

# 2 Chronicles 13 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES					
The Kingdom of Israel					
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Splendor			Disaster		
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36		
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Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years		

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Click Chart from Charles Swindoll](#)

1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2 Samuel				1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

(NOTE: Many consider Uzziah and Hezekiah as "good" kings)

## 2 Chronicles 13:1 In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah.

- in the eighteenth: ch. 2Ch 12:16 1Ki 15:1-8
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

### Related Passage:

1 Kings 15:1-8 Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. 3 He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David. 4 But for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, to raise up his son (KING ASA) after him and to establish Jerusalem; 5 because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite. 6 There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 Now 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 became king in his place.

## THE REIGN OF KING ABIJAH

**INTRODUCTION: Raymond Dillard:** Where Kings describes a sinful king not wholly devoted to God, a king maintained only because of God's fidelity to David, the Chronicler presents instead a victorious leader and preacher of righteousness. . . Overlaying the entire passage are the motifs of holy war. Battles displaying the power of Israel's God are commonly fought against much larger armies (13:3; Deut 20:2; 2 Chr 14:8-9; 20:2); a pre-battle speech by a priest, prophet, or king assures that God is with Israel's army and will give victory (13:5-13; Deut 20:1-4; 2 Chr 20:5-17). An offer of peace may be tendered to the opposing forces (13:5-13; Deut 20:10). Cultic purity for the combatants is a prerequisite (13:10-11; 1 Sam 21:4-5; Josh 5:1-8; 7:13; 2 Chr 20:3-4); victory follows the blowing of the trumpets by the priests and the battle cry from the army (13:12-15; Num 10:8-9; 31:6; Josh 6; 2 Chr 20:18-22). (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**August Konkell:** Spiritual opportunity is not always self-evident. Sometimes conflict is opportunity in disguise. If conflict cannot be resolved but conflicted parties can come to realize their own failures, there is spiritual progress. The Chronicler's presentation of Abijah contrasts sharply with the censure of 1 Kings 15:1-8, where the Judean king is condemned for following in the idolatry of Rehoboam. In Kings, Abijah's reign of faithlessness serves only to exemplify the mercy of God in preserving the Davidic dynasty. The lamp of Israel continued to shine in Jerusalem (2 Sam 21:17). The Chronicler provides an account of a war with Jeroboam in which Abijah wins a decisive victory. In addition, Abijah gives what has been termed a Levitical sermon (von Rad 1966). Such a speech consists of doctrine, application, and exhortation, with an appeal to earlier biblical texts (2 Chron 13:4-12). The reign of Abijah becomes the critical turning point in the Chronicler's assessment of relationships with the northern tribes. Victory over Jeroboam's superior forces was a divine judgment against the north and an affirmation of Judah's faithfulness. It provides a spiritual

opportunity for the northern tribes. The Chronicler absolves the northern tribes of their apostasy during the time of Rehoboam. They were guilty of driving out the priests and replacing them with others who worshiped at the high places. They set up calves and created satyrs (2 Chron 11:13-15). With the death of Jeroboam, there is a possibility of turning to God in faithfulness. There was no benefit to the northern tribes in associating with Rehoboam, who forsook the law of the Lord (12:1), but there is renewed opportunity with a new king in Judah. Those who followed Jeroboam should join in the company of those who serve the God of their fathers. Abijah's speech is not a negative polemic but an urgent plea to reconcile the division that has come about. (See [1 & 2 Chronicles: Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**Martin Selman:** Abijah concludes with an appeal, Do not fight against the Lord . . . for you will not succeed. It is the focal point of Abijah's argument, and resembles a sermon test, as in other speeches where the text often comes at the end. It contains two important themes, both of which are developed in 2 Chronicles 20:1-30, the centerpiece of the Divided Monarchy. - **The first**, which has its origin in Exodus, is that it is futile to oppose God, for he fights his own battles (cf. 1 Ch. 5:22; 2 Ch. 11:4; 20:27; 32:8; cf. Ex. 14:14; Dt. 20:4; Acts 5:39). - **The second** is that one can succeed only with God's help as illustrated positively (e.g. 1 Ch 29:23; 2 Ch. 14:6; 20:20; and negatively (e.g. 2 Ch. 24:20). (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**John Schultz:** The missing point in Abijah's speech is the fact that the division had been God-ordained and was a punishment for the sins of his grandfather Solomon and his father Rehoboam. Jeroboam had received the kingdom, consisting of the ten northern tribes from God, just as much as Abijah had received the southern tribes by divine authority. But it was, obviously, never God's intent that this division would lead to a civil war.

**Andrew Hill:** The genre of the story of Abijah's "holy war" is identified as report, and the contents of the story may be outlined as follows: - prelude to war (2Ch 13:2b-3), - Abijah's speech (2Ch 13:4-12), and - the battle report (2Ch 13:13-21). The story is framed by opening and closing regnal résumés (2Ch 13:1-2a; 2Ch 13:22-14:1). (See [NIVAC](#))

**In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah** - The chronicler emphasized the positive aspects of Abijah's reign while the writer of Kings emphasized the negative noting that Abijah "walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David." (1Ki 15:3+) Rehoboam had hand picked Abijah as alluded to in 2Ch 11:22 "Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maacah as head and leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king."

**Bob Utley** - This is the only place in Chronicles that the parallel reigns of the kings of Israel and Judah are mentioned. This is regularly done in Kings. **Abijah** was Rehoboam's favorite son (cf. 2 Chr. 11:22). The parallel is in 1 Kings 15:1-8, but there it is a much briefer account and his name is spelled "Abijam." "Micaiah" The LXX has "Maacah" both here and in 1 Kgs. 15:2, but there are two different fathers listed. here, Uriel 1 Kgs. 15:2, Abishalom (possibly grandfather, cf. 2 Chr. 11:20) This is the same name as one of Rehoboam's wives (cf. 1 Kgs. 15:2; 2 Chr. 11:20,21,22).

**Frederick Mabie:** Following Rehoboam's death, his son Abijah assumes the throne in Judah. Abijah reigns over the southern kingdom from ca. 913-11 BC and may have had a brief coregency with his father Rehoboam. Earlier, Rehoboam had appointed Abijah as chief prince, presumably to facilitate a stable regnal changeover (see 2Ch 11:22). Meanwhile, Jeroboam is in his eighteenth year of rule in the northern kingdom. (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 Chronicles-Job - Page 217](#))

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**Warren Wiersbe** - The Northern Kingdom of Israel had nine dynasties in about 250 years (**SEE LIST BELOW**) while the Southern Kingdom faithfully maintained the Davidic dynasty for 350 years, and that was the dynasty from which the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, would come (Matt. 1:1). With all of its faults, the kingdom of Judah was identified with the true and living God, practiced authorized worship in the temple, and had kings who came from David's family. Two of these kings are named in these chapters—Abijah and Asa. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**List of the 9 Dynasties of Israel** and only one dynasty (Jehu's) lasted for five generations. Dates are approximations.

1. Jeroboam's Dynasty (930–909 BC)
  - Kings: Jeroboam I, Nadab
  - Ended when Baasha assassinated Nadab.
2. Baasha's Dynasty (909–885 BC)
  - Kings: Baasha, Elah
  - Ended when Zimri assassinated Elah.
3. Zimri's Short Reign (7 Days in 885 BC)
  - King: Zimri

- Ended when Zimri set his palace on fire and died.

#### 4. Omri's Dynasty (885–841 BC)

- Kings: Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram (Jehoram)
- Ended when Jehu, backed by God's command, killed Joram.

#### 5. Jehu's Dynasty (841–753 BC)

- Kings: Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash (Joash), Jeroboam II, Zechariah
- Ended when Shallum assassinated Zechariah.

#### 6. Shallum's Short Reign (1 Month in 752 BC)

- King: Shallum
- Ended when Menahem killed him.

#### 7. Menahem's Dynasty (752–740 BC)

- Kings: Menahem, Pekahiah
- Ended when Pekah assassinated Pekahiah.

#### 8. Pekah's Rule (740–732 BC)

- King: Pekah
- Ended when Hoshea assassinated him.

#### 9. Hoshea's Rule (Last King, 732–722 BC)

- King: Hoshea
- Ended when the Assyrians conquered Israel, destroying the kingdom.

### QUESTION -[Who was King Abijah in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - King Abijah, also called King Abiah or King Abijam, was the son of [King Rehoboam](#) and father of [King Asa](#). Abijah reigned for only three years (913–911 BC) in Judah before he died. Abijah was a wicked king: "He committed all the sins his father had done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been" (1 Kings 15:3). King Abijah attempted to reclaim the northern ten tribes of Israel as part of his kingdom, and so there was war between Abijah and [Jeroboam](#) throughout Abijah's lifetime (verse 6).

King Abijah had some victories over Israel to the north. 2 Chronicles 13 describes a battle in which Abijah and his 400,000 men triumphed over Jeroboam with his 800,000 men. King Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim and spoke out to Jeroboam and Israel about God's covenant with David, Jeroboam's rebellion against Rehoboam, and Jeroboam's ridding Israel of the Levites and allowing anyone to become a priest of false gods. Abijah concluded, "God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. People of Israel, do not fight against the Lord, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed" (2 Chronicles 13:12). The troops of Israel had come behind those of Judah to ambush them, intending to attack them from both front and rear. But the men from Judah cried out to God, the priests blew their trumpets, and "at the sound of their battle cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah" (2 Chronicles 13:15). Abijah also took the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah, Ephron, and their surrounding villages from Jeroboam. From that time, King Jeroboam's strength lessened: "Jeroboam did not regain power during the time of Abijah. And the Lord struck him down and he died. But Abijah grew in strength. He married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters" (2 Chronicles 13:20–21).

