

# CHAPTER 15

## introduction TO 1 KINGS 15

In this chapter we have a short history of the reign of Abijam, (<sup><1150></sup>1 Kings 15:1-8) and of Asa, (<sup><1149></sup>1 Kings 14:9-24), both kings of Judah; and of the reigns of Nadab the son of Jeroboam, and of Baasha, who destroyed his family, both kings of Israel, (<sup><1155></sup>1 Kings 15:25-34).

**Ver. 1.** *Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah.*] That is, began to reign; and by this it appears that Rehoboam was in the eighteenth year of his reign when he died, for he and Jeroboam began their reign at the same time.

**Ver. 2.** *Three years reigned he in Jerusalem,* etc.] And three only; his reign was short, and indeed not three full years, only one whole year and part of two others; for Asa his son began to reign in the twentieth of Jeroboam, (<sup><1159></sup>1 Kings 15:9) so that he reigned part of his eighteenth, this whole nineteenth, and part of his twentieth:

*and his mother's name was Maachah the daughter of Abishalom;* called Absalom, (<sup><4112></sup>2 Chronicles 11:20,21), generally supposed by the Jews to be Absalom the son of David, and which may seem not improbable, since his other two wives were of his father's family, (<sup><4118></sup>2 Chronicles 11:18). Josephus says <sup>f340</sup> she was the daughter of Tamar the daughter of Absalom, and so his granddaughter; and which may account for her being called Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, (<sup><4432></sup>2 Chronicles 13:2) since the difference between Maachah and Michaiah is not very great; and Uriel might be the name of Tamar's husband; though it is most likely that both father and daughter had two names; she seems to be mentioned here, to observe that she was the cause and means of her son's disagreeable walk, as follows, (see <sup><1153></sup>1 Kings 15:13).

**Ver. 3.** *And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him,* etc.] Having such bad examples as both parents to copy after; it chiefly respects idolatrous practices, (see <sup><1143></sup>1 Kings 14:23),

*and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God*; he did profess the true God, and worshipped him, but not wholly, and only, and sincerely; he worshipped other gods besides him: and so his heart was not

*as the heart of David his father*; who was a sole and sincere worshipper of God, never departed from him and his service.

**Ver. 4.** *Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem*, etc.] A kingdom there, as the Targum, splendid and glorious, to be continued in his posterity: to set up his son after him; in it:

*and to establish Jerusalem*: to continue that in which the temple was, for the sake of which, and the worship of God in it, there was a succession of David's posterity on the throne of Judah.

**Ver. 5.** *Because David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord*, etc.] With respect to worship: and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life; especially in matters of religion, nor even in his moral walk and conversation, deliberately, studiously, and with design:

*save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite*; the killing of him, and other sins which led on to it, and were in connection with it; Abarbinel thinks, because the affair of Bathsheba is not mentioned, that was not reckoned to David as a sin; but no doubt it was, and is included here.

**Ver. 6.** *And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life*.] Not the days of Rehoboam, though that was true, and is observed, (<sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:30), but all the days of Abijam, before he came to the throne, and in which, when a young man, he was concerned, and which still continued between him and Jeroboam; though some think he is called by his father's name, as Rehoboam is called David, (<sup><1126></sup>1 Kings 12:16).

**Ver. 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?* etc.] Which seem to be written by Iddo the prophet, (see <sup><4432></sup>2 Chronicles 13:22),

*and there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam*; and a famous pitched battle between them we read of in (<sup><4433></sup>2 Chronicles 13:3,17).

**Ver. 8.** *And Abijam slept with his fathers*, etc.] That is, died as they did:

*and they buried him in the city of David*, in the sepulchre of his royal ancestors, David, Solomon, and Rehoboam:

*and Asa his son reigned in his stead*; who perhaps was the eldest of his twenty two sons, (<sup><4132></sup>2 Chronicles 13:21).

**Ver. 9.** *And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.*] How this is to be accounted for (see Gill on "<sup><4115></sup>1 Kings 15:2").

