

1 Kings 14-15

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn to 1 Kings 14? We're gonna study both 14 & 15 tonight. There's only 23 chapters in this book, and once we finish it we will move back to the NT on Wednesday nights and study the book of Galatians.

It took only one generation after King Solomon for a Civil War to divide the nation of Israel. As we saw last week, the Davidic dynasty reigned in Jerusalem, over the southern tribe of Judah. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, sat on the throne.

But the northern tribes, or Israel, rallied around a man named Jeroboam. Remember last week we saw how Jeroboam came up with a plan to avoid the mandated worship in Jerusalem according to God's Law. Jeroboam set up golden calves in Dan and Bethel, made his own sacrifices, priesthood, and feast days. Jeroboam created a religion of convenience and compromise.

No matter what justification he tried to use, as far as God was concerned Jeroboam's sin was idolatry. And as a result, in chapter 14 God's judgment falls on the house of Jeroboam

The title of tonight's message is The Continued Division
Let's pray

1 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. 2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet is there, who told me that I

would be king over this people. Back when Solomon was king, Ahijah the prophet declared that the kingdom would be ripped from Solomon - and Jeroboam would ascend to the throne of Israel. Obviously, Ahijah's prophecy proved true. So Jeroboam thinks perhaps this prophet Ahijah can predict the outcome of his son's illness. The king sends his wife on an undercover mission to inquire of the prophet.

But think about the flawed logic here. Jeroboam expects the Prophet to see into the future, but he thinks his wife's disguise will fool the prophet?

Its staggering how strongholds of sin can rob us of judgment and blind us to reality.

3-4

3 Also take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." 4 And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were glazed by reason of his age. By now this prophet was an old man – a seer who could no longer physically see. But look what happens...

5 Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he is sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman." Ahijah didn't need to see. He relied on the voice of God - not his physical sight. I would encourage all of us in our prayers to ask the Lord to reveal that which we cannot see physically

6-11

6 And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, “Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another person? For I have been sent to you with bad news. 7 Go, tell Jeroboam, ‘Thus says the LORD God of Israel: “Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, 8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and yet you have not been as My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes; 9 but you have done more evil than all who were before you, for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and have cast Me behind your back— 10 therefore behold! I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. 11 The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!” ’ Jeroboam could have had a lasting dynasty, but he wasted the promise of God with his unbelief, idolatry, and outright rejection of God.

And in addition the prophet gives Mrs. Jeroboam one more ominous warning...

12 Arise therefore, go to your own house. When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 13 And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall come to the grave, .(or die a peaceful death), because in him there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam¹ Kings 15:29, informs us the rest of

Jeroboam's family dies violently in the aftermath of a bloody coup. But notice, Jeroboam's son, Abijah is spared violence by a peaceful death. An innocent child was the only good God could find in the house of Jeroboam, so rather than allow the boy to grow up under his dad's evil influence, and reap its judgment, God went ahead and took him. Death spared a corrupting influence and a torturous death.

This sheds light on one of the OT's most troublesome issues... When God ordered Israel's conquest of Canaan - over and over Joshua is told to take no prisoners – no survivors – slaughter the women and children, as well as the soldiers. We read that, and think God is being brutal and barbaric, but we forget how hideously corrupt, and defiled Canaanite culture had become.

Obviously, this is a call only God in His wisdom can make, but He spared the Canaanite children from moral corruption and eternal damnation by their mass extermination. It was a severe mercy on God's part – just as it is here.

14-16

14 "Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; this is the day. What? Even now! 15 For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River,[fn] because they have made their wooden images,[fn] provoking the LORD to anger. 16 And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who made Israel sin."The demise of the northern kingdom culminates in 722 BC when the Assyrian

empire captures the northern kingdom. If you want to flash ahead 200 years - 2 Kings 17 records Israel's final days.

17 Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to Tirzah. When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. 18 And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet. The prophecy about Israel's national exile wouldn't be fulfilled for centuries. Yet it was demonstrated as true because the immediate prophecy of the death of Jeroboam's son was exactly fulfilled.

19 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 20 The period that Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then Nadab his son reigned in his place. Though Jeroboam reigned just 22 years, his evil influence lasted 2½ centuries.

From 1 Kings 14 through 2 Kings 17 you're going to see week after week how the verses flip-flop back and forth between the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah. Nineteen kings rule Israel – and none of them please the Lord. Of 19 kings not one pleases God, largely thanks to Jeroboam.

Twenty kings reign over Judah, the southern kingdom - only 8 gain the Lord's approval. But those 8 kings kept Judah going 135 years after the fall of Israel.

1 Kings 14:21 shifts south to discuss Rehoboam reigning in Judah

21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. His mom was a pagan – and the mention of her here may explain some of the actions of Rehoboam. He'd watched his father, Solomon, worship at the pagan altars, and he follows in his footsteps. If you're a parent, remember your kids are watching the way you worship.
22-23

22 Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. 23 For they also built for themselves high places, sacred pillars, and wooden images on every high hill and under every green tree. Rather than worship the one true God they worshiped idols. Rather than worship in the one sanctioned place, and in God's mandated manner that God gave through the law of Moses- they set up illegal altars - or high places - all over the land.

SHOW PIC On September 1, 1983 Korean Airlines Flight 007 was flying from Anchorage to Seoul south Korea, and was carrying 269 passengers and 29 crew members. After lift-off the plane was put on autopilot. But a small mistake in the flight path caused a tragic disaster. A few degrees error at lift-off caused the plane to end up 310 miles off course in the end. It would eventually crash into the sea. **CLOSE PIC**

And the same dangers apply to spiritual matters. You can be a few degrees off in the beginning – continue on the projected course – and end up in serious error by the end. This is why it's so critical we stay rooted and grounded in God's word.

