

1 Kings Ch 15-16

We find ourselves in the middle of the pages of the history of Israel as they kind of flip back and forth from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, to the Southern Kingdom of Judah and vice versa. You recall that the nation has been divided in ½ due to the disobedience of Solomon. And his son Rehoboam began to reign in Judah and a man by the name of Jeroboam began to reign in Israel. But unfortunately neither one of them did well, Jeroboam sanctioned idolatry in the North, and Rehoboam allowed idolatry in the South. And you have to really kind of pay attention as you read through this portion or you can get confused as to whose doing what where. Because we'll read about a certain happening in a king's life, then we'll see his death, but when it reverts to the opposite kingdom it may reference the other King that we just seen die because what's happening at that time was relevant to the other King while he was alive. And so it's like we'll get the story from one side, rewind a bit, and take a look from the other side and see how these kings overlapped one another. Now once we get to ch 17 we'll get a rest for a while because Elijah comes on the scene and things slow down to focus in on the way he interacted with Ahab. So just buckle your seat belts and we'll plow through these things, and we'll stop to try and glean a few things here and there, but we have a significant chunk of reading we need to do.

Vs1-5

So it begins, you remember ch 14 records the death of Jeroboam but since this took place before his death the tape rewinds so that we can get it from a different camera angle. Abijam is Rehoboam's son, so Jeroboam out lived Rehoboam and now Rehoboam's son comes to reign. But we see in vs 2 that his reign was relatively short, God didn't sustain him on the throne and so he only reigned 3 yrs. And as a historical side note the author tells us that his mother was the granddaughter of Absalom whom I'm sure you remember. He was David's rebellious son who murdered Amnon for raping his sister and tried to usurp David's throne by means of conspiracy. But this person here Abishalom is simply another rendering for Absalom.

But there's something else we want to quickly draw out here as we go through the listings of these Kings. Generally speaking in the scriptures, when the name of a significant individual is given, they are generally identified with their father. "David the son of Jesse." But over and over again throughout the listings of the Kings, we have mention of the names of the mothers. In Ch 14 we're given Rehoboam's mom's name, here in 15 we're told Abijam's mom's name we'll see it again in ch 22 and throughout the book of 2nd Kings as well, why? I'm not totally sure but I don't think we violate the text to draw an application off of that, and that is the tremendous influence that mothers have in shaping and molding the lives of their children. I'm not saying it's not there with the fathers, we see that in vs 3. But so much of what children are taught, or are shown in regards to moral conviction, comes from their mom, that's just the fact. And it just might be that the Lord is seeking to speak to us regarding the need for mom's to focus on their primary responsibility, which is the home and their children.

And before daggers start flying I know that the day and age in which we live and the all of the variables that can enter into the equation of our lives at times alters that course. But mom, don't take your role when it comes to who you are in your children's lives lightly, and so often because we're too involved in other things, our primary priorities are neglected. Even in the church, let me tell you that with out all the ladies serving here we'd be sunk, I thank God for every one of them. But I think that even in the church sometimes some of the ladies can begin to place priority on what they're doing here over what they're doing at home, and it ought not be.

Some things require women specifically, and there are certainly liberties to serve. But the fact is that more men should actually be who God has called *them* to be, and stand up, crucify the flesh and serve the body of Christ. So to me when I see so many *women* serving and not many *men* (And I'm not saying that's the way it is here necessarily) to me that speaks multitudes about the women's desire to be serving the Lord, but it's an absolute shame to the men whom God has called to set the standards of service in the body of Christ. And when ladies place more focus on what they do in the work force, or what they do in the church over what they do at home, the kids suffer. That's all I'm saying, many of you have heard Chuck Smith's testimony, and his love for his godly mom who told him of Daniel and the lions den as opposed to Hansel and Gretel, or David and Goliath instead of Jack and the beanstalk. She taught him to read out of the bible, and she just really breathed the reality of Jesus Christ into his life, and in certain respects we're all byproducts of her commitment before Christ to focus on the spiritual demeanor of her home.

