

FIRST KINGS

Chapter 15

Abijam Reigns in Judah

Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam began to reign over Judah. 2 He reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. 3 And he walked in all the sins that his father did before him, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father. 4 Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem, 5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. 6 Now there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 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. 8 And Abijam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David. And Asa his son reigned in his place.

15:1 *eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam.* The first of numerous synchronisms in 1,2 Kings between the reigns of the kings in the north and those in Judah. (CSB)

Abijah. Both Rehoboam and Jeroboam had sons by this name. (CSB)

Also spelled Abijah. Account of his reign is even shorter than that of Rehoboam, his predecessor. (TLSB)

15:2 *three years.* 913–910 B.C. (CSB)

Maacah daughter of Abishalom. Abijah's mother is said to be a daughter of Uriel of Gibeah in 2Ch 13:2. It is likely that Maacah was the granddaughter of Absalom and the daughter of a marriage between Tamar (Absalom's daughter; see 2Sa 14:27) and Uriel. Absalom's mother was also named Maacah (2Sa 3:3). (CSB)

Abishalom. Variant spelling of Absalom. (TLSB)

15:3 *sins his father had done.* Lit, his great grandfather. David had trouble disciplining his sons (1:6). (TLSB)

heart was not true to the LORD his God, as ... David his father. Although David fell into grievous sin, his heart was never divided between serving the Lord and serving the nature deities of the Canaanites. (CSB)

15:5 *Uriah the Hittite.* Writer idealizes David's reign, yet also remembers David's tragic flaw. Israelite history recorded its leaders strengths and weaknesses, in contrast to the annals of other nations. (TLSB)

15:7 *war between Abijah and Jeroboam.* Cf. v. 6; 14:30. From 2Ch 13 it is clear that the chronic hostile relations of preceding years flared into serious combat in which Abijah defeated Jeroboam and took several towns from him, including Bethel (2Ch 13:19). (CSB)

15:1–8 Rehoboam's son Abijam reigns for only three years, but it is long enough for him to follow in his father's sinful footsteps. The example that parents set greatly influences their children. Our example for the next generation influences whether they will walk "in all the sins" of their forefathers or whether their

hearts may be “wholly true to the LORD” (v 3). Thanks be to Jesus! He not only set an example for us but also assured our rescue by declaring us God’s children through Holy Baptism. • Tender Savior, guard and protect us always; help us to pass Your saving Word on to the next generation, that our children and their children may grow up to know You and sing Your praises. Amen. (TLSB)

Asa Reigns in Judah

9 In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa began to reign over Judah, **10** and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. **11** And Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his father had done. **12** He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. **13** He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah. And Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron. **14** But the high places were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was wholly true to the LORD all his days. **15** And he brought into the house of the LORD the sacred gifts of his father and his own sacred gifts, silver, and gold, and vessels. **16** And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. **17** Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. **18** Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house and gave them into the hands of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who lived in Damascus, saying, **19** “Let there be a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me.” **20** And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel and conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. **21** And when Baasha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah, and he lived in Tirzah. **22** Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah, none was exempt, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building, and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. **23** Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? But in his old age he was diseased in his feet. **24** And Asa slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

15:9 *twentieth year of Jeroboam.* 910 B.C. (CSB)

His reign was nearly as long as that of wicked Manasseh’s 55 years (2Ki 21:1). (TLSB)

15:10 *forty-one years.* 910–869 B.C. (CSB)

Maacah daughter of Abishalom. She retained her influential role of queen (grand)mother until Asa deposed her (v 13). (TLSB)

Rulers of Israel and Judah

DATA AND
DATES IN
ORDER OF
SEQUENCE

Adapted from: *A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings* by Edwin R. Thiele. © 1977 by the Zondervan Corporation. Used by Permission.

1.	1Ki 12:1–24 14:21–31	Rehoboam (Judah)		17 years	930–913
2.	1Ki 12:25– 14:20	Jeroboam I (Israel)		22 years	930–909
3.	1Ki 15:1–8	Abijah (Judah)	18th of Jeroboam	3 years	913–910
4.	1Ki 15:9–24	Asa (Judah)	20th of Jeroboam	41 years	910–869
5.	1Ki 15:25–31	Nadab (Israel)	2nd of Asa	2 years	909–908
6.	1Ki 15:32– 16:7	Baasha (Israel)	3rd of Asa	24 years	908–886
7.	1Ki 16:8–14	Elah (Israel)	26th of Asa	2 years	886–882
8.	1Ki 16:15–20	Zimri (Israel)	27th of Asa	7 days	885
9.	1Ki 16:21–22	Tibni (Israel)			Overlap with 885–880 Omri

