

1KINGS 15: 1 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat began Abijam to reign over Judah.

Abijam's wicked reign, and death, 1Kgs 15:1-8. Asa succeeds him in the kingdom of Judah, and rules well, 1Kgs 15:9-15. He makes a league with the king of Syria against Baasha king of Israel, who is obliged to desist in his attempts against Judah, 1Kgs 15:16-22. He is diseased in his feet and dies, and is succeeded by his son Jehoshaphat, 1Kgs 15:23-25. Nadab, son of Jeroboam, reigns over Israel; but is slain by Baasha, who reigns in his stead, 1Kgs 15:26-28. Baasha destroys all the house of Jeroboam, according to the prediction of Ahijah, 1Kgs 15:29, 1Kgs 15:30. Baasha continues the idolatry of Jeroboam, 1Kgs 15:31-34.

Verse 1

Reigned Abijam over Judah - Of this son of Rehoboam, of his brethren, and of Rehoboam's family in general, see 2 Chronicles 12, where many particulars are added.

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

1KINGS 15: 3 He walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father.

Verse 3

His heart was not perfect - He was an idolater, or did not support the worship of the true God. This appears to be the general meaning of the heart not being perfect with God.

1KINGS 15: 4 Nevertheless for David's sake, the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem;

Verse 4

The Lord - give him a lamp - That is, a son to succeed him; see 1Kgs 11:36.

1KINGS 15: 5 because David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and didn't turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

Verse 5

Save only in the matter of Uriah - Properly speaking, this is the only flagrant fault or crime in the life of David. It was a horrible offense, or rather a whole system of offenses. See the notes on 2 Samuel 11 (note), and 2 Samuel 12 (note).

1KINGS 15: 6 Now there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.

Verse 6

There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam - This was mentioned in the preceding chapter, 1Kgs 14:30, and it can mean no more than this: there was a continual spirit of hostility kept up between the two kingdoms, and no doubt frequent skirmishing between bordering parties; but it never broke out into open war, for this was particularly forbidden. See 1Kgs 12:24. Hostility did exist, and no doubt frequent skirmishes; but open war and pitched battles there were none.

But why is this circumstance repeated, and the history of Abijam interrupted by the repetition? There is some reason to believe that Rehoboam is not the true reading, and that it should be Abijam: "Now there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam all the days of his life." And this is the reading of fourteen of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. The Syriac has Abia the son of Rehoboam; the Arabic has Abijam. In the Septuagint the whole verse is omitted in the London Polyglot, but it is extant in those of Complutum and Antwerp. Some copies of the Targum have Abijam also, and the Editio Princeps of the Vulgate has Abia. This is doubtless the true reading, as we know there was a very memorable war between Abia and Jeroboam; see it particularly described 2Chr 13:3 (note), etc.

1KINGS 15: 7 The rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

1KINGS 15: 8 Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his place.

1KINGS 15: 9 In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Asa to reign over Judah.

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

Verse 10

His mother's name - Our translators thought that grandmother was likely to be the meaning, and therefore have put it in the margin.

The daughter of Abishalom - She is called, says Calmet, the daughter of Absalom, according to the custom of the Scriptures, which give the name of daughter indifferently to the niece, the grand-daughter, and great grand-daughter.

1KINGS 15: 11 Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.

1KINGS 15: 12 He put away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

Verse 12

The sodomites - הקדשים hakkedeshim; literally, the holy or consecrated ones. See on 1Kgs 14:24 (note).

1KINGS 15: 13 Also Maacah his mother he removed from being queen, because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah; and Asa cut down her image, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.

Verse 13

She had made an idol in a grove - The original word, מפלצת miphletseth, is variously understood. I shall give its different views in the versions: - "Besides, he removed his mother Maacha from being chief in the sacred rites of Priapus, and in his grove which she had consecrated." - Vulgate. "And Ana, [other copies Maacha], he removed from being governess, because she had made an assembly in her grove." - Septuagint. "Moreover, he deprived Maacha, his mother, of her own magnificence, because she had celebrated a solemnity to her own worship." - Syriac. "And even Maacha, his mother, he removed from the kingdom, because she had made an idol in a grove." - Chaldee. "Besides, he removed Maacha, his mother, from her kingdom, because she had made a high tree into an idol." - Arabic. "Also he removed Maacha, his mother, from the kingdom, because she had made a horrible statue; and our rabbins say that it was called מפלצת miphletseth, because מפליא maphli leysanutha, it produced wonderful ridicule; for she made it ad instar membri virilis, and she used it daily." - Rabbi Solomon Jarchi.

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 this 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. Maachah was most likely another Messalina; and Asa probably did for his mother what Claudius did for his wife.

1KINGS 15: 14 But the high places were not taken away: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect with the LORD all his days.

Verse 14

The high places were not removed - He was not able to make a thorough reformation; this was reserved for his son Jehoshaphat.

Asa's heart was perfect - He worshipped the true God, and zealously promoted his service; see on 1Kgs 15:3 (note). And even the high places which he did not remove were probably those where the true God alone was worshipped; for that there were such high places the preceding history amply

proves, and Jarchi intimates that these were places which individuals had erected for the worship of Jehovah.

1KINGS 15: 15 He brought into the LORD's house the things that his father had dedicated, and the things that himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

Verse 15

Which his father had dedicated - On what account he and his father dedicated the things mentioned below, we know not; but it appears that Asa thought himself bound by the vow of his father.