**Ver. 10.** *And forty one years reigned he in Jerusalem*, etc.] Being a good king, had the blessing of a long reign, and reached, and even exceeded, the years of the reigns of David and Solomon:

*and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom*; that is the name of his grandmother, (see <sup><4115></sup>1 Kings 15:2) she is called his mother, not because she brought him forth, but because she brought him up; and this is observed to his commendation, that though he was educated by an idolatrous woman, yet was not corrupted by her as his father was.

**Ver. 11.** *And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father.*] In his personal walk and conversation, in his government of the nation, and especially in the matters of his God, and of religion, he made David his pattern and example to copy after.

**Ver. 12.** *And he took away the Sodomites out of the land*, etc.] Which were in the times of Rehoboam, (<sup><4112></sup>1 Kings 14:24), and continued in his father's reign; those he took away, either by driving them out of the land, or by putting them to death according to the law of God, (<sup><4313></sup>Leviticus 20:13) even as many of them as he had knowledge of, for some remained, (see <sup><4124></sup>1 Kings 22:46),

*and removed all the idols that his fathers had made*; or suffered to be made, as Solomon, Rehoboam, and Abijam, (see <sup><4110></sup>1 Kings 11:7 14:23 15:3).

**Ver. 13.** *And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen*, etc.] From the kingdom, as the Targum; from having any share in the government, as she might have had during his minority, his mother being dead, as some conjecture; and not only took away her power and authority, but all the ensigns of it, and perhaps forbid her the court: or he removed her from the queen, his own wife, that she might not be corrupted

by her; or rather it was from presiding over the rites of the idol next mentioned, and the worshipping of it:

*because she had made an idol in a grove*; which had its name from horror and trembling; either because it was of a terrible aspect, or injected horror into its worshippers, or brought terrible calamities and judgments upon them: according to some Jewish writers <sup>f341</sup>, it was a Priapus, of an obscene figure; and so others <sup>f342</sup>, who suppose she presided over the sacred rites of this impure deity, the same with Baalpeor; and the Heathens used to place Priapus in their gardens <sup>f343</sup>, to fright away birds, (see Gill on “<sup><-2496></sup>Jeremiah 49:16”), others take it to be Pan, from whence the word “Panic”, used for any great fright:

*and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron*: and cast the ashes of it into it, that none might have any profit by it, the gold and silver on it, and in indignation to it, (see <sup><0321></sup>Exodus 32:20).

**Ver. 14.** *But the high places were not removed*, etc.] That is, such as had been used for the worship of God, before the temple was built, which yet now should have been removed, since sacrifice was now only to be offered there; but he might think they were still lawful, or the people had such an opinion of them, that it was difficult and dangerous to attempt to remove them; otherwise high places for idolatry were removed by him, (<sup><-444B></sup>2 Chronicles 14:3),

*nevertheless, Asa’s heart was perfect all his days*; he was sincere in the worship of God, and did everything to the best of his knowledge and capacity for restoring true religion, and destroying idolatry.

**Ver. 15.** *And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated*, etc.] The spoils he had taken in war from Jeroboam, and which he had devoted to religious uses, but lived not to perform his vows, which his son now did for him; so that it seems, notwithstanding the sins he fell into, he had some regard to God and his worship, (see <sup><-4439></sup>2 Chronicles 13:19)

*and the things which himself had dedicated*; out of the spoils taken from the Ethiopians, (<sup><-4443></sup>2 Chronicles 14:13,14), these he brought into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels; of various sorts.

**Ver. 16.** *And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days*:] That is as long as they lived together; for Baasha died many years before Asa, and this must be reckoned from the time the war began

between them. Baasha did not begin his reign until the third year of Asa, (<sup><1155></sup>1 Kings 15:25) and in the first ten years of Asa's reign the land was quiet and free from war, (<sup><440></sup>2 Chronicles 14:1) of which there must be seven in the reign of Baasha, who is here made mention of out of course, for Nadab reigned before him, (<sup><1155></sup>1 Kings 15:25-27), the reason of which Abarbinel thinks is, that the historian, having given an account of the good deeds of Asa, relates his failings before he proceeds to the other part of his history.

