

2 Chronicles 11:13 – 15:19

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III. God Preserves His Kingdom in Judah until the Return from Exile (2 Chronicles 10:1—36:23)

C. Priests and Levites come to Jerusalem (11:13-17):

1. We will see that the northern kingdom of Israel (N) was more wicked than the southern kingdom of Judah (S). Notice here how the northern kingdom had a sad beginning: ¹⁴ “The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property, and came to Judah and Jerusalem because Jeroboam and his sons [of the northern kingdom] had rejected them as priests of the LORD.” (NIV)
2. The faithful ones followed what was right: ¹⁶ “Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of their fathers.” (NIV) What is your desire?
 - a. Go along with the crowd!
 - b. Be a half-hearted follower of Jesus!
 - c. Fully follow God’s Word, even if you are the only one!
3. ¹⁷ “They [who set their hearts on seeking the LORD] strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon three years, walking in the ways of David and Solomon during this time.” (NIV)
 - a. But “Rehoboam later abandoned the law of the LORD” (12:1). (TLSB, 682)
 - b. “But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.” (Hebrews 10:39 NIV)

D. Rehoboam’s Family (11:18-23): ²¹ “In all, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.” (NIV)

E. Egypt Plunders Jerusalem (12:1-16): Let’s understand the BIG PICTURE:

1. For three years the southern kingdom followed the LORD (11:17).
2. When things were going well for Rehoboam (12:1), he and all those with him abandoned the LORD ☹.
3. Two years later (*in Rehoboam’s fifth year, only two years after they abandoned the LORD*), ² “because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem... ⁴ he captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. ⁵ Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and to the leaders of Judah... ‘This is what the LORD says, “You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak.”’ ⁶ The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, ‘The LORD is just.’ ⁷ When the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah: ‘Since they have humbled themselves, I will not destroy them but will soon give them deliverance [ESV ...but I will grant them some deliverance].’ When Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem, he carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including the gold shields Solomon had made.” (NIV)

- a. Why did Egypt attack Jerusalem? (12:2) _____
 - b. Did Rehoboam bring much trouble upon his nation because he chose his own way over the LORD's way? Y N
 - c. Did the LORD show some mercy when the king and the leaders humbled themselves? Y N
 - d. Is it important for us to vote for people who fear the LORD? Y N
4. Sad summary: ¹³ "King Rehoboam...reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem...
¹⁴ He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the LORD." (NIV)
- a. See the chart: Kings and Prophets of Judah [S] and Israel [N]
 - b. Rehoboam (S) and Jeroboam (N) began to reign in 931 BC.

F. Abijah Reigns in Judah (13:1-22):

1. ¹ "In the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam, Abijah became king of Judah..." (NIV) "*Abijah*. A significant modification is the change in name from Abijam ('my father is Yam,' a Canaanite god), the consistent name in Kings, to Abijah ('my father is the LORD')." (TLSB)
2. When Rehoboam died and Abijah became the new king, Jeroboam seized what appeared to be a good opportunity to conquer the southern kingdom of Judah. However, he overlooked a very important factor: *Abijah was trusting in the LORD God of Israel*:
 - a. Jeroboam had 800,000 chosen mighty warriors; Abijah only 400,000.
 - b. Abijah spoke to Jeroboam and all Israel from Mount Zemaraim (9 miles north of Jerusalem; see map):
 - i. He reminded Jeroboam about the united kingdom under David and Solomon, and how the kingdom had come to be divided through some "worthless scoundrels" (2Ch 13:7 NIV).
 - ii. Then Abijah said: ⁸ "And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD... because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves... [then, after reminding them of their sins, he said:] ¹⁰ But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him.... ¹² ...you cannot succeed." (ESV)
 - c. So what did Jeroboam do? Since he •had Abijah outnumbered 2 to 1, •had his false gods with him, and •had come around the back of Abijah to ambush him, *he thought he was invincible*. BUT ¹⁵ "when the men of Judah shouted, God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel... ¹⁷ Abijah and his people struck them with great force, so there fell slain of Israel 500,000 chosen men. ¹⁸ ...because [Judah] relied on the LORD..." (ESV)

G. Asa Reigns in Judah (14:1-15): After Abijah's short reign of three years, his son Asa became king (S):

1. Some reforms: ² "...Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. ³ He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim ⁴ and commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment.

⁵ He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars.” (ESV)

2. The source of their blessings: ⁷ “The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God.” (ESV)
3. The LORD’s complete defeat of the Ethiopians: ⁹ “Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men... ¹⁰ And Asa went out to meet him... ¹¹ And Asa cried to the LORD his God, ‘...Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude....’ ¹² So the LORD defeated the Ethiopians... ¹³ ...until none remained alive...” (ESV)

H. Asa’s Religious Reforms (15:1-19):

1. Asa and the southern kingdom received encouragement from Azariah the prophet: ² “...The LORD is with you while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. ³ For a long time Israel was without the true God... ⁵ In those times... ⁶ ...God troubled them with every sort of distress. ⁷ But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.” (ESV) Since the LORD loves us:
 - a. He troubles / disciplines us when we are forsaking Him.
 - b. He blesses us when we seek and follow Him.
2. Then Asa took action: He ⁸ “...put away the detestable idols... and he repaired the altar of the LORD... ¹¹ They [*Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing with them*] sacrificed to the LORD... ¹² And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD... ¹³ but...whoever would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, should be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman.... ¹⁶ Even Maacah, his mother, King Asa removed from being queen...because she had made a detestable image for Asherah...” (ESV)
 - a. Asherah: “She was commonly the sister-wife to the storm god Baal... Asherah...was honored most as goddess of fertility.... The Bible notes that Asherah was worshiped in association with trees, groves, and wooden poles.... Archaeologists associate Asherah with the numerous fertility figurines discovered throughout Canaan. Most Near Eastern religions had a male deity and a female deity as a couple; worship practices for Baal and Asherah were sexual in nature.” (TLSB, 154)
 - b. How is the LORD calling us to take action today – *in our personal lives, families, or congregation* – in order to remove what dishonors Him and follow His Holy Word? _____