Now as I was saying we're seeing a joint effort here because it mentions the mother's name, but we read in vs 3 that he walked in all the sins *of his father*. And take note of the fact that it says, "...which he had done *before* him;" now that may be a reference to how it played out chronologically, but I would dare to suggest to you that it's what Abijam saw *practically* before his eyes as well in the pattern of his dad's life. As much as the mom's shape and influence their children, we also understand that for whatever reason, children often have a desire to emulate their fathers. And not only do they want to do what dad does, they want to take it to the next level, there's a bit of a competitive edge in the child in regards to the standard of the dad. If dad plays ball, the son wants to be a better ball player, if he's a carpenter the child wants to learn the trade, and the things the children see their fathers do, they walk often times in a similar mode. And this is why the bible is so emphatic on the responsibility of parents to set the standards of godliness in the home for the children to see and learn from. Because what they learn *from* you, and see *in* you will have a radical impact on their lives. The bible says in regards to the things God has done for you, in you, and through you, "... *take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,*" Deut 4:9 and Again, "... *these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*" Deut 6:6-

And over and over again in the Word of God we're confronted with the responsibility as parents to lead godly lives *before* our children and to teach the Word of God, it's principles and precepts *to* our children. Because as we mentioned Sunday, they're not ours anyway, they're the Lord's and He holds us accountable for the influence with breathe into their lives, so if you desire to have children you need to be aware of what God requires of you on their behalf. And if you have children currently pray that the Lord would help you to be *for them* as *unto Him* the parent, or parents He's called you to be.

Abijam's mom apparently didn't honor the Lord in her home, his dad Rehoboam set an ungodly example, Rehoboam's heart wasn't loyal to God. So what happened? Abijam's heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, and I know things can go sour even in homes where mom and dad are doing all they can as unto the Lord. Kids have a mind of their own and they'll make their choice accordingly, but all the more reason to seek the Lord, to demonstrate tangibly and observably the reality of the Lord, that when that age of accountability comes upon them, they might make the right choice. (vs 4)

F.B. Meyer said, "How long after David's sun had set did the light of his life glimmer over his house." So even as your disobedience can impact your kids, your obedience and devotion to God can invoke God's mercy on your house for generations after you're gone. Because David loved God so intensely and worshipped Him so openly and fervently, the glow of his life remained upon his family's line for generation after generation. We understand that his devotion didn't save his kids, or grandkids or anyone else, but it caused the Lord to deal graciously with his family on his behalf. Now David wasn't perfect, and vs 5 brings up a case in point (Uriah the Hittite whom David had killed so that he could have his wife.) But David never gave his heart over to idols, never sought to serve other gods, his heart stayed loyal to God even though he failed miserably. And as you and I know God is searching our hearts, you might fail, I might falter, but is my heart loyal to God or has it gone after other things? Abijam's heart wasn't loyal to God, but because David's was God dealt graciously with his family lineage. Abijam knew about the Lord, even called upon the Lord when he was preparing for battle and was in the throws of battle, (2nd Chron 13) but when it was all said and done, he preached but he didn't practice, in his heart he was loyal to God.

Vs6-11

This phrase "his father David" is a general term meaning David was his ancestor, in reality Asa was his great-great grandson. But here we have an exception to the rule and a breath of fresh air overall, even when mom and dad blow it, God is able to reach down draw a child's heart to Himself even after generations of ungodliness. Last year there was a young lady who gave her heart to Christ here who was a 5th generation atheist, yet Jesus Christ broke that chain and made Himself real to her. And though Asa's dad, and his granddad didn't really serve the Lord, he served the Lord. Vs 14 tells us that his heart was loyal to the Lord all his days. So as much as parents play a persuasive role in the lives of their children, even still each of us are accountable for the decisions we make as it relates to our relationship with the Lord.

We can't say, "Well, my dad didn't do this, or always did that and so I am the way I am." No, we are the way we are because we've made choices and have gone down pathways accordingly. Asa came from a couple of generations of general ungodliness yet he purposed in *his* heart to serve the Lord. So there's a balance there, we're accountable as parents for the influence we subject our children to, but as children we all come to a place where we make a personal choice regardless of what's happened in my life up to this point. And out of the 8 good Kings that Judah will experience, Asa becomes the 1st, Israel will have none, they'll go from bad to worse, but Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

Vs12-15

Here we're seeing the balance of how a loyal heart demonstrates itself practically, his heart was loyal inwardly and that spilled over into the way he led his life outwardly. He banished the state sanctioned homosexual prostitution that his granddad allowed to be reseeded in the land. You know our nation is becoming more and more calloused towards godliness, and more and more tolerant of sinfulness, but regardless of the position we take nationally, God's Word remains the same on His position personally towards sin. And homosexuality is sin, it doesn't mean God doesn't love the person who is homosexual, but just the same as any other sin it's sin before the Lord. Both old and new testaments address the topic as sin before the Lord, a perversion of a relationship that God intended to be between a man and his wife. And it's an abomination before the Lord, now so are several other things obviously, but today there's such a lobbying for acceptance and legalizing gay marriages, consenting to a right that they should have as anyone else.

