) the material on the life of Asa. Kings only has a few verses (i.e., 1 Kgs. 15:9-24). Chronicles is using another prophetic written source.

1. positive – 2 Chr. 14:1-15:19
2. negative – 2 Chr. 16:1-14

Faithful at the beginning but faithless at the end becomes a terrible pattern.

**1 Kings 15:12 He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols which his fathers had made.**

NET 1 Kings 15:12 He removed the male cultic prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the disgusting idols his ancestors had made.

CSB 1 Kings 15:12 He banished the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all of the idols that his fathers had made.

ESV 1 Kings 15:12 He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

NIV 1 Kings 15:12 He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his fathers had made.

NLT 1 Kings 15:12 He banished the male and female shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his ancestors had made.

NRS 1 Kings 15:12 He put away the male temple prostitutes out of the land, and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made.

NJB 1 Kings 15:12 He drove the male prostitutes out of the country and got rid of all the idols which his ancestors had made.

NAB 1 Kings 15:12 banishing the temple prostitutes from the land and removing all the idols his father had made.

YLT 1 Kings 15:12 and removeth the whoremongers out of the land, and turneth aside all the idols that his fathers made;

GWN 1 Kings 15:12 He forced the male temple prostitutes out of the land and got rid of the idols his father had made.

- **He also put away the male cult prostitutes:** 1Ki 14:24 22:46 Ro 1:26,27 Jude 1:7
- **removed all the idols:** 1Ki 15:3 11:7,8 14:23 2Ch 14:2-5 Eze 20:18,19 Zec 1:2-6 1Pe 1:18
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## GETTING RID OF THE IDOLS AND THE IDOLATERS

**He also put away the male cult prostitutes ([qadesh](#)) from the land** - The KJV renders **male cult prostitutes** as "sodomites." **Put away** means he removed them from the land. One wonders why he did not sentence them to death.

**David Guzik** - 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 ([gillul/gillulim](#)) which his fathers had made - His fathers** who made these idols undoubtedly alludes to his father Abijah, grandfather Rehoboam and sadly his great-grandfather Solomon! **All** sounds like Asa did a thorough cleansing of the idols with one slight exception (see 1Ki 15:14).

*If you seek Him [the LORD], He will be found by you,  
but if you abandon Him, He will abandon you"*  
-- Prophet Azariah to Asa (2Ch 15:2)

**Tony Merida** - The Chronicler highlights Asa's spiritual leadership saying that he "told the people of Judah to seek the LORD ... and to carry out the instruction and the commands" (2 Chr 14:4; emphasis added). Asa points the nation in the right direction. Have you ever been serious about seeking the Lord? If not, follow Asa's example: put away the idols and seek the Lord. James says, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" (Jas 4:8). This happened to me in college. I had been around the church growing up, but I didn't earnestly seek the Lord until then. Perhaps you have some religious practices but no living relationship with the God of the Bible. Let me urge you to follow this model of seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings](#))

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**Male cult prostitutes** (06945) [qadesh](#) from [qodesh](#) = holy, apartness, sacredness) refers to a male temple prostitute. The sad irony is that the root word signifies "holy" or "sacred" and in context of the pagan idolatrous temples the word signifies a man who has been set apart for male prostitution, likely reflecting homosexual and bisexual activities. Yahweh did not permit the Israelites, male or female, to be set aside for sacred prostitution. The name **qadesh** is a sad commentary on the licentiousness of Canaanite worship which infiltrated and destroyed the true worship of Yahweh! Male and female prostitutes were only one feature of Canaanite fertility religion, but they were a central feature, one that violated the morality and ethics of the Covenant that the Lord had made with Israel at Sinai. The veneration of other Canaanite goddesses, such as Astarte and Anath, helped foster cultic prostitution. Male or female cult prostitutes were explicitly outlawed in Israel (with good cause) by the Sinai Covenant (Deut. 23:17).

**Idols** (01544) [gillul/gillulim](#) - latter is the plural form = all OT uses are plural) means logs, blocks, shapeless things. This word describes "an object (not necessarily three dimensional) which has been formed to resemble a person, god, animal." (Louw-Nida). It is used to mock the pagan gods, and it always views idols as contemptuous things ([1 Ki. 15:12](#); [Deut. 29:17](#); [Ezek. 6:4](#)). Idols are always an [abomination](#), and they pollute the people and the land. The word is often used by Ezekiel parallel to the noun *tāmfi*, "to be unclean," "to defile oneself", thus strengthening the etymological argument to associate the noun with dung. The prime indictment of Judah communicated by Ezekiel was idolatry (see ch. 16). This defilement forced the Spirit of Yahweh to depart from the Temple (chs. 9-11), as the Temple itself was defiled by idolatry ([Ezek 8:9f](#)).

Other words for **idols** are:

**selem** "image," which emphasizes its representational character (used seven times);

**semel** of uncertain etymology (5x);

**terapim**, apparently meaning a "thing of shame" used for Laban's household gods stolen by Rachel;

**mippeleset** "thing of horror";

**'elil** "empty or meaningless thing";

**'awen** "sinful thing" BDB (KB suggests, a "thing of mystery" from a possible etymology, but BDB is better on the basis of the usage of 'awen).

**ashera**, which are cult objects, perhaps sacred poles, but are more symbols of the goddess 'ashera rather than idols in the normal sense.

**NET NOTE** on **idols** - The word used here, גִּלּוּלִים [gillulim], is always used as a disdainful reference to idols. It is generally thought to have originally referred to "dung pellets" (cf. KBL 183 s.v. גִּלּוּלִים). It is only one of several terms used in this way, such as "worthless things" (אֵלִילִים, 'elilim), "vanities" or "empty winds" (הַבִּלְיָוִים, havalim).

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**1 Kings 15:13 He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah; and Asa cut down her horrid image and burned it at the brook Kidron.**

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in her grove: and Asa cut down her retreats, and burnt them with fire in the brook of Kedron.

NET 1 Kings 15:13 He also removed Maacah his grandmother from her position as queen because she had made a loathsome Asherah pole. Asa cut down her Asherah pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

CSB 1 Kings 15:13 He also removed his grandmother Maacah from being queen mother because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. Asa chopped down her obscene image and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

ESV 1 Kings 15:13 He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah. And Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron.

NIV 1 Kings 15:13 He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

NLT 1 Kings 15:13 He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made an obscene Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

NRS 1 Kings 15:13 He also removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother, because she had made an abominable image for Asherah; Asa cut down her image and burned it at the Wadi Kidron.

NJB 1 Kings 15:13 He even deprived his grandmother Maacah of the dignity of Great Lady for having made an obscenity for Asherah; Asa cut down her obscenity and burnt it in the ravine of the Kidron.

NAB 1 Kings 15:13 He also deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made an outrageous object for Asherah. Asa cut down this object and burned it in the Kidron Valley.

YLT 1 Kings 15:13 and also Maachah his mother -- he turneth her aside from being mistress, in that she made a horrible thing for a shrine, and Asa cutteth down her horrible thing, and burneth it by the brook Kidron;

- **Maachah:** 1Ki 15:2,10 2Ch 15:15,16-19
- **his mother:** De 13:6-11 33:9 Zec 13:3 Mt 10:37 12:46-50 2Co 5:16 Ga 2:5,6,14
- **Cut down,** Lev 26:30 De 7:5 2Ki 18:4 23:12-15 2Ch 34:4
- **and burned:** Ex 32:20 De 9:21 Jos 6:24
- **the brook:** 2Sa 15:23 2Ki 23:6 Joh 18:1, Cedron
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 32:20 He took the calf which they had made **and burned it with fire**, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink it.

Deuteronomy 9:21 "I took your sinful thing, the calf which you had made, and **burned it with fire** and crushed it, grinding it very small until it was as fine as dust; and I threw its dust into the brook that came down from the mountain.

2 Chronicles 15:16 He also removed Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the position of queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her horrid image, crushed it and burned it at the brook Kidron.

## PURGING THE PALACE

**He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother** (gebirah) - Don't be confused because **Maacah** was not Asa's **mother** but his grandmother, for she was the wife of King Rehoboam and the mother of Abijam (Abijah), who was the father of King Asa (2Ch 14:1+). In addition Maacah was the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah (2Ch 13:2) and Tamar (2Sa 14:27) and hence was the granddaughter of Absalom. Think about what King Asa was up against! His own grandmother who had the prestige of "[queen mother](#)," who in general had a highly honored position in the royal court, often second in status only to the king himself. King Asa has a heart wholly devoted to Yahweh and "[bucks the system](#)," [canning](#) his grandmother because of her godless, abominable worship!

**THOUGHT** - It cost Asa to follow Jehovah, for he was forced to break family ties with his own grandmother.

Beloved, following Jesus will cost us also, and some of you may have already experienced broken family ties (I have and it was very painful!) Jesus warned us that "from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." (Lk 12:52,53+, cp Mk 8:34-40+, Lk 14:26,27,33+). Have you counted the cost?

**Because** (term of explanation) **she had made a horrid** (loathsome, obscene) **image as an Asherah - Horrid image** is the Hebrew word *miphletseth/mipleset* used only here and in 2Ch 15:16+, both times describing the sin of Maacah. The root word (*palats*) means to shudder from fear. Maacah's image was so horrible that it caused shuddering from fear! Fortunately, King Asa had the fear of the LORD and was not intimidated but took swift action against the **horrid image!** As someone has said fear God and you will have nothing else to fear!

*The fear of man brings a snare,*

*But he who trusts in the LORD will be exalted.*

-- Proverbs 29:25

**And Asa cut down ([karath](#)) her horrid image and burned it at the brook Kidron** - Asa treated Maacah's horrid image like Moses treated the golden calf, totally eradicating all traces of this sinful object. Her horrid image received a fitting "burial," for the Kidron Valley was the main garbage dump for Jerusalem!

**Adam Clarke** is a bit graphic but probably not far from the truth - From the whole, it is pretty evident that the image was a mere *Priapus*, or something of the same nature, and that Maachah had an assembly in the grove where the image was set up, and doubtless worshipped it with the most impure rites. What the Roman *Priapus* was I need not tell the learned reader; and as to the unlearned, it would not profit him to know (**ED: I AGREE AND FOR THAT REASON GIVE NO LINKS TO THAT VILE TERM**).

