

Monday, March 7th—Asa: King of Judah

1 Kings 15:8–24

2 Chronicles 14:1–16:14

At the beginning of his reign, King Asa of Judah did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord. His heart was wholly true to the Lord, for he removed the foreign altars and high places, broke down the pillars and Asherim, and commanded Judah to seek the Lord by keeping the law and the commandments. The Lord saw his faithfulness and rewarded him with ten years of peace and prosperity.

Even when there was the war against Zerah the Ethiopian, Asa interceded to the Lord on behalf of his men, pleading for help and relying solely upon God's mighty hand for deliverance. Once again, the Lord blessed Asa by defeating the Ethiopians and providing them with much spoil and plunder. It was through the godly encouragement of Azariah that Asa took courage and removed the idols from Judah and Benjamin. He repaired the altar of the Lord, offered up sacrifices with the spoil they received and made a covenant with his people to seek the Lord with all their heart and soul.

Near the end of his reign, Hanani the seer rebuked Asa for failing to rely on the Lord by relying on the king of Syria during his war with Baasha, and by relying on physicians when he had a disease in his feet. No man is blameless, not even King David. Thanks be to God for Asa's courage and faithfulness in restoring right worship among God's people. May God grant us the courage to strengthen our weak hands and seek the Lord and His Word in all circumstances, even in times of war and peace, in health and sickness, and in prosperity and famine. The Word of the Lord has proven true.

Tuesday, March 8th—Baasha: King of Israel

1 Kings 15:27–16:7

2 Chronicles 16:1–6

Like a dog that returns to its vomit, Baasha was a foolish king of Israel who returned to the folly of Jeroboam. He forsook the Lord who raised him from the dust and made him leader over Israel. In his twenty-four-year reign, he killed all the house of Jeroboam, walked in the sins of Jeroboam, caused Israel to sin, and provoked the Lord to anger. Because of this, the Lord declared that this foolish dog would be swept away and thrown out to be devoured by the dogs and birds of the heavens.

In Exodus 22:31, the Lord declared that any unclean flesh (cf. Matt 7:6) was to be thrown to the unclean dogs. Thus, those who defiled God's holy name or murdered God's holy people would be devoured by the birds and thrown to the dogs who would lick their blood. This was the fate of Ahab (1 Kings 21:19; 22:38), Jezebel (2 Kings 9:10), and God's unfaithful people (Jer 15:3).

For the sake of His holy name, God redeemed Israel from all their uncleanness and restored their relationship to Him. He purified and consecrated them, thus foreshadowing the outpouring of Christ's blood from the cross for the salvation of mankind. Christ's holy body was not thrown to the dogs and devoured like unclean flesh, but it was placed in an unused tomb. Christ's body was pierced, and his holy blood was shed to appease the Father's anger and to sanctify mankind to be a people for His own possession.

Wednesday, March 9th—Jehoshaphat: King of Judah

1 Kings 22:41–50

2 Chronicles 17:1–20:37

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, was a righteous and courageous man, but also a man of compromise. He allied himself with the ungodly not once, but twice: First, with Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, to go to war against the Aramites. A throng of four hundred false prophets spurred them on, and only the prophet Micaiah gave the true word of the Lord—that they should abandon their plan. Unsurprisingly, they were defeated by the Aramites. Unlike Ahab, Jehoshaphat escaped with his life.

Later, he also allied with Ahaziah, another ungodly king of Judah, to build ships to trade with Ophir and Tarshish. Another prophet, Eliezer, rebuked him and foretold the destruction of that navy. This was the result of his willingness to compromise and to join forces with the wicked. But the prophets of the Lord recognized that Jehoshaphat was in other respects a very good king, much like his father before him: He did away with many forms of idolatry, including the shameful “sacred” boy prostitutes, and strove hard to organize the teaching of the Law in each city. He also appointed judges to mete out justice to his people.

His greatest triumph was against the overwhelming invading forces of Moabites, Ammonites and Mount Seir. He despaired of his own strength and brought all Judah to pray to the Lord. By the word of the Lord, they were promised a victory without battle. And indeed, as they stood on the field singing the psalms, the invaders turned against each other and tore each other apart, leaving more plunder than the men of Judah could carry.

Faith in the Lord was Jehoshaphat’s greatest strength—but his weakness was to seek the help of wicked men. Let us consider such strengths and weaknesses in ourselves in these days. Let us continue to pray to the Lord for good and righteous leaders, but not to place all our trust in the hands of those who claim to be on our side. Jesus Christ is on our side, and He will preserve His church, no matter who holds the reigns of our government in these days.