Abijah's mother was Maakah, and she apparently held a position of authority as queen mother throughout Abijah's reign and into the reign of her grandson Asa. After Abijah's death, there was peace between Israel and Judah for ten years (2 Chronicles 14:1), and Abijah's son, [King Asa](#), instituted wide reforms throughout Judah. One of Asa's reforms was to depose his grandmother Maakah because of her promotion of [Asherah](#) worship (1 Kings 15:13). Second Chronicles 14:2 says, "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God."

Abijah's short reign was unfortunately marked by doing evil in the eyes of the Lord. Even though God had granted him victory over Israel, Abijah continued the same error as his father, Rehoboam—not being fully devoted to God (2 Chronicles 12:14; 1 Kings 15:3). [GotQuestions.org](#)

### John Kitto - Daily Bible Illustrations - Abijah—II Chronicles 13:1–20; I Kings 15:1–9

It is observable, that although Rehoboam had fewer wives than his father—only eighteen wives and sixty concubines, he had a far more numerous progeny—no less than twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters,—a somewhat singular disproportion of sexes. Even this comparatively modern harem was adverse to the judgment and habits of his subjects; for the historian remarks that he "desired

many wives,”—implying that so far he contravened the restriction imposed by the law against a king “multiplying wives unto himself.” Of all Rehoboam’s wives, the one who had most influence with him was Maachah, who appears to have been a grand-daughter of Absalom by his daughter Tamar, who married one Uriel of the house of Saul. This special attachment to the mother induced Rehoboam to determine that her son Abijah (otherwise called Abijam) should be his successor; and the solicitude he is described as evincing in this matter, and the means he took to secure this object, seem to show that Abijah was not his eldest son. To obviate the competition of his brothers, and to prevent them from forming an interest in rivalry to his at the seat of power, Rehoboam took much the same course as Abraham took to secure the undisputed heritage to Isaac. He provided for them, and gave them employment during his life-time, by making them governors of cities—thus dispersing them through his dominions for their own advantage, while preventing them from any combined operations to the detriment of the heir. This is an early scriptural example of the same kind of policy which has only within the present age been adopted in the courts of Persia and Turkey, where the princes were shut up in the harem till the death of their father, and then either imprisoned, killed, or incapacitated for public life (in Persia by blinding), when their brother mounted the throne. Now, at least in Persia, they are sent into the provinces, where they administer the civil and military local government for the king—collect the crown dues, and remit them to court after deducting their own expenses and the local charges. These princes, in their lesser spheres, reflect the royal dignity, maintaining courts on the royal model, but on a smaller scale; administering justice like the king, and appearing, when required, with the military force to be raised within their districts. Doubtless the sons of Rehoboam performed the same functions in their respective districts; but the smallness of the territory over which so many princes were distributed, must have given a proportionately diminished scale to their establishments; and if they, as princes of the blood, affected, as is likely, more magnificence than ordinary governors, this must have rendered the task of supporting the courts of so many royal governors rather burdensome to the people. The crown also probably found it unprofitable in the end, a large proportion of the public imposts being in such cases absorbed, before they reached the royal treasury, in the expenses of local government,—and the king being obliged to allow expenses for his sons, and to admit excuses on their behalf, which would not be endured in an ordinary functionary.

The precautions of the king were, however, successful; and at his death the son he had designated succeeded to the throne without opposition. This young man, of the same name with Jeroboam’s lost son, took up the cause of the house of David with the ardor natural to a lofty-minded youth just come to the throne. He purposed to himself to reestablish the dominion of his house over the ten tribes; and no priest or prophet interfered this time to discourage the undertaking. This was not now necessary, seeing that the kingdom of Israel was now fully equal to its own defence against Judah; and now, moreover, Jeroboam had forfeited all claim to the Lord’s interference, and his house had indeed been sentenced to deprivation.

Abijah took the initiative, and marched into the territory of Jeroboam, at the head of a general military levy of his kingdom. Jeroboam was, however, too able and experienced a commander to be taken unprepared, and he met the king of Judah with a force that greatly outnumbered his own.

The circumstances of this first great action between the two kingdoms are very interesting, and well deserve careful consideration, from the light they cast upon the state of feeling with which the house of David at this time regarded the rival kingdom. This we are able to collect from the harangue which king Abijah addressed to the enemy opposed to him, before they came to blows, according to a custom which strikes us as somewhat strange, but of which there are numerous ancient examples. The staple of such harangues always has consisted, and always does consist in the East, of self-praise on the part of the orator, and dispraise and abuse of the enemy. Of this we find enough in the speech of Abijah, the tone of which seems to us not in all respects so gratifying as it has appeared to many.

The oration consists properly of five parts—political, and religious or theocratic. The political part is based entirely on the divine-right principle, which was certainly not sanctioned by the Hebrew constitution. Wholly overlooking the offence of Solomon, the judgment of Heaven, the Divine appointment of Jeroboam, the constitutional conduct of the people, the aggravating folly of Rehoboam, and the Lord’s recognition of the separation,—Abijah talks loftily of the rights of the house of David, and treats the tribes as unreasonable and causeless rebels,—servants who had turned against their master when they found the opportunity in the accession of the “young and tender-hearted” Rehoboam, and whom it behooved now, at his son’s call, to return to their allegiance. The egregious foolishness of all this seems to have been scarcely exceeded by that which Rehoboam himself had manifested, and must have been heard with calm disdain by the veterans of Israel. The purely dynastic and party view of the great question, was such as a not and not over-wise young prince of the house of David was likely to take, and is in itself perfectly intelligible. But we know that there was another side of the question which found no expression; and the reader may do well to supply for himself the answer which Jeroboam could have given if he had liked.

The remainder of Abijah’s harangue was, however, in substance unanswerable, although one is not over-satisfied at the self-righteousness of its tone, its inordinate appreciation of ritual observances, and the absence of more spiritual grounds of confidence than it indicates. He animadverted on the measures, the corruptions, and arbitrary changes by which Jeroboam had endeavored to secure his kingdom; and, with not unbecoming pride, contrasted this disorder and profanity with the beautiful order in which, according to the law, and the regulations of David and Solomon, the worship of the Lord was conducted by the Levitical priesthood,

in "the holy and beautiful house which the Divine King honored with the visible symbol of his inhabitation." "We keep the charge of Jehovah," he declared, "but ye have forsaken him. And, behold, God himself is with us for our captain, and his priests with sounding trumpets, to cry alarm against you. O children of Israel, fight not against Jehovah, the God of your fathers, for ye shall not prosper."

By the time he had finished, Abijah found himself, to his great amazement, surrounded by the enemy; and that he hath purchased the satisfaction of making a speech at the cost of allowing a large body of the enemy to move quietly round the hill, so as to take his force in the rear, while the main body still confronted him. This difficult and bold maneuver had well nigh decided the action; for the Judahites raised a cry of dismay, and a serious panic would probably have followed, had not the priests at that moment sounded their silver trumpets, at which old and inspiring signal, the more stouthearted men raised a cry to the Lord for help, and rushed upon the enemy, inspiring by their example the more timid and wavering. The embattled host of Israel could not withstand the force of this terrible shock. Their ranks were broken, they fled, and the slaughter inflicted upon them was most awful, and can only be explained by reference to the peculiar animosity and bloodiness of wars of kindred. Besides, the conquerors were in the enemy's country, and in numbers much the weaker party—too weak for mercy.<sup>540</sup>

Notwithstanding this decisive success, Abijah was too well advised, to pursue his original design of reducing the ten tribes, and was content to re-establish his authority over certain border towns and districts, which had originally belonged to Judah or Benjamin, but which Jeroboam had found means to include in his portion of the divided kingdom. This was but a poor result from the shedding of so much blood, and for the increased alienation which must have ensued between the subjects of the two kingdoms, which still formed but one nation. All that can be said is, that as much blood has often been shed with as little real advantage to the conquerors.

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**Abijah In Rabbinical Literature:** Although Abijah took up God's cause against Jeroboam, the idolatrous king of Israel, he was not permitted to enjoy the fruits of his victory over the latter for any considerable time, dying as he did shortly after his campaign (Josephus, "Ant." viii. 11, § 3). The rabbis recount many transgressions committed by Abijah against his fellow men, which resulted in drawing God's vengeance upon him more speedily than upon Jeroboam's idolatries. Thus it is stated that he mutilated the corpses of Jeroboam's soldiers, and even would not permit them to be interred until they had arrived at a state of putrefaction. Nor did Abijah show himself zealous in God's cause after all; for when, by the conquest of Bethel (2 Chron. 13.19), **the golden calves came into his possession, he did not destroy them as the law** (Deut. 7.25) enjoined. The rabbis also point out that it was improper for Abijah to accuse the whole of Israel of idolatry and to proclaim the appointment of Jeroboam as king to have been the work of "vain men, the children of Belial" (2 Chron. 13.7), since in point of fact it was the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite, who made him king (1 Kings, 9.37). For these reasons Abijah's reign was a short one.