**Ver. 17.** *And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah*, etc.] Which, in (<sup><440></sup>2 Chronicles 16:1) is said to be in the thirty sixth year of Asa's reign, or rather of his kingdom; for it can never mean the year of his reign, for Baasha was dead many years before that, since his reign began in the third of Asa, and he reigned but twenty four years, and therefore must die in the twenty seventh of Asa; but it is to be understood of the kingdom of Judah, when it was divided from Israel; from that time to this were thirty six years, seventeen under Rehoboam, three under Abijam, so that this year must be the sixteenth of Asa; thus it is calculated in the Jewish chronology <sup>f344</sup>, and which is followed by many of the best of our chronologers:

*and built Ramah*; a city in the tribe of Benjamin, (<sup><685></sup>Joshua 18:25), but taken by the king of Israel, which he rebuilt or fortified:

*that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah*; that his people might not go to and from Jerusalem, and worship at the temple there; this garrison lying on the borders of both kingdoms, he thought hereby to cut off all communication between them.

**Ver. 18.** *Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house*, etc.] What was left untaken away by Shishak king of Egypt, (<sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:26), or what he had put there dedicated by his father and himself, (<sup><1155></sup>1 Kings 15:15) and be they either, they were not to be taken, especially the treasures of the house of the Lord, and put to profane use, and particularly to such bad purposes as these were:

*and delivered them into the hands of his servants*: to be disposed of as next directed:

*and King Asa sent them to Benhadad the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus*; according to some chronologers <sup>f345</sup>, Hezion, the grandfather of this Benhadad, is the same

with Rezon the first king of Damascus, (<sup><1112></sup>1 Kings 11:23,24), who was succeeded by Tabrimon, and he by Benhadad:

*saying*: as follows.

**Ver. 19.** *There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father*, etc.] For though Hezion, if he is the same with Rezon, was an adversary to Israel in the days of Solomon, (<sup><1112></sup>1 Kings 11:25), yet it seems his son was not, but was a confederate with the kings of Israel and Judah:

*behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold*; taken out of the treasury of the temple and his own treasury:

*come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me*; it was sinful in him to take the money out of the temple, to which it was dedicated; it was more so to make use of it to bribe an Heathen to break his covenant and alliance with another, in order to serve him; in which he betrayed great distrust of the Lord, and of his power to help him; which was the more aggravated, when he had had such a wonderful appearance of God for him against the Ethiopians, (see <sup><1407></sup>2 Chronicles 16:7,8).

**Ver. 20.** *So Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel*, etc.] He broke off his alliance with the king of Israel; and as he had a standing army, with proper officers, he sent them directly to take the cities of Israel:

*and he smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali*; places which lay on the northern part of Israel, the nearest to Syria. Ijon some place in the tribe of Naphtali, others in Asher; it seems to be on the extreme border of the land northward, as Dan also was; hence the phrase from Dan to Beersheba, i.e. from north to south. Abelbethmaachah is the same with Abelmaim, (<sup><1404></sup>2 Chronicles 16:4) which perhaps is the same with that Abela, placed by Jerome <sup>f346</sup> between Damascus and Paneas, supposed to be the Enhydra of Pliny <sup>f347</sup>. Cinneroth is the same with Gennesaret, a fruitful country in Galilee, from which is a sea or lake of that name, mentioned in the New Testament, and was in the tribe of Naphtali, the land of which was seized upon at this time.

**Ver. 21.** *And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof*, etc.] What was doing in the northern part of his kingdom:

*that he left off building of Ramah;* which was the thing designed to be answered by this diversion:

*and dwelt in Tirzah;* in the tribe of Manasseh, nearer at hand, to observe and stop the motions of the Syrian king.