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**Queen** (01377)(**gebirah** from **gebir** = lord; a cognate is [gibbor](#) which means mighty) is a feminine noun depicting a queen, a lady, a woman or mistress (Ge 16:4, 8, 9; 2 Ki. 5:3). Gebirah is the title of the king's mother (or in Asa's case his grandmother), the so called "queen mother" (1 Ki. 15:13; 2 Ki. 10:13). Gebirah is used as the title of Pharaoh's wife in Egypt (1 Ki. 11:19). Sons of this female were considered full brothers of the king (2 Ki. 10:13). Queen Mother often served as a trusted counselor to the king as when Bathsheba advised Solomon in 1 Kings 1:11-21. In 1 Kings 2:19, King Solomon bowed before his mother, Bathsheba, showing the deep respect accorded to the Queen Mother. In many ancient Near Eastern cultures, the Queen Mother acted as a diplomatic figure. She may have played a role in forming alliances, negotiating treaties, and managing court affairs. As Israel and Judah faced decline and foreign invasions, the role of the Queen Mother lost some of its prestige. However, the concept of the powerful mother of a king continued to influence later traditions, including the idea of the Virgin Mary as the "Queen Mother" (which of course she was NOT! -- SEE [Queen of Heaven](#))

**[Complete Biblical Library](#)** - (NOTE THIS SOURCE CITES MORE USES OF GEBIRAH/GEVIRAH THAN OTHER SOURCES) Gevīrah is a technical term which denotes legal superiority. It occurs fifteen times in the Hebrew Bible. Seven times it appears in the context of the female superior of a female servant. Six times it refers to either the queen or queen mother (the female superior of all in society). Twice it is used metaphorically in Isaiah as "queen."

Three times it occurs in the account of Hagar's flight from Sarah and her discussion with the angel in the desert, ultimately leading to her return to her superior (Gen. 16:4ff). Naaman, a Syrian military official, became aware of the potential healing power of Elisha through the Israelite female slave of his wife (2 Ki. 5:3).

The word is coupled with shiphah in poetic contexts. The psalmist states that the collective eyes of the people look upon Yahweh as servants look to masters and mistresses for mercy (123:2). In Isaiah 24, it is prophesied that Yahweh will punish the unrighteous. All will suffer identical fates. "As with the female servant, so with her mistress" (v. 2). Finally, among those things that cause the earth to tremble is "a female servant when she succeeds her mistress" (Prov. 30:23).

The remaining occurrences of the word are those associated with the position of queen mother (with the exception of 1 Ki. 11:19, where the context implies the term is used to denote the queen of Egypt). This position is one which is associated with Judah, as the formula employed at the ascension of Judaeon kings include the mother of the king; Israelite kings do not mention them. Precisely what powers were held by the women in this position is not clear, although it is clear they wielded enough power to cause problems.

**Four queen mothers are mentioned, three of them in a negative light.** Bathsheba (the non-negative example), wife of David and mother of Solomon, appears with access to and a position near her son's throne

(perhaps as reward for her efforts in the harem intrigue which brought her son to power; 2 Sam. 11:3; 12:24).

**The only Israelite queen mother who is recorded in the Hebrew Bible is Jezebel.** Her influence in the courts of her sons Ahaziah and Jehoram was undeniable (1 Ki. 16:31; 22:15; 2 Ki. 3:2; 9:22). Her prominence in the narratives is a stark contrast to the involvement of other queen mothers in Israel. This may be attributed to her being the daughter of the king of Sidon. It is clear that the queen played some role in neighboring Ugarit, although the extent of her role is unknown. The uniqueness and negativity of Jezebel's role is an indictment against allowing foreign influences to enter into Hebrew political and religious life.

The prime charge against the evil queen mother involves the introduction of foreign religions. Jezebel was zealous concerning the worship of Phoenician deities of her native Sidon. She had 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Asherah seated at the royal table, indicating state support of the religion (1 Ki. 18:19). Given the intolerance of normative Yahwism for other gods, she persecuted all members of the Yahwistic religious structure, including prophets (e.g., Elijah, 1 Ki. 18:4). She violated the royal role in Israel by her seizure of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). Murder is by no means the only serious offense in this incident (21:19). The ultimate violation by Jezebel's action is the seizure of inalienable property as her own. Yahweh owned the land; all property was his, and He allowed individuals to inherit the use of fields. To usurp ownership outside the clan structure was to take land from Yahweh, to usurp his role. Her inglorious end at the hand of eunuchs obeying the command of Jehu during his successful coup underscores her lack of power in the face of Yahweh. Her lack of burial is antithetical to her position of prominence, as the powerful secured elaborate tombs and a period of public mourning.

The next evil queen mother recorded in the Hebrew Bible was a Judahite queen, Athaliah, who was either the daughter or (less likely) sister-in-law (cf. 2 Ki. 8:26; see ABD 1, 511f) of Jezebel. First Kings 22:44 states that Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, made peace with Israel, doubtless sealed by the marriage of the crown prince Jehoram to Athaliah (2 Ki. 8:18). Jehoram reigned for eight years (most of which scholars hold was as coregent with his father), and was labeled as an evil king, especially in contrast to his father and grandfather (2 Ki. 8:18; 2 Chr. 22:11ff). His sin was that "he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife." This indictment had to do with the tolerance of worship for foreign gods. Given Jezebel's influence and zeal for Sidonian gods, it is not at all surprising that her daughter (or any royal family member) would push for the same religious circumstances that existed in the Northern kingdom.

The Chronicler blames her for the reign of her son Ahaziah, which was done in the fashion of the "ways of the house of Ahab" (2 Chr. 22:3ff). He was killed in the course of Jehu's coup in Israel, along with the entirety of Ahab's descendants and forty-two Davidic descendants who were in the Northern kingdom (2 Ki. 9:27ff; 10:13ff).

Athaliah seized upon the political chaos by attempting to obliterate all male descendants of the royal line, inadvertently missing Ahaziah's son Joash (2 Kings 11). Joash was protected by the high priest of the Temple of Yahweh, who six years later would instate him as king in a palace coup (2 Ki. 11:4-20; 2 Chr. 22:11-12). Meanwhile, Athaliah became sole ruler in Judah, the lone queen to rule either kingdom.

The animosity of the Yahwistic priesthood and the destruction of the temple of Baal in the coup which ended her reign and life confirm her commitment to Baalism. Her ability to stage a coup, to order male Davidic descendants to be slaughtered, speaks of the power of the position of the queen mother. Her ability to firmly establish Baalism as an official cult likewise is testimony to the power wielded by this woman. It is not clear if this represents the normal power wielded by her office or if it is representative of the enormous strength of personality of this woman. The latter certainly must play a role in her ascension to the rulership of the country; how much of a base her office provided is not clear.

The other person labeled *gevîrah* in the Hebrew Bible was Maacah, the mother of Abijah and Asa, wife of Rehoboam the son of Solomon. Abijah did evil in the sight of Yahweh (1 Ki. 15:3-8). Asa did away with most forms of idolatry (1 Ki. 15:11-15). In order to do so, he had "to remove his mother Maacah from being queen mother, because she had made an abominable image for Asherah" (1 Ki. 15:13). Her power of office was sufficient to be enough of a nuisance to the king that Asa had to remove her from her power base.

Isaiah uses this noun metaphorically twice in ch. 47 in the course of an oracle against Babylon and its impending demise. Babylon is called the "mistress of kingdoms" (v. 5) and considers herself to be "mistress forever" (v. 7). Here the imagery is best understood as that of queen or superior. Verse 8 contains the boast of Babylon that she "shall not sit as a widow or know the loss of children."

### **John Kitto - The Queen—I Kings 15:13**

The disproportion of daughters to sons which was noticeable in the case of Rehoboam, was counter-balanced in the case of Abijah by a preponderance of sons. Of these he had twenty-two, and of daughters sixteen. His wives were fourteen; and that the number was so much below that which constituted the harem of his father, shows an increasing deference to public opinion, which was undoubtedly unfavorable to this "multiplication of wives" by the kings, of which Solomon, or perhaps we may say David, had set the example. Even this number is named with the marked emphasis which implies disapprobation; and as nothing is said of the number of his son Asa's wives, and as it appears he had but one child, it is to be inferred that he so far respected the national feeling and the dignity of woman as to be content with the one wife, whose recorded name is Azubah. After that reign we hear no more of the numerous wives of the kings of Judah, so that this abuse appears to have been rectified; and in the other kingdom it does not seem to have had any existence, for we do not meet with any king who is known to have had more than one wife.

King Abijah reigned but three years; but his son Asa, who succeeded him, reigned forty-one years, and beheld the close of the reign of Jeroboam in Israel, and the commencement of that of Ahab,—so that this one reign in the house of David covered the entire reigns of five, and parts of the reigns of two, kings in Israel—seven in all, including four different families or dynasties.<sup>541</sup> The contrast is striking; and there can be no doubt that this long, and, upon the whole, prosperous and meritorious reign, while Israel was torn by internal factions and revolutions, and stained with the blood of fallen princes, massacred by the successful competitors for the perilous crown, tended much to consolidate the strength of Judah, and to raise it to that equality with the rival kingdom, which might not in the first instance have appeared feasible when the great disproportion of territory is considered.

The mention of royal wives, in connection with this reign, may remind us of the remarkable fact, that it is in this reign the word translated queen first occurs, as applied to one not a reigning sovereign, as the queen of Sheba appears to have been.

If the reader reflects a little, he will see that the practice of polygamy is incompatible with the existence of the rank of queen-consort. Where there are many wives—some of them of equal or nearly equal rank—how can any one of them be queen? Hence David, Solomon, Rehoboam, and Abijah, who had many wives, could have had no "queen," in the European sense of the word, which is that of female-king. So it is still in the polygamous courts of the East; and hence the court of the anti-penultimate king of Persia, Futteh Ali Shah, was greatly perplexed when a British ambassador appeared with a letter from queen Charlotte, addressed to "the queen of Persia," and bearing presents for her. However, that the presents might not be lost for the want of a lady to receive them, and that the "king of kings," known to be the husband of many wives and the father of many children, might not appear to be destitute of that which the princes of Europe appeared to consider so necessary to him as a queen, the favorite lady of the day was instructed to take the part—to receive the presents and the letter,—the latter being also answered in her name.

The fact is, that there can be no queen-consort where there is more than one wife; and, in the East, when there is no more than one, she is not a queen—she has no recognized public position in the state—she is simply the zan-i-shah, "the king's wife"—that is all. There is, however, in most cases, some one in the harem who, on one account or another, is recognized as the chief lady. This position is seldom fixed by the king's mere arbitrary will or personal liking, but is determined by circumstances which usage compels him to respect. Hence the favorite wife or concubine is not always, or even generally, the chief lady. The circumstances which usually fix that position are either high birth, priority of marriage, or giving birth to the heir of the throne; and if these three conditions, or the first and the last, concur in the same person, the superiority over the others becomes clear and indisputable; and, in any case, the fact of becoming mother of the future king over-rides every other consideration, and renders the happy woman so privileged the chief lady, even though she be not a favorite wife.