**2 Chronicles 13:2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. Now there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam.**

- Micaiah: 2Ch 11:20, Maachah the daughter of Absalom, 1Ki 15:2, Abishalom
- Gibeah: Jos 18:28, Gibeath, Judges 19:14,16 1Sa 10:26, A.M. 3047, B.C. 957
- And there was: 1Ki 15:6,7

## INTERTRIBAL WAR ENSUES

**He reigned three years in Jerusalem (913-910 BC); and his mother's name was Micaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.**  
- Most consider **Micaiah** to be a variation of the name Maacah and consider the the same person.

**Andrew Hill** ties these confusing names together writing "The most likely reconstruction, then, identifies Maacah as the granddaughter of Absalom (Abishalom in 1 Kings 15:2) by his daughter Tamar and her husband Uriel of Gibeah (2 Chron. 13:2; cf. 2 Sam. 14:27). This means that Maacah is King Asa's grandmother. (See [1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 10](#))

**Reformation Study Bible** - Maacah was apparently the granddaughter of Absalom through his daughter Tamar and her husband Uriel of Gibeah.

**ISBE on MAACAH (Micaiah)** - The daughter of Absalom, the favorite wife of Rehoboam, and mother of Abijah (1 Ki 15:2; 2 Ch 11:20, etc.). Evidently "daughter" must here be understood as "granddaughter," according to a common oriental usage. Tamar was the only daughter of Absalom. If Tamar married **Uriel of Gibeah** (2 Ch 13:2), then Maacah was her daughter. In that case the name **Micaiah** in this passage would be either a copyist's error or a variant of **Maacah**. She must have been a woman of strong personality. Unfortunately, her influence was cast upon the side of idolatry. She maintained her position in the palace, however, till

the reign of her grandson Asa. Possibly she acted as regent during his minority. Ultimately, she was degraded by him for an act of peculiar infamy (1 Ki 15:13; 2 Ch 15:16).

**Now there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam** - In a parallel passage in Kings we read "There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 Now the rest of the acts of Abijah 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 **Abijah and Jeroboam.**" (1 Ki 15:6-7)

**2 Chronicles 13:3 Abijah began the battle with an army of valiant warriors, 400,000 chosen men, while Jeroboam drew up in battle formation against him with 800,000 chosen men who were valiant warriors.**

- **Abijah began the battle** 1Sa 17:1-3
- **four hundred:** 2Ch 11:1 14:8 17:14-18 26:12,13 1Ch 21:5
- **eight hundred:** 2Ch 14:9

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 20:15 and he said, "Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's.

## STANDOFF BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

**Abijah began the battle with an army of valiant warriors, 400,000 chosen men, while Jeroboam drew up in battle formation against him with 800,000 chosen men who were valiant warriors** - Some think these numbers were exaggerated. (For more on numbers in Kings see [The mysterious numbers of the Hebrew kings](#)). In any case there is a 2 to 1 advantage of the North (Jeroboam) over the South (Abijah). The numbers do not seem unreasonable in light of the fact that in David's census in 1Ch 21:5 in "all Israel were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword; and Judah was 470,000 men who drew the sword."

**McConville** makes an interesting point that "It is hard to avoid the thought that, in biblical theology, weakness is a positive advantage, because it is a prerequisite of reliance (cf. 2 Cor. 12:10). (BORROW [I & II Chronicles](#))

**Iain Duguid:** The account of the battle itself highlights God's provision: He is present and leading, as it is His battle (also in 2Ch 20:15). Victory depended not on a greater army (in numbers or resources) but on his action. This was important for the post-exilic community in their apparent weakness in relation to the Persian Empire. (See [ESV Expository Commentary: 1 Samuel–2 Chronicles](#))

**Andrew Hill:** There is no direct indication as to which party has declared war, although according to Selman Jeroboam is likely the aggressor in an attempt to reunite the twelve tribes under a single monarch. He bases his conjecture on the defensive posture of Abijah's speech (esp. 2 Chron. 13:8) and Jeroboam's military strategy relying on the surprise attack of an ambush (2Ch 13:13–14). The Chronicler's report of the size of the two opposing armies proves troublesome for some commentators. Various interpretive approaches have been suggested: - taking the numbers at face value since the writer seems to intend them as literal, - understanding the numbers as somehow symbolic or a form of hyperbole, or - assigning a more technical meaning to the word "thousand" ('elep; e.g., "chieftain" or a military "cohort" of an unspecified number of soldiers). However one chooses to understand the numbers, the basic meaning of the tallies is clear—the troops of Israel outnumber the troops of Judah two to one. (See [1 and 2 Chronicles - Page 10](#))

**2 Chronicles 13:4 Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, 'Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel:**

- **Listen to me:** 2Ch 15:2 Judges 9:7

## ABIJAH'S SERMON TO JEROBOAM & ISRAEL



**Then** - This is a time phrase marking progress in the narrative. In this case, the time is crucial because the battle between north and south is imminent.

**Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the hill country of Ephraim, and said, “Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel** (northern kingdom): **Zemaraim** was a mountain in the hill country of Ephraim near the border of Benjamin, but not much more is known. Joshua 18:22 would support that Zemaraim is near Bethel, which is soon captured by Abijah (2Ch 13:19).

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#### **Norman Geisler - 2 CHRONICLES 13:4–22—Was Abijah a wicked or a righteous king?**

**PROBLEM:** According to 1 Kings 15:3, Abijah was a wicked king who “walked in all the sins of his father.” However, here in 2 Chronicles he is represented as giving a speech against idolatry and in defense of God’s appointed priests and temple in Jerusalem.

**SOLUTION:** Abijah is not the first, nor will he be the last, politician on record who could give an occasional pious speech when it served his purposes. The fact is, his deeds did not match his words. That is, in general, whatever occasional exceptions there may have been, he was an evil king, just as 1 Kings 15:3 declares. ([When Critics Ask](#))

#### **2 Chronicles 13:5 “Do you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?”**

- **Do you not know** Ne 5:9 Pr 1:29 2Pe 3:5
- **the LORD God of Israel:** Judges 11:21-24 Jer 27:5-7 Da 4:25-32 5:18
- **to David:** 1Sa 16:1,12 2Sa 7:12-16 1Ki 8:20 1Ch 17:11,14 28:4,5 Ps 89:19-37 Jer 33:21,22,26 Lu 1:31-33
- **a covenant of salt:** Lev 2:13 Nu 18:19 Eze 43:24 Mk 9:49-50

#### **Related Passages:**

Leviticus 2:13+ “Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the **salt of the covenant** of your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt.

Numbers 18:19+ “All the offerings of the holy gifts, which the sons of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and your daughters with you, as a perpetual allotment. It is an everlasting covenant of salt before the LORD to you and your descendants with you.”

Ezekiel 43:24 ( “You shall present them before the LORD, and the priests shall throw salt on them, and they shall offer them up as a burnt offering to the LORD.

### **ABIJAH BEGINS BY APPEALING TO THE DAVIDIC COVENANT**

**Do you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the rule over Israel forever to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?** - He assumes Jeroboam and all Israel know the essential tenets of the Davidic Covenant and that Jehovah gave David and his descendants the kingship over Israel forever. In 1 and 2 Chronicles, the emphasis is repeatedly on the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty (1Ch. 17:14; 1Ch 28:5; 1Ch 29:11, 23; 2Ch 9:8). Ancient Middle Eastern customs used salt to seal agreements. A **Covenant of Salt** means an eternal, sacred, and unbreakable agreement.

**MacArthur on covenant of salt** - Salt is associated elsewhere with the Mosaic Covenant sacrifices (Lv 2:13), the Priestly Covenant (Nu 18:19), and the New Covenant symbolic sacrifices in the millennial kingdom (Eze 43:24). The preservative quality of salt represents the fidelity or loyalty intended in keeping the covenant. Here it would refer to God’s irrevocable pledge and intended loyalty in fulfilling the Davidic Covenant and God’s desire for the loyalty of David’s lineage to Him if the people are to enjoy the blessings of the covenant. (See [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Raymond Dillard:** The context implies that a “covenant of salt” is an eternal and efficacious covenant, though the precise social or religious character of such a covenant is not known. The “salt of the covenant” was necessary for a sacrifice to be efficacious (Lev 2:13); W. Robertson Smith (Lectures on the Religion of the Semites, 2d ed. [1894] 270) related the reference to the sacredness of the bond acknowledged among Arabs between persons who have “eaten salt” together. The covenant made with David was as permanent as the covenant made with Israel in the wilderness (Num 18:19; Coggins, 195). (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**David Guzik:** This promise God made to David was called **acovenant of salt**, which meant a serious covenant because it was



sealed by sacrifice (sacrifices always included salt, Leviticus 2:13). A covenant of salt also had the following associations: A pure covenant (salt stays pure as a chemical compound). An enduring covenant (salt makes things preserve and endure). A valuable covenant (salt was expensive).

