



## Review

- Kingdom is divided after Solomon's death because of Solomon's sin.
- Northern tribes rebel and go with Jeroboam, one of Solomon's servants.
- Southern tribes of Judah and Benjamin stay loyal to the House of David, because God is keeping his covenant with David.

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## Review

- Profile of two kings:
  - Rehoboam: Masculinity out of control.
  - Jeroboam: Compromising worship motivated out of fear.
- Story of the unknown prophet:
  - God pronounces judgment on Jeroboam and makes a prophecy that will not be fulfilled until the birth of Josiah, approximately 300 years later.
  - Unknown prophet judged because he endorsed Israel's sin.

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The Divided Kingdoms			
Dates (BC)	Israel (Northern)	Judah (Southern)	Dates (BC)
922-901	Jeroboam I	Rehoboam	922-915
		Abijah	915-913

**Abijah**  
915-913 BC

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## Abijah

- Abijah is a relatively insignificant king – so much so that in 1 Kings he gets little more than an afterthought.
- He gets more attention in 2 Chronicles 13.
  - The two books of Kings treat on both the northern and the southern kingdoms
  - The books of Chronicles focus mainly on the kingdom of Judah

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## Abijah's accomplishments

- Abijah's primary claim to fame is a successful war against Jeroboam.
  - Specifically, the Battle of Mount Zemaraim
  - This was a tremendous victory that Judah had against Israel despite 2:1 odds

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## 2 Chronicles 13:1-3

- *In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah began to reign over Judah. He reigned for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. Now there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. Abijah went out to battle, having an army of valiant men of war, 400,000 chosen men. And Jeroboam drew up his line of battle against him with 800,000 chosen mighty warriors.*

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## The war

- At the beginning of his reign, war breaks out between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
- Over the next several hundred years that makes up the divided kingdom period, the two kingdoms will alternately be worst enemies and best friends.

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## Abijah's offensive

- When the war breaks out, Abijah decides to go on the offensive despite the fact that he has a smaller military, and he takes the battle into the territory belonging to the tribe of Ephraim.
  - Ephraim was the most powerful of the tribes of Israel.
  - Jeroboam is from Ephraim. So Abijah is effectively taking the war onto Jeroboam's home turf.

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## 2 Chronicles 13:4-7

- *Then Abijah stood up on Mount Zemaraim that is in the hill country of Ephraim and said, "Hear me, O Jeroboam and all Israel! Ought you not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingship over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt? Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord, and certain worthless scoundrels gathered about him and defied Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and irresolute and could not withstand them.*

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## The confrontation at Mount Zemaraim

- The armies of Jeroboam and Abijah come together for a showdown in the territory of Ephraim.
- Abijah goes to a high place on Mount Zemaraim where he can be heard by all and makes a speech that voices both condemnation and defiance.

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## Abijah's speech

- Abijah's speech has essentially four points:
  - The right to rule belongs to the house of David (v. 4-7)
  - Israel is wicked (v. 8-9)
  - Judah is righteous (v. 10-11)
  - God is on Judah's side (v. 12)

## 2 Chronicles 13:13-17

- *Jeroboam had sent an ambush around to come upon them from behind. Thus his troops were in front of Judah, and the ambush was behind them. And when Judah looked, behold, the battle was in front of and behind them. And they cried to the LORD, and the priests blew the trumpets.*

## 2 Chronicles 13:13-17

- *Then the men of Judah raised the battle shout. And when the men of Judah shouted, God defeated Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. The men of Israel fled before Judah, and God gave them into their hand. Abijah and his people struck them with great force, so there fell slain of Israel 500,000 chosen men.*

## The battle

- Jeroboam surrounds Judah with his army.
- God gives Judah victory, and Israel is defeated.
  - Judah pursues Israel and takes several of their cities, including Bethel, the center of the false calf worship (v. 19)
  - Israel loses over 50% of its fighting force (v. 17)
  - Jeroboam never recovers (v. 20)
  - Abijah grows mighty and has many wives, sons, and daughters (v. 21)

## 3 questions

1. Why did Judah win the battle, with the odds stacked against them?
2. What kind of a king was Abijah?
3. Why did God bless and prosper Abijah?

## 1. Why Judah won

- Judah won the battle because they trusted in God:
- *Thus the men of Israel were subdued at that time, and the men of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD, the God of their fathers. (2Ch 13:18)*
- Note that they did not win because of their own righteousness or because of Abijah's leadership.

## 2. What kind of a king was Abijah?

- Abijah was a wicked king:
- *And he [Abijah] walked in all the sins that his father [Rehoboam] did before him, and his heart was not wholly true to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father. (1Ki 15:3)*
- Abijah's end: He dies after being king for only three years.

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## The sins of Abijah's father

- Abijah "walked in all the sins that his father did":
  - Pride
  - Fleshliness
  - Masculinity out of control
  - Allowed sin to run rampant
  - Strength was surrendered

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## Abijah's heart

- Abijah's heart is not "wholly true to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father."
- This is not an argument for perfection, but rather a life and attitude of surrender and a desire for intimacy with God.
- Throughout the divided kingdom stage we are going to find David constantly referred to as the standard.

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## 3. Why God blessed Abijah

- God blessed Abijah because God loved David:
- *Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, setting up his son after him, and establishing Jerusalem, 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. (1Ki 15:4-5)*

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## 3. Why God blessed Abijah (2)

- David was the standard because his love was demonstrated by obedience, not because David was completely perfect.
  - This love for God and a desire to please Him is found throughout David's psalms, which are the outpouring of his heart to God's.

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## 3. Why God blessed Abijah (3)

- Abijah's heritage as the descendent of David was enough to give him temporal success and blessings while he lived.
- It was not enough to redeem him.
- It was not enough to curry favor with God.

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## Abijah's speech revisited

1. We have a right to be right!
  - In reality, Abijah gets many of his facts wrong in 2 Chronicles 13:6-7
2. You are wicked!
  - This was essentially true

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## Abijah's speech revisited (2)

3. We are righteous!
  - In reality, Abijah does not love God, and is not leading the nation of Judah righteously.
  - Male prostitution is rampant in the land
  - Abijah's own mother has set up an asherim – a stylized pole or tree used to worship the fertility deity Ashtoreth.

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## Abijah's speech revisited (3)

4. Because of our heritage, and because of our religion, God won't let us lose!
  - Ultimately God gives them victory because the men of Judah are trusting in Him, and God seems to *tolerate* Abijah's sinfulness because of His love for David, but Abijah is still only king for three years.

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## The lesson

- The four things that won't get you in a right standing with God:
  1. Your parents
  2. Your family heritage
  3. Going to Church
  4. Being more (insert trait or character quality here) than other people
- None of these things save, ensure a useful life, or make God love you more (or less).

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## Conclusion

- Be like David: Keep doing the right things you are doing. But do them for the right reason.
- Kids:
  - Know your faith.
  - Make it your own faith.
  - You can't ride on your parents' heritage forever. Whether in this life or the next, you and you alone will be accountable for your soul.

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