1KINGS 15: 16 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

Verse 16

There was war - That is, there was continual enmity; see on 1Kgs 15:6 (note). But there was no open war till the thirty-sixth year of Asa, when Baasha, king of Israel, began to build Ramah, that he might prevent all communication between Israel and Judah; see 2Chr 15:19; 2Chr 16:1. But this does not agree with what is said here, 1Kgs 16:8, 1Kgs 16:9, that Elah, the son and successor of Baasha, was killed by Zimri, in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Asa. Chronologers endeavor to reconcile this by saying that the years should be reckoned, not from the beginning of the reign of Asa, but from the separation of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It is most certain that Baasha could not make war upon Asa in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, when it is evident from this chapter that he was dead in the twenty-sixth year of that king. We must either adopt the mode of solution given by chronologists, or grant that there is a mistake in some of the numbers; most likely in the parallel places in Chronicles, but which we have no direct means of correcting. But the reader may compare 2Chr 14:1, with 2Chr 15:10, 2Chr 15:19; 2Chr 16:1.

1KINGS 15: 17 Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not allow anyone to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

Verse 17

And Baasha - built Ramah - As the word signifies a high place, what is here termed Ramah was probably a hill, (commanding a defile through which lay the principal road to Jerusalem), which Baasha fortified in order to prevent all intercourse with the kingdom of Judah, lest his subjects should cleave to the house of David. Ramah was about two leagues northward of Jerusalem.

1KINGS 15: 18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the LORD's house, and the treasures 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 Syria, who lived at Damascus, saying,

Verse 18

Asa took all the silver - Shishak, king of Egypt, had not taken the whole, or there had been some treasures brought in since that time.

Ben-hadad - This was the grandson of Rezon, called here Hezion, who founded the kingdom of Damascus. See 1Kgs 11:23, 1Kgs 11:24; and Calmet.

1KINGS 15: 19 “There is a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent to you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.”

Verse 19

There is a league between me and thee - Or, Let there be a league between me and thee; as there was between my father and thy father. There was no reason why Asa should have emptied his treasures at this time to procure the aid of the Syrian king; as it does not appear that there was any danger which himself could not have turned aside. He probably wished to destroy the kingdom of Israel; and to effect this purpose, even robbed the house of the Lord.

1KINGS 15: 20 Ben Hadad listened to king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel, and struck Ijon, and Dan, and Abel Beth Maacah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

Verse 20

Ijon, and Dan, etc. - He appears to have attacked and taken those towns which constituted the principal strength of the kingdom of Israel.

1KINGS 15: 21 When Baasha heard of it, he left off building Ramah, and lived in Tirzah.

Verse 21

Dwelt in Tirzah - This seems to have been the royal city; see 1Kgs 15:33, and 1Kgs 14:17; and in this Baasha was probably obliged to shut himself up.

1KINGS 15: 22 Then king Asa made a proclamation to all Judah; no one was exempted: and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and its timber, with which Baasha had built; and king Asa built therewith Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

Verse 22

None was exempted - Every man was obliged to go and help to dismantle the fortress at Ramah which Baasha had built. This was a general levee en masse of the people: every one was obliged to lend a helping hand, as the state was then supposed to be in danger, and all exemptions necessarily ceased. This is a maxim of civil policy, Ubi adversus hostem muniendi sent limites, omnis immunitas cessat: "Where the boundaries are to be fortified against an enemy, then all exemptions cease.

1KINGS 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, aren't they 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.

Verse 23

And the cities which he built - Such as Geba and Mizpah, which he built out of the spoils of Ramah. He was diseased in his feet - Probably he had a strong rheumatic affection, or the gout. This took place in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, three years before his death; and it is said that he sought to physicians rather than to the Lord, 2Chr 16:12, 2Chr 16:13.

1KINGS 15: 24 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.

Verse 24

Asa slept with his fathers - Of his splendid and costly funeral we read 1Chr 16:14.

1KINGS 15: 25 Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah; and he reigned over Israel two years.

Verse 25

Nadab - began to reign over Israel - He began his reign in the second year of the reign of Asa, and reigned two years.

1KINGS 15: 26 He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin.

1KINGS 15: 27 Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha struck him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon.

Verse 27

Smote him at Gabbethon - This was a city in the tribe of Dan, and generally in the possession of the Philistines.

1KINGS 15: 28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha killed him, and reigned in his place.

1KINGS 15: 29 As soon as he was king, he struck all the house of Jeroboam. He didn't leave to Jeroboam any who breathed, until he had destroyed him; according to the saying of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite;

Verse 29

He smote all the house of Jeroboam - This was according to Ahijah's prophetic declaration; see 1Kgs 14:10, 1Kgs 14:14. Thus God made use of one wicked man to destroy another.

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

1KINGS 15: 31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

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

Verse 32

There was war - See on 1Kgs 15:16 (note).

1KINGS 15: 33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah began to reign over all Israel in Tirzah for twenty-four years.

1KINGS 15: 34 He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin.

Verse 34

Walked in the way of Jeroboam - The entail of iniquity cannot be cut off but by a thorough conversion of the soul to God; and of this, these bad kings seem to have had no adequate notion. The wicked followed the steps of the wicked, and became still more wicked; sin gathers strength by exercise and age.

