

December 6

Scriptures: Read 1 Kings 15 & 16

Key Verse: “Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did his father David.”
(1 Kings 15:11)

Overview

In these two chapters, we have a list of several kings of both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms. In the Northern Kingdom of Israel, there were many different dynasties, for as Ahijah had prophesied, Jeroboam’s house came to destruction. Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab. Like his father, he promoted idolatry and “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (15:26). After reigning only two years, he was assassinated by conspirators led by Baasha, from the tribe of Issachar, who took the throne. In fulfillment of the divine judgment, Baasha completely exterminated the house of Jeroboam (13:34; 14:10, 14). If only he had been obedient to God, He would have blessed his house and given him a lasting dynasty (11:38).

In the Southern Kingdom of Judah, however, God was faithful to his promise to David. He kept the throne in the line of David, though most of these kings also did evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Samuel 7:14-15). Only Asa walked righteously before God as his great-great-grandfather David had. The Lord rewarded him with a long reign of forty-one years. He drove out the perverted people that carried on abominations connected with the Canaanite fertility cults (15:12; 14:24) and destroyed all the places of idolatry. His love and zeal for God even led him to remove his own idolatrous grandmother from her position as “queen mother”. He rightly put God first and desired to please Him, even over his own family members.

Asa’s one failure was that he did not tear down the “high places” (15:14). These were probably places where sacrifices were made to God (3:2), but the law of Moses stated that all sacrifices to God were to be done at the central place of worship where the Lord had chosen to put His name. At that time, the Temple in Jerusalem was the place in which this was to be done (9:3; Deuteronomy 12:5-11). Asa also showed weakness in his faith when, rather than trusting fully in God for the victory, he made an alliance with the king of Syria to help him avoid an attack from Israel (15:18-19; 2 Chronicles 16:7-9). Yet, like David, Asa’s heart remained loyal to God all his days.

Interestingly, the kings of Judah are compared with David, the ideal standard of a good king (15:3, 11). This does not mean he did not sin, for we know he did, but his heart was sensitive to God, and when he fell into sin he sincerely repented. David did not have a rebellious heart but remained loyal to God. It was this quality that made him a man after God’s own heart and an example to all future kings.

The kings of Israel, on the other hand, are compared with Jeroboam, the epitome of wickedness (Nadab, 15:26; Baasha, 15:34; Elah, 16:7; Zimri, 16:19; Omri, 16:26; Ahab, the worst, 16:31). They continued in the evil ways of Jeroboam and caused Israel to sin. Ahab was the most wicked of all the kings of Israel; the sins of Jeroboam seemed trivial compared to his. He and his wife Jezebel brought Baal worship to Israel and tried to convert all the people to that terrible cult.

Stubborn defiance of the commands of God marked his rule. During his reign, one man tried to rebuild the walls of Jericho in open defiance of God's curse upon anyone who would do so, and he paid with the lives of his two sons (16:34; Joshua 6:26). It is a dangerous thing to play with sin, for sin does not pay!

Prayer

Thank You, Lord, that in the midst of sin and false religion we can, through Your Son and our Lord and Saviour, live lives of purity and truth. Keep us by Your hand, O God.