But God has said, marriage is a relationship between a man and woman and anything other than that is a perversion and an abomination. Asa did what was right in the sight of the Lord when he banished the perverted persons from the land, like a body purging poisons. When a body loses its ability to purge toxins it's only a matter of time before it dies, the same thing happens in a church body, or in a nation. The bible says, "*Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.*" Prov 14:34 and Asa is injecting some political antibiotics into the Southern Kingdom of Judah and it was right in the eyes of God. Pray for your president, that he wouldn't fear the voice of the people but that he would be careful to honor God in the legislative decisions that he makes, that he would do what is right in the eyes of the Lord. He got rid of the temple prostitutes, he got rid of the various idols that his fathers had made. He even dethroned his grandma because she had given public approval and even encouraged idolatry herself. This is what we spoke of Sunday, sometimes strife surfaces in the family when one loves the Lord and the other really doesn't. But you have to love God more. Jesus said, "*He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*" Matt 10:37 Asa purposed to honor God over anything, or anyone else in his life and God honored it, approved of it. How does the loyalty of your heart to the Lord inwardly surface in your life outwardly, how do people distinguish your love for God. Asa got rid of the perverse things, he got rid of false gods, things that were only distracting the worship of the one true living God in his life, and he dedicated his resources to the Lord (silver and gold and utensils.)

Now in vs 14 we read the high places weren't removed, in 2nd Chronicles we're told he did get rid of them, so probably what is meant by this is that even though he made the reformation there were those high places that were either missed, or rebuilt after he'd been through, but I don't want you to think that he just blew that part off, he made effort but apparently it wasn't a clean sweep.

Vs16-21

We'll see how Baasha became King here in a minute, but even though his plan worked and strategically it was a good move. Spiritually it was unwise, he took the treasuries of the Lord and sought military help and foreign relations to help him in his campaign rather than seeking the Lord 1st and seeing how God would have him handle this. And again in 2nd Chronicles Asa is rebuked because of this, the Lord had helped him overcome incredible odds militarily once before, but this time he just did what he thought he needed to do rather than seek the Lord. And he got mad over the whole deal, through the prophet in prison and all, and though overall like David he never sought after idols, and stayed true towards the Lord in that respect, he became pretty bitter towards the Lord there at the end and didn't seem to finish to well. But in vs 21-22 we see how the Lord can take the things the enemy is seeking to establish against us, tear those things down and utilize them for His good and His glory. Remember Joseph told his brothers that the things that happened against him they meant for evil, but God meant it for good, to save many people alive, and though Baasha was meaning evil against Asa, God used it to build up other areas in Asa's kingdom. And God will use those things that seem to come against you to build up various areas of your life that would otherwise lie in shambles and in ruins.

Vs22-24

Asa died of athlete's foot, and when you read of this in 2nd Chronicles you find that he's rebuked again because it says that he sought physicians rather than the Lord. And the implication is that if he'd have humbled himself and sought the Lord, God would've healed him, but because he refused he died. That's not to say we're not to go to doctors, Luke was a physician, God has given us those who are able to help us physically when we're ill.

But we're not to place our hope in the doctors, our hope is in the Lord, if God wants to work through doctors that's great, but we need to be careful to seek Him in regards to our needs. But the feet also speak of the walk, and towards the end of his days Asa's walk was degenerating, but he didn't seek the Lord. How often people are walking around with diseased feet, and they'll seek therapists, and counselors and all these "professionals" but they refuse to seek the Lord. The answer isn't found in a book, it's found in Jesus Christ we're to seek Him, He's the One who brings healing to our lives, restores our walk.

Vs25-32

Remember in Ch 14 the Word of the Lord came to Jeroboam saying that because he had cast God behind his back and had done more evil than all who were before him God was going to cut his family line off from the face of the earth.

Every male, young and old, and they wouldn't even get a decent burial, the dogs would eat those in the cities, and the birds of the air would eat those who died in the fields, so God fulfilled His Word as He always does. He says it, and it comes to pass, Jeroboam has been dealt with and his lineage is no more.