First Sunday in Lent—Parable of Wheat & Tares:

Matthew 13:24b–30 The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.”’

What would you do if you heard that your work in progress had been ruined in secret by your enemy? A masterwork painting ruined by a generous splash of red paint? A magnificent house intentionally flooded with water and left to rot? An exquisite dish made inedible with the help of vinegar? Perhaps your first instinct would be to abandon the project and start from scratch. After all, it is only natural to feel frustrated and defeated when the effort and resources you have been seems wasted, and your vision is—to say the least—compromised.

Now consider the man of the parable. His servants were quick to suggest that the work of the enemy should immediately be undone. But the man would not let them. Why? Because they would inevitably undo some of his own work. He took so much pride in his own work that he would not let the sabotage of the enemy undo even a fraction of it. This would inevitably lead to much trouble and toil, but he was adamant that the good could be separated from the evil.

Such is the kingdom of heaven. The Lord is not fazed by the frenzied vandalism of the Devil. Instead, he lets the good grow with the bad, until both have matured and shown their fruits. He will not destroy the faithful souls in his Church with those of the wicked, but He will wait until the time of their harvest comes. Likewise, He is not disheartened with our daily shortcomings and sins, but He perseveres to finish the work that He has begun. The world might see His beloved masterwork as now blemished, he does not see it as such, for on the Last Day it will be purified, made clean, clear, and radiant.

Saturday, March 5th–Nadab: King of Israel

1 Kings 15:25–28 *Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.*

“When the wicked increase, transgression increases, but the righteous will look upon their downfall (Prov. 29:16).” With the passage of time, the increase of a wicked ruler and subsequent crime can become easily perceptible. With the passage of time, the errors and mistakes in your own life become more apparent, giving you the opportunity to distance yourself from them and confess them with less guilt and shame. It’s too easy to confess the mistakes you made two years ago. However, Wisdom’s call is the past *and* present discernment of evil that leads to a confession in the present time.

Wisdom’s call is the present discernment of evil. Nadab, in the two years he was given to reign over Israel, failed to discern the past evils of his father. He increased in evil by walking in the way of Jeroboam and causing Israel to stumble. Therefore, transgression increased during his two years of reign. Baasha conspired against him, struck him down during his siege of Gibbethon, and reigned over Israel in his place.

Two years seems like a short time, doesn’t it? Whether short or long, any passage of time can and will be used for the increase of evil. And yet, the righteous, who live every hour in the knowledge of their sin and their need for deliverance, will look upon the downfall of the wicked. Grow and increase, like the twelve-year-old Jesus, in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. In Christ, the passage of time yields abundant fruit.

Thursday, March 10th–Elah: King of Israel

1 Kings 16:6–14

1 Kings 16:8–12 *In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah. Now his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols.*

How does a great man continue his legacy? For that matter, how does any man set up a legacy that will continue long after he is dead? We have seen what Rehoboam did. He wanted to surpass his father’s legacy, so he took counsel with his young friends and sought to rule harshly.

As we look at Elah, we see the opposite type of son: a lazy, drunken party animal. His father Baasha was a great but evil king. God raised him up to punish Jeroboam, and he did—completely ending his royal line. All that Baasha accomplished was overturned by the ineptitude of his son Elah. Zimri, a military commander, struck him down while he was “drinking himself drunk” (1 Kings 16:9). Zimri proceeded to destroy the whole house of Baasha.

We ought to learn from Rehoboam and Elah, not only as we are children of those who have gone before us, but also as we have children who will follow after us. We ought to pass on the faith that which will last through all ages. We should avoid being purely reactionary to our fathers. Our fathers certainly help us know who we are, but they have their strengths and weaknesses. Our Heavenly Father has given us His Name by which we are truly known. His legacy continues whenever and wherever the Word is preached, heard, and believed.

Friday, March 11th—Jehoram (Joram): King of Judah

2 Kings 8:16–24

2 Chronicles 21:1–20

Joram, son of Jehoshaphat, ruled Judah while a man of the same name also ruled Israel—he in turn the son of Ahab. While Jehoshaphat was a godly king, his son brought to fruition the seeds of compromise that his father had sown during his reign. Despite the idolatry of Ahab and of all Israel, Joram son of Jehoshaphat had married Ahab's daughter. This led him to idolatry and wicked deeds in the eyes of the Lord.

Joram's first act as king was tremendously evil: He murdered all his brothers, whom his father had lavished with gifts of treasures and cities. Why? Perhaps jealousy, perhaps fear. It was not unprecedented, as Abimelech had done the same to his brothers (Judges 9). In this, Joram became a dark mirror image of Jesus Christ: Instead of laying down his own life for his brothers, he took theirs to seize their possessions. Joram's wickedness in murder was exacerbated by him leading the people of Jerusalem into fornication, and by him reinstating the "high places" where illicit sacrifices could be made.

The Lord was not blind to Joram's evil, and the prophet Elijah prophesied against him and his house. God raised up the Philistines and the Arabians to raid his castle, taking his treasures, his wife and all his children, save for one—Jehoahaz. Why did the Lord spare his youngest child? Because in his grace, He had promised to preserve the house of David. The wickedness of man cannot undo the promises of God. As for Joram himself, he suffered long as his intestines slowly burst through his stomach due to illness—just as Elijah had prophesied. Joram was not missed. While America or Canada or even Finland isn't the promised country of God, within these lands lie the promised land. Altars where Jesus Christ's body and blood are distributed to faithful believers. Pulpits where Jesus Christ crucified is proclaimed. God will remember His people and even the wickedness all around us will not undo His promises to us.

Friday, March 4th—Abijah (Abijam/Abia): King of Judah

1 Kings 14:34–15:8

2 Chronicles 13:1–22

King Abijah was Rehoboam's son and the chief prince among his twenty-eight brothers. His three-year reign, like all the days of his life, was fraught with the war between his father and Jeroboam, Solomon's servant. Because the son of David turned his heart away from the Lord, the Lord raised up Jeroboam to afflict the offspring of David by taking the kingdom from Solomon and dividing the tribes of Israel. However, the Lord would not afflict David's offspring forever. Because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn aside from His commandments, a lamp would be preserved in Jerusalem.

This lamp of David's kingship over Israel was preserved through King Abijah. Unlike Jeroboam, it is recorded that Abijah kept the charge of the Lord God and preserved the priestly service of Aaron and the Levites. Because they relied on the God their fathers, the Lord graciously preserved Judah by striking down Jeroboam and his 500,000 chosen men. Abijah, with his fourteen wives, twenty-two sons, and sixteen daughters, grew mighty until Asa his son reigned in his place.

Though the Lord granted victory to Abijah and temporary peace to his son, the Lord does not count these things as righteousness. Only God judges the hearts of men, and Abijah's heart was not found to be wholly true to the Lord his God. He did not depart from the sins of his father, but he walked in them and forsook the light of God's law. Now that the Light of David's Son and Lord has dawned in Christ Jesus, may the hearts of all men be found to be faithful and true, cleansed and redeemed by the King whose Word reigns as our Lamp and Light throughout all ages.

Thursday, March 3rd—Jeroboam: King of Israel

1 Kings 11:26–14:20

2 Chronicles 9:29–13:22

1st Kings 12:26–28. *And Jeroboam said in his heart, “Now the kingdom will turn back to the house of David. If this people go up to offer sacrifices in the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn again to their lord, to Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and return to Rehoboam king of Judah.” So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold. And he said to the people, “You have gone up to Jerusalem long enough. Behold your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”*

Jeroboam could have been a great king. He had the heart of the people, and unlike Rehoboam, he listened to his people. God also gave him the Northern Kingdom of Israel as a punishment against Solomon’s worship of the false gods. God promised to be with Jeroboam if he would be faithful as David was, who followed God’s commands and walked in God’s ways. And just as the kingdom was taken from Saul and handed to David, and David’s house would be established forever, so would God take the ten tribes and give them to Jeroboam and establish his house forever.

But Jeroboam wasn’t another David; he was another Saul. He didn’t fear God, but he feared losing his power to God. While the kingdom itself was divided, both sides intended to remain united in their worship of the one true God. That scared Jeroboam, even beyond his faith in God’s promises to him. So he abandoned God’s teaching, just as his ancestors had done, and erected golden calves in his own kingdom. He didn’t want the 10 tribes crossing the border into Judah to go to the temple that Solomon had built for Jesus Christ.