10.	1Ki 16:23–28	Omri (Israel)	27th of Asa 31st of Asa	12 years	Made king by the people Overlap with Tibni Official reign=11 actual years Beginning of sole reign	885–880 885–874 880
11.	1Ki 16:29– 22:40	Ahab (Israel)	38th of Asa	22 years	Official reign=21 actual years	874–853
12.	1Ki 22:41–50	Jehoshaphat (Judah)	4th Ahab	25 years	Co-regency with Asa Official reign Beginning of sole reign Has Jehoram as regent	872–869 872–848 869 853–848
13.	1Ki 22:51– 2Ki 1:18	Ahaziah (Israel)	17th of Jehoshaphat	2 years	Official reign=1 yr. actual reign	853–852
14.	2Ki 1:17 2Ki 3:1–8:15	Joram (Israel)	2nd of Johoram 18th of Jehoshaphat	12 years	Official reign=11 actual years	852 852–841
15.	2Ki 8:16–24	Jehoram (Judah)	5th of Joram	8 years	Beginning of sole reign Official reign=7 actual years	848 848–841
16.	2Ki 8:25–29 2Ki 9:29	Ahaziah (Judah)	12th of Joram 11th of Joram	1 Year	Nonaccession -year reckoning Accession- year reckoning	841 841

17.	2Ki 9:30–10:36	Jehu (Israel)		28 years		841–814
18.	2Ki 11	Athaliah (Judah)		7 years		841–835
19.	2Ki 12	Joash (Judah)	7th of Juha	40 years		835–796
20.	2Ki 13:1–9	Jehoahaz (Israel)	23rd of Joash	17 years		814–798
21.	2Ki 13:10–25	Jehoash (Israel)	37th of Joash	16 years		798–782
22.	2Ki 14:1–22	Amaziah (Judah)	2nd of Jehoash	29 years	Overlap with Azariah	796–767
23.	2Ki 14:23–29	Jeroboam II (Israel)	15th Amaziah	41 years	Co-regency with Jehoash	793–782 793–753 Total reign 782 Beginning of sole reign
24.	2Ki 15:1–7	Azariah (Judah)	27th of Jeroboam	52 years	Overlap with Amaziah	792–767 792–740 Total reign 767 Beginning of sole reign
25.	2Ki 15:8–12	Zechariah (Israel)	38th of Azariah	6 months		753
26.	2Ki 15:13–15	Shallum (Israel)	39th of Azariah	1 month		752
27.	2Ki 15:16–22	Menaheem	39th of	10 years	Ruled in	752–742

		(Israel)	Azariah		Samaria	
28.	2Ki 15:23–26	Pekahiah (Israel)	50th of Azariah	2 years		742–740
29.	2Ki 15:27–31	Pekah (Israel)	52nd of Azariah	20 years	In Gilead; overlapping years Total reign Beginning of sole reign	752–740 752–732 740
30.	2Ki 15:32–38 2Ki 15:30	Jotham (Judah)	2nd of Pekah	16 years	Co-regent with Azariah Official reign Reign to his 20th year Beginning of co-regency	750–740 750–735 750–732 750
31.	2Ki 16	Ahaz (Judah)		16 years	Total reign From 20th of Jotham	735–715 735 732–722
32.	2Ki 15:30 2Ki 17	Hoshea (Israel)	12th of Ahaz	9 years	20th of Jotham	732 732–722
33.	2Ki 18:1– 20:21	Hezekiah (Judah)	3rd of Hoshea	29 years		715–686
34.	2Ki 21:1–18	Manasseh (Judah)		55 years	Co-regency with Hezekiah Total reign	697–686 679–642
35.	2Ki 21:19–26	Amon (Judah)		2 years		642–640
36.	2Ki 22:1– 23:30	Josiah (Judah)		31 years		640–609

37.	2Ki 23:31–33	Jehoahaz (Judah)	3 months	609
38.	2Ki 23:34– 24:7	Jehoiakim (Judah)	11 years	609–598
39.	2Ki 24:8–17	Jehoichin (Judah)	3 months	598–597
40.	2Ki 24:18– 25:26	Zedekiah (Judah)	11 years	597–586

*Italics denotes kings of
Judah*
Non-italic type denotes
kings of **Israel**

15:12 *male shrine prostitutes.* See note on 14:24. (CSB)

got rid of all the idols his fathers had made. See 14:23. (CSB)