**BORROW Trumbull's book** [The covenant of salt as based on the significance and symbolism of salt in primitive thought](#)

**COVENANT OF SALT [ISBE]** - salt (berith melach; halas, classical Greek hals): As salt was regarded as a necessary ingredient of the daily food, and so of all sacrifices offered to Yahweh (Lev 2:13), it became an easy step to the very close connection between salt and covenant-making. When men ate together they became friends. Compare the Arabic expression, "There is salt between us"; "He has eaten of my salt," which means partaking of hospitality which cemented friendship; compare "eat the salt of the palace" (Ezr 4:14). Covenants were generally confirmed by sacrificial meals and salt was always present. Since, too, salt is a preservative, it would easily become symbolic of an enduring covenant. So offerings to Yahweh were to be by a statute forever, "a covenant of salt for ever before Yahweh" (Nu 18:19). David received his kingdom forever from Yahweh by a "covenant of salt" (2 Ch 13:5). In the light of these conceptions the remark of our Lord becomes the more significant: "Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace one with another" (Mk 9:50). Edward Bagby Pollard

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**COVENANT OF SALT** (Heb. brît melah). Covenanting parties were accustomed to partake of salt, thus making a covenant of salt (Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5), i.e., one that was inviolably sure. The meaning appears to have been that the salt, with its power to strengthen food and keep it from decay, symbolized the unbending truthfulness of that self-surrender to the Lord embodied in the sacrifice, by which all impurity and hypocrisy were repelled. BIBLIOGRAPHY: BORROW H. C. Trumbull, [The covenant of salt](#) 1899); BORROW J. E. Latham, [The Religious Symbolism of Salt](#) (1982). (BORROW [The new Unger's Bible dictionary](#))

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#### **QUESTION - [What is a salt covenant?](#)**

**ANSWER** - There is more to salt than meets the taste buds. Salt has been used in many cultures as a valuable commodity. The word *salary* comes from an ancient word meaning "salt-money," referring to a Roman soldier's allowance for the purchase of salt. Someone who earns his pay is still said to be "worth his salt." Salt has also been used to express promises and friendship between people. It was even considered by the Greeks to be divine. Today in many Arab cultures, if two men partake of salt together they are sworn to protect one another—even if they had previously been enemies. In some cultures, people throw salt over their shoulders when they make a promise. Who knew sodium chloride was so important?

In the ancient world, ingesting salt was a way to make an agreement legally binding. If two parties entered into an agreement, they would eat salt together in the presence of witnesses, and that act would bind their contract. King Abijah's speech in 2 Chronicles 13:5 mentions just such a salt covenant: "Don't you know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt?" Here, Abijah refers to the strong, legally binding promise of God to give Israel to David and his sons forever.

The Old Testament Law commands the use of salt in all grain offerings and makes clear that the "salt of the covenant" should not be missing from the grain offerings (Leviticus 2:13). Since the [Levitical priests](#) did not have land of their own, God promised to provide for them via the sacrifices of the people, and He called this promise of provision a "salt covenant" (Numbers 18:19). Salt has always been known for its preservative properties, and it is also possible that God instructed the use of salt so that the meat would last longer and taste better—and thus be of more value to the priests who depended upon it for their daily food.

The idea of a salt covenant carries a great deal of meaning because of the value of salt. Today, salt is easy to come by in our culture, and we don't necessarily need it as a preservative because of refrigeration. But to the people of Jesus' day, salt was an important and precious commodity. So, when Jesus told His disciples that they were "the [salt of the earth](#)," He meant that believers have value in this world and are to have a preserving influence (Matthew 5:13).

The salt covenant is never explicitly defined in the Bible, but we can infer from the understanding of salt's value and the contexts in which a salt covenant is mentioned that it has much to do with the keeping of promises and with God's good will toward man. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 13:6 "Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master,**

- rebelled: 2Ch 10:19 1Ki 11:26 12:20,27

## Related Passage:

1 Kings 11:26+ "Then Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite of Zeredah, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow, also rebelled against the king."

## JEROBOAM'S REBELLION

**Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master-** Abijah correctly points out that Jeroboam rebelled but leaves out the critical fact that this was sovereignly orchestrated by God (1Ki 11:26-40+).

**Raymond Dillard:** 2Ch 13:4-12 -- The speech of Abijah has two foci: the legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty and the legitimacy of the Jerusalem cult. The kingdom of David is in reality the kingdom of Yahweh; Jeroboam is a rebel surrounded by worthless scoundrels. The cultic personnel and apparatus of the South are divinely ordained, while those of the North serve "no-gods." (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**NEBAT [ISBE]** - ne'-bat (nebhaT): Father of Jeroboam I (1 Ki 11:26, and frequently elsewhere). The name occurs only in the phrase "Jeroboam the son of Nebat," and is evidently intended to distinguish Jeroboam I from the later son of Joash.

**2 Chronicles 13:7 and worthless men gathered about him, scoundrels, who proved too strong for Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when he was young and timid and could not hold his own against them.**

NET 2 Chronicles 13:7 Lawless good-for-nothing men gathered around him and conspired against Rehoboam son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was an inexperienced young man and could not resist them.

CSB 2 Chronicles 13:7 Then worthless and wicked men gathered around him to resist Rehoboam son of Solomon when Rehoboam was young, inexperienced, and unable to assert himself against them.

ESV 2 Chronicles 13:7 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.

NIV 2 Chronicles 13:7 Some worthless scoundrels gathered around him and opposed Rehoboam son of Solomon when he was young and indecisive and not strong enough to resist them.

NLT 2 Chronicles 13:7 Then a whole gang of scoundrels joined him, defying Solomon's son Rehoboam when he was young and inexperienced and could not stand up to them.

NRS 2 Chronicles 13:7 and certain worthless scoundrels gathered around him and defied Rehoboam son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and irresolute and could not withstand them.

NJB 2 Chronicles 13:7 Worthless men, scoundrels, rallied to him, proving too strong for Rehoboam son of Solomon, as Rehoboam was then inexperienced and timid and unable to resist them.

NAB 2 Chronicles 13:7 Worthless men, scoundrels, joined him and overcame Rehoboam, son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and unthinking, and no match for them.

YLT 2 Chronicles 13:7 'And there are gathered unto him vain men, sons of worthlessness, and they strengthen themselves against Rehoboam son of Solomon, and Rehoboam was a youth, and tender of heart, and hath not strengthened himself against them.

- **and worthless men:** Judges 9:4 11:3 1Sa 22:2 Job 30:8 Ps 26:4 Pr 12:11 28:19 Ac 17:5 Tit 1:10 : De 13:13 1Ki 21:10,13
- **young:** 2Ch 10:16 12:13 Ec 10:16 Isa 3:4 1Co 14:20 Heb 5:12
- **could not:** 2Ch 11:1-4

**And worthless men gathered about him, scoundrels, who proved too strong for Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when he was young and timid and could not hold his own against them** - NET = "lawless good-for-nothing men" Who is him? Most think this refers to Jeroboam. **Scoundrels** is "ben beliyaal" = "sons of Belial" ([Belial](#)) often rendered as "worthless" (cf Dt 13:13 Jdg 19:22 20:13 1Sa 2:12 10:27 25:17 1Ki 21:10 21:13 2Ch 13:7)

**Iain Duguid:** The identity of the king around whom the "scoundrels gathered" (2 Chron. 13:7) is unclear. Most commentators see the

men as accompanying Jeroboam. Josephus Antiquities 8.277, however, understood the statement as referring to the young men who gathered around Rehoboam and “prevailed over, persuaded” (rather than “defied”) him (cf. 2Ch 10:10; this interpretation fits normal Hebrew patterns in which “him” would be the last person mentioned—Jeroboam’s “lord,” Rehoboam). (See [ESV Expository Commentary: 1 Samuel–2 Chronicles](#))

**August Konkel** sees the **worthless men** not as belonging to Jeroboam's forces but those who persuaded Rehoboam to make a foolish decision - The sons of Belial (**scoundrels**) that prevailed over Rehoboam can be none other (**ED: THIS IS A BIT DOGMATIC - NOT EVERYONE AGREE WITH THIS INTERPRETATION**) than the rash young advisers who demanded more conscripted labor from the north. (See [1 & 2 Chronicles](#); see [Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**2 Chronicles 13:8 “So now you intend to resist the kingdom of the LORD through the sons of David, being a great multitude and having with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made for gods for you.**

NET 2 Chronicles 13:8 Now you are declaring that you will resist the LORD's rule through the Davidic dynasty. You have a huge army, and bring with you the gold calves that Jeroboam made for you as gods.

CSB 2 Chronicles 13:8 "And now you are saying you can assert yourselves against the LORD's kingdom, which is in the hand of one of David's sons. You are a vast number and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made for you as gods.

ESV 2 Chronicles 13:8 "And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David, because you are a great multitude and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made you for gods.

NIV 2 Chronicles 13:8 "And now you plan to resist the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods.

NLT 2 Chronicles 13:8 "Do you really think you can stand against the kingdom of the LORD that is led by the descendants of David? You may have a vast army, and you have those gold calves that Jeroboam made as your gods.

- **the kingdom:** 2Ch 9:8 Ps 2:1-6 Isa 7:6,7 9:6,7 Lu 19:14,27
- **a great multitude:** 2Ch 14:9-11 20:6,12 Ps 33:16
- **with you golden:** 2Ch 11:15 1Ki 12:28 14:9 Ho 8:5,6

## HAVE IDOLS WILL TRAVEL

**So now you intend to resist the kingdom of the LORD through the sons of David, being a great multitude-** A rhetorical question. **The kingdom of the LORD** refers to the southern kingdom. **Through the sons of David** is an allusion to the immutable Davidic Covenant. By this Abijah implies (and rightly so) that Yahweh is on his side. If Jeroboam's ambush with twice as many men had been allowed to succeed, it is quite possible that the Davidic line (of whom Abijah is one - Mt 1:7), would have been annihilated. And of course God would not allow that to occur. So the subsequent actions of Yahweh in smiting Jeroboam's forces has more to do with God's covenant and His promise to keep it than it has to do with Judah deserving His intervention. For after all, Judah's leader Abijah was not wholly devoted to Yahweh and "walked in all the sins of his father." (1Ki 15:3+) His sins included idolatry and perverted worship (see 1Ki 14:22-24+), which make his denouncement of Jeroboam's similar false worship somewhat hypocritical.

