

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 12.2, 1 Kings 14-15, Part 2 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 12.2, 1 Kings 14-15, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on the kings of Judah, Rehoboam and Abijah, as described in **1 Kings 14-15**. He highlights the differing perspectives of Kings and Chronicles regarding these rulers, emphasizing that **Chronicles prioritizes the kings' support of the temple, priests, and Levites**. In contrast, **Kings assesses their actions concerning idolatry, pagan worship, and treatment of the poor**. The lecture further explores the consequences of Rehoboam's actions, particularly the invasion by the Egyptian Pharaoh Shishak, and **analyzes the cyclical nature of kingship introductions and conclusions in 1 and 2 Kings**. Finally, Oswalt reflects on Abijah's divided heart and its implications for living a life devoted to God.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 12.2 – Double click icon to
play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).**



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3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 12.2, 1 Kings 14-15, Part 2

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 14-15, specifically Part 2 of Session 12:

Briefing Document: 1 Kings 14-15 (Rehoboam & Abijah) - Oswalt Lecture

Overview: This lecture segment focuses on the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah, Southern Kings of Judah, drawing comparisons between the accounts in Kings and Chronicles and highlighting the consequences of their actions (or inactions) on the nation. A central theme revolves around the concept of divided hearts and the importance of wholehearted devotion to God. Oswalt also explores the significance of symbols versus reality in worship.

Main Themes & Key Ideas:

1. **Kings vs. Chronicles: Different Perspectives, Different Questions:** Oswalt emphasizes that Kings and Chronicles offer distinct perspectives on Israel's history and that we should not see one as "right" and the other as "wrong."
 - Kings: Focuses on idolatry, pagan worship, and the oppression of the poor as indicators of a king's worthiness.
 - Chronicles: Focuses on the king's attitude towards the temple, priesthood, and Levites, particularly in the context of post-exilic Israel trying to redefine its identity. Chronicles was written when the Israelites were under Persian rule and questioned how they could still be the kingdom of God without a Davidic king, independence, or an army. "Was it the kingdom that gave us the worship of God, or did the worship of God give us the kingdom?" Chronicles argues that worship is paramount, even in the absence of political power.
1. **Rehoboam's Reign: A Study in Inaction and Consequences:** While Chronicles paints a somewhat favorable picture of Rehoboam for his support of the temple, Kings criticizes him for failing to stop the idolatrous practices of his people.
 - "Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord." Oswalt suggests the writer of Kings is cutting Rehoboam "a little slack" but notes he didn't prevent the people's sins.
 - Rehoboam failed to eradicate the pagan shrines established by Solomon, illustrating the long-term consequences of Solomon's actions.

- The invasion by Pharaoh Shishak (possibly connected to Solomon's marriage to an Egyptian princess) and the subsequent plundering of the temple is presented as a potential consequence of Solomon's alliances and idolatry, highlighting the idea that "actions have consequences."
1. **The Bronze Shields: Form vs. Substance:** Oswalt explores the symbolic replacement of gold shields with bronze shields, questioning if this reflects a prioritization of outward form over genuine devotion.
 - "They have the form of godliness, but lack the power thereof." He uses Paul's words to caution against letting symbols become more important than the reality they represent.
 - He questions whether Rehoboam focused on the superficial replacement of symbols (shields) rather than addressing the underlying spiritual issues.
 1. **Abijah: The Divided Heart:** Abijah's reign is characterized by a lack of wholehearted devotion to God, despite his name meaning "My father is Yahweh."
 - "He committed all the sins his father had done before him. His heart was not complete for God." Oswalt connects Abijah's sins to his divided heart, suggesting that partial devotion leads to compromise and sin.
 - Oswalt argues that fully giving your life to God enables a life pleasing to God and that trying to live for God with a divided heart will lead to frustration.
 1. **God's Promise and Human Choice:** Despite the failings of Rehoboam and Abijah, God remains faithful to his promise to David, maintaining a Davidic king on the throne.
 - "For David's sake, the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem."
 - However, Oswalt emphasizes that this promise is not unconditional and is subject to the choices of the people: consequences happen "unless you repent and turn away."

Quotes:

- "Was it the kingdom that gave us the worship of God, or did the worship of God give us the kingdom?"
- "Judah did evil in the eyes of the Lord."
- "They have the form of godliness, but lack the power thereof."
- "He committed all the sins his father had done before him. His heart was not complete for God."
- "For David's sake, the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem."