15:13 *removed Maacah his mother.* 2Ch 14:1–15:16 indicates a progression in Asa’s reform over a period of years. Although Asa had destroyed pagan idols and altars early in his reign (2Ch 14:2–3), it was not until after a victory over Zerah the Cushite (2Ch 14:8–15) that Asa responded to the message of the prophet Azariah son of Oded by calling for a covenant renewal assembly in Jerusalem in the 15th year of his reign (2Ch 15:10). After this assembly Asa deposed his grandmother Maacah because of her idolatry (2Ch 15:16). (CSB)

made an abominable image for Asherah. It appears that Maacah’s action was a deliberate attempt to counter Asa’s reform. (CSB)

Hbr root means “to shudder”; denotes an idol that produced horror because of its ugliness or obscene representation. Word occurs only here and in parallel account, 2Ch 15:16. (TLSB)

15:14 *high places were not taken away.* The reference here and in 2Ch 15:17 is to those high places where the Lord was worshiped When 2Ch 14:3 indicates that Asa removed the high places, it is to be taken as a reference to the high places that were centers of pagan Canaanite worship (see 2Ch 17:6; 20:33 for the same distinction). This same statement of qualified approval that is made of Asa is made of five other kings of Judah prior to the time of Hezekiah (Jehoshaphat, 22:43; Joash, 2Ki 12:3; Amaziah, 2Ki 14:4; Azariah, 2Ki 15:4; Jotham, 2Ki 15:35). (CSB)

wholly true. Asa's faith was sincere, though he tolerated false religion and insincerity among his subjects. Chem: "The expression 'with my whole heart' is used in many places in Scripture in opposition to hypocrisy and outward pretense" (*LTh* 2:340). (TLSB)

15:15 *silver and gold and vessels.* Most likely consisting of war booty that Abijah had taken from Jeroboam (2Ch 13) and that Asa acquired from Zerah the Cushite (2Ch 14:8–15). (CSB)

Translated "things ... dedicated" in 7:51, these unspecified gifts were to replace the treasures that Shishak took away (14:26). (TLSB)

15:16 *war between Asa and Baasha ... all their days.* A reference to the chronic hostile relations that had existed ever since the division of the kingdom, rather than to full-scale combat. (CSB)

15:17 *built Ramah.* Baasha had recaptured the territory previously taken from Jeroboam by Abijah since Ramah was located south of Bethel and only about five miles north of Jerusalem. (CSB)

Fortress and troops c 5 mi N of Jerusalem, as a dagger aimed at Judah's heart. (TLSB)

15:18 *silver and gold that was left.* That which remained after the plundering of Jerusalem by Shishak of Egypt (see 14:25). (CSB)

As tribute to Ben-hadad. (TLSB)

Hezion. It is not clear whether Hezion is to be identified with Rezon of Damascus (see 11:23–25) or regarded as the founder of a new dynasty. (CSB)

Perhaps Rezon's grandson, the Syrian state's founder with headquarters at Damascus. At least two of its kings bore the name Ben-hadad, which means "son of the storm god Hadad" (cf 20:1; 2Ki 13:24). By a foreign alliance against the Israelite king Baasha, Asa intensified the civil war. (TLSB)

Syria ... Damascus. Inland 50 mi from the coast of the Great Sea, one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world. (TLSB)

15:19 *covenant ... between me and you.* A reference to a previously unmentioned treaty between Abijah and Tabrimmon of Aram. When Tabrimmon died, Baasha succeeded in establishing a treaty with his successor Ben-Hadad. Asa saw no hope for success against Baasha without the assistance provided by a renewal of the old treaty with Aram. Although his plan seemed to be successful, it was condemned by Hanani the prophet as a foolish act and a denial of reliance on the Lord (see 2Ch 16:7–10). The true theocratic king was never to fear his enemies but to trust in the God of the covenant for security and protection (see note on 1Sa 17:11). Ahaz was later to follow Asa's bad example and seek Assyria's help when he was attacked by Israel and Aram (see 2Ki 16:5–9; Isa 7). (CSB)

15:20 *Naphtali.* The cities that Ben-Hadad conquered in Naphtali were of particular importance because the major trade routes from Damascus going west to Tyre and southwest through the plain of Jezreel to the coastal plain and Egypt transversed this area. This same territory was later seized by the Assyrian ruler Tiglath-Pileser III (2Ki 15:29). (CSB)

On Israel's northern border. (TLSB)

15:21 *stopped building.* Syrian pressure on his northern frontier forced Baasha to withdraw from his building operations on his southern border. (TLSB)

15:22 *proclamation to all Judah.* Asa's action is reminiscent of the labor force conscripted by Solomon (5:13–14; 11:28). (CSB)

Taking advantage of his rival's preoccupation, Asa mobilized "all Judah" to build his own fortified cities with the stones and timbers from Ramah. (TLSB)

carried away. Building supplies were precious. (TLSB)