24 And there were also perverted persons[fn] in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. Many of the idols Judah worshipped were fertility gods. "Perverted persons" were likely male prostitutes that performed their lewd acts in association with the worship of these gods.

So think about what has happened with the nation. Judah has become as evil as the Canaanites. Remember God gave the land to Israel as judgment for the wickedness of the Caananaites. Now 500 years later, the Israelites were embroiled in the same sins God used them to judge.

25 It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. 26 And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields which Solomon had made. Solomon stockpiled great wealth. Now after only 5 years it's gone. 2 Chronicles describes Shishak's raid and Judah's response in more detail. We'll save it until we get there. Egyptian archeology sets the date of this invasion as 925 BC

We studied 1 Kings 10 a couple weeks ago and we saw description of these 500 shields made of solid gold. These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon,

but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields.

Some theologians believe these shields were an example of the emphasis of image over substance that began in the days of Solomon and worsened in the days of Rehoboam.

27 Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. 28 And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom. Here's Judah's decline in a nutshell – from gold to bronze in five years. They were interested in keeping up the appearances, even though the substance was drastically different.

Sounds like much of the church in America today. The substance, the true worship of God and the study of His word have been replaced with sermonettes, flashy lights, and gimmicks to attract the masses.

29-31

29 Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 30 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. 31 So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then Abijam^[fn] his son reigned in his place. We're told this about Abijam in **2 Chronicles 12:14 And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.**

Chapter 15

1-3

1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. 3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. Abijam was David's great-grandson, but that's where the relation ended. He followed after his father and grandfather's idols – rather than the God of David. We'll see more about his reign in 2 Chronicles 13.

4 Nevertheless for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; 5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. Notice what David did that made his life so special to God. Verse 5 "David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD."

A lot of Christians serve the Lord as long as it serves them too.. But David did what was right – not necessarily in his eyes – but in the eyes of the Lord. David did the right thing – even when it inconvenienced him.

6 And there was war between Rehoboam[fn] and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and

Jeroboam. Jeroboam was still king in Israel while Abijam reigned in Judah, so Rehoboam's son inherited the animosity between his dad and Jeroboam

8 So Abijam rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. Asa turns out to be a good guy.

9-12

9 In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. 10 And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name was Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. 11 Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did his father David. 12 And he banished the perverted persons[fn] **from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.** The "perverted persons" were homosexuals.

Notice that Asa made a public stand against idolatry and homosexuality. Asa rightly discerned that these two sins are the most destructive for a society, because they are the foundation of civilization.

Idolatry violates mankind's most vital relationship – our relationship with God.

Homosexuality undermines the next most important relationship in society - the union between a husband and a wife.

A society that promotes idolatry and endorses homosexuality is writing its own death certificate. Without God there's no moral foundation for society, and without marriage there's no social foundation. Asa had the courage to stand against both.

13 Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah.[fn] And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron. Evidently, both Asa's parents and grandparents followed after idols.

Asa was the victim of a dysfunctional family. Yet King Asa was determined to not repeat his parents' mistakes. Praise God the power of the Holy Spirit can set us free and begin a new family lineage instead of being trapped in family history.

14 But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the LORD all his days. As you study the kings of Israel some of the bad kings did a few good things, whereas the good kings made some mistakes. Ultimately they were judged good or bad based on the loyalty of their heart toward God. Asa wasn't perfect, but his heart was loyal.

And that's what God is looking for in us – not perfection, but devotion. Even when our feet stumble, God wants our hearts fixed on Him.

15-17

15 He also brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils.

16 Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. 17 And Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. This is describing the continual struggle for

dominance between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

Baasha gained the upper hand in the days of Asa because he effectively blocked a main route into Judah at the city of Ramah. He hoped this military and economic pressure on Judah would force Asa into significant concessions.

18-22

18 Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was 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 Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, 19 "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."

20 So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

21 Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah, and remained in Tirzah.

22 Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah." Ramah was on the border between Israel and Judah - only 8 miles from Jerusalem. Here's why King Baasha of Israel built Ramah... Asa's reforms birthed a revival in Judah. It stirred a hunger in the hearts of people, as far away as Israel. Many in the north wanted to return

to the true worship of God, and migrate south to Judah. Baasha didn't like it. He built Ramah as a checkpoint to stop the exodus. The city of Ramah was Baasha's version of the Berlin wall. Here's what happens... King Asa buys the help of the Syrian king, Ben-Hadad. He attacks Baasha's northern territories. Baasha moves north to defend himself - leaving the city of Ramah for Asa to dismantle. Here's the moral... "God always keeps the way open for those who desire to worship Him in spirit and truth.

23 The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, 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. 2 Chronicles 16:12 And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. He consulted all the podiatrists

2 Chronicles 14-16 provides many more details regarding the reign of Asa.

24 So Asa rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place. Jehoshaphat also was one of the few good kings of Judah. We'll read about Jehoshaphat again in the last chapter of 1 Kings. In the meantime, the next section focuses on the northern kingdom of Israel.

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. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. 2 Chronicles 11 specifically tells us that both

Jeroboam and his sons were responsible for driving God's priests out of the land of Israel. Nadab directly shared in the sins of his father Jeroboam.

27 Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. 29 And it was so, when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 30 because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. This was the prophecy we discussed in 14:10. God took away the house of Jeroboam.

31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. 34 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. This will be a familiar report card throughout the history of the northern kingdom of Israel. Every king was guilty of adopting the alternative religion of Jeroboam.