Implications:

- The passage calls for self-reflection on our own influence and impact on others, particularly those for whom we are responsible. Are we actively preventing sin or passively allowing it?
- The passage encourages the prioritization of genuine devotion over outward displays of religious practice, cautioning against empty rituals and symbols.
- The passage stresses the importance of complete and undivided devotion to God as the foundation for a righteous life. It highlights the ongoing tension between divine promise and human responsibility and choice.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 12.2, 1 Kings 14-15, Part 2

The Kings and Chronicles: A Study of Rehoboam and Abijah

Review of Key Concepts

This study guide focuses on the provided excerpt from Dr. Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 14-15, particularly the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah, and contrasting perspectives from Kings and Chronicles. The main themes include:

- **Differing Perspectives:** Understanding the distinct viewpoints of the books of Kings and Chronicles on Israel's history.
- **Rehoboam's Reign:** Analyzing Rehoboam's actions (and inactions) in light of both Kings and Chronicles.
- **Consequences of Actions:** Identifying the consequences of Solomon's and Rehoboam's choices, including Shishak's invasion.
- **The Importance of Wholehearted Devotion:** Exploring the concept of a divided heart through the example of Abijah and its implications.
- **The Davidic Covenant:** Understanding the unconditional nature of the Davidic covenant, yet how obedience will still dictate the ultimate outcome.
- **Forms vs. Reality:** Considering the importance of substance versus outward appearances in religious practice.

Quiz

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What are the primary concerns of the writer of Chronicles when evaluating kings?
2. What specific sins did Judah commit during Rehoboam's reign?
3. Why does the writer of Kings seem to hold Rehoboam partially responsible for the sins of Judah?
4. Who was Shishak, and what was the significance of his invasion during Rehoboam's reign?
5. What does the story of the gold and bronze shields illustrate, according to Dr. Oswalt?

6. What was the typical introductory formula for a king in 1 and 2 Kings?
7. What was Abijah's relationship to Absalom?
8. What does it mean that Abijah's heart was not "complete" or "perfect" toward God?
9. What is the danger of living with a divided heart?
10. What is the condition that could nullify the Davidic Covenant?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The writer of Chronicles primarily evaluates kings based on their attitude toward the temple, the priesthood, and the Levites. A king who honored these institutions was generally considered good, while one who neglected or undermined them was viewed negatively.
2. During Rehoboam's reign, Judah committed sins such as setting up high places, sacred stones, and Asherah poles; engaging in male prostitution; and participating in other detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out. These actions stirred up God's jealous anger.
3. While Rehoboam may not have personally engaged in idol worship, the writer of Kings holds him partially responsible because he did not prevent his people from engaging in these sinful practices. He failed to stop the spread of idolatry that Solomon had introduced.
4. Shishak was the king of Egypt who invaded Judah during Rehoboam's reign. This invasion is significant because it resulted in the sacking of the temple and the loss of its gold shields, potentially highlighting the consequences of Solomon's and Rehoboam's actions.
5. The story of the gold and bronze shields illustrates the potential for religious forms and symbols to become more important than the underlying reality. Rehoboam replaced the gold shields with bronze ones, maintaining the outward appearance of the temple rituals but losing the true value.
6. The typical introductory formula for a king in 1 and 2 Kings includes the king's name, his father's name, the year of his reign in relation to the king of the other kingdom, his age at the time of ascending the throne, the length of his reign, and his mother's name and nationality.

7. Abijah's mother was Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom (possibly Absalom, but if so, a generation was missing), possibly implying a connection to David's family. However, it's also possible that this Abishalom was a different person with the same name.
8. That Abijah's heart was not "complete" or "perfect" toward God means that his devotion was divided between God and other desires or allegiances. He didn't fully commit himself to God and thus committed the same sins his father had committed.
9. The danger of living with a divided heart is that it creates internal conflict and frustration, making it difficult to live a life pleasing to God. A "fifth column" within the person constantly fights against the desire to follow God fully.
10. The only condition that could nullify the Davidic Covenant, according to Dr. Oswalt, is if Judah persistently and finally turns away from God. Even though the covenant is unconditional, it cannot be assumed that God will always support and defend a nation that has turned its back on Him.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the perspectives of the books of Kings and Chronicles on the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah. How do their different audiences and purposes influence their portrayals of these kings?
2. Analyze the consequences of Solomon's actions in light of Rehoboam's reign and Shishak's invasion. How do these events illustrate the principle that "actions have consequences?"
3. Discuss the significance of the story of the gold and bronze shields. What does it reveal about the relationship between religious forms and genuine devotion?
4. Explore the concept of a "divided heart" as exemplified by Abijah. How does a lack of wholehearted devotion impact one's ability to live a life pleasing to God?
5. Evaluate the nature of the Davidic covenant and its implications for the kings of Judah. Is the covenant truly unconditional, or are there conditions that could lead to its forfeiture?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Rehoboam:** The son of Solomon and Naamah, and the first king of Judah after the division of the kingdom. His reign was marked by idolatry and the invasion of Shishak.
- **Abijah (Abijam):** The son of Rehoboam and the second king of Judah. He followed in his father's sinful ways despite his name meaning "my father is Yahweh."
- **Jeroboam:** The first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel after the secession. His introduction of idol worship led the Northern Kingdom astray from Yahweh.
- **Chronicles:** A book of the Hebrew Bible written after the Babylonian exile, focusing on the temple, priesthood, and Levites, often portraying kings more favorably than Kings.
- **Kings:** A book of the Hebrew Bible providing a historical account of the kings of Israel and Judah, often judging them based on their faithfulness to God.
- **Shishak:** The king of Egypt who invaded Judah during Rehoboam's reign, plundering the temple.
- **Asherah Poles:** Wooden poles or trees representing the Canaanite goddess Asherah, often associated with idolatrous worship practices.
- **High Places:** Elevated locations where sacrifices and worship were offered, often to pagan gods.
- **Davidic Covenant:** God's promise to David that his lineage would always have a king on the throne of Israel.
- **Temple (in Jerusalem):** The central place of worship for the Israelites, built by Solomon, and a focal point for the book of Chronicles.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods, a major sin in the eyes of the God of Israel.
- **Divided Heart:** A lack of complete devotion to God, where one's affections and loyalties are split between God and other desires or allegiances.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 12.2, 1 Kings 14-15, Part 2, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Rehoboam and Abijah (1 Kings 14-15)