Geba ... Mizpah. Asa established two border fortresses to check Baasha's desire to expand his territory southward. Geba was east of Ramah, and Mizpah was southwest of Ramah. (CSB)

Geba. Levitical town 6 mi NE of Jerusalem. *Mizpah.* Northwest of Geba, with which it served as fortresses north of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have found a massive casemate wall at Mizpah. (TLSB)

15:23 *old age.* See 2Ch 16:12. (CSB)

Or, weak due to age. (TLSB)

15:9–24 Asa breaks the pattern of wickedness and "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD" (v 11), though the idolatrous high places remain. The Bible does not teach fatalism. Despite the sins of one generation, the Lord can raise up the next in the right way. Take heart! The Lord intercedes in history. He intercedes in our lives by His gracious Word. • Loving Shepherd, You guide us through this world. Please bless this land with godly leaders who trust in You and follow Your Word. Amen. (TLSB)

Nadab Reigns in Israel

25 Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 26 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin. 27 Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, for Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon. 28 So Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his place. 29 And as soon as he was king, he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He left to the house of Jeroboam not one that breathed, until he had destroyed it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite. 30 It was for the sins of Jeroboam that he sinned and that he made Israel to sin, and because of the anger to which he provoked the LORD, the God of Israel. 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.

15:25–16:28 Synchronizing the history of the two kingdoms, the author interrupts the account of Judah's kings (14:21–15:24) for a survey of five Israelite kings. Omri's reign (16:21–28) marked a transition to a period of peaceful relations between the Northern and Southern kingdoms. (TLSB)

15:25 *second year of Asa.* The second year of Asa of Judah corresponded to the 22nd and last year of Jeroboam of Israel (see v. 9; 14:20). (CSB)

two years. 909–908 B.C. (CSB)

15:26 *his sin, which which he made Israel to sin.* Jeroboam's sin (see note on 14:16). Although Abijah of Judah occupied Bethel during the reign of Jeroboam, it is probable that the paganized worship Jeroboam initiated was continued elsewhere until control of Bethel was regained by Baasha. (CSB)

Hbr expression; the sin was the religion established by Jeroboam. (TLSB)

5:27 *Baasha*. Lit, “Baal hears”; Baasha usurped the throne and brought an end to Jeroboam’s house. (TLSB)

conspired. During the two centuries of its existence, Israel was ruled by 19 kings representing nine different dynasties. Conspiracies and regicides were responsible for the frequent changes in ruling houses, of which none lasted longer than four generations. Jeroboam was succeeded only by his son. (TLSB)

Gibbethon. A town located between Jerusalem and Joppa (probably a few miles west of Gezer) in the territory originally assigned to Dan (Jos 19:43–45). This Levitical city (Jos 21:23) probably fell into Philistine hands at the time of the Philistine expansion in the period of the judges. (CSB)

C 20 mi W of Ramah. Originally assigned to the tribe of Dan, Gibbethon was under Philistine control. Evidently Nadab’s siege was unsuccessful. The Israelites again—or perhaps still—encamped against the same city 24 years later (16:15). (TLSB)

15:28 *third year of Asa*. 908 B.C. It is likely that Baasha was a commander in Nadab’s army and was able to secure the support of the military for his revolt. (CSB)

15:32 *war ... throughout their reigns*. See note on v. 16. The demise of Jeroboam’s dynasty did not improve relations between the two kingdoms. (CSB)

15:25–32 Switching from Judah to Nadab’s reign in the Northern Kingdom, we learn that Nadab, like all the other Israelite kings, “did what was evil in the sight of the LORD” (v 26). The pattern of wicked leadership became entrenched in Israel. Evil is working for such entrenchment still today. Through the Word, the Lord equips us to stand against wickedness in our times and in our land. Likewise, through the means of grace, He brings forgiveness and life to us anew each day. • Lord God heavenly Father, guard us from wickedness in high places. Defend Your people who daily call upon Your saving name. Amen. (TLSB)

Baasha Reigns in Israel

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah began to reign over all Israel at Tirzah, and he reigned twenty-four years. 34 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.

15:33 *third year of Asa*. 908 B.C. (CSB)

twenty-four years. 908–886 B.C. His official years were counted as 24, though his actual years were 23. (CSB)

Of lowly origin in the tribe of Issachar (v 27), Baasha reigned two years longer than Jeroboam, the founder of the Ephraimite dynasty, which Baasha displaced. Vv 16–22 tell of his hostile relationship to Judah’s kings. (TLSB)

15:34 *his sin, which he had made Israel to sin*. The assessment of Baasha’s reign indicates no improvement over the reign of Nadab, whom he replaced (see v. 26). (CSB)