

The CHRONICLES of the KINGS

Asa vs. Israel

1 Samuel 8:5-8

April 25, 2026

Following the breakup of the United Kingdom, Israel and Judah would have many kings:

- Israel would have 20 kings – 19 did evil. Israel's tragic end would come at the hands of the Assyrians in 722 BC.
- Judah would have 19 kings and 1 queen – only 4 did right. Judah outlasted Israel by just 136 years, being destroyed by Babylon in 586 BC.

Our starting points today are 1 Kings 15 and 2 Chronicles 13 and they begin the same way:

"In the 18th year of Jeroboam's reign, Abijah became king in Judah and he reigned in Jerusalem for 3 years."

Abijah/Abijam = Judah 1 Kings 15:1-8 and 2 Chronicles 13:1-22

- He committed all the sins of his father.
- His heart was not fully devoted to Yahweh, yet Yahweh gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son (Asa) to succeed him.
- There was war between was a war between Abijah and Jeroboam:

Abijah went into battle with an army of 400,000 men against Jeroboam's army of 800,000 men.

Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, in the hill country of Ephraim, and addressed Jeroboam and his army, giving a brief history of Jeroboam's rebellion and idolatry and how Yahweh would fight for Judah because they had not forsaken him, *"Men of Israel,"* he said, *"do not fight against Yahweh, for you will not succeed."*

While Abijah was making his speech, Jeroboam sent troops to ambush Judah from behind while they were focused on the main army of Israel in front of them. When Judah realized what Jeroboam had done, they cried to Yahweh and he routed Jeroboam's army. Judah's army inflicted heavy losses on Israel's army, who reported 500,000 casualties.

"The men of Israel were subdued on that occasion, and the men of Judah were victorious because they relied on Yahweh, the God of their fathers"

- Jeroboam's power declined, while Abijah grew in strength.
- Abijah married 14 wives and had 22 sons and 16 daughters
- All the other events of his reign are written in the book of the kings of Judah and in the annotations of the prophet, Iddo.
- Abijah died and was buried in the City of David – Asa his son succeeded him as king.

Asa – 1 Kings 15:9-24 and 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14

Asa did what was good and right. He reigned in Judah for 41 years – during that time Israel had 8 kings (1 Kings 15:25-22:40):

- Jeroboam reigned another 2 years – his son, Nadab, began king – 1 Kings 15:25.
- Nadab reigned for 2 years. He did evil. He was murdered by Baasha, son of Ahijah (tribe of Issachar), along with Jeroboam's entire family – Nadab killed them all. The events of his reign were written in the annals of the kings of Israel – 1 Kings 15:25-31.
- Baasha reigned for 24 years. He did evil – 1 Kings 15:33 – 16:7

Then the word Yahweh came to Jehu son of Hanani against Baasha – because of all the evil he had done – becoming like the house of Jeroboam – and also because he destroyed it:

The other events of Baasha's reign were written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel.

Baasha died and his son, Elah became king in Israel.

- Elah reigned for 2 years. He did evil – 1 Kings 16:8-14

Zimri, one of his officials, plotted against him. Elah was at Tirzah, in the home of Arza, getting drunk. Zimri came in and killed him then declared himself king. He killed Baasha's entire family – he spared no one.

The other events of Elah's reign are written in the annals of the kings of Israel.

- Zimri reigned for 7 days. He did evil – 1 Kings 16:15-20

Zimri's plan backfired when Israel's army, in response to the murder of the king, declared Omri king. Omri and the army laid siege to Tirzah and when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he killed himself by setting fire to the palace.

The other events of Zimri's reign are written in the annals of the kings of Israel.

At this point Israel was split into 2 factions – those who supported Tibni and those who supported Omri.

- Tibni reigned 4 years – but Omri's supporters proved stronger – 1 Kings 16:21-22

- Omri reigned for 12 years. He did evil – 1 Kings 16:23-28

Omri reigned for the 1st 6 years from Tirzah, but then bought the hill of Samaria, built a city and named it Samaria.

Omri did more evil than all those before him.

The other events of Omri's reign are written in the annals of the kings of Israel.

Omri died and was buried in Samaria – his son, Ahab became king.

- Ahab had reigned for 3-4 years when Asa Died – 1 Kings 16:29-22:40

He reigned in Samaria over Israel 22 years. He did more evil in the eyes of Yahweh than any of those before him including marrying Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him.

Back to Asa

There was peace for 10 years and Asa took that time to build up the fortified cities in Judah, "so they built and prospered."

Asa had an army of 300,000 men from Judah and 280,000 from Benjamin.

Zerah the Cushite marched out against Judah with a vast army and 300 chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. Asa went out to meet him and called on Yahweh, "There is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Yahweh our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O Yahweh, you are our God; do not let man prevail against you."

Yahweh struck down the Cushites. The men of Judah carried off large amounts of plunder including droves of sheep, cattle and goats, then they returned to Jerusalem.

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Yahweh is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.... Be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."

Asa was encouraged by the prophecy of Azariah. He removed the idols, foreign altars and high places. He smashed the sacred stones, cut down the Asherah poles and expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He even removed his grandmother, Maacah, as queen mother, because she had made a Asherah pole, which he cut down and burned in the Kidron Valley.

Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to Yahweh all his life.

He repaired the altar of burnt offering in the Temple and in the 3rd month of the 15th year of Asa's reign the people of Judah and Benjamin and those who had defected from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon, assembled at Jerusalem. They entered into a covenant to seek Yahweh with all their heart and soul, *"They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them."*

All who refused were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman.

Yahweh gave them rest on every side - there was no war until the 35th year of Asa's reign.

In the 36th year of Asa's reign, Baasha, king of Israel, created a blockade at Ramah – hoping to prevent Israelites from attending the annual festivals in Jerusalem.

The Bible does not clue us in as to the 20 intervening years, but Asa's commitment to Yahweh appears to come to an end. The king who had relied on God, who had cleared the land of idolatry and brought the people back into a Covenant relationship with God, when faced with this new crisis, did not turn to God. Instead, he sent silver and gold from the Temple treasury and from his personal treasury and made an alliance with, Ben-Hadad the king of Aram (Syria), *"who was ruling from Damascus."*

Ben-Hadad invaded the towns of Israel and when Baasha heard this, he abandoned Ramah and returned to Tirzah.

Asa was feeling pretty good about his decisions until Hanani, the seer, arrived with a message from Yahweh, *"Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on Yahweh, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on Yahweh, he delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."*

Instead of humbling himself, Asa became angry and had Hanani thrown in prison. At the same time he brutally oppressed the people.

Despite all the good he did in Judah; the end of Asa's reign is sad. In year 39, he contracted a severe foot disease, but only sought human interventions, then his story comes to an abrupt end as we are notified that the other events of his reign are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

Asa died and was buried in the City of David - Jehoshaphat, Asa's son, became king of Judah in the 4th year of Ahab, king of Israel.

To understand the position we find God's people in, we have to go back further than the Monarchy.

Israel is the only nation, EVER, to be a Theocracy – a nation, whose Leader was God. But the God of the Universe wasn't who they wanted to lead them. They liked the benefits of the Covenant, but the pull to be like everyone else was stronger and in the end, they rejected God and declared, *"Give us a king like the other nations."*

A sad history followed.

John Maxwell {The Leadership Bible} - As the Leader goes, so goes the Nation - When Israel or Judah lived under good kings, things went well. Under bad kings, things went sour. The heart and skill of a leader will always affect the lives of the people under his direction. This is a law, both timeless and universal.....

Until Next Time.....