Now, to apply this. It is likely that the one of David's wives who was recognized as the chief, was the mother of his eldest son, Amnon, although, perhaps, Absalom's mother, by virtue of her high rank as the daughter of a king, asserted her claim to scarcely less consideration, and had a separate establishment of her own; and when, by the death of Amnon, her son became the heir, and these two high claims were united in her person, her pre-eminence must have been beyond question or dispute. When Absalom was slain, she necessarily lost the maternal part of her pre-eminence, but retained that which her high birth conferred. So, when Solomon became the acknowledged heir to the crown, his mother became the chief lady of the harem,—though, perhaps, at first, Haggith, the mother of Adonijah,—really the elder son, made some pretensions to that enviable station. Amid these changes, arising from births and deaths of sons, the fixed position which her rank gave to king Talmi's daughter may have seemed not the least enviable, but for this—that the one who was chief lady by virtue of her maternity, had to look forward to the still higher state which she might expect to enjoy when her son reached the throne.

Solomon had among his thousand wives one of the most exalted rank, being no other than the king of Egypt's daughter. She was treated with great distinction, and had a separate palace for herself; and the only claim to be regarded as the chief wife that could at

all interfere with hers, was that of the mother of Rehoboam, the heir to the throne. As, however, the rank is not one of public or official recognition, and as Pharaoh's daughter had a separate establishment, there is no likelihood that their claims came into conflict.

There was in fact one whose claim to be chief lady of "queen," was superior to either of theirs, and to which both could not but submit—and this was that of the MOTHER of the king. The chief wife claimed that distinction as mother of the future king; but the chief lady was the mother of the king himself. This is in conformity with the prevalent usage of the East, which assigns the first rank in every household, not to the wife of the master, but his mother, to whom the wife merely becomes another daughter. Thus, so far as there was any woman who could be called "queen" in the time of Solomon, it was Bathsheba who enjoyed that distinction. We see a trace of this in the ceremonious respect with which she is received by her son, who rose to meet her, bowed himself to her, and caused a seat to be set for "the king's mother" on his right hand. It was this rank, that of "the king's mother," which really constituted the distinction, making the nearest approach to the rank and dignity of a non-regnant queen.

So, now, we come to the remarkable fact by which these observations have been suggested. We have already had occasion to mention, that Rehoboam's favored wife was Maachah, the grand-daughter of Absalom. On the accession of her son Abijah, she of course became, as "the king's mother," the chief lady in the land, or "queen;" and it appears that she would have retained it under her grandson Asa, but for a cause which is thus stated:—"And also concerning Maachah, the mother (grandmother) of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove." The rights which she enjoyed as the king's mother were not lessened, but rather strengthened, by her becoming the king's grandmother—the maternal head of the royal house. But she might lose the conventional pre-eminence and state rights (if any) which this position conferred upon her, by her misconduct; and doubtless Asa, by this decided act, intended to express, and was understood to express, in the strongest possible manner, his abomination of idolatry, and his determination to put it down. The rank of which she was thus deprived, doubtless then devolved on the king's own mother.

The most striking analogy to this is found in the high rank, eminent privileges, and even political influence, to which the mother of the sovereign of the Turkish empire succeeds when her son ascends the throne. We hear little or nothing in Turkish history of any woman except the validé sultan,—of empress-dowager,—but of her often, and under various circumstances, which indicate her exalted position and high influence. It was much the same in ancient Persia, where the king's mother enjoyed a peculiar rank and title, corresponding to that of the validé sultan, and with privileges much higher than those of his wife. As the true distinction lay in being the king's mother, the mother of his father probably retained that title whenever—which the course of nature rendered unusual—she continued to enjoy the rank and privileges of the chief lady under her grandson, as in the case before us. It is, however, so common in Scripture for a grandmother to be called a mother, that perhaps even this explanation is scarcely necessary to account for Maachah being called the mother of king Asa.

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**SOME ABOMINATIONS OF THE PAGAN RELIGIONS THAT INFECTED GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE** - The Canaanite religion, as described in ancient texts, including the Bible, was often depicted as highly corrupt, particularly in terms of **sexual immorality** and other practices considered abominable by Israelite standards. Here are some of the key aspects:

### 1. Cultic Prostitution

- Many Canaanite religious practices involved ritual prostitution in temples dedicated to their gods, such as Baal and Asherah.
- Both male and female temple prostitutes (often called "sacred prostitutes") engaged in sexual acts as part of religious ceremonies, believed to ensure fertility for the land and people.

### 2. Worship of Baal and Asherah

- Baal was a storm and fertility god, and Asherah was a mother goddess. Their worship included orgiastic rites, where sexual acts were performed as acts of devotion.
- These acts were meant to imitate divine fertility and secure agricultural prosperity.

### 3. Incest and Bestiality

- Ancient Canaanite texts, such as the Ugaritic texts, reveal mythologies that normalize incestuous relationships among their deities, suggesting that such behaviors were tolerated or even encouraged in some social contexts.
- The laws in Leviticus 18:1-30 specifically prohibit incest, bestiality, and other sexual perversions, implying that these practices



were common among the Canaanites.

#### 4. Child Sacrifice & Sexual Perverse Worship

- The worship of Molech included child sacrifice, where children were burned alive as offerings. Some scholars suggest that these ceremonies may have involved sexual rituals alongside human sacrifice.
- The combination of sexual immorality and violent practices made Canaanite religion particularly detestable to the Israelites.

#### 5. Homosexual Practices & Sodomy

- Sodomy and same-sex relations (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13) were tied to Canaanite religious practices, where such acts were often performed in temples.

#### 6. God's Judgment Against the Canaanites

- Due to these extreme corruptions, God commanded the Israelites to completely destroy Canaanite religious sites (Deuteronomy 7:5) and to avoid intermarrying or adopting their practices (Deuteronomy 7:3-4).
- The conquest of Canaan (Joshua's campaign) was not just about land but also about eradicating these abominable religious customs. Unfortunately for Israel this "spiritual cancer" was never totally removed! And like untreated cancer usually does, it spread throughout both the northern kingdom bringing death to the nation in 722 BC and then to the southern kingdom bringing death to Judah and destruction of Yahweh's Temple in 586 BC.

To summarize, the Canaanite religion was deeply intertwined with sexual perversion, idolatry, and human sacrifice, making it one of the most corrupt in ancient times. These practices were considered an abomination in Israelite law, leading to God's command for their destruction.

**1 Kings 15:14 But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly devoted to the LORD all his days.**

- the high places: 1Ki 22:43 2Ki 12:3 14:4 15:4 2Ch 14:3,5
- was perfect: 1Ki 15:3 8:61 11:4 2Ch 15:17,18 16:9 25:2
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 14:3+ for he (**ASA**) removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim,

2 Chronicles 20:33+ (**KING JEHOSHAPHAT**) The high places, however, were not removed; **the people had not yet directed their hearts to the God of their fathers.** (ED: IN THIS CONTEXT, HIGH PLACES SEEM TO BE A "BAROMETER" OF THE PEOPLE'S HEART AFFECTION TOWARD YAHWEH).

Deuteronomy 12:2-3+ (**GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE HIGH PLACES**) "You shall **utterly destroy all the places** where the nations whom you shall dispossess serve their gods, **on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree.** 3 "You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place.

### THE MYSTERY OF THE HIGH PLACES

**But** - Term of contrast. Note that the parallel passage above says Asa did remove the high places.

**The high places** ([bamah](#)) **were not taken away** - The implication is that the high places should have been taken away and

apparently some were according to 2Ch 14:3. Why were they said to not be removed in this verse? The text does not tell us (see [Norman Geisler's explanation](#) and [G Campbell Morgan's comments](#)). Many think that Asa tore down the idolatrous high places and retained high places that were dedicated to the LORD. While that is a reasonable comment, it is not perfectly compatible with God's instruction in Dt 12:5 which says "you shall seek the LORD at the place which the LORD your God will choose from all your tribes, to establish His name there for His dwelling, and there you shall come." (cf Ps 132:13) And of course the place He had establish His Name was the Temple in Jerusalem. Therefore the persistence of ANY high places at this time is at the very least problematic (see also 2Ch 20:33b+)!

**John MacArthur** says "Apparently, he did not remove all the high places or, once removed, they reappeared (cf. 1Ki 15:17; 1Ki 15:14). His son Jehoshaphat later had to remove them (cf. 2Ch 17:6), although not completely (cf. 2Ch 20:33). This was done in an effort to comply with Dt 12:2, 3. (See [MacArthur Study Bible - Page 618](#))

There is one other possible explanation suggested by 2 Chronicles 15:17 which says, "But the high places were not taken away from **Israel**." If **Israel** here refers to the northern kingdom, it suggests that Asa removed the high places in **Judah** but could not remove those in the northern kingdom of Israel, which was under King Baasha at the time. Some questions will not be fully answered until we are in Heaven, for "now I know in part, but then I will know fully." (1Co 13:12+)

**John Schultz** makes a good point regarding the high places - One thing lacking in Asa's understanding of God's will was the fact that he did not consider the place of worship of God to be the important issue. Although he removed the symbols of idolatry, he did not regard the temple in Jerusalem as the only place where God ought to be worshipped as He had indicated. As far as that was concerned he did not have David's vision.

**Nevertheless** (contrast) - This contrast seems to show that despite the failure to remove all the high places Asa's heart was still right with the Lord.

**The heart of Asa was wholly devoted** ([shalem](#); Lxx - [teleios](#) = having attained the end or purpose) **to the LORD all his days** - So in spite of not removing the high places, the writer says Asa had a "whole heart." See [discussion of wholly devoted in comments](#) on 1Ki 15:3.

**THOUGHT**- Dear saint battling daily with sin, does God's assessment of Asa not encourage you to continue to run with endurance? That's rhetorical! Asa, like David, was hardly perfect, yet God designated his heart as **wholly devoted**. While God does not wink at our missteps, because of His mercies, which are new every morning (we need them every morning!), neither does He condemn us. In amazing grace, when we return and confess our sins, He bestows forgiveness and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. A wholly devoted heart WILL stumble, but the general direction of such a heart is to seek the Lord.

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**High places** (01116) **bamah** Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - [NET Note](#) = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp Isa 58:14) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Ch 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and **Josiah** (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about **Josiah** 300 years earlier = 1Ki 13:2) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son **Manasseh** rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them! We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high**

places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

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**Norman Geisler** 1 KINGS 15:14—**Did Asa destroy the high places or leave them standing? See [When Critics Ask](#)**

**PROBLEM:** 2 Chronicles 14:3 asserts that "he [Asa] removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places." But here, 1 Kings says that, during the reign of king Asa, "the high places were not removed."

**SOLUTION:** There are several possible explanations. One is that these passages may refer to different times in Asa's reign. In his early period, he may have been more active in putting idolatry down. Or, it may have been that Asa was unsuccessful in carrying through his reforms, so that the high places were not completely removed. Some have suggested that he may have only torn down the high places to other gods (as 2 Chronicles notes) but allowed the ones to the Lord to remain (which 1 Kings speaks about). Any one of these would take care of the difficulty.