**And having with you the golden calves which Jeroboam made for gods for you - NET** = "You have a huge army, and bring with you the gold calves that Jeroboam made for you as gods." Presumably Jeroboam brought the calf idols to the battle. One is reminded of the superstition of Israel in 1Sa 4:4-5+ that the literal presence of the Ark of the Covenant, like a "divine talisman" would guarantee them victory over the Philistines!

**Raymond Dillard:** 2Ch 13:8-9 -- For the Chronicler the kingdom of David was the kingdom of God; that kingdom was forever to be in the hands of David's descendants. For the post-exilic audience to which he wrote, an audience living without a Davidic king, this speech must have expressed their hopes and aspirations. The speech argues from the two foci of legitimate king and legitimate cult; in the Chronicler's own day legitimate cult was a reality with the second temple, and aspirations for political freedom fired hopes for the reestablishment of the Davidic dynasty. Israel as the kingdom of Yahweh is one of the Chronicler's favorite themes (1 Chr 17:14; 28:5; 29:11, 23; 2 Chr 9:8). (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

Abijah is saying in effect that Jeroboam was basing on faulty reasoning. Abijah is saying in his speech that Jeroboam was trying to resist the Kingdom of the LORD, was trusting in his superior numbers and was trusting the power of his manmade gods (2Ch 13:9).

**2 Chronicles 13:9 “Have you not driven out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests like the peoples of other lands? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams, even he may become a priest of what are no gods.**

- **driven out:** 2Ch 11:14-15
- **made you priests:** 1Ki 12:31-33 13:33
- **consecrate himself:** Ex 32:29 Lev 16:32 1Ch 29:5
- **young bull:** Ex 29:1,35 Lev 8:2
- **no gods:** De 32:17 2Ki 19:18 Jer 2:11 Ho 8:6 Ac 19:26 Ga 4:8

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 11:14-15 For the Levites left their pasture lands and their property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had excluded them from serving as priests to the LORD. 15 He set up priests of his own for the high places, for the satyrs and for the calves which he had made.

1 Kings 12:31-33+ And he (JEROBOAM) made houses on high places, and made priests from among all the people who were not of the sons of Levi. 32 Jeroboam instituted a feast in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast which is in Judah, and he went up to the altar; thus he did in Bethel, sacrificing to the calves which he had made. And he stationed in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 Then he went up to the altar which he had made in Bethel on the fifteenth day in the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised in his own heart; and he instituted a feast for the sons of Israel and went up to the altar to burn incense.

### **REHOBOAM'S ACCUSATIONS OF PRIESTLY "HIRELINGS"**

**Have you not driven out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests like the peoples of other lands?** Abijah's rhetorical question clearly calls for an affirmative reply.

**Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams, even he may become a priest of what are no gods** - The priestly vacuum was filled with fake priests so Abijah condemns Jeroboam's perversion of these non-Levitical priests. There is a ring of hypocrisy in the statement because Abijah was following the idolatry of his father (1Ki 14:23).

**2 Chronicles 13:10 “But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the sons of Aaron are ministering to the LORD as priests, and the Levites attend to their work.**

- **the LORD is our God** 2Ch 11:16,17 Ex 19:5,6 Zec 13:9
- **priests:** Ex 29:1-37 Nu 16:40 18:1-7

### **ABIJAH CLAIMS THEY REMAINED LOYAL TO YAHWEH**

**But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him**- This is true in the sense that the Temple is still the place of worship in Judah. While it may have been true when he said **we have not forsaken Him**, as discussed below, we know that at some point Abijah did follow in the evil of his father Rehoboam (see 1Ki 14:22-24+).

**And the sons of Aaron are ministering to the LORD as priests, and the Levites attend to their work** Levitical priests were present to allow proper worship. Abijah's theology is good. Whether he practiced what he preached is open to some question.

The declarations of orthodoxy in 2Ch 13:10-11 are somewhat confusing in light of the fact that in Abijah's short 3 year reign he is said to have followed in the footsteps of "**ALL** the sins of his father" (1Ki 15:3+), sins which included idol worship and perverted,

sensual worship (1Ki 14:22-24+)! I suppose Abijah's declaration of national commitment to orthodoxy could describe the time when he began to walk in the sins of his father Rehoboam.

I agree with **J Barton Payne's** comments - While at this point Abijah's affirmation **"The LORD is our God"** rings with sincerity, **a longer view of his history requires some modification in evaluation**; for "he committed all the sins his father had done before him" (1 Kings 15:3+, witness his polygamy, described in 2Ch 13:21, and see Ezra's earlier evaluation of his father, Rehoboam, in 2Ch 12:1+). Also noteworthy is the fact that the prophets of the North and South had sanctioned the division. **So Abijah used religious arguments for his own political ends. Yet since the North had acted in unbelief and apostasy his words carried some conviction.** (Bolding added)(See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition - Page 50](#))

**2 Chronicles 13:11 "Every morning and evening they burn to the LORD burnt offerings and fragrant incense, and the showbread is set on the clean table, and the golden lampstand with its lamps is ready to light every evening; for we keep the charge of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him.**

- **they burn:** 2Ch 2:4 Ex 29:38
- **incense:** Ex 30:1-10 Lev 2:1-3 Nu 16:6,46 Lu 1:9 Rev 8:3,4
- **showbread:** Ex 25:30 Lev 24:5-9
- **the candlestick:** Ex 25:31-39 27:20,21 Lev 24:2-4
- **we keep:** Ge 26:5 Nu 9:19 Eze 44:8,15 48:11

## **ABIJAH CLAIMS ORTHODOXY**

**Every morning and evening they burn to the LORD burnt offerings and fragrant incense, and the showbread is set on the clean table, and the golden lampstand with its lamps is ready to light every evening; for we keep the charge of the LORD our God** - This is a wonderful orthodox description, but as discussed elsewhere clearly Abijah detoured from this at some point in his 3 year reign. Again Abijah has good theology, but questionable orthopraxy.

**but you have forsaken** (['azab](#) ;Lxx - [egkataleipo](#)) **Him** - Earlier Abijah claimed they had not forsaken Yahweh and now he correctly asserts that Jeroboam has **forsaken Him**.

**2 Chronicles 13:12 "Now behold, God is with us at our head and His priests with the signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you will not succeed."**

NET 2 Chronicles 13:12 Now look, God is with us as our leader. His priests are ready to blow the trumpets to signal the attack against you. You Israelites, don't fight against the LORD God of your ancestors, for you will not win!"

CSB 2 Chronicles 13:12 Look, God and His priests are with us at our head. The trumpets are ready to sound the charge against you. Israelites, don't fight against the LORD God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed."

ESV 2 Chronicles 13:12 Behold, God is with us at our head, and his priests with their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you. O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you cannot succeed."

NIV 2 Chronicles 13:12 God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. Men of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you will not succeed."

NLT 2 Chronicles 13:12 So you see, God is with us. He is our leader. His priests blow their trumpets and lead us into battle against you. O people of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed!"

NRS 2 Chronicles 13:12 See, God is with us at our head, and his priests have their battle trumpets to sound the call to battle against you. O Israelites, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your ancestors; for you cannot succeed."

- **God:** Nu 23:21 1Sa 4:5-7 Isa 8:10 Zec 10:5 Ro 8:31
- **our head:** De 20:4 Jos 5:13-15 Ps 20:7 Heb 2:10
- **his priests:** Nu 10:8,9 Nu 31:6 Jos 6:13-20
- **fight:** Job 15:25,26 40:9 Isa 45:9 Jer 50:24 Ac 5:39 9:4,5
- **not:** 2Ch 24:20 Nu 14:41 De 28:29 Job 9:4 Isa 54:17 Jer 2:37 Eze 17:9

## FINAL WARNING YOU ARE FIGHTING GOD!

**Now** - Based on the theology lesson, Abijah comes to a confident conclusion which includes a dire warning.

**Behold**, (PAY ATTENTION JEROBOAM!) **God is with us at our Head** (Leader) **and His priests with the signal trumpets to sound the alarm against you** (cf Nu 10:9+). **O sons of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you will not succeed** - Is this a prophecy? In any event the subsequent course would prove Abijah was correct that Jeroboam **will not succeed**.

As I stated above, Abijah was destined to be in the line of the Messiah and God would not allow the Davidic Covenant to come to an end on the battlefield, but would see that his life was preserved (whether he deserved it or not - that's God's covenant lovingkindness!). Matthew 1:7+ says "Solomon was the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of **Abijah**, and **Abijah** the father of Asa."

**Iain Duguid:** Thus the final appeal to the "sons of Israel" to cease their rebellion speaks of the Lord as the **God of your fathers**." They may have rebelled, but they are still part of "Israel," over whom God had placed "sons of David" to rule and whose worship was centered in the temple, with the Aaronic priesthood assisted by other Levites. Returning to the Lord, whom "your fathers" worshiped, is the only way to "succeed." (**ED:** This is an interesting comment, but again we have to keep in mind that Abijah himself would rebel against the Lord.) (See [ESV Expository Commentary: 1 Samuel–2 Chronicles](#))

### Robert Morgan ([BORROW From This Verse](#)) - Much More February 20

In 1865, when Hudson Taylor founded the China Inland Mission (now Overseas Missionary Fellowship), he determined to depend on God alone for the needed finances. From that day no direct solicitation of funds has occurred, yet the Mission's needs have been continuously met from unexpected sources at critical times, in answer to prayer.

