

## 2 Chronicles 13-14 – Thursday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**2 Chronicles 13** -- 1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah set the battle in order with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand choice men. Jeroboam also drew up in battle formation against him with eight hundred thousand choice men, mighty men of valor.

- The chapter begins with a brutal and bloody civil war between the kingdom of Judah in the south, and the kingdom in the North.
- It's important to understand that what we're about to study, shouldn't be seen as God endorsing it, rather, it's God recording it.
- The question becomes one of why we have a record such as this in our Bibles, and the answer is found in the New Testament.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) — 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: 5 Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. 7 Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. 8 And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you are a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods. 9 Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests, like the peoples of other lands, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of things that are not gods? 10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites attend to their duties. 11 And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; they also set the showbread in order on the pure gold table, and the lampstand of gold with its lamps to burn every evening; for we keep the command of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him. 12 Now look, God Himself is with us as our head, and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!"

- Here we have recorded an appeal on the part of Abijah to Jeroboam, which at first read almost sounds like it's true, but it's not.
- The reason being is it's what we call today, revisionist history, in the sense that Abijah is sort of rewriting the history of Israel.
- The truth of the matter is, this is at best a half-truth, such that, the rebellion was due in large part to Rehoboam did on his part.

G. Campbell Morgan describes it this way, "It is a strange mixture of misrepresentation and religion. The misrepresentation is in his statement of the reason for the rebellion of Israel, which culminated in the crowning of Jeroboam. He attributed the rebellion to the influence of evil men whom he described as 'sons of Belial.'"

13 But Jeroboam caused an ambush to go around behind them; so they were in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them. 14 And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line was at both front and rear; and they cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded the trumpets. 15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand. 17 Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter; so five hundred thousand choice men of Israel fell slain. 18 Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers. 19 And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephraim with its villages. 20 So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died. 21 But Abijah grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22 Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings are written in the annals of the prophet Iddo.

- The chapter ends with a powerful principal as it relates to the reason that Abijah was victorious and it's found in verse eighteen.
- Notice we're told that the reason for the children of Judah prevailing was because they relied on the Lord God of their fathers.
- To me, this speaks to one of the most powerful yet simple truths in all the Bible, which is that of relying and depending on God.

**2 Chronicles 14** -- 1 So Abijah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for ten years. 2 Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God, 3 for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images. 4 He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. 5 He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. 6 And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest.

- Chapter fourteen begins with the record of a good King Asa, who we're told did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord.
- We're even told why he did what was right in the Lord's sight. He removed all the altars and high places of the foreign gods.
- We we're first introduced to this good king back in our study through 1 Kings chapter 15, where we're provided with more detail.

**1 Kings 15:9-13** -- 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 from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 Also he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah. And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the Brook Kidron.

- This is one of those places in God's Word where you can almost read past something that has a valuable personal application.
- We're told that Asa banished the perverts, and removed and burned the perverted high places that his grandmother had made.
- In other words, he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord by taking a stand for righteousness against his own family.

- There's something I need to point out here before we move on, and it has to do with the false teaching of Generational Curses.
- This because in scripture, good kings came from father's who were evil kings, and vice versa, the evil kings came from good.
- While we have addressed this before, I think it would be good to address it again now, because of the confusion surrounding it.

- Sadly, there's much confusion about children paying for the sins of the father, and its seemingly still gaining traction even today.
- We did a study on this back when we were going through the book of Exodus chapter 20 concerning the Ten Commandments.

**Exodus 20:4-6** - 4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- We actually find this mention of how God visits the sins of the fathers a total of three more times in the first five books of Moses.

**Exodus 34:6-7** - 6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

**Numbers 14:18-19** - 18 'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

**Deuteronomy 5:8-10** (2<sup>nd</sup>/Deuce-Law) 8 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image -- any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 9 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 10 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- What follows are several reasons there are no "generational curses," such that children are punished for the sins of the fathers.
  1. The Lord visits the iniquity for the purpose of showing mercy, forgiveness and compassion. He's longsuffering slow to anger.
  2. The Lord is so compassionate He visits the children to the fourth generation knowing the effects pass onto that generation.
  3. He visits the iniquity of generations of children whose fathers hated God, showing mercy to thousands of those who love God.
  4. One can't be held responsible for, or make payment for the sins of another. One said; "every tub has to stand on its own feet".
  5. Even if there was a generational curse, the cross broke it. There is therefore now no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus.
  6. One of the most compelling reasons that there are no "generational curses" is there's no example of it anywhere in Scripture.
    - Jesus or Paul never mention generational curses
    - The book of Acts never shows generational curses dealt with.
    - The Old Testament prophets never refer to, or prophesy about it.
    - The Old Testament has good Kings coming from bad, and bad from good.

7 Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around them, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered. 8 And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows; all these were mighty men of valor.

- What Asa does here is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is he takes advantage of this time of peace.
- In other words, he doesn't waste this season of peace and quiet but instead sees it as an opportunity to prepare for what's next.
- Often we fritter away those seasons in our lives when we're not in a trial, only to be blindsided and ill prepared for the next trial.

**Ephesians 5:15-17** (NIV) — 15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

**Galatians 6:10** Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

9 Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. 10 So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!"

- This is what's known as a life and death trial, and what Asa does here is really the only thing he can do, which is cry out to God.
- It's not just that he cries out, it's how he cries out in that he acknowledges that there is nothing that's too hard for God to do.
- As such, the Lord will deliver this million-man army of the Ethiopians into his hand by way of a supernatural victory from God.

12 So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people who were with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army. And they carried away very much spoil. 14 Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. 15 They also attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

- One would think that on the heels of a miraculous victory such as this, Asa would never again have what we call a crisis of faith.
- However, as we'll see in the next chapter, next week, Asa will be on the receiving end of a warning concerning this exact thing.
- Not only will he have a crisis of faith, he will actually forsake the Lord and trust in his own strength and military strategy instead.