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - 1 Kings 15.14.**

Rehoboam was succeeded as King of Judah by his son, Abijam, who for three years continued the evil courses of his father, and the process of national deterioration went forward. Then, with the accession and long reign (of fifty-one years) of Asa, there was in a measure a halt in the downward progress. The partial reform under his influence preserved Judah from the speedy spread of corruption which occurred in the case of Israel. The statement of the chronicler, that his heart "was perfect with Jehovah," is a revelation of the fact that his purpose and intention were right. His will and power were not equal to his purpose, and consequently the reforms were not radical. He went a long way when he removed his mother Maacah from being queen, and cut down the abominable image which she had erected; but he left the high places still standing. It is the record of a faulty life, but one in which the deepest thing, that of desire, was right; and so it is the record of a life, the influence of which was a blessing rather than a curse. It is a revealing story. While it is necessarily true that the higher form of life is that in which will completely answers desire, and at all costs carries out high purpose, it is a great source of encouragement thus to discover that God accepts, values, and makes use of those whose desires are in harmony with His will, even though they do not attain to the fullness of realization.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the significance of high places in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - High places, very simply, were places of worship on elevated pieces of ground. High places were originally dedicated to idol worship (Numbers 33:52; Leviticus 26:30), especially among the Moabites (Isaiah 16:12). These shrines often included an altar and a sacred object such as a stone pillar or wooden pole in various shapes identified with the object of worship (animals, constellations, goddesses, and fertility deities). It seems that, at times, high places were set up in a spot that had been artificially elevated; 2 Kings 16:4 seems to differentiate the "high places" from the "hills."

The Israelites, forever turning away from God, practiced Molech worship and built high places for Baal (Jeremiah 32:35). Although Solomon built the temple of God in Jerusalem, he later established idolatrous high places for his foreign wives outside of Jerusalem and worshiped with them, causing him the loss of the kingdom (1 Kings 11:11). The people were still sacrificing at the pagan high places before the temple was built, and Solomon joined them. After the Lord appeared to him in a dream at Gibeon, the king returned to Jerusalem and sacrificed offerings; however, he continued to waver between the two places of worship.

Not all high places were dedicated to idol worship. They played a major role in Israelite worship, and the earliest biblical mention of a site of worship, later called a "high place," is found in Genesis 12:6–8 where Abram built altars to the Lord at Shechem and Hebron. Abraham built an altar in the region of Moriah and was willing to sacrifice his son there (Genesis 22:1–2). This site is traditionally believed to be the same high place where the temple of Jerusalem was built. Jacob set up a stone pillar to the Lord at Bethel (Genesis 28:18–19), and Moses met God on Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1–3).

Joshua set up stone pillars after crossing the Jordan (Joshua 4:20) and considered this a high place of worship because the Israelites "came up from" the Jordan onto higher ground. The high places were visited regularly by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 7:16). High places as sites of Canaanite idol worship (Judges 3:19) extended into the period of Elijah (1 Kings 18:16–40). God would name only one high place where sacrifice was authorized, and that was the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 3:1). God commanded that all other high places be destroyed. King Josiah destroyed them in 2 Kings 22–23. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**1 Kings 15:15 He brought into the house of the LORD the dedicated things of his father and his own dedicated things: silver and gold and utensils.**

KJV 1 Kings 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.

BGT 1 Kings 15:15 κα ε σ νεγκεν το ς κ ονας το πατρ ς α το κα το ς κ ονας α το ε σ νεγκεν ε ς τ υ ο κου κυρ ου ρυρο ς κα χρυσο ς κα σκε η

LXE 1 Kings 15:15 And he brought in the pillars of his father, he even brought in his gold and silver pillars into the house of the Lord, and his vessels.

NET 1 Kings 15:15 He brought the holy items that he and his father had made into the LORD's temple, including the silver, gold, and other articles.

CSB 1 Kings 15:15 He brought his father's consecrated gifts and his own consecrated gifts into the LORD's temple: silver, gold, and utensils.

ESV 1 Kings 15:15 And he brought into the house of the LORD the sacred gifts of his father and his own sacred gifts, silver, and gold, and vessels.

NIV 1 Kings 15:15 He brought into the temple of the LORD the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.

NLT 1 Kings 15:15 He brought into the Temple of the LORD the silver and gold and the various items that he and his father had dedicated.

NRS 1 Kings 15:15 He brought into the house of the LORD the votive gifts of his father and his own votive gifts-- silver, gold, and utensils.

NJB 1 Kings 15:15 He deposited his father's and his own dedicated gifts of silver, gold and sacred vessels in the Temple of Yahweh.

NAB 1 Kings 15:15 He brought into the temple of the LORD his father's and his own votive offerings of silver, gold, and various utensils.

YLT 1 Kings 15:15 and he bringeth in the sanctified things of his father, and his own sanctified things, to the house of Jehovah, silver, and gold, and vessels.

GWN 1 Kings 15:15 He brought into the LORD's temple the silver, the gold, and the utensils he and his father had set apart as holy.

- **he brought:** 1Ki 7:51 1Ch 26:26-28 2Ch 14:13 15:18
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## ASA RESTORES SOME VESSELS IN TEMPLE

**He brought into the house of the LORD the dedicated things([qodesh](#)) of his father and his own dedicated things: silver and gold and utensils** - Asa restores some of the gold vessels to the Temple. Where did he get this gold? We cannot be absolutely certain but 2Ch 14:13-14 says when Asa defeated the Ethiopians (2Ch 14:12) they carried away "much plunder." In this act we see Asa's heart being wholly devoted to God and this restoration serving as an act of worship of Yahweh.

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**Dedicated** (holy holy things) ([06944](#)) [qodesh](#) is a masculine noun which means set apart, distinct, unique. **Qodesh** describes that which has been consecrated or set apart for sacred use and was not to be used for common or profane tasks. If it were used for profane things, in simple terms, it became "not holy."

**1 Kings 15:16 Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.**

- 1Ki 15:6,7,32 1Ki 14:30 2Ch 16:1-6
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

## BROTHERS CONTINUALLY AT WAR

**Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days** - 1Ki 15:32 repeats "There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days." The 10 northern tribes continually fought with the 2 southern tribes during the reign of these kings. Baasha began his reign around the 3rd year of Asa's accession and reigned 24 years. The ESV note says [Asa began his reign 912/911 BC](#) (ended 871/870) and [Baasha began his reign about 910/909 BC](#) (ended 887/886).

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## WARRING BRETHREN 1 Kings 15:16-34

We obtain a fuller view of the events described in the earlier part of this passage by reference to 2 Chronicles 16:1-6. Asa's early piety, which shone out in his drastic purging of idolatry and the corruptions which sprang up like fungi on a damp soil, cannot be questioned. Strange that such a man, who, by faith in God, had driven back Zerah's formidable invasion, should in later years succumb to the craven methods of mere expediency in his conflict with Baasha.

This league with Ben-hadad arose from unbelief. Even true believers are sometimes hard pressed to maintain their integrity, because the trials of faith tend to increase. When Peter looked at the rising billows, his heart became troubled and he began to sink. To Asa's alliance with this heathen king may be traced the beginning of the downfall of both kingdoms-of the ten tribes and of Judah. Palestine was no longer a neutral state, but became involved in the political combinations of the time. Those that honor God are honored, 1 Samuel 2:30; those that put their trust elsewhere rue it all their days.

**1 Kings 15:17 Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.**

- **Baasha:** 1Ki 15:27 2Ch 16:1-6
- **Ramah:** By building Ramah is here meant fortifying it, in order to prevent all intercourse with the kingdom of Judah, lest his subjects should cleave to the house of David: for Ramah was a city of Benjamin, situated on the confines of both kingdoms, probably on a hill, as the name imports, commanding a narrow defile between the mountains, through which lay the principal road to Jerusalem; so that a fortification being erected here, no communication could be held between the people of Israel and Judah, without Baasha's permission. 1Ki 15:21 Jos 18:25 1Sa 15:34 Jer 31:15
- he might not suffer: 1Ki 12:27 2Ch 11:13-17
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 15:9+ He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from **Ephraim, Manasseh** and Simeon who resided with them, for **MANY defected to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.**



## LIMITING YOUR LOSSES

**Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah** - King **Baasha** crossed the north/south dividing border, invaded **Judah** and took possession of Judah's city of **Ramah**. On the map above note that **Ramah** is about 5 miles north of Jerusalem in the territory of **Judah** (actually a city of the tribe of Benjamin) just south of the border between the northern and southern kingdoms. **Ramah** is strategically located between Bethel (north) and Jerusalem (south) and thus effectively blocks the main route into the Southern Kingdom.

**In order to** (term of purpose) - What was the purpose of fortifying **Ramah**?

**Prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah** - Basically Baasha was trying to keep Israelites in the north from "defecting" to the Southern Kingdom, for 2Ch 15:9+ says **MANY** had defected to King Asa's rule. And why would they want to defect? The most obvious reason is that the religion of the northern kingdom was completely godless and some of those in the north still desired to worship the true and living God rather than idols. And given the location of Ramah (which means "hill"), it would be a strategic site to prevent defection to Judah.

**Bob Utley** - "**fortified Ramah**" Baasha tried to isolate Jerusalem from trade from the north and from the coast by turning the city of Ramah, which was only a short distance north of Jerusalem, into a fortified city.

**Dale Ralph Davis**: Ramah was strategic: it was only five-plus miles north of Asa's Jerusalem, sat astride the north-south trunk road, and controlled Judah's best western access to the coastal plain via Beth-horon. Baasha's design was no secret; it smells like an economic blockade (v. 17b). (**ED**: I AGREE BUT IT WAS ALSO A WAY TO PREVENT DEFECTION OF THOSE IN THE NORTH TO THE TRUE RELIGION OF THE SOUTH).

John Whitcomb agrees with me writing "Baasha's invasion of Judah and his fortification of Ramah (five miles north of Jerusalem) was his Berlin wall response to the powerful magnet of revival in Jerusalem to the south (cf. 2Ch 15:9). The king of Israel realized full well that it was his most stalwart citizens who were leaving him, the very life blood of the nation, and he took drastic means to stop it.

**1 Kings 15:18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold which were left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying,**

- **Asa**: 1Ki 15:15 14:26 2Ki 12:18 18:15,16 2Ch 15:18 16:2-6
- **Ben-hadad**: 1Ki 20:1-5,33,34 2Ki 8:7-15
- **Damascus**: 1Ki 11:23,24 Ge 14:15 15:2 Jer 49:27 Am 1:4
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:2-4, 7-10+ Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying,

2 Chronicles 16:7-10+ At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you have **relied** on the king of Aram and have not **relied** on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand. 8 "Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9 "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars." (**ED**: WERE THREE YEARS OF SEVERELY DISEASED FEET 2Ch 16:12-14+ ALSO PART OF GOD'S DISCIPLINE? I THINK SO!) 10 Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time. ([Guzik](#) - "Asa shows us the tragedy of a man who rules well and seeks the LORD for many years, yet fails in a significant challenge of his faith and then refuses to hear God's correction.")



