

Lesson 12 25 October, 2020

Abijah Wars Against Jeroboam

Lesson Scope: [2 Chronicles 13](#)

References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

After Rehoboam's death, his son Abijah reigned for three years as the second king of Judah. In many ways his reign was similar to his father's. War between Judah and the Northern Kingdom continued. Abijah bravely set his army in position against Jeroboam, though he had much less experience in War than Jeroboam and an army only half the size of Israel's. Only with God's help could he hope to be victorious.

By relying on God, Abijah won a decisive victory over Israel so that Israel did not pose a threat for the rest of Abijah's reign. Though Abijah walked in the sins of his father, yet God aided him for His servant David's sake (1 Kings 15:3-4).

Though we note spiritual failure in Judah, God chose to Work with them. The Northern Kingdom had, by contrast, turned to idol worship and lost God's blessing and favour.

Those who reject the Lord pose a threat to God's people. Fidelity in worship and faith in the Lord are keys to victory.

This account from Old Testament history illustrates how God guides, protects, and defends His people today. The world around us, the fleshly nature within us, and the devil himself conspire to defeat us. As you teach this lesson, look for those principles we can apply to the spiritual conflicts of our time. We need to remind ourselves and other faithful Christian that "greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Lesson Aim: To present principles for prevailing against evil forces.

Theme Verses: [Ephesians 6:10-11](#). Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the Whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the Wiles of the devil.

Lesson Text

Identifying the Challenge

2 Chronicles 13:1-12

¹ (KJV) Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam began Abijah to reign over Judah. ² He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Michaiiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. ³ And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, *even* four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, *being* mighty men of valour. ⁴ And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which *is* in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel; ⁵ Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, *even* to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt? ⁶ Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord. ⁷ And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them. ⁸ And now ye think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD in the hand of the sons of David; and ye *be* a great multitude, and *there are* with you golden calves, which Jeroboam made you for gods. ⁹ Have ye not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and have made you priests after the manner of the nations of *other* lands? so that whosoever cometh to consecrate himself with a young bullock and seven rams, *the same* may be a priest of *them that are* no gods. ¹⁰ But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken him; and the priests, which minister unto the LORD, *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *wait upon their* business: ¹¹ And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also *set they in order* upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him. ¹² 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 ye not against the LORD God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper.

Relying on God

2 Chronicles 13:13-15

¹³ (KJV) But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment *was* behind them. ¹⁴ And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle *was* before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets. ¹⁵ Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

Prevailing in Victory

2 Chronicles 13:18-20

¹⁸ (KJV) Thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied upon the LORD God of their fathers. ¹⁹ And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Bethel with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof. ²⁰ Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died.

Questions for Study

Identifying the Challenge

1. How could Abijah have courage to face an army twice the size of his?
2. In What ways had Jeroboam rebelled against God?
3. Why is proper Worship essential for spiritual victory?

Relying on God

4. What advantages did Jeroboam have over Abijah?
5. What did Judah do to win the battle? What did God do?
6. How can we be assured of victory against the spiritual foes we face?

Prevailing in Victory

7. In what practical ways can we demonstrate our reliance upon God?
8. What can an individual do to contribute to the victory of the group?

Analysing the Passage

Abijah's speech upon the mount shows that he understood that God's covenant with David was sure. "A covenant of salt" was an everlasting covenant, symbolized by the preserving quality of salt. Yet Abijah mentioned this to imply that he had a right to rule over all the tribes of Isra-

el. He failed to acknowledge that the ten tribes of Israel were taken away from the rule of David's descendants due to the failure of Solomon. Jeroboam was God-appointed to reign in the Northern Kingdom. Jeroboam's failure lay in his rejection of God and his institution of idolatry.

Though Judah retained the temple worship, the priestly office, and sacrifices to the true God, they were not entirely free of idolatry. Yet God fought for them because they looked to Him for help.

Ambushment is a surprise attack launched by soldiers kept in hiding. From the standpoint of military tactics and the size of his army, it appeared that Jeroboam held a definite advantage over Abijah. But God overruled the situation and fought for Judah by smiting Israel, giving Judah a great victory. Judah gained a few towns on the northern border between Israel and Judah, including Bethel, one of the places where Jeroboam had set up golden calves.

Principles and Applications

Identifying the Challenge

1. Strength and courage are required to face the enemy (13:3). The forces of evil often outnumber the forces of good. The people of God, though less numerous, find their strength in the God they serve. Their courage stems from their confidence that God will aid them in their struggles with the enemy. They face the enemy courageously. They do not flee, compromise, or surrender.

2. The knowledge of God's past work and present will is essential to prevailing (13:5). In our spiritual battles today, we draw confidence and courage from knowing how God has worked in the past, sustaining and protecting His people in the face of tremendous odds. He, with unerring wisdom, guides, guards, and defends His people. In all ages God's people have been victorious by looking to God. He is "our help in ages past" and "our hope for years to come."

3. Knowledge of the enemy's goals, tactics, and weaknesses will aid in defeating him (13:7-9). What is the enemy trying to do to us? What does he hope to gain? The enemy's tricks may seem to guarantee victory, but the enemy is not all-powerful as our God is. An awareness that our spiritual enemy is, in many ways, stronger than we, should cause us to look to God for our help.

4. Proper worship is required before we can claim God's help (13:10). Not only are right procedures and proper forms of worship important but also a corresponding life of righteous conduct. Today many flesh-pleasing features have become common in religious gatherings. God knows whether those who come before Him to worship have surrendered their hearts to Him.

5. Victory is promised to those who make God the Lord of their lives (13:12). We can be assured of God's help in the conflicts we face when He is made Lord of all our life. We can expect victory when we march according to His orders. Those who fail to honour God as Lord cannot claim Him as Saviour. It sounds like a paradox, but we win the victory over the enemy by surrender to God.

Relying on God

6. We overcome the enemy by recognizing our weakness and crying out to God for aid (13:14-15). We are unable to gain victory in our own human strength. If we rely on our strength, we are sure to fail. When we feel overwhelmed in the conflicts of life, we must look to "the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2). We must be on guard against the pressures from worldly or apostate friends and relatives.

7. Victory comes to those who courageously engage the enemy (13:15-16). God's people know that their cooperation with Him is the key to victory over the enemy. Knowing that we are in the will of God gives us confidence to engage the enemy. God gives us the victory. We do not gain it in our own strength.

Prevailing in Victory

8. Those who wholly rely on God will prevail (13:18). We remember how Israel's defeat at Ai came as a shock because they failed to seek God's direction. Since the city was small, they sent a small group to attack the city, believing it would be easy to conquer. Let us not fail to rely on God every time, placing no confidence in self.

9. