



Main Idea: Only God is our King.

Scripture: 1 Kings 14-15, Romans 10:9-10

Hey everyone! I am [name] and we are so glad you are here. We are starting a new series today called Anarchy. Google defines Anarchy as “a state of disorder due to absence or nonrecognition of authority” and I think it’s very timely considering the state of things. War in the middle east, assassination attempts on former presidents, explicit social media, cancel culture running rampant, and a whole bunch of other problems you already personally experience every day can make it feel like our world is living in a state of anarchy where there is mass chaos and no one or nothing in control. On the other end of the spectrum and across the big pond (The Atlantic Ocean), is a world that lives under a monarchy which is where a single king or queen reigns above government structures and has the final say, so they basically have total control. The goal of this series is to investigate the kind of Kingdom God desires for us to live within, and I don’t believe it involves anarchy.

Today, we are going to travel back to ancient Israel to examine a few of their monarchs, but especially one in particular, King Asa, who, aside from King David, was one of the few Israelite kings to get it right. But first, you may need some context as this is not a typical passage of Scripture we study in church often.

The Israelites had been saved from the oppressing hand of Egypt and had been given the promised land God appointed for them: Canaan. As they fought for and settled into their land, they appointed judges - a religious chief of sorts - to rule them as they followed God’s commands via His laws and His prophets. While they encountered these other nations, they noticed they all had kings. And what happens when you see someone with something new, shiny, or interesting? You want it too. So, Israel begged their judge, Samuel, to appoint a king so they could look like other nations, even though it was against God’s desires or timing for one single person to rule over His people.

All 12 tribes of Israel were then led by three Kings: Saul, David, and Solomon, under what scholars consider the “united monarchy.” There is SO

much more to these three kings that we do not have time for, but King Solomon fell into evil ways, ignited God's wrath against his reign, and the people of Israel revolted against their own tribes. This is how we got the divided kingdom of Israel and Judah, and this is the setting in which we find ourselves as we examine King Asa. Our main passage of Scripture is found in 1 Kings 15:9-15.

1 Kings 15:9-15 (NLT)

“Asa began to rule over Judah in the twentieth year of Jeroboam’s reign in Israel. He reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His grandmother was Maacah, the granddaughter of Absalom. Asa did what was pleasing in the Lord’s sight, as his ancestor David had done. He banished the male and female shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his ancestors had made. He even deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made an obscene Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole and burned it in the Kidron Valley. Although the pagan shrines were not removed, Asa’s heart remained completely faithful to the Lord throughout his life. He brought into the Temple of the Lord the silver and gold and the various items that he and his father had dedicated.”

Now, there is some good stuff here and we will get more into it, but on the surface, it seems that this passage of the Bible has some good stuff to say about King Asa, right? These were like the highlights of Asa’s accomplishments.

If Asa had a baseball card, these specs would be very good: he did right by God, banished evil, removed false idols, had a good heart, and brought God gifts.

According to the Bible, Asa was a good king and a good leader, but more importantly, he was a good man of faith.

As we read this, it is evident that there is obviously more to the story; King Asa’s job required him to do some controversial work within his country and confront difficult decisions. Why were there male prostitutes? Why did his father make false idols to other gods? And what was going on with his grandmother?

It started one page over with the kingdom of his grandfather, Rehoboam.

1 Kings 14:22-24 (NLT)

“During Rehoboam’s reign, the people of Judah did what was evil in the Lord’s sight, provoking his anger with their sin, for it was even worse than that of their ancestors. For they also built for themselves pagan shrines and set up sacred pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. There were even male and female shrine prostitutes throughout the land. The people imitated the detestable practices of the pagan nations the Lord had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites.”

King Rehoboam was the leader of had of God’s great nation where the Temple resided, and his people started to slip away from the faith and way of life they once clung to for their salvation.

They instead built altars and shrines that looked like the nations around them that did not serve God. They put up sacred pillars and Asherah poles, and we don’t really know what the functions of these pillars or poles were, but it alerted the community that it was a sacred religious location devoted to another god.

They put “sacred slaves” of sorts to please those coming to the shrines to make their sacrifices, which was outlawed in the law of Moses. They traded their faith to blend in with the other religions around them.

But Rehoboam did nothing to stop their wayward actions. As king, their job, especially in Israel, was meant to lead the nation in governance, law, AND faith... pretty much to be in control of all of it. However, he allowed his kingdom to choose however they wanted to live. He allowed the surrounding nations to impact his people’s way of life. And so, my first point is this:

1) The world tries to determine who is King.

Not only was the kingdom full of people making unwise choices, so was the family line of Kings. The story goes on.

1 Kings 14:31-15:1-3 (NLT)

“When Rehoboam died, he was buried among his ancestors in the City of David. His mother was Naamah, an Ammonite woman. Then his son Abijam became the next king. Abijam began to rule over Judah in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam’s reign in Israel. He reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother was Maacah, the granddaughter of Absalom. He committed the same sins as his father before him, and he was not faithful to the Lord his God, as his ancestor David had been.”

Rehoboam did not exactly have a good track record. In fact, you could say a once great and thriving nation, solely devoted to God, was now divided and then tainted with sin. Obviously, there was still sin before, but the nation became weaker and worse off due to the amount of their wickedness. Rehoboam passed this tainted nation to his son who had a chance to rectify wrongs and turn things around for the better.

But that is not how Abijam decided to play out his role as King. No, he followed in the same footsteps of his father and even committed the same sins.

[Note: There are portions of Scripture that may refer to generational sins, meaning the sins and its punishments are passed from father to son. This isn’t what we are talking about.]

Abijam had seen how his dad led as king and followed in his footsteps, falling victim to the same sins as Rehoboam.

This passage also gives us insight to King Asa’s grandmother, Maacah. Earlier, we read that Maacah was a queen mother or *Gebirah* in Hebrew. A *Gebirah* was the highest authoritative position a woman could hold in a kingdom and was a part of the royal court, meaning she was also the most influential woman; even the Kings would listen to their mother! Maacah decided to use this power to influence her son and his kingdom to commit idolatry and divert the worship of Judah away from God. This leads me to my second point:

2) People close to you try to determine who is King.

While all of this was happening in Judah, King Jeroboam was ruling over Israel. Jeroboam was an official of King Solomon who dethroned him with God’s approval. God gave Jeroboam a chance to lead His people right



Main Idea: God's Kingdom is unlike any other.

Scripture: Mark 1:15, John 12:1-15, Philippians 3:20, John 14:27

- If you could live in any other country, what would it be and why?
- Is there something you love that is unique about America? Or is there something you like that is unique about another country or ruler?
- What do you think the Kingdom of God meant to a Jew waiting for the Messiah? What type of kingdom were they expecting?
- Read John 12:1-15. What is the significance of what Mary did and Jesus' entry to Jerusalem?
- How does our humble King Jesus contrast the rulers of the world today?
- Do you think the character of a leader matters/impacts how citizens live? If you have an example, share a time a leader led, and people followed (for good or bad).
- A nation has laws, and the Kingdom of God has a lifestyle. Using the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5 or what you know about Jesus, what characteristics should a person in the Kingdom of God exhibit?
- What do you think Christians are most known for right now? If it isn't what you just answered in the previous question, why do you think there is a difference?
- Fake peace is when something/someone offers a temporary solution that appears as peace but does not satisfy the soul. What kind of fake peace do you see plaguing our world?
- If you could have Jesus say, "Peace, be still" into any situation in your life right now, what would it be? It could be personal, political, global, etc.

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