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global  
See DAMASCUS, SYRIA (ARAM) IN THE NORTH

## LET'S MAKE A DEAL

**Then** - Time phrase usually marking *progression* in a narrative. In this case, the **then** marks a sad "*digression*" or declension in the narrative of King Asa.

**Asa took all the silver and the gold which were left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants** - Asa strips the Temple of treasure (**TOOK ALL**). It is surprising that Asa could find silver and gold given that Shishak had stripped the Temple of gold in Rehoboam's day. Recall that it was Asa himself who had placed dedicated gold and silver vessels in the Temple (1Ki 15:15+). The irony is that Asa now appears to be a "*fair-weather giver*" taking back what he had given to Yahweh's Temple! Clearly, we are beginning to see a backsliding of Asa's wholehearted devotion to the LORD. Baaha's move to fortify Ramah prompts a man whose heart is wholly devoted to the LORD to fall to rely on God's help and instead rely on Gold's help!

*For most of us the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin.*

**THOUGHT** - Webster says that to **backslide** means to lapse morally, to fall off; to turn gradually from one's faith and practice of the truth of the Gospel. To backslide means to drift into sinful habits from a prior state of Spirit enabled holiness. William Barclay sounds a warning for all believers, for NONE of us are immune to **backsliding** - "*For most of us the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin. There are few people who deliberately and in a moment turn their backs on God; there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from Him. There are not many who in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin; there are many who almost imperceptibly involve themselves in some situation and suddenly awake to find that they have ruined life for themselves and broken someone else's heart. We must continually be on the alert against the peril of the drifting life (cf 1Pe 1:13-17+, Heb 2:1+, Mt 26:41+, etc). The Word will never drift from us. The danger is our drifting from the anchor provided by the Truth of God's Word (cf Heb 6:19+). The harbor of salvation is absolutely secure. It is Jesus Christ, Who never moves, never changes, (Heb 13:8) and is always available to anyone who wants the protection and security of His righteousness.* ([William Barclay on Hebrews](#))

And King Asa sent them to **Ben-hadad** the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Aram (**Syria**), who lived in **Damascus, saying** - Asa has fallen for the snare of every man ever born. He now thinks gold will buy him protection. He forgets to remove the letter "L" for it is only God Who gives true protection. As shown on the map **Aram (Syria)** is in the north and strategically just to the north of King Baasha's kingdom.

**ESV Archaeological Note** - A marker dedicated to the god Baal Melqart (**ED**: the chief god of Tyre) has been found at Aleppo in northern Syria. It bears an Aramaic inscription that mentions Barhada (**ED**: the Aramean equivalent of Ben-Hadad), son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

## QUESTION - [Who was Ben-Hadad in the Bible?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER - Ben-Hadad** seems to have been the title of the reigning king of [Aram \(Syria\)](#). *Ben-Hadad* means “son of Hadad.” Hadad or Adad was the god of storm and thunder, and, as was common in that epoch of history, kings were seen as sons of the primary god of the region.

In the Bible, Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, is mentioned in 1 Kings 15:18–22; throughout 1 Kings 20; 2 Kings 6:24; 8:9; 13:24–25; 2 Chronicles 16:2–4; Jeremiah 49:27; and Amos 1:4. Since *Ben-Hadad* is a title much like *Pharaoh* or *President*, the term can refer to different individuals at different times. The context of each passage must be studied to determine just who is involved. Most students of history accept the existence of **three Ben-Hadads who ruled in Damascus**: Ben-Hadad I, who ruled c. 900–860 BC; his son (or grandson) Ben-Hadad II, who ruled 860–841; and another, unrelated Ben-Hadad, the son of the man who assassinated Ben-Hadad II.

In 1 Kings 15:18, **Ben-Hadad is designated as the son of Tabrimmon**, the son of Hezion. In this passage, [King Asa](#) of Judah makes a treaty with Ben-Hadad to help protect himself against the king of Israel, who was threatening Judah. (This is also recorded in 2 Chronicles 16:2–4.) Ben-Hadad sent soldiers against Israel and King Baasha and conquered a number of towns, bringing some relief to Judah.

In 1 Kings 20, Ben-Hadad once again attacks the northern kingdom of Israel, where [Ahab](#) is now the king. It is possible that this is the same Ben-Hadad who attacked in 1 Kings 15, or it could be a son, Ben-Hadad II. It seems that this time Ben-Hadad is attacking on his own without consideration for any treaty with Judah. And this time, although he had 32 kings helping him (1 Kings 20:1), he is defeated by King Ahab and the army of Israel. About three years later, Israel and Syria renew their conflict, leading to Ahab's final battle and death (1 Kings 22).

In 2 Kings 6–7, about nine years after Ahab's death, Ben-Hadad II invades Israel and lays siege to Samaria, the capital. The siege went on for so long that the people in the city were starving to death. However, in the middle of the night, the Lord caused the Aramean army to hear sounds of an advancing army. Thinking the king of Israel was receiving help from foreign nations, all of Ben-Hadad's men fled, leaving everything behind.

In 2 Kings 8, the [prophet Elisha](#) travels to Damascus and relays a paradoxical prophecy to Ben-Hadad II, who was ill: “Go and say to him, ‘You will certainly recover.’ Nevertheless, the Lord has revealed to me that he will in fact die” (verse 10). Just as Elisha said, Ben-Hadad began to recover from his illness, but then a man named [Hazael](#) murdered Ben-Hadad and took the throne of Aram. In 2 Kings 13, Hazael is succeeded by his son, who is also named Ben-Hadad. This final Ben-Hadad was defeated three times by King Jehoash of Israel, fulfilling another prophecy of Elisha (2 Kings 13:1–25).

In Jeremiah 49:27, the word of the Lord says, “I will set fire to the walls of Damascus; it will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.” At the time of Jeremiah's prophecy, none of the Ben-Hadads mentioned above would have been alive. The reference may be to the current king of Aram or perhaps to a fortress that had been built by and now bore the name of a former king. In Amos 1:4 we have a similar prophecy: “I will send fire on the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad.” By this time, the original Ben-Hadad had been killed, and Hazael was king. As above, “the fortress of Ben-Hadad” could simply refer to a fortress of the current king or to a specific fortress that was known by that name.

In summary, *Ben-Hadad* is the title of the Aramean king, “son of Hadad,” a prominent deity in the region. Several kings of Aram had extensive interaction with the kingdom of Israel and attacked several times. The Lord used Ben-Hadad and the Arameans to bring judgment on rebellious Israel, but He punished Aram for her evil, as well.

**1 Kings 15:19** “Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. **Behold**, I have sent you a present of silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me.”

- **Let there be a treaty:** 2Ch 19:2 Isa 31:1
- **break your treaty:** 2Sa 21:2 2Ch 16:3 Eze 17:13-16 Ro 1:31 3:8
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:3+ “Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. **Behold**, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me.”



## KING ASA'S WORLDLY WISDOM

**Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father** - Ben-hadad is a pagan idol worshiper. To make an alliance with him is utter foolishness. Asa maneuver to buy off Ben-hadad is a reflection of his unbelief. For some reason he forgets the prior faithfulness of Yahweh and resorts to human reasoning in the face of Baasha's threat.

*How do we respond when the pressure is on?*

*Do we abandon our convictions and chose compromise over confidence in the LORD?*

**THOUGHT** - Have you ever done the "Asa two-step"? It's not a very attractive "dance move!" Let's say you have just experienced deliverance by the good hand of the LORD from a trial, but then you experience another "attack" (affliction, trial, test, etc) and instead of seeking the LORD's help, you choose to rely on your wisdom or the wisdom of others (even Christians). Remember, even if you have what you deem to be a positive outcome (like Asa), that does not mean your reliance on self instead of God was pleasing to Him. I love the words of the writer of Chronicles "**Seek** (Command and in Lxx [-arist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the LORD and His strength; **Seek** (Command and in Lxx [-arist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) His face continually." (1Ch 16:11) O, how I wish I would always yield to the Spirit and obey these simple commands!

**Behold, I have sent you a present of silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me** - Note Asa's human wisdom. If Ben-hadad (Aram/Syria) broke his alliance with Baasha and aligned with Asa, Baaha would be forced to withdraw from Ramah lest he be fighting a war on two fronts (Ben-hada in north, Asa in south). One can also question Asa's ethics in bribing Ben-hadad to break an alliance. God's prophet certainly called Asa out because of his actions (2Ch 16:7-10+).

**1 Kings 15:20 So 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, besides all the land of Naphtali.**

- **Ijon**: 2Ki 15:29
- **Dan**: 1Ki 12:29 Ge 14:14 Jdg 18:29,
- **Abel-beth-maacah**, 2Sa 20:14,15
- **Chinneroth**: Jos 11:2 12:3
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries



Source: [ESV Study Bible p. 762](#)

**Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 16:4+ So Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all the store cities of Naphtali.

## MONEY TALKS BEN-HADAD BRIBED

So 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, besides all the land of Naphtali - Ben-hadad broke the treaty with Baasha and conquered some of his land. See map above (look at top of map) for location of the cities conquered. [See nice map "Campaign of Ben-hadad" in MacMillan Bible Atlas page 90.](#)

**1 Kings 15:21 When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and remained in Tirzah.**

- **when Baasha:** 2Ch 16:5
- **Tirzah:** 1Ki 14:17 16:15-18 Song 6:4
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:4+ So Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all the store cities of Naphtali.



Source: [ESV Study Bible p. 762](#)

## SEEMING SUCCESS OF ASA'S WORLDLY WISDOM

**When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah** - The withdrawal of Baasha from Ramah must have convinced Asa he had made the right move by bribing Ben-hadad with the LORD's Temple treasures.

**And remained in Tirzah** - Tirzah (modern [Tell el-Farah North](#)) was about 50 miles north of Jerusalem and was the capital city for the early kings of the the Northern Kingdom (1Ki 14:17; 15:21, 33; 1Ki 16:6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 23)

I disagree with this the second part of the comment by Constable that Asa's treaty with Ben-hadad "evidenced some lack of trust in Yahweh (2Ch16:7-9). Asa's strategy was one that God blessed." I submit Asa's humanistic strategy is one God allowed, but he definitely did not bless Asa's failure to rely on Him to defend Judah from Baasha! Warren Wiersbe agrees noting that "Everyone was happy with the results of the treaty **except the Lord**. He sent the prophet Hanani to rebuke the king and give him the Word of the

Lord....The prophet's message was clear: if Asa had relied on the Lord, the army of Judah would have defeated both Israel and Syria. Instead, Judah merely gained a few towns, the Lord's treasury was robbed and the king was now in a sinful alliance with the Syrians." Mark it down that worldly success does not always equate with the blessing of the LORD!