Several years ago, Phyllis Thompson chronicled many stories of God's faithfulness to CIM in her little book, Proving God. "Through the ninety and more years of its history," she wrote, "although no public or private appeal for funds has ever been authorized, its work and workers have been sustained by an unfailing supply."

For example, Thompson recalls that in December, 1954, when funds were especially low, Mission personnel heard of a gift coming their way from a wealthy American lady. Nobody at CIM remembered having met the lady, but she had sometimes sent small donations to the Mission's London office. Now she had apparently included CIM in her will to the tune of \$5,500.

As it turned out, however, the money was not for the China Inland Mission. It went instead to a Bible school organized by Chinese in the Far East. While the CIM personnel were glad for their Chinese brothers, they naturally felt a bit disappointed. But their attention was soon drawn to 2 Chronicles 25:9, and they claimed the verse as their own: "The Lord is able to give you much more than this."

Within days another communication came from the woman's estate. She had indeed remembered the mission, but not for \$5,500. The amount being sent was \$75,000, with an additional \$60,000 coming later! Mission directors met for prayer with overflowing and humbled hearts. They sang the Doxology and thanked the Lord for his goodness in sending them "much more than this."

**2 Chronicles 13:13 But Jeroboam had set an ambush to come from the rear, so that Israel was in front of Judah and the ambush was behind them.**

- **ambush:** 2Ch 20:22 Jos 8:4 Pr 21:30 Jer 4:22

## JEROBOAM REFUSES TO LISTEN TO ABIJAH

**But** - Term of contrast. Jeroboam's refuses to listen to Abijah and return to the Lord.



**Jeroboam had set an ambush to come from the rear, so that Israel was in front of Judah and the ambush was behind them.**

**Andrew Hill:** The battle report is presented in four stages: - Jeroboam's tactic of an ambush (2Ch 13:13–14a), - Judah's prayers for divine help (2Ch 13:14b–15a), - God's granting victory to Judah (2Ch 13:15b–16), and - details concerning the outcome of the battle (2Ch 13:17–19). The realization that Jeroboam's troops catch Judah in ambush, resulting in a pincers type attack that force the action at the front and the rear of Abijah's army, causes them to cry out to God for divine intervention. This battle shout is "an act of faith" that God's swift and dramatic involvement will ensue (reminiscent of the battle shout that brought down Jericho, Joshua 6:20). (See [First and Second Chronicles - Page 137](#))

**2 Chronicles 13:14 When Judah turned around, behold, they were attacked both front and rear; so they cried to the LORD, and the priests blew the trumpets.**

- **turned around:** Ex 14:10 Jos 8:20 Judges 20:33-43 2Sa 10:8-14
- **cried:** 2Ch 14:11 18:31 Ps 50:15 91:5
- **the priests:** 2Ch 13:12

#### **Related Passages:**

2 Chronicles 6:34-35+ "When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, by whatever way You shall send them, and they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the house which I have built for Your name, 35 then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

Numbers 10:8-10+ "The priestly sons of Aaron, moreover, shall blow the trumpets; and this shall be for you a perpetual statute throughout your generations. 9 "When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies. 10 "Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed feasts, and on the first days of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be as a reminder of you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

### **CRY OUT TO THE LORD**

**When Judah turned around, behold, they were attacked both front and rear** - Abijah had good theology but bad strategy!

**So** - Term of conclusion. This conclusion is based on their dire straits and almost certain defeat in light of Jeroboam's ambush.

**They cried to the LORD** - This is a sincere response by Judah. Did they recall the words of Solomon's prayer? See [Solomon's prayer above](#). Surrounded and desperate, they look up at the only hope they have to avoid being annihilated.

**THOUGHT** - This is always a good strategy for God's people when we feel surrounded by enemies! Cry out! Play this old Maranatha song [Cry Out!](#)

**G Campbell Morgan** - This is really a most interesting chapter, and this account of the victory of Judah is a striking revelation of the readiness with which God ever responds to a genuine cry to Him for help, even on the part of those who are far from worthy....The whole story is another illustration of that truth, to which the Scriptures and human experience bear persistent testimony, of the unfailing grace of God, and of His willingness to forgive and deliver those who call upon Him in sincerity, notwithstanding all their unworthiness. Honestly to rely upon God is ever to prevail over opposing foes.

**And the priests blew the trumpets** - And did the **priests** remember the promise in Nu 10:9+ "*When you go to war in your land against the adversary who attacks you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the LORD your God, and be saved from your enemies.*"? Perhaps.

*God is notably the active subject of the verbs in 2Ch 13:15, while Abijah and the army of Judah are depicted in a passive posture observing the rout.*

**William Barnes** - As with others in the Old Testament who faced greater military forces, the legitimate force must cast themselves into the hands of a gracious God ("they cried out to the Lord for help," 2Ch 13:14; "they trusted in the Lord," 2Ch 13:18), who alone



can bring victory ("God defeated... and routed them," 2Ch 13:15; "God handed them over," 2Ch 13:16). God is notably the active subject of the verbs in 2Ch 13:15, while Abijah and the army of Judah are depicted in a passive posture observing the rout. Only after the northern army was in flight did Abijah and his troops spring into action, which is depicted as a cleanup operation. Defeat at Mount Zemaraim leads to the fall of the southern region of Ephraim, typified by the capture of the towns of Jeshanah, Bethel, and Ephron. (See [1-2 Chronicles - Page 302](#))

**F B Meyer** - Abijah's address is full of true and noble utterances, especially when he describes God as being the Captain of the Host; and this spirit soon permeated his people, so that when the battle was sorest, and they were hemmed in by their foes, it was natural for them to turn to the Lord, and for the priests to give a blast on the trumpets, like that with which the new moon and the solemn feasts were inaugurated.

**The point for us to remember is that our enemies may shut us in on all sides, preventing reinforcements from north, south, east, and west; but no earthly power can ever shut off God from above us. The way upward is always kept clear; the ladder which links the beleaguered soul with God and heaven can never be blocked, except by transgression and sin.**

The Priest is always with thee, child of God. His help is always at hand. Neither death, nor, life, nor height, nor depth, nor principalities, nor powers, can ever separate thee from the down-coming of God's love.

The battle is often before and behind. From behind come memories of past failure, the consequences of mistakes, the misunderstandings which have alienated us from others, and made it difficult for us to live as we would; on the other hand perplexities and anxieties seem to bar our future path. But when the battle is before and behind, remember that God besets His people behind and before, and covers them with His hand. The invisible film of His protection makes the soul invulnerable. The life that is hid with Christ in God is beyond the reach of harm.

**2 Chronicles 13:15 Then the men of Judah raised a war cry, and when the men of Judah raised the war cry, then it was that God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.**

- **the men:** 2Ch 20:21 Jos 6:16,20 Judges 7:18-22 Ps 47:1,5
- **God routed:** 2Ch 14:12 Nu 32:4 Jos 11:8 Judges 4:15 2Ki 5:1 Ps 118:4-7 Isa 37:36

### **GREAT TIME PHRASES: "WHEN...THEN"**

**Then the men of Judah raised a war cry** - This would clearly seem to be a cry of faith

**and when the men of Judah raised the war cry, then it was that God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah** - Clearly Yahweh moved in response to the cry of the men of Judah and won the victory over the Northern army.

*They added the shout of faith to their cry unto the LORD  
and God struck the army of Israel.*

-- David Guzik

**Wiersbe** - "Sudden deliverance in the midst of battle is a repeated theme in 2 Chronicles (2Ch 13:14-18; 2Ch 14:11-12; 18:31; 20:1ff; 32:20-22). ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#))

**2 Chronicles 13:16 When the sons of Israel fled before Judah, God gave them into their hand.**

- **God gave them:** Ge 14:20 De 2:36 3:3 Jos 10:12 21:44 Judges 1:4 11:21 1Sa 23:7

**When the sons of Israel fled before Judah, God gave them into their hand**- The Lord in some way gave the army of Israel into the hands of the smaller army of Judah.

**2 Chronicles 13:17 Abijah and his people defeated them with a great slaughter, so that 500,000 chosen men of Israel fell slain.**

- **five hundred:** 2Ch 13:3,12 28:6 Isa 10:16-19 37:36 Na 1:5 1Co 10:22

## JEROBOAM'S DEVASTATING LOSS

**Abijah and his people defeated them with a great slaughter, so that 500,000 chosen men of Israel fell slain**

**Warren Wiersbe** - Over half of Jeroboam's army was slain by the army of Judah, and Abijah's soldiers moved north to capture the city of Bethel, ten miles from Jerusalem. From Bethel they moved five miles north and took Jeshanah and four miles northeast to take [Ephraim](#) (Ephron) ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#) )

**J.A. Thompson:** Abijah and his men inflicted heavy losses on Israel. The outcome of the battle was defeat and humiliation for Jeroboam and victory for Abijah and the men of Judah because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers.

**2 Chronicles 13:18 Thus the sons of Israel were subdued at that time, and the sons of Judah conquered because they trusted in the LORD, the God of their fathers.**

- **Trusted:** 2Ch 16:8,9 20:20 2Ki 18:5 1Ch 5:20 Ps 22:4,5 146:5 Da 3:28 Na 1:7 Eph 1:12

## KEY TO VICTORY LEANING ON THE LORD

**Thus the sons of Israel were subdued at that time, and the sons of Judah conquered because they trusted**([sha'an](#) - relied on) **in the LORD, the God of their fathers-** This passage teaches a powerful unchanging principle that in all our spiritual battles we need to remember to rely on the strong arm of the Lord, not on our imagined strength.