Vs33-34

Ch16

Vs1-6

What's the point here? There are no exceptions, we sometimes think that we're exceptions to the penalties of God's Word. He's said that to others, but He understands with us. Here God says, "I raised you up out of the dust and gave you the kingdom, I judged Jeroboam because of the way he rejected Me and yet you're doing the same thing, therefore you'll share the same fate." God will not be mocked, if we sow it, we'll reap it.

Vs7

Now this is interesting, even though God utilized the acts of Baasha to fulfill His Word to Jeroboam, it still doesn't justify Baasha's murder of Jeroboam's family. It's like election and freewill, God doesn't make your choice for you, but He will capitalize on the choice that you make, but that in no way justifies your choice. So even though in the big picture Baasha's act of murder fulfilled God's Word, God didn't place it in his heart to murder those people, that's a decision he's accountable for himself. God knows the end from the beginning, so how can we find fault with Him when He chooses to let us in on the facts? and Notice the reference to idolatry here as, "...the work of his hands" how easily we can become ensnared by the work of our hands. We worship that sweet ride, that new boat, or beautiful new instrument, our new wardrobe or whatever. The works of man's hands, yet we bow before them in awe, that's idolatry, and it provokes the Lord, because He's the One who deserves that primary place in our hearts. And yet we want to give precedence to the works of *mans* hands rather than the creator of all things. May God help/forgive us.

Vs8-14

One thing I want to pull out of this section, when did the enemy attack him? When he was drinking himself drunk, off guard, distracted, you remember when Absalom had Amnon murdered, when he had well drunk and was "merry with wine." and Of course I'd refer you to Prov 23:29-35

And there are all kinds of things that the enemy likes to see us get drunk on, you can get drunk on success, drunk on pursuing success or riches, the cares of this world, the lust of the eye, the pride of life, the praises of man, power over people, whatever. And when you're good and drunk, distracted and dull in your senses he'll swoop in, do his damage, and destroy your life. That's why Peter said, "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" 1 Peter 5:8 Jesus said, "*Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*" Matt 26:41

Vs15-20

So Zimri got a whopping week on the throne, then when he realized he was an unacceptable choice in the eyes of the people, rather than fall into the hands Omri he burned down the palace with him inside it. He committed suicide, a subject on which the bible is silent, we know that as believers we're not our own, we've been bought at the price of the shed blood of Jesus Christ And the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Is suicide sin? Absolutely, is it unpardonable? You'd be hard pressed to argue that biblically, inexcusable, but not unforgivable, to commit suicide is to buy the lie of the enemy who came to rob, kill and destroy. God wants to use your life for His glory, and when we take our own lives we rob Him of that option. Once you give your life to Christ you don't have the right to take it into your own hands, sometimes people do, and it's an absolute tragedy, but a subject on which the bible is silent.

Vs21-31

So Omri did worse than all who were before him, and Ahab his son did worse than that! You see what I mean, the boy wanted to one up his dad. Dad's I pray that you're setting a standard of godliness in your family that your children want to out do. I think I serve as a pretty easy target for my kids, God's grace abounds towards me, but it's my prayer that they serve the Lord in a capacity that far exceeds anything God accomplishes through me. Just the opposite happened here, and these names may be ringing a bell because this is the Ahab that Elijah deals with, and this is the infamous/notorious Jezebel of which the bible has no kind word for, and we'll be seeing these people some more over the coming weeks.

Vs32-34

This just sort of seems thrown in here basically irrelevant to the rest of what's happening, what's this talking about? When Joshua conquered the city of Jericho the Lord inspired him to say these words, "*Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.*" Josh 6:26 Which means at the cost of his 1st born son's life the foundation will be laid, and when it's finished his youngest will die, and at this point in history this man sought to rebuild Jericho and just as the Word of God had said it cost the life of both his eldest and his youngest son. And perhaps the correlation here is in the foreshadowing judgment that's to come into Ahab's life. And that even as God's Word was fulfilled regarding the destruction of the house that would seek to establish a city against the ordinances of God, even so Ahab was setting up a system of worship that was to be judged just as sure. May God help us to get the message, it's vanity to fight against the ordinances of His Word, there are no exceptions. How much better to hear His Word, humble ourselves before Him and simply lead lives pleasing to Him? God wants to bless your life, but blessing follows obedience, but disobedience destroys our lives. Prov 29:1 "*He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*" We see it over and over and over again, God help us let that sink into our hearts, and impact our lives as unto obedience and dedication to Him. Not out of legal constraint, but through a loving relationship, that we would love God more than our own ways that lead to destruction.