**1 Kings 15:22 Then 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 built. And King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.**

- **made a proclamation:** 2Ch 16:6
- **Geba:** Jos 18:24, Gaba, Jos 21:17
- **Mizpah:** Jos 18:26 1Sa 7:5, Mizpeh, Jer 40:6,10
- 1 Kings 15 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:6+ Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had been building, and with them he fortified Geba and Mizpah.



Source: [ESV Study Bible p. 762](#)

## ASA DISMANTLES RAMAH & REBUILDS GEBÄ & MIZPAH

**Then** - Marks progression in the narrative.

**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 built** - Asa must have felt vindicated by trusting in Gold instead of God this time. Judah even received "spoils" from Ramah without even having to lift a finger! All they had to do was bribe Ben-hadad. Judah used Baasha's materials to fortify their own defenses. This surely [looks like a win](#) for King Asa and Judah. Look at his approval rating skyrocketing in the polls! But the writer of Kings leaves out the significant "disclaimer" recorded in 2Ch 16:7-9+.

**And King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah** - See the map above for locations of Geba and Mizpah, both at the junction of the border with Baasha's Northern Kingdom. Fortification of these border towns would further convince King Asa he had made a wise move in bribing Ben-Hadad. [See Plan of wall Asa built around Mizpah in MacMillan Bible Atlas page 89](#)

**1 Kings 15:23 Now 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? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.**

- **rest of all:** 1Ki 15:7,8 14:29-31
- **in the time:** 2Ch 16:12-14 Ps 90:10

### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:12-14+ In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. 13 So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign. 14 They buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire for him.

## ASA'S "EPILOGUE" - "DISEASED IN HIS FEET"

**Now 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?** - Note that all three (**acts...might...built**) speak of worldly, transient human achievements.

**But** - Term of contrast. Asa's acts, might and building are now dramatically contrasted.

**In the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet**- This is the "bad hand of the LORD" on Asa, a man who will still be remembered as one of the kings whose heart was wholly devoted to the LORD. "His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians." (2Ch 16:12+)' Sadly, his great start did not have a great ending. He had been walking by faith, not sight, but he began to focus on the problem (Baasha in Ramah) rather than on the "Problem Solver!" Asa's foot disease only served to further worsen or reveal his heart disease (hardening 2Ch 16:12+)!

*Age and time do not necessarily make us better;  
they only do if we continue to follow God in faith.*

-- David Guzik

**THOUGHT** - 1Cor 10:6, 11+ warn NT believers to avoid the examples of Old Testament saints who were disobedient and experienced the disciplining hand of God. So many start the race strong, but sadly many fail to finish strong. God grant each of us grace and Spirit empowerment to run our race with endurance, to fight the good fight of faith, to press on toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus, all for Your glory. Amen

**Adam Dooley** - After thirty-five years of leading with integrity and enjoying peace, Asa stumbled near the finish during his last five years by depending more on his personal strength and wisdom than on Yahweh. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Chronicles](#))

As a physician I agree with **Donald Wiseman's** "likely diagnosis" of Asa's severe foot disease - "Some think that Asa's foot ailment was gout, "but gout was uncommon in Palestine and ancient Egypt and it is more likely, in view 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 (**ED: I WOULD ADD IT COULD HAVE BEEN RELATED TO DIABETIC NEUROPATHY WHICH COMMONLY AFFECTS THE LOWER EXTREMITIES**)" (See [1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary - Page 168](#))

**G Campbell Morgan** writes that King Asa "is the record of a faulty life, but one in which the deepest thing, that of desire, was right; and so it is the record of a life, the influence of which was a blessing rather than a curse. It is a revealing story."

**Tony Merida** - Asa, the wonderful king, fails to trust in God, turns against the seer, inflicts cruelties, and doesn't seek the Lord. What a warning to us! A person may seek the Lord and command others to seek the Lord for many years but then fall at the end of life. God is looking for, in the words of Eugene Peterson's book title, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction. Every day we must begin afresh with God, repenting of sin, reading His Word, and asking for His help. Let us pursue a life of faithfulness. We also learn that success in the eyes of the world may be unfaithfulness to God. Asa won a victory but not the way God desired. (See [Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Kings](#))

**Philip Ryken** - Asa was also guilty of tragic spiritual compromise. This is "why we find the Bible so disturbing," writes Dale Ralph Davis, because "it tells us that success is no authentication of fidelity. Circumstantial success and covenantal failure can exist side-by-side." Was Asa a hero or a villain, a saint or a sinner? It is impossible to put him in only one category. He wanted to follow God, and sometimes he did, but he also made spiritual compromises that went against everything his heavenly kingdom stood for. In other words, Asa was a lot like us: called to be a saint, but still struggling as a sinner. (Philip Ryken - [1 Kings](#))

[Guzik](#) - 2 Chronicles 14-16 provides many more details regarding the reign of Asa.

1. He encouraged national piety: *He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment.* (2 Chronicles 14:4).
2. He built fortified cities and presided over a long period of peace (2 Chronicles 14:6).
3. In response to Asa's prayer, God defeated a huge Ethiopian army that came against Judah (2 Chronicles 14:9-13).
4. He had an encouraging word from the prophet Azariah that encouraged him to continue his reforms (2 Chronicles 15:1-9).
5. Asa led a national re-commitment to the covenant (2 Chronicles 15:10-15).

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**Peter Pett:** There are numerous lessons from Asa's long life.

- The first is that we need to walk faithfully in accordance with God's requirements, with a heart that is right towards God.
- The second is that we need to root out of our lives all our 'idols'.
- The third is that we need to learn to trust fully in God rather than in men.
- The fourth is that we need to take every opportunity to build up our defences (Ephesians 6:10-18).

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**John Kitto** - Physicians—I Kings 15:23; II Chronicles 16:12

Asa was in his latter days afflicted with "a disease in his feet," which is generally supposed to have been the gout. Here, again, the king incurs some blame for having resorted to "the physicians instead of relying upon God." We cannot suppose that he was blameworthy for taking proper means for his recovery, but he was for relying upon them instead of upon the Lord's blessing upon the means they employed. It was therefore a new manifestation of that lapse of faith, to which he had unhappily become too prone. Much had been given to him—even large capacities of faith—and much more therefore was required from him than from men less favored. It may have been something even worse. It is even probable that the "physicians" may have been foreigners and idolaters, whose practice consisted much in superstitious arts and idolatrous rites, instead of the priests, or rather Levites, in whose hands the medical practice of the Jews chiefly rested. In this case his offence was the same in kind as that of the king of Israel (Jehoram) in the next generation, who sent to Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, respecting the disease with which he was afflicted, and who incurred thereby a dreadful rebuke for not having rather consulted the God of Israel. This shows, that since diseases were considered the immediate act of God, so was also the cure; and it was usual to ascertain his will through the priests or prophets. It was also sought to propitiate Him by vows, by prayers, and by sacrifices. Under the same views as to the cause of the disease, the heathen resorted to their gods, and sought to will their favor or to pacify them by various strange, superstitious, and often brutal rites. In any case, certainly, under such a state of things, to apply to a foreign physician was but an indirect mode of application to the god he served.

We will take this opportunity of stating a few particulars respecting the state of medicine among the ancient Hebrews.

There have been some curious speculations among them as to the medical knowledge of Adam—founded on the idea that the knowledge of all creatures, implied in his bestowal of appropriate names upon them, must have comprised a knowledge of their medicinal properties and uses. The mere conjecture shows the extent to which animal substances were applied in the *materia medica* of the Hebrews. In this age, where more potent medicinal agents have been found, it is hard to conceive the extent to which the parts of animals were used, not only by the ancients, but, until a comparatively recent date, by the moderns. Indeed, most of the practices as to applications of animal simples, which, where found in use among our peasantry, are cited, under such headings as "Folk-Lore," as rural superstitions, are often little other than remnants of ancient and legitimate medical practice.

The point is curious; and in proof of it we might quote largely from a work bearing the date of 1664, which sets forth the medical uses of most animals, citing ancient and medical authorities for most of the statements—including Jewish medical writers.<sup>545</sup> We wish our space allowed quotation from this book; but can only give a sample or two. The first article is "Ape,"—in which, among other things, we are told "an ape eaten by a lion, cureth his diseases"—a fact we most potently believe, having often noted a lion to seem greatly refreshed after demolishing an ape. Under "Asse" we are told, among other delectable matter, that "a little of the water being drunke, of which the cow or asse hath drunke, doth effectually help the headach." "The dried brain of an asse, being drunke daily in water and honey, helpeth the epilepsie in 30 daies."—"The heart of a black male asse, being eaten with bread, helpeth the falling sicknesse."—"The gall doth asswage the signes of abscesses."—"The flesh helpeth against the paine of the back-bone and hipps. The marrow anointed cureth the gout, and easeth the paine. The ashes of the hoofes burned help the falling sickness. The dung mixed with the yolk of an egge, and applied to the forehead, stoppeth the fluxe of blood, and, with a bull's gall, curleth the haire." Of the mouse it is said,—"The flesh causeth oblivion. A mouse dissected and applied draweth out reeds, darts, and other things that stick in the flesh. Being eaten by children, when rosted, they dry up their spittle. The water in which they have been boiled helpeth against the quinsy. The ashes, with honey, used ten dayes, clear the eyes. The head, worne in a cloth, helpeth the headache and epilepsy. The liver, rosted in the new of the moon, trieth the epilepsie. The brain, being steeped in wine and applied to the forehead,

helpeth the headach. The gall, with vinegar, dropped into the eare, bringeth out live creatures in the eare. The dung, given in any liquour, helpeth the colick,” and is further stated to be good, as are other of its parts and products, for a variety of other uses, which must have rendered this little creature formerly of much more estimation in public opinion than it now bears.

The first mention of physicians in Scripture is in the time of Joseph, and with reference to Egypt, which may be regarded as the western cradle of this and many other ancient sciences and arts. These physicians were those who embalmed Jacob; and were, therefore, rather embalmers than physicians, whose profession is to cure the living, not to embalm the dead. Nevertheless, we know from other sources that the Egyptians had early made great progress in the study of medicine, and acquired high reputation; so that the aid of Egyptian physicians was much sought for even in foreign lands. Indeed, it is far from unlikely that the physicians whose skill Asa so unwisely relied on were of Egypt. It was believed that they had a knowledge of materia medica more extensive than any other men by whom medical science was cultivated, and that in this their great strength lay. Indeed, there is clear enough allusion to this in one of the prophets, who exclaims, “O, virgin daughter of Egypt, in vain shalt thou use many medicines, for thou shalt not be cured.” Jeremiah 46:11.