**Ver. 22.** *Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah,* etc.] Summoned men of all sorts, ranks, and degrees:

(*none was exempted;*) the Jews <sup>f348</sup> say, not so much as a newly married man, whom the law excused from war the first year, nor the disciples of the wise men:

*and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded;* or fortified the place; these; the men of Judah, whom Asa summoned, carried off:

*and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah;* which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and which he fortified, (<sup><468></sup>Joshua 18:24,26) (<sup><3410></sup>Jeremiah 41:10).

**Ver. 23.** *The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* etc.] Some of which are to be met with in the canonical book of that name, (<sup><440></sup>2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14), and others in the annals of the kings, out of which the Scripture account was taken:

*nevertheless, in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet;* seized with the gout, as the Jews say <sup>f349</sup>, and which was two years before his death, (see <sup><4162></sup>2 Chronicles 16:12,13).

**Ver. 24.** *And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father,* etc.] In a sepulchre there he himself had made, and in great pomp and solemnity, being laid on a bed filled with sweet odours and spices, prepared according to art, and which were burned for him, (<sup><4164></sup>2 Chronicles 16:14),

*and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead;* a very pious and worthy prince.

**Ver. 25.** *And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah,* etc.] Before Baasha did:

*and reigned over Israel two years*, not two whole years; for he began in the second of Asa, and in the third of that king's reign Baasha slew him, and reigned in his stead, (<sup><1153></sup>1 Kings 15:28).

**Ver. 26.** *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord*, etc.] Committed idolatry, than which nothing is a greater evil in his sight:

*and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin*: in making and worshipping of golden calves.

**Ver. 27.** *And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar*, etc.] A man of that tribe; but who he was, or his father, is nowhere else said, very probably an officer in Nadab's army:

*conspired against him*; laid a scheme to take away his life, and seize the kingdom:

*and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon*; a city in the tribe of Dan, (<sup><684></sup>Joshua 19:44)

*which belongeth to the Philistines*; it was a city given to the Levites, (<sup><623></sup>Joshua 21:23) and they being driven from it by Jeroboam, the Philistines seized on it, or had heretofore made a conquest of it; and Nadab was desirous of getting it out of their hands, and therefore besieged it, as follows:

*for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon*; and while he was besieging it, Baasha took the opportunity to slay him, where his carcass lay exposed to dogs, or fowls of the air, and had no burial, as Ahijah predicted, (<sup><1141></sup>1 Kings 14:11,13).

**Ver. 28.** *Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.*] Which seems to be his only or chief view in slaying him, to get possession of his kingdom.

**Ver. 29.** *And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam*, etc.] That he might have no rival, or any that could pretend any title to the crown:

*he left not Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite*; not that his intention in destroying Jeroboam's family was to fulfil that prophecy, but so it was eventually; (see <sup><1140></sup>1 Kings 14:10,14).

**Ver. 30.** *Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel.*] Not that Baasha destroyed the family of Jeroboam because of his sins, which did so much mischief to Israel, and were so provoking to the Lord, from any dislike or hatred of them, for he walked in the same, (<sup><1153></sup>1 Kings 15:34), but the Lord threatened this by his prophet, and suffered it to be done because of his abominations.

**Ver. 31.** *Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did,* etc.] In his short reign, which yet were more than here related:

*are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* in which those of his father Jeroboam were written, (<sup><1149></sup>1 Kings 14:19).

**Ver. 32.** *And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.*] For being a wicked man, and an idolater, Asa had no respect for him, though he had slain the family of Jeroboam; nor had Baasha any regard to Judah, nor to the worship of God at Jerusalem, so that there was no good understanding between them, but frequent acts of hostility, (see <sup><1156></sup>1 Kings 15:16).

**Ver. 33.** *In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah,* etc.] Which is repeated, partly to observe that the whole kingdom submitted to him, though an usurper and murderer, and the place where he kept his court, as also the time of his reign, as follows:

*twenty four years;* which were as long as both Jeroboam and his son reigned.

**Ver. 34.** *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,* etc.] As Nadab did, whom he slew:

*and walked in the way of Jeroboam;* whose family he destroyed:

*and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin;* in worshipping the golden calves; so that it was not out of dislike to idolatry, but out of malice and ambition, that he slew the family of Jeroboam.