

# History In The Making

Over the next few weeks, I'm asking us to look inward together to reflect, grow, mold, and repent (if need be). Looking in the mirror can be frightening, but God draws near to those who draw near Him. He offers strength, hope, mercy, forgiveness, and thus acceptance.

It's easy to go through life as if no one is watching (though we know the Lord is aware). Abijah was the second king of Judah after the split, and his son, Asa, was the third. They didn't appreciate that their lives were history in the making. And you, brethren, though the Bible is completed and God has no modern Abraham or Moses, are writing a story while God works alongside you. Yes, you have free will and are writing a story. A story you will leave with your loved ones, friends, and family. Many of you leave them to your children and grandchildren. No Bible will contain your story, but make no mistake, your story will be told. What story will you leave behind?

Let's begin this series of looking inward by studying Abijah and Asa.

## **Background:**

- Rehoboam and Jeroboam
  - Solomon turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11), and God raised up adversaries.
  - One adversary was Jeroboam, Solomon's servant. God specifically said He would give the kingdom to his servant. So, when Solomon learned of this, Jeroboam fled to Egypt.
  - Once Solomon died, Jeroboam returned and, with the people, gathered to speak with Rehoboam. They requested a lighter service than Solomon to serve him.
  - After Rehoboam spoke harshly to Israel, a split occurred. Not a coincidence. It was brought about by the Lord.
  - Jeroboam, a servant of Solomon, took advantage and began to rule over Israel.
  - There were continual wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.
- Abijah: 1 Kings 15:1-8; 2 Chronicles 13
  - Father was Rehoboam
  - Reigned 3 years
  - Walked in the sins of his father
  - Observations:
    - From Kings:
      - Fathers have much influence on their sons.
      - Sons often fight their father's enemies.
      - It's hard to see your father as the bad guy.
    - From Chronicles:
      - He defended Judah as being obedient to God.
      - He cried out to the Lord, thus gaining a victory over Jeroboam.
      - It's easy to lean on God when you're in trouble. That doesn't mean God didn't hear Him and act.

## **Asa: 1 Kings 15:9-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16**

- Father was Abijah

- Reigned 41 years
- Did was right

Observations:

- From Kings:
  - He began to reign in the 20th year (out of 22) of Jeroboam.
  - He put away male cult prostitutes, idols, and his own queen mother (grandmother), who had made an image of Asherah. He burned it at the brook of Kidron.
  - Yet, he didn't take away the high places. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was wholly true to the Lord all his days (makes you think of the commentary of David in 1 Kings 15:5).
  - No mentioning war with Jeroboam.
  - He took silver and gold from the house of the Lord and gave them to the king of Syria. He asked him to break ties with Israel's king (Baasha). So, Ben-hadad attacked Israel. It backed Israel off and stopped Baasha's efforts to build Ramah and restrict others from traveling to or from Judah.
  - He was diseased in his feet in an old age.
  - He would die, and his son, Jehoshaphat, would be a good ruler.
- From Chronicles:
  - They had rest for 10 years (from the Lord).
  - Cleaned house and commanded Judah to seek the Lord and keep the Law.
  - Asa knew peace came from God because they had sought Him.
  - The Ethiopians came against Judah with 1,000,000 and 300 chariots. Asa called out to the Lord for victory because they relied on Him. God defeated the Ethiopians.
  - God spoke through a prophet, encouraging Asa to remain faithful to God.
  - He is called to be strong, not for physical war but for spiritual battles.
  - Either this isn't in chronological order, explaining what stirred his first reform, or it's showing that only some things had been removed, so he further cleansed Judah. This was during his 15th year as King.
  - The people sacrificed to the Lord and made a commitment to put to death those who wouldn't seek the Lord, young or old, male or female. They sought Him with their whole desire.
  - This mentions the removal of the mother queen (grandmother).
  - There was no more war until the 35th year of his reign.
  - In the 36th year of his reign, Baasha went up against Judah and built Ramah.
  - It's the same account as Kings.
  - However, Chronicles adds something. Hanani, the seer, rebukes Asa for relying on Ben-hadad and not God. He was reminded of God's victory over the Ethiopians. He explains how God's eyes go through the earth to support those whose hearts are blameless before Him. Because of this, he would have wars.
  - Asa took out his anger on the seer. He also lashed out at the people.
  - In his 39th year as King, his feet were diseased. Yet, he did not seek the Lord but rather physicians. He died in the 41st year of his reign.

"Note, The eminent piety and usefulness of good men ought to be remembered to their praise, though they have had their blemishes. Let their faults be buried in their graves, while their services are remembered over their graves. He that said, There is not a just man

that doeth good and sinneth not, yet said also, The memory of the just is blessed; and let it be so." *Matthew Henry, Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 593.*

### **Lessons from History**

- Evil people can have good moments. Good people can have evil moments.
- We tend to follow our closest examples, but not always.
- We can fight unnecessary battles because of who we follow.
- What trusting in God looks like.
  - Repentance and Prayer
- We tend to forget who wins battles.
  - Hanani's rebuke.
- We can start strong but finish weak.
  - He was silent until his death.
- Asa was . . .
  - I don't know what to say about Asa. Did he die faithful? How do we harmonize 1 Kings 15:17 and 2 Chronicles 15:17 with 2 Chronicles 16?
  - Let's seek to make our walks clear.