No one can doubt that the Hebrews must have brought some considerable portion of this knowledge of medicine with them from Egypt. The proof of the knowledge actually possessed is strikingly manifested in the indication of the characters by which the priest was to recognize the leprosy, as well as of the sanitary measures to be taken, and the means of cure to be adopted. All this may be seen in Leviticus 13; and it suffices to observe, that modern physicians,<sup>546</sup> who have given attention to the subject, have only found occasion to attest the exact accuracy of these indications. The knowledge thus possessed by, and required from the priests, sufficiently indicates that medicine was in all essential respects a sacred pursuit, and was, as such, in the hands of the Levitical priesthood, whose learned leisure and dispersion through the country, as well as their superior education, rendered them in these remote ages the best and fittest depositaries of medical science. Indeed, nothing is more certain than the essential identity among all ancient nations of the professions—religion, law, and medicine, which the progress of civilization has separated into three. Indeed, in our own country even, the profession of the law still bears the outward and visible marks of its ancient connection with religion; and the time is not distant when every parish priest was expected to possess some knowledge of medicine.

Among the Hebrews, leprosy, and all other diseases, were deemed to be the immediate effect of the omnipotence of God. They were sent for punishment or fatherly correction to those who had offended Him or incurred His rebuke; and they were cured when they had appeased Him by their contrition and their prayers, or when the object of their chastening had been accomplished. This true theory of disease and cure among the Hebrews will, in its application, throw much light upon all the passages which more or less bear upon the subject.

As we shall, in the Illustrations of the New Testament, have to take up the further developments of a subject which is most conspicuously produced in that portion of Divine revelation, we here limit our view, as much as possible, to the state of the matter before Christ. For the elucidation of this, there is a most remarkable passage in the Apocrypha, which has been much overlooked in the consideration of the question. It is in Ecclesiasticus; and as the apocryphal books are not now generally accessible, we give it entire below.<sup>547</sup>

It appears to us that this passage very exactly defines the position of the physician. It allows him honor, and gives due weight to his skill and the real use of the means he employs, but admirably refers all to God. The skill of the physician is His; the medicaments are His; and the cure is His. Even the skill of the physician is proportioned to the faculty he possesses of rendering God honor, by his knowledge and employment of the healing properties which he has imparted to various productions of the earth. In the last clause there is, however, something which would be regarded as a sarcasm on the profession if it were met with in a modern writing:—“He that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hands of the physician!”

**1 Kings 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 place.**

- **was buried:** 2 Ch 16:14.
- **Jehoshaphat:** 1Ki 22:41-43 2Ch 17:1-9 Mt 1:8

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 16:13-14+ So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign. 14 They buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire for him.

## ASA'S REST AND JEHOSHAPHAT'S RULE

**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 place** - R D Patterson observes "For his funerary observance Asa had the air filled with sweet spices (2 Chron 16:12-14); but no amount of manmade perfume can hide the noxious stench of the life of a believer alienated from God! How far he had fallen and from what great spiritual heights! Asa's life remains as an exemplary admonition to the believer to abide humbly in Christ, lest his life become totally unproductive for God (cf. John 15:5-6+; 1 Cor 9:27+)." ([1 and 2 Kings](#))

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**QUESTION** - [Who was King Jehoshaphat in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - King Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of Judah under the divided monarchy, the son of [Asa](#). We are first introduced to him in [1 Kings 15:24](#) but are told nothing more than that he succeeded Asa. Later, [1 Kings 22:42](#) tells us that he was 35 years old when he began his reign and that he reigned 25 years (from 873 to 848 BC). [1 Kings 22](#) gives a brief account of his reign with [2 Chronicles 17-22](#) giving a more comprehensive account.

Spiritually, Jehoshaphat began his reign in a positive way. [2 Chronicles 17:3-6](#) gives this commendation: "The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the ways of his father David before him. He did not consult the [Baals](#) but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel. The Lord established the kingdom under his control; and all Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, so that he had great wealth and honor. His heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord; furthermore, he removed the high places and the [Asherah poles](#) from Judah." In addition, Jehoshaphat sent men throughout the kingdom to teach the people the Law of God ([2 Chronicles 17:7-9](#)).

Militarily, Jehoshaphat fortified his defenses, primarily against the northern kingdom of Israel ([2 Chronicles 17:1-3](#)). The surrounding nations feared Judah and brought tribute ([2 Chronicles 17:10-19](#)).

After making peace with Israel, Jehoshaphat apparently tried to reach out to [Ahab](#), the king of Israel. Ahab was one of the wickedest kings of Israel, and Jehoshaphat could not have been ignorant of his character. [1 Kings 22](#) and [2 Chronicles 18](#) relate the following account: Ahab asks Jehoshaphat to help him attack Syria. Jehoshaphat wisely requests that they consult the LORD on the matter. Ahab gathers 400 of his prophets who encourage the attack. Jehoshaphat recognizes that these are not genuine prophets of the LORD, and the exchange that follows between Jehoshaphat and Ahab is almost comical: "But Jehoshaphat asked, 'Is there no longer a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?' The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, 'There is still one prophet through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.'"

So, [Micaiah](#) is summoned, and the question is posed. Micaiah responds with high irony: "Attack and be victorious, . . . for the Lord will give it into the king's hand." This answer exasperates King Ahab: "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?" Micaiah then tells Ahab the hard truth: "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, 'These people have no master'" ([1 Kings 22:15-18](#)).

In spite of what seems to be an acknowledgement that Micaiah speaks for the LORD, Jehoshaphat joins Ahab in the attack. Ahab is killed, and Jehoshaphat narrowly escapes. When Jehoshaphat returns home, he is reprimanded by a prophet of the Lord for his collaboration with Ahab: "Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him and said to the king, 'Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of the Lord is on you. There is, however, some good in you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God'" ([2 Chronicles 19:2-3](#)).

Jehoshaphat continues to make reforms, appointing judges throughout the land to handle disputes and charging them to make righteous judgments and to fear the Lord ([2 Chronicles 19:4-11](#)).

In [2 Chronicles 20](#), an alliance of nations decides to march against Judah. Jehoshaphat seeks the Lord and asks all Judah to fast (verse 3). Through a man named Jahaziel, the Lord tells Jehoshaphat that He will deliver Judah without a fight (verses 14-17). Jehoshaphat goes out to battle with singers leading the way, singing praise to the Lord. The alliance of nations turn against each other and begin to kill each other (verses 22-23). The men of Judah spend three days collecting the spoils of war that were abandoned by their enemies (verse 25).

Although Jehoshaphat started his reign by removing the idolatrous high places, at the end of his reign, there were still high places that had not been taken away ([1 Kings 22](#) and [2 Chronicles 20](#)). Jehoshaphat started well, but his diligence flagged, and the idol-worship returned. [1 Kings 22:41-50](#) and [2 Chronicles 20:35-37](#) record a joint ship-building venture that Jehoshaphat attempted with the wicked king Ahaziah of Israel. Jehoshaphat, who had already been chastised for an alliance with Ahab, is once again

confronted by a prophet with a warning. It seems that Jehoshaphat heeded the warning and did not allow Ahaziah's men to sail with the Judeans, but the judgment still came to pass: the fleet was wrecked, and Jehoshaphat's foolish investment with Ahaziah proved futile.

Jehoshaphat is still considered a good and godly king, but his reign ended rather badly. He kept trying to build an alliance with Israel, even though the kings of Israel were obviously wicked. Jehoshaphat worshiped the Lord and led his people in seeking the Lord, but the hearts of the people were never fully changed. They reverted to pagan practices. King Jehoshaphat was unable to pass his faith on to his son [Jehoram](#) who reigned after him. Jehoram started by killing all of his brothers, and then he married the daughter of Ahab (2 Chronicles 21:4–6).

**1 Kings 15:25 Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years.**

- **Nadab:** 1Ki 14:12,20

#### Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:10-11+ therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and **I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam**, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone. 11 "Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken it."

**NOTE** - 1 Kings 15:25-30 summarizes the story of the fall of Jeroboam's royal line exactly as prophesied by Ahijah (1Ki 14:10-11). God's Word never fails! And then in 1 Kings 15:25-16:34 we shift entirely to the Northern Kingdom as we look at the increasingly spiritually dark reigns of 7 evil kings (length of reign in parenthesis) - Nadab (2 yr), Baasha (24 yr), Elah (2 yr), Zimri (7 days), Tibni (3 yr), Omri (11 yr) and Ahab (22 yr), this last king getting most of the press (1Ki 16:29 through 1Ki 22:40). (See [ESV Chart](#) which includes dates of their reigns)

**Now [Nadab](#) the son of [Jeroboam](#) became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years**

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Nadab in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - Nadab was the son of [King Jeroboam I](#) of Israel (1 Kings 14:20; 15:25). Jeroboam had been chosen by God to lead Israel after God divided the kingdom due to Solomon's sin (1 Kings 11:11, 38). Jeroboam could have handed a great dynasty to his son Nadab, but he turned away from God and led Israel into deeper wickedness. Because of this, God pronounced judgment rather than blessing on the house of Jeroboam (1 Kings 14:10–11). When his father died, Nadab took his place on Israel's throne while [Asa](#) reigned as king in Judah. Nadab only reigned for two years, but he followed in the footsteps of his wicked father, Jeroboam, and led Israel into deeper sin (1 Kings 15:26).

Jeroboam's sin had been idolatry, and when Nadab reigned over Israel, he continued in his father's footsteps. Then Baasha plotted against Nadab, assassinated him in Philistine territory during wartime, and usurped the throne (1 Kings 15:27–28). "As soon as [Baasha] began to reign, he killed Jeroboam's whole family. He did not leave Jeroboam anyone that breathed, but destroyed them all, according to the word of the Lord given through his servant Ahijah the Shilonite" (verse 29). The dire prophecy against the house of Jeroboam had come true.

King Nadab was one failure in a long list of men who tried to rule God's people without God. The books of Kings and Chronicles detail the reigns of these men, and a disturbing pattern emerges. Some began well, but power and wealth turned them aside from following God, and they began to compromise with evil. Idolatry was a perennial problem, especially in the northern kingdom of Israel.

King Nadab and other kings had a chance to rid the land of idolatry and lead the nation in worshiping the Lord. But they failed. If Nadab had turned away from his father's evil and torn down the idol shrines and the [high places](#), God may have relented and allowed Nadab the dynasty his father had forfeited (see Jeremiah 15:19). But Nadab had watched his father lead while seeking help from false gods, and he continued that wicked practice. Therefore, King Nadab is simply another example of wasted potential because of his rejection of God.



**1 Kings 15:26 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin which he made Israel sin.**

- **he did evil:** 1Ki 16:7,25,30
- **walked:** 1Ki 12:28-33 13:33,34
- **in his sin:** 1Ki 15:30,34 14:16 16:19,26 21:22 22:52 Ge 20:9 Ex 32:21 1Sa 2:24 2Ki 3:3 21:11 23:15 Jer 32:35 Ro 14:15 1Co 8:10-13

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 11:14+ For the Levites left their pasture lands and their property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and **his sons** (THIS WOULD INCLUDE NADAB!) had excluded them from serving as priests to the LORD.