*It was for the glory of His own Name  
that the Lord acted as He did.*

-- Warren Wiersbe

**J.A. Thompson:** The verb translated "relied on" (sa'an) appears also at 2Ch 14:11 and 2Ch 16:7-8. It is used of leaning upon something (cf. 2 Sam 1:6; 2 Kgs 5:18; 7:2, 17; Ezek 29:7; figuratively in Prov 3:5). By contrast, when Judah turned aside to wickedness, they might well have lost a battle (cf. 2Ch 28:19).

**Trusted in** (relied on, leaned on) ([08172](#)) [sha'an](#) primarily means to lean on something (Saul on his sword = 2Sa 1:6) or someone (2Ki 5:16, 7:2, 17), to rest on, to support oneself (Jdg 16:26), figuratively to trust (2Chr 13:18, Job 8:15, other versions render with rely), to rest (Ge 18:4). Rely on (2Chr 16:7 - twice).

**SHA'AN - 22/20V** - lean(3), leaned(2), leaning(2), leans(2), relied(4), rely(4), rest yourselves(1), supported(1), trust(1), trusted(1), trusts(1). Gen. 18:4; Num. 21:15; Jdg. 16:26; 2 Sam. 1:6; 2 Ki. 5:18; 2 Ki. 7:2; 2 Ki. 7:17; 2 Chr. 13:18; 2 Chr. 14:11; 2 Chr. 16:7; 2 Chr. 16:8; Job 8:15; Job 24:23; Prov. 3:5; Isa. 10:20; Isa. 30:12; Isa. 31:1; Isa. 50:10; Ezek. 29:7; Mic. 3:11

Pr 3:5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not **lean (sha'an)** on your own understanding.

**2 Chronicles 13:19 Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured from him several cities, Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages and Ephron with its villages.**

- **captured from him several cities:** Jos 10:19,39 11:12 1Sa 31:7
- **Ephron** 2Ch 15:8 Jos 15:9, Joh 11:54

## EVEN HOUSE OF THE CALF CAPTURED

**Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured from him several cities, [Bethel](#) with its villages, [Jeshanah](#) with its villages and [Ephron](#) with its villages** - Of course there is divine irony in the capture of Bethel, the house of the golden calf. So much for the

power of the idols to give victory to Jeroboam, much less defend their own sanctuary!

**G Campbell Morgan** - This is really a most interesting chapter, and this account of the victory of Judah is a striking revelation of the readiness with which God ever responds to a genuine cry to Him for help, even on the part of those who are far from worthy. This king Abijah "walked in all the sins of his father" (1 Kings 15:3). Here, however, in his address, in which he attempted to persuade Israel to submission, he was speaking and acting for his nation. This address in itself was a strange mixture of misrepresentation and religion. The misrepresentation is found in his statement of the reason of the revolt of Israel, which culminated in the crowning of Jeroboam. He attributed the whole thing to the influence of evil men, whereas it arose out of the despotism of Rehoboam, and was misdirected by evil influences (**ED: AND WAS SOVEREIGNLY ORCHESTRATED BY YAHWEH**). His attempt to prevent conflict by this address was clever, but utterly futile. Deliverance and victory came to Judah, not through this action on the part of the king, but because, when Judah found themselves caught between two armies, "they cried unto Jehovah." It was a poor business, in that it was a last resort, but it was sincere; and the answer of God was immediate, and complete victory resulted.

The whole story is another illustration of that truth, to which the Scriptures and human experience bear persistent testimony, of the unfailing grace of God, and of His willingness to forgive and deliver those who call upon Him in sincerity, notwithstanding all their unworthiness. Honestly to rely upon God is ever to prevail over opposing foes.

#### Related Resource:

- [What is the significance of Bethel in the Bible?](#) - Gotquestions

**2 Chronicles 13:20 Jeroboam did not again recover strength in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him and he died.**

- **Jeroboam did not again recover strength:** Ps 18:37,38
- **the LORD struck him :** 1Sa 25:38 26:10 Eze 24:16 Ac 12:23
- **and he died.** 1Ki 14:20 15:9

### THIS WAS JEROBOAM'S LAST STAND

**Jeroboam did not again recover strength in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck**([nagaph](#); Lxx - [patasso](#) - strike a fatal blow) **him and he died** - Jeroboam had sinned greatly against Yahweh and it was fitting that LORD would strike the fatal blow to this man's evil reign! The record in 1Ki 14:20 is a bit kinder recording that "Jeroboam reigned...twenty-two years; and he slept with his fathers."

**Andrew Hill:** The heavy losses sustained by Jeroboam at the battle of Mount Zemaraim cripple his capacities for further aggression against the southern kingdom. In that sense, Jeroboam does "not regain power" (2Ch 13:20a) during Abijah's reign (remember that Abijah only rules for three years). The report of Jeroboam's death (2Ch 13:20b) is telescoped for the sake of the Chronicler's theological emphasis, since Jeroboam actually outlives Abijah (cf. 1 Kings 15:9). The Chronicler understands Jeroboam's eventual death as an act of divine judgment ("the LORD struck him down," 2 Chron. 13:20b). (See [First and Second Chronicles - Page 138](#))

**Struck** ([05062](#)) [nagaph](#) means to give a blow, usually from God and either fatal or disastrous (Ex 8:2, Passover - Ex 12:23, 27, smiting Israel after making a golden calf). Prophecy to Israel she would be struck down because of her disobedience (Lev 26:17). Moses warning Israel would be struck down if they went against their enemies after refusing to go into the promised land (Nu 14:42). Lord causes defeat of Israel's enemies if they obey (Dt 28:7) but defeat (striking down) of Israel if the disobey (Dt 28:25). Striking one's foot (figuratively speaking) is prevented by walking in wisdom (Pr 3:23).

**2 Chronicles 13:21 But Abijah became powerful; and took fourteen wives to himself, and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.**

- **became powerful;** 2Sa 5:12,13
- **fourteen wives:** 2Ch 11:21
- **became the father:** Judges 8:30,31 9:5 10:4

## ABIJAH BECOMES POWERFUL

**But** - Term of contrast. What's the writer clearly contrasting?

**Abijah became powerful; and took fourteen wives to himself, and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters** - Unfortunately Abijah becoming powerful was not accompanied by a description that he became godly. And there is no evidence that his becoming powerful stirred in him a sense of gratitude (for either the miraculous victory or his increasing power).

I agree with **Warren Wiersbe's** comments on why Abijah experienced the miraculous victory over Jeroboam - It was for the glory of His own name that the Lord acted as He did. In 1 Kings, **Abijah** isn't marked out as a godly ruler, but we commend him for his understanding of God's truth and his faith in God's power. Abijah was no Joshua, but the God of Joshua was still the God of His people and proved Himself faithful. Abijah become more and more powerful, fathered many children, and helped to continue the dynasty of David. God uses imperfect people to do His will, if only they will trust Him. ([Bible Exposition Commentary - Old Testament](#) )

**Iain Duguid:** The account of Abijah's reign ends by comparing Jeroboam's weakening position, which climaxes in "The Lord struck him down [nagap, as in v. 15]," with Abijah's large family, a sign of blessing. (**ED:** Yes, a large family is generally a sign of blessing, but this is countered by his having 14 wives, which could not have pleased God. Furthermore, he only reigned 3 years which is often a sign of displeasure of the Lord. See 1Ki 15:2+)

**2 Chronicles 13:22 Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways and his words are written in the treatise of the prophet Iddo.**

- **Iddo:** 2Ch 9:29 12:15

**Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways and his words are written in the treatise of the prophet Iddo-** The treatise of the prophet Iddo is lost to us today. The best and saddest summary of Abijah is in 1Ki 15:3+ "He walked in all the sins of his father which he had committed before him; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, like the heart of his father David."

**Morris** - The Hebrew word here for "story" is midrash. It originally meant something like a commentary. In more recent times, it came to be applied to a collection of Rabbinic comments on the Old Testament, collected between 100 B.C. and A.D. 300 (see note on 1 Chronicles 29:29).

**Believer's Study Bible** - The "annals" of the prophet Iddo was some type of commentary, study, or interpretation. The word employed is midrash (Heb., used only here and in 2 Chr. 24:27), which became the designation for the formal, doctrinal, and homiletical expositions of the Hebrew and Aramaic Scriptures which were collected into a unified body of literature during the period 100 B.C.-A.D. 300 (cf. 1 Chr. 29:29, note).

**David Guzik:** Yet from our more complete understanding of Abijah's life, we can learn another lesson: that one great spiritual victory does not make an entire life before God. One should never trust in a past spiritual accomplishment or season of victory.

**Matthew Henry: Result:** The death of both of the conquered and of the conqueror, not long after.

1. Jeroboam never looked up after this defeat, though he survived it two or three years. He could not recover strength again, 2 Chron. 13:20. The Lord struck him either with some bodily disease, of which he languished, or with melancholy and trouble of mind; his heart was broken, and vexation at his loss brought his head, probably by this time a hoary head, with sorrow to the grave. He escaped the sword of Abijah, but God struck him: and there is no escaping his sword.