- **How do the books of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles differ in their portrayal of Rehoboam, and why?**
- 1 Kings focuses on Rehoboam's failure to prevent idolatry and pagan practices within Judah, emphasizing his lack of action in stamping out the negative influences that began with Solomon. 2 Chronicles, written after the Babylonian exile, presents a more favorable view because Rehoboam supported the temple, priests, and Levites. Chronicles aims to reassure the exiled Israelites that the essence of their identity as the people of God lies in their worship, not in political power or a Davidic king. The books evaluate the same historical events but from different perspectives and asking different questions.
- **What was Rehoboam's major failing in the eyes of the writer of Kings?**
- While Rehoboam himself may not have actively participated in idolatry, his major failing, according to 1 Kings, was his inaction in stopping the people of Judah from engaging in idolatrous practices and detestable acts. He failed to undo the damage initiated by Solomon, who built shrines for his wives' pagan gods. He did not use his influence to prevent the spread of pagan worship.
- **What was the significance of Pharaoh Shishak's invasion during Rehoboam's reign?**
- Pharaoh Shishak's invasion, resulting in the sacking of the temple and the loss of gold shields, is seen as a consequence of Solomon's dealings with foreign nations, specifically his marriage to an Egyptian Pharaoh's daughter. The writer of Kings highlights the irony of Solomon's reign beginning with a marriage to a Pharaoh's daughter and his son's reign being marked by an invasion from Egypt. Actions have consequences.

- **What is the significance of Rehoboam replacing the gold shields taken by Shishak with bronze shields?**
- The writer of Kings highlights the action of replacing the gold shields with bronze shields, the expense, and how they were returned after each use as an example of focusing on the "form" rather than the substance of faith. It raises questions about the importance placed on symbols and rituals, suggesting that they can become empty gestures when they overshadow the underlying spiritual reality.
- **What are the typical elements of introducing and concluding the reign of a king as seen in 1 and 2 Kings?**
- The typical introduction of a king includes the king's name, parentage, age at ascension, length of reign, and the name and origin of his mother. The conclusion typically includes a reference to other events of the king's reign being recorded in the "Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah," mentions warfare, and notes his death, burial, and successor.
- **How is Abijah's reign characterized, and what is the significance of his name?**
- Despite his name meaning "My father is Yahweh," Abijah is portrayed as committing the same sins as his father, Rehoboam. His heart was not fully devoted to God ("not complete for God"), leading him to continue the idolatrous practices of Judah.
- **What is the connection between Abijah's divided heart and his sinful actions?**
- Abijah's divided heart, partly devoted to God but also influenced by selfish desires, is presented as the reason for his sinful actions. Having a divided allegiance makes it impossible to live a life pleasing to God. Without full devotion, there will always be internal conflict hindering one's ability to fully follow God.
- **Despite the failings of Rehoboam and Abijah, why does God continue to support the Davidic line?**
- Despite the unfaithfulness of Rehoboam and Abijah, God continues to uphold the Davidic line "for David's sake," honoring the covenant made with David. This signifies God's faithfulness to his promises, establishing a "lamp" (dynasty) in Jerusalem. However, this does not negate the consequences of their actions or guarantee unconditional blessing.