### **LIKE FATHER SINS SO SINS SON**

**He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin which he made Israel sin-** NET = "He followed his father's footsteps and encouraged Israel to sin." (See some of Nadab's evil in 2Ch 11:14+) Note the repeated truth that **evil** is not done in a vacuum or in secret but is always **in the sight of the LORD**. This is a poignant reminder to all of us! The metaphor of **walked** speaks of [Nadab's](#) lifestyle, his general conduct, the general direction of his life which was toward **evil** not good. Fathers can have a massive impact on their children and Jeroboam's sinful ways were clearly passed on to his son [Nadab](#). Note the phrase **made Israel sin** (a repeated phrase - 1Ki 14:16, 1Ki 15:30, 34) indicating that while the people of course are held guilty for their sins, it was the evil leadership of Jeroboam (and then Nadab) who encouraged and led his people to sin against the LORD (e.g., by setting up centers for false worship at Bethel and Dan).

**1 Kings 15:27 Then Baasha the son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against him, and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon.**

- **Baasha the son:** 1Ki 15:16,17 14:14
- **conspired:** 1Ki 16:9 2Ki 12:20
- **Gibbethon:** 1Ki 16:15,17 Jos 19:44 21:23

### **BAASHA'S COUP D'ETAT AGAINST NADAB**

**Then Baasha the son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired** (plotted) **against him, and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while [Nadab](#) and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon** - Baasha rises up to strike Nadab when he is not looking for he is focused on the siege of the Philistine town of Gibberthon. Note the divine irony of God using one evil man to slay another evil man!

GIBBETHON - gib'-e-thon (gibbethon): A city in the territory of Dan in the plain named with Eltekeh and Baalath (Josh 19:44), and assigned to the Kohathite Levites (Josh 21:23). Later we find it in the hands of the Philistines; and it was while besieging the city that Nadab was slain by Baasha (1 Ki 15:27). After 25 years Omri, the general of Baasha, was here made king of the army when news reached them of Zimri's regicide (1 Ki 16:15 ff). It may possibly be identified with Kibbiah, which lies about 16 miles Southeast of Jaffa; but no certain identification is possible

**1 Kings 15:28 So Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his place.**

- De 32:35

### **BAASHA'S ASSUMPTION OF NADAB'S THRONE**

**So Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his place-** This assassination effectively accomplished "a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone," exactly as predicted by the prophet Ahijah to Jeroboam's wife (1Ki 14:10+).

**David Guzik** - Had Jeroboam remained obedient to the LORD, God promised him a lasting dynasty like the house of David (1 Kings 11:38). Because of Jeroboam's sin, though he enjoyed a long reign, his son only reigned two years before the assassination of Nadab and the murder of all Jeroboam's descendants.

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Baasha in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - Baasha was king of Israel from 909–886 BC. (**ED: REMEMBER THE DATES OF THE KINGS ARE "BEST APPROXIMATIONS"**) His contemporary in Judah was [King Asa](#), the great-grandson of King Solomon. The two kings were polar opposites—while Asa "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done" (1 Kings 15:11), King Baasha was an evil ruler and followed idolatrous practices.

Baasha took the throne after assassinating [King Nadab](#) son of [Jeroboam](#) while Nadab was attacking a Philistine town (1 Kings 15:27). Baasha then killed Jeroboam's entire family. Although Baasha may not have known it, his actions to secure his throne were actually a part of God's will. Years earlier, through Ahijah the prophet, God had pronounced judgment on Jeroboam and his descendants for their evil practices (1 Kings 14:1–16). It could be that Baasha had heard of the prophecy against Jeroboam, but he did not learn any lessons from Jeroboam's fate; instead, he continued in Jeroboam's wickedness. Because of Baasha's rebellion against God's Law, God spoke to the prophet Jehu and proclaimed the same judgment on Baasha's house that Jeroboam's family had received: complete destruction (1 Kings 16:1–4).

Throughout his reign, King Baasha was at war against King Asa (1 Kings 15:16, 32). Baasha originally had a treaty with the king of Syria, Ben-Hadad, but, while Baasha was building fortifications in Ramah to keep anyone from going in or out of Judah, Asa took all the silver and gold from the Jerusalem treasuries and sent it to Ben-Hadad, asking the Syrians to ally with him instead. Ben-Hadad agreed, switched alliances, and sent his armies to attack the northern kingdom of Israel. This proved disastrous for Israel, as Ben-Hadad took the cities of Ijon, Dan, Abel, and Beth Maakah, as well as the region of Kinnereth and the territory of the tribe of Naphtali (verse 20).

It seems that Baasha died of natural causes (1 Kings 16:6), but, when his son Elah succeeded him, the Lord's judgment was swift in coming. After King Elah had reigned only two years, one of his commanders, [Zimri](#), assassinated him while he was getting drunk at the house of one of his administrators (verses 9–10). Zimri then did as Baasha had done to Jeroboam's household and killed Baasha's entire family, not sparing "a single male, whether relative or friend" (verse 11).

**1 Kings 15:29 It came about as soon as he was king, he struck down all the household of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam any persons alive, until he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite,**

- **He did not leave** 1Ki 14:9-16 2Ki 9:7-10,36,37 10:10,11,31 19:25

#### Related Passages:

1 Kings 14:9-16+ you (JEROBOAM) also have done more evil than all who were before you, and have gone and made for yourself other gods and molten images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— 10 therefore behold, I am bringing calamity on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male person, both bond and free in Israel, and I will make a clean sweep of the house of Jeroboam, as one sweeps away dung until it is all gone. 11 "Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs will eat. And he who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will eat; for the LORD has spoken it." 12 "Now you, arise, go to your house. When your feet enter the city the child will die. 13 "All Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he alone of Jeroboam's family will come to the grave, because in him something good was found toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. 14 "Moreover, the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who will cut off the house of Jeroboam this day and from now on. 15 "For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the Euphrates River, because they have made their Asherim, provoking the LORD to anger. 16 "He will give up Israel on account of the sins of Jeroboam, which he committed and with which he made Israel to sin."

## AHIJAH'S PROPHECY FULFILLED

**It came about as soon as he (Baasha) was king, he struck down all the household of Jeroboam** - King Baasha was God's instrument of punishment to the house of Jeroboam. As Daniel 2:21+ says Yahweh sovereignly "removes kings and establishes kings," and even uses evil kings to bring about this purpose (cf Jer 25:9).

**He did not leave to Jeroboam any persons alive, until he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite** - Baasha made a complete purge of Jeroboam's lineage just as God's prophet had predicted.

**1 Kings 15:30 and because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.**

- **because of the sins:** 1Ki 15:26 14:9-16
- **because of his provocation:** 1Ki 14:22

### CONTINUED EXPLANATION OF WHY JEROBOAM'S LINE ANNIHILATED

**and because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger** - Jeroboam did not live to see the end of his line, but his sordid story emphasizes the high cost of sin against Jehovah -

*Sin will take you farther than you ever thought you'd stray.*

*Sin will leave you so lost, you think you'll never find your way*

*Sin will keep you longer than you ever thought you'd stay*

*Sin will cost you more than you ever thought you'd pay*

**1 Kings 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?**

- **are they not written:** 1Ki 14:19 16:5,14,20,27

**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?** - This record has been lost.

**Peter Pett:** The lessons we may learn from Nadab's life, are:

- 1). The brevity life. It is a reminder that in the midst of life we are in death.
- 2). The certainty of God's judgment on sin.
- 3). A recognition of the holiness of a God Who so hates sin that He allowed the wiping out of a family because of its sinfulness.
- 4). The folly of following in the footsteps of those who have turned against God and His ways. If only he had repented he might have avoided God's judgment.

**1 Kings 15:32 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.**

- **there was war:** 1Ki 15:16

**There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days** That is, there was a constant spirit of hostility kept up between the two kingdoms, and no doubt frequent skirmishing between the bordering parties; but there was no open war till Baasha

king of Israel began to build Ramah, which was, according to 2 Ch 15:19; 16:1, in the thirty-sixth year of Asa; but according to 1Ki 16:8, 9, his son was killed by Zimri in the twenty-sixth year of Asa, and consequently he could not make war upon him in the thirty-sixth year of his reign. Chronologers endeavour to reconcile this, by saying that the years should be reckoned, not from the beginning of Asa's reign, but from the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

**1 Kings 15:33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel at Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years.**

- reigned twenty-four years: 1Ki 16:8

## **BAASHA BEGINS HIS EVIL REIGN OVER ISRAEL**

**In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel at Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years** - Tirzah was the same city Jeroboam choose as his capital. Frankly, given the evil nature of Baasha, I am very surprised Jehovah allowed him such a relatively long reign! Tirzah remained the capital until Omri moved it to Samaria. Tirzah was rich with gardens and groves and abundant water. Reference to Tirzah is made in Song 6:4: "You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling."

**Mordechai Cogan:** The impression that the short text leaves concerning Baasha's two-decade rule is that it was one of continuous strife. It began in a bloody revolt against the House of Jeroboam, while the army was engaged in the northern Shephelah fighting the Philistines (1Ki 15:27); the lack of success on that front is notable, because a quarter of a century later the same adversaries still stared at each other across the same battle line (1Ki 16:15). Nor did Baasha's moves against Judah meet with much success: Baasha was outmaneuvered by Asa's renewal of the treaty between Damascus and Jerusalem, which brought Aramean troops to the Israelite Galilee (1Ki 15:17–21). This dismal record may have instigated the military revolt against Baasha's son Elah within a year of his assuming the throne. ([1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary](#))

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**TIRZAH** - A city of Canaan in of Ephraim, to which tribe Jeroboam belonged.

- Captured by Joshua, Josh. 12:24.
- Becomes the residence of the kings of Israel, 1 Ki 14:17; 15:21, 33; 16:6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 23.
- This was the capital after Shechem (cf 1 Kgs. 15:21,33; 16:6-9,15,23).
- Royal residence moved from, 1 Ki 16:23, 24.
- Base of military operations of Menahem, 2 Ki 15:14, 16.
- Beauty of, Song 6:4.

**1 Kings 15:34 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel sin.**

- **He did evil in the sight of the LORD** 1Ki 15:26
- **walked in the way of Jeroboam:** 1Ki 15:26 12:28,29 13:33,34 14:16 Isa 1:4

## **BAASHA FOLLOWS JEROBOAM'S FOOTSTEPS**

**He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked**(conducted himself) **in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel sin** - We see **the way of Jeroboam** becomes a pattern for subsequent evil kings of Israel. What a horrible legacy to leave!

**WAY OF JEROBOAM** - 5V - 1 Ki. 15:34; 1 Ki. 16:2; 1 Ki. 16:19; 1 Ki. 16:26; 1 Ki. 22:52

**David Guzik** - The summary puts it simply. Though Baasha was not a genetic descendent of Jeroboam (having murdered his family), he was certainly a *spiritual* descendent of Jeroboam.

**THOUGHT** - What spiritual legacy will you leave beloved?