2. Abijah waxed mighty upon it. What number of wives and children he had before does not appear; but now he multiplied his wives to fourteen in all, by whom he had thirty-eight children, 2 Chron. 13:21. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of those arrows. It seems, he had ways peculiar to himself, and sayings of his own, which were recorded with his acts in the history of those times, 2 Chron. 13:22. But the number of his months was cut off in the midst, and, soon after his triumphs, death conquered the conqueror. Perhaps he was too much lifted up with his victories, and therefore God would not let him live long to enjoy the honour of them.

[Paul Apple - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:](#)

- 1) When do we try to fight against God or against His kingdom agenda?
- 2) When are we tempted to put our trust in numbers or tempted to lean on our own understanding rather than fully trusting the Lord for victory?
- 3) How painful are internal conflicts within the church?
- 4) Do we really consider the Lord's promises regarding our future to be a covenant of salt?

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Raymond Dillard:** The import of Abijah's sermon was not likely lost on the post-exilic community for which the Chronicler wrote. The theocracy stood on twin pillars: the Davidic covenant and the temple cult, both the foci of Abijah's condemnation of the North. The post-exilic community had enjoyed the reinstitution of the temple cult; the revitalization of Israel awaited the reestablishment of political freedom under Davidic rule. The Chronicler is so often treated as if he offered no eschatological expectation and was an advocate of the status quo; that reading of Chronicles, however, cannot grapple adequately with the forcefulness with which the Chronicler reiterates the eternality of God's promises to the house of David (1 Chr 17; 22:10; 28:6–7; 2 Chr 6:16; 7:17–18; 13:4, 8). The post-exilic community might be under foreign domination, but the kingdom remains secure: God always was the real king of Israel (13:8), even when no descendant of David sat on a throne. The Chronicler will later draw on his account of the reign of Abijah to show that the South could sink to the same level of apostasy as had the North (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** For the Chronicler the high point of Abijah's reign was his sermon to the northern tribes, in which he upheld the ideal of the Davidic king as God's anointed ruler for his people and the Solomonic temple as God's chosen place for worship. To be sure, he did not deny that the Davidic king could behave with weakness and folly, but the truth still remains that this is the only chosen line. To abandon it is to turn away from God's kingdom. Abijah's message speaks to our day as well. Many people have grievances against the church and feel that this legitimizes their rejection of it. To be sure, the church has many faults, just as the house of David had many faults. Yet both are at the heart of God's plan. In the end the kingdom of God will triumph, and those who oppose or reject his institutions will suffer for it.

**August Konkel:** The speech of Abijah introduces the implications of the division for the Davidic dynasty and the purity of worship at Jerusalem. The northerners now have an opportunity to support a good king. Kings says nothing of such devotion by Abijah and condemns him for following in the idolatry of Rehoboam. His dominion was preserved only because the Lord desired to keep the lamp for David preserved in Jerusalem (1 Kings 15:3-4). The Chronicler in turn sees the positive possibility of turning to God after the weakness of Rehoboam and the rebellion of Jeroboam against him had caused the disruption of the kingdom. ([Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**Iain Duguid:** In telling this story the Chronicler affirms that past rebellion is not final; the prodigal is always welcomed as a full member of the family (cf. Luke 15:11–32). While past history always shapes life in the present, with patterns of behavior becoming more set (as grooves become ruts!), each generation is nevertheless responsible for its own decisions. This was argued at length at the time of the exile, in Ezekiel 18 (also Jer. 31:29–30; the only Mosaic law explicitly quoted in Kings [2 Kings 14:6; Deut. 24:16] is one rejecting intergenerational liability). Abijah's call was not a matter of political affiliation but an appeal based on the "kingdom of the Lord." Centuries later, Jesus, the Son of David, proclaimed: "The kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). The call to allegiance extends not only to "all Israel" but to "all nations" (Matt. 28:19–20). Abijah's appeal, based on God's past actions and his welcome as people "seek" him, points to God's grace, as does God's action when the people "relied" on him. The people of the north, part of "all Israel," may have rebelled because of the weakness and faults of the Davidic kings—one might compare failings by church leaders—but that did not negate God's plan for the Davidic king and his people. For all the faults of God's people, it is among and through his people that God is still fulfilling his purposes (Eph. 1:15–23). Centuries later, Gamaliel warned of the folly of "opposing God" (Acts 5:38–39).

**Andrew Hill:** The location of this mountain is uncertain, but presumably it is situated somewhere in the hill country of Ephraim on the northern border of Benjamite territory—perhaps near Bethel (cf. Josh. 18:22). Abijah's speech is propagandistic, given the military context of the address; "psychological warfare" is not a modern development. His address is also sermonistic in that it is hortatory in nature. Indirectly, the king appeals to the northern tribes to reunify under Davidic rule because the kingdom of the Lord has been given to David and his descendants (2Ch 13:5, 8a). Abijah also directly challenges the Israelite army to give up the fight because God's covenant of kingship with the house of David is a perpetual one, as signified by the reference to "a covenant of salt" (2Ch 13:5; cf. Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19 on the connotations of eternality associated with the "covenant of salt").

The speech contrasts the faithfulness and loyalty of Abijah with the rebellion and disloyalty of Jeroboam in two issues: the Davidic covenant (2Ch 13:4–8a) and God's temple in Jerusalem (2Ch 13:8b–12). In order to create dissension and separate Jeroboam from his troops, Abijah refers to his northern counterpart in the third person and characterizes his leadership as "rebellion" against Solomon (13:6), since he was formerly a court official under David's successor (1 Kings 11:26). Implicitly, Jeroboam has rebelled

against God since God has given the kingdom to David and his descendants (2 Chron. 13:5).

Abijah goes on to defend his father's role in the split of the monarchy, acknowledging he was "young and indecisive" at the time (2Ch 13:7). Meanwhile, Jeroboam has surrounded himself with "scoundrels," who aided and abetted him as the mastermind of the coup (2Ch 13:7). . .

The second half of Abijah's speech contrasts Jeroboam's forsaking of the Lord's temple and his banishment of the Levitical priesthood with Abijah's compliance with the Mosaic law related to the proper worship of God (2Ch 13:8b–12). Like the first half of the address, this segment includes a rhetorical question based on the conviction that Israel ought to know they are the party in the wrong (2Ch 13:9). The installment of a pseudopriesthood aside (2Ch 13:9b), the most damning indictment against the northern tribes are "the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods" (2Ch 13:8b).

The punch line of Abijah's oration is eminently theological and decidedly practical: "God is with us" (2Ch 13:12a). What kind of folly is it to "fight against the LORD" (2Ch 13:12b)? Allen has penetrated to the heart of Abijah's appeal in his insight that the king's speech is ultimately all about "self-determination." Israel can choose not to fight against the Lord. The Chronicler holds out that same option for his own audience. They too can bury the tribal schisms of the past and in self-determination pursue an agenda of reconciliation and unity for the good of all the Israelites in postexilic Judah. This is the only way the "restoration" of Israel will succeed.

#### **Caleb Nelson:**

I. The Background: Abijah's Conflict with Jeroboam, 13:13

II. Abijah Proves that Judah Is the Kingdom of God, 13:4-12

A. First Argument: The History of the Covenant, 13:5-9 Compare 2 Chronicles 9:8; 1 Chronicles 29:23; Isaiah 9:7

B. Second Argument: The Ongoing Practice of Levitical Worship, 2Ch 13:10-11

C. Conclusion: To Fight Judah Is to Fight God Himself, 2Ch 13:12

III. God Proves that Abijah Was Right, 2Ch 13:13-14:1b

A. God Defeats Israel, 2Ch 13:13-19

B. God Smites Jeroboam, 2Ch 13:20

C. God Blesses Abijah, 13:21-14:1b

<https://media-cloud.sermonaudio.com/text/829161246491.pdf>

**Matthew Henry:** Abijah had right on his side, a *jus divinum*—a divine right: "You know, or ought to know, that God gave the kingdom to David and his sons for ever" (2 Chron. 13:5), not by common providence, his usual way of disposing of kingdoms, but by a covenant of salt, a lasting covenant, a covenant made by sacrifice, which was always salted; so bishop Patrick. All Israel had owned that David was a king of God's making, and that God had entailed the crown upon his family; so that Jeroboam's taking the crown of Israel at first was not justifiable: yet it is not certain that Abijah referred chiefly to that, for he knew that Jeroboam had a grant from God of the ten tribes. His attempt, however, to disturb the peace and possession of the king of Judah was by no means excusable; for when the ten tribes were given to him two were reserved for the house of David. Abijah shows,

(1.) That there was a great deal of dishonesty and disingenuousness in Jeroboam's first setting himself up: He rebelled against his lord (2 Chron. 13:6) who had preferred him (1 Kgs. 11:28), and basely took advantage of Rehoboam's weakness in a critical juncture, when, in gratitude to his old master and in justice to his title, he ought rather to have stood by him, and helped to secure the people in their allegiance to him, than to head a party against him and make a prey of him, which was unworthily done and what he could not expect to prosper in. Those that supported him are here called vain men (a character perhaps borrowed from Jdg. 11:3), men that did not act from any steady principle, but were given to change, and men of Belial, that were for shaking off the yoke of government and setting those over them that would do just as they would have them do.

(2.) That there was a great deal of impiety in his present attempt; for, in fighting against the house of David, he fought against the kingdom of the Lord. Those who oppose right oppose the righteous God who sits in the throne judging right, and cannot promise themselves success in so doing. Right may indeed go by the worst for a time, but it will prevail at last.



## 1-2 CHRONICLES

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