

Life Lesson 79
The Early Kings of Judah
Text: I Kings 15, II Chronicles 13 & 14

Introduction

What a terrible thing it is to have war with your own family!

The children of Israel were God's people, and all were descendants of Abraham. Even though they were related and had a common past, they were at war.

The kingdom was divided when Jeroboam led all but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in a revolt against King Rehoboam. After Rehoboam died, his son Abijah reigned as king over the house of Judah, as the southern part of the kingdom was called. Now Abijah and Jeroboam fought with each other.

The Story

Abijah was a king much like his father, Rehoboam. He was wicked and did things to displease the Lord.

God judged Abijah and gave him a short reign. He only ruled Judah for three years.

After Abijah died, his son, Asa, came to the throne. Asa, I'm glad to say, loved the Lord and wanted to do what was right. He took away the altars of the false gods and broke the idols. He even smashed the idol his mother had worshiped. He stamped on it and finally burned it. Asa then demoted his mother from being queen because she had worshiped this idol instead of the true God.

Asa did something else that pleased the Lord that people today don't want to do. Asa made it a crime to be a homosexual and ran all of the perverted people out of his kingdom. Now people say that it is a "choice" to be a homosexual and we should let people choose what they want to be. God says it is an abomination. That means He hates that particular sin especially!

God was pleased with Asa and the changes he made. He gave Asa a peaceful reign and blessed the nation of Judah. Asa reigned as king for 41 years. Although he wasn't perfect, and at times he forgot to trust the Lord, we can remember Asa as one of the good kings of Judah.

After Asa died, his son Jehoshaphat came to the throne. Jehoshaphat was another good king. He finished up what his father had started and made sure there were no idols and no homosexuals in the land. He also sent teachers out throughout the land to teach the people God's word.

God was happy with Jehoshaphat and blessed the people by giving them peace. All the other nations were afraid of them, so they lived peaceably.

Jehoshaphat made one bad mistake in his reign as king. He made an alliance with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. He almost lost his life in a battle that he didn't belong in, but God delivered him. After that, Jehoshaphat learned his lesson.

When he found out that the Ammonites and Moabites, with a lot of smaller tribes, were coming in a great multitude to attack him, he didn't look for earthly help. Instead of going to other friendly kings for help in the battle, he sought the Lord.

The prophet Jahaziel gave him the directions from God. They weren't to fear or to do any fighting. God would protect them and give them the victory.

Jehoshaphat and the rest of the kingdom thanked God. Then Jehoshaphat arranged the army. He didn't put the best fighting men in front of the troops. He didn't put *any* fighters in the front. He had the singers go first to meet the enemy army!

Can you imagine how surprised the invading troops were to be met with people singing God's praise? God said that they wouldn't need to fight. He would give the victory. Jehoshaphat believed God and didn't even make battle preparations.

God was true to His word. He made the enemy troops start fighting among themselves. Eventually they almost killed each other off. Just as God had said, the people of Judah didn't have to fight at all.

Jehoshaphat wasn't a perfect king, but he was a good king. We can remember him as another of the good kings of Judah.

The Life Lesson

When the king of Judah led the people in the right way, God blessed both the king and the land. When the king led the people astray, God sent judgement on the land. What does that tell you that we should do? We should pray for our president and the others who are in authority over us. We want our leaders to do right so that our nation will be blessed.

Review Questions

Who was king after Rehoboam?

Abijah

Was Abijah a good or a bad king?

Bad

Did Asa obey the Lord?

Yes

Tell one of the good things Asa did.

He broke down the idols, demoted his mother from being queen because she worshipped idols, made the homosexuals leave the land.

Who was king after Asa?

Jehoshaphat

What unusual battle plan did God give Jehoshaphat?

He was to put the singers in front of the soldiers.

Was Jehoshaphat a good king?

Yes.

Review

1. Saul – the first king
2. David – the best king
3. Solomon – the wise king

Kings of Judah Kings of Israel

1. Rehoboam – mostly bad
2. Abijah – mostly bad
3. Asa – mostly good
4. Jehoshaphat – mostly good

1. Jeroboam – bad
2. Nadab – bad
3. Baasha – bad
4. Elah – bad
5. Zimri – bad
6. Omri – bad
7. Ahab – the worst