That hits home after these last years. We’re too scared of this virus, so here’s this virtual temple that we’ve constructed to keep you safe. God’s Word clearly says to meet together, but surely He can’t mean that when it might be dangerous. The blood of the martyrs begs to differ. This Lenten season, confess your sins, repent of them, and receive the forgiveness of Jesus, not remotely through a screen, but from the called and ordained man God has placed in your midst. Don’t let God’s promises be ripped away from you like they were ripped away from Jeroboam, trust in all of God’s promises to you. Amen.

Saturday, March 12th—Zimri: King of Israel

1 Kings 16:9–20

1st Kings 16:16–19. *Now the people who were encamped heard it said, “Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king.” So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king’s house and burned the king’s house down upon himself with fire, and died, because of the sins which he had sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin.*

Haven’t you heard of the mighty King Zimri? You haven’t? Well, I don’t blame you. His reign was an amazingly long seven whole days. He had been the captain of King Elah’s chariots, leading as much as half of the king’s army. But while the bulk of the army was away besieging the town of Gibbethon in the country allotted to the tribe of Dan, Zimri saw his opportunity. The king was drunk, and so Zimri struck. After assuming the throne for himself, he wiped out the entire family of the king, according to God’s judgment on the house of Baasha.

But while Zimri was an agent of God’s justice, he certainly wasn’t a follower of our Lord. He was simply a greedy man who seized an opportunity when it presented itself. And he hung onto that greed to the bitter end. Rather than submit himself to his superior and the man chosen by the army to be king (Omri), he literally burned it all down. He took himself to the palace and burnt it down all around him.

I can empathize with that. There are times when I just want to watch the whole world burn, even if the flames take me too. The evil seems so pervasive that surely it would be worth my sacrifice to burn it all down with me. But just as Zimri’s death didn’t solve the problems that Israel faced, neither would our deaths solve the problems that we’re faced with. Evil will survive the fire and will scatter our ashes to the wind. But there is one whose death that evil cannot survive, one who overcomes death itself. He isn’t the unrighteous man who died for his greed; He is the righteous man who died for our greed, and all our other sins. And His reign won’t be short, it will be everlasting. So hold onto that hope in these dark days when the weight of your sins presses down upon you. Amen.

Second Sunday in Lent—Parable of the Mustard Seed

Matthew 13:31b–32 *The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.*

The tiniest mustard seed grows into a great tree, giving shelter to the birds of the heavens. This is the Kingdom of Heaven, the dominion of Jesus Christ. This is not the only image of kingship in the Scriptures. Another one is in the book of Judges (ch. 9), of the murderous rule of Abimelech son of Jerubbaal, who conspired with the men of Shechem to be made king. He murdered all 70 of his brothers but the youngest, Jotham. The last survivor spoke a parable of his rule, comparing him not to the noble olive tree, the sweet fig tree, or the cheerful vine, but to the lowly bramble. The trees of the forest want to have a king, but all the good ones decline the honor. The spiteful bramble, however, is quick to seize the opportunity. The arrogance of the bramble knows no bounds. He even dares to invite the cedars of Lebanon to take shelter under his branches, only to light them on fire.

The Kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of spiteful and impudent brambles, but of peaceful breezes among the green leaves. Even the gentlest of heavenly creatures find shelter in the branches. Is this not an image of the union of heaven and earth? In Christ, heaven and earth are united in kisses of peace.

This Kingdom is tiny and often concealed by all the other plants. It does not brag of itself. It does not care to overshadow the plants of the garden. But it will finally be elevated to a great stature there. The tiny and humble mustard seed will grow to be the great tree of Paradise. Such is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, our beloved Lord and Savior.

Ash Wednesday—Rehoboam: King of Judah

1 Kings 11:42–14:31

2 Chronicles 9:31–12:16

2nd Chronicles 12:13a, 14. *So King Rehoboam grew strong in Jerusalem and reigned. ... And he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the Lord.*

1st Kings 14:22–24. *And Judah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. For they also built for themselves high places and pillars and Asherim on every high hill and under every green tree, and there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.*

Rehoboam was the son of Solomon, who inherited the Kingdom of Israel, but he wasn't Solomon. He was like his father in all the worst ways. He has Solomon's confidence without his wisdom. We could dwell on the many ways in which Rehoboam divided the kingdom, but God had already determined to take the kingdom from him before he was ever on the throne due to his father Solomon's turning away from the faith (1 Kings 11:11–13). But for all his political failures, none of them was his greatest folly.

His greatest folly was rejecting the faith of his father. His father was given divine wisdom from God, and he wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, and yet Rehoboam still turned away from the Lord. In a twisted sort of a way, we want to take some comfort in this by thinking, "See, if even the great Solomon can't get this parenting thing right, my failures as a parent don't look so bad." Unfortunately, regardless of what Solomon said and wrote, his actions spoke louder than his words, since in his later years Solomon abandoned the Lord. How often do we find ourselves in that same position? We claim that God is the most important thing in our lives, yet our Bibles gather dust on our shelves while our heads look nonstop at our phones. We can't find the book of Isaiah in the Bible without looking in the table of contents, but we can tell you the numbers associated with each channel on TV. This Lenten season, consider tearing down the high places in your land, in your life, and in your house, and return to the Lord. Return to the Lord for He is gracious and merciful, abounding in kindness and steadfast love, Amen.

The Mad Christian Paendragon: Rev. Jonathan Fisk
(The Illusive Man)

Project Lead: Rev. Jon Franson (Nythrius)

Editor: Rev. Joshua Woelmer (jwoelmer2)

Cover Artist: Sem. Philip Wortmann (Philypocrite)

Contributors:

Rev. Jon Franson (Nythrius)

Rev. Joshua Woelmer (jwoelmer2)

Sem. Joshua J Radke (Radke)

Rev. Tuomas Salo (Vodrilus)

Sem. David Woelmer (dwoelmer)

Rev. Daniel Greg (Rev Soap)

Sem. Jonah Laws (gijonah)

A Note from Rev. Franson (Nythrius):

You will need your Bible! This devotional is a study on the kings of Israel & Judah, but we cannot possibly fit the entire reign of each king in this booklet. Some of the entries will have a selection from the Scripture reading printed, but others will not. With every devotional, there will be a selection from the books of Kings and Chronicles listed that contains the record of their rule. Please read those passages to get a full understanding of what the devotional writer is saying.

Come quickly, O Jesus Christ, King of Kings. Amen.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the NKJV Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. All rights reserved.

The Sons of Solomon Discipline:

The Sons of Solomon is an ecumenical prayer habitus of catholic Christian men worldwide focused on the Psalms and Proverbs. We agree on what we all confess: The Three Ecumenical Creeds. We pray the prayers God gave us to pray, and seek together the wisdom that is from above.

How?

1. Carry a bible, prayer book, and crucifix with you.
What is a prayer book?

Anything that points you back to the scriptures in your daily life: a hymnal, catechism, theological book...Anything by which you find inspiration to open, read and ponder the scriptures
Is this required at all times?

We are not practitioners of Judaism.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any."
Do not abandon prudence, practice wisdom and discipline.
Let the image of the perfect man be your spiritual focus.

2. Meditate on a Proverb every day.
How might one do that?

Translate the Proverb into your own words. Carry that thought with you on a piece of paper for a day. Pray that you might use the thought in a conversation. Leave the note alone for a week, then read it again and repeat the process. Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the wisdom of the Holy Scriptures. Let the author teach you wisdom, that you may be thoroughly equipped.

3. Read the Psalms of the Diaspora each day:
Morning: Psalms 123, 125, 127
Mid-day: Psalms 124, 129
Vespers: Psalms 126, 128
Evening: Psalms 130, 131

Learn more about this disciple at <https://sonsofsolomon.net/>

The Daughters of Wisdom Discipline:
Mothers, Sisters, Daughters, pray for the Patriarchy. Pray for the blessings God has promised. Pray for God's will to be done.

Morning: Psalm 133, 1 Samuel 2: 1-10

Meditate on how joyous it is when brothers dwell together in unity!
For additional morning encouragement, add the Song of Hannah, the mother of Samuel, as she gives thanks to God.

Midday: Proverbs 31

The Wisdom of the mother of King Lemuel. Meditate on the promises God gives to the wife that trust his words. Meditate on the blessings you are given. Consider the life presented therein, and rejoice in it.

Vespers: Psalm 135 (optional)

Remember the mighty works of the LORD Jesus, and remember the folly of those who trust in idols of silver and gold (and plastic).

Compline: Psalm 134, Magnificat

Bless the LORD Jesus at the end of the day, and add in the Song of Mary, the mother of our LORD, as she gives thanks to God.

Learn more about this disciple at <https://sonsofsolomon.net/dow>

*Lenten devotional for Christians who wait for the King of Kings
Ash Wednesday - Second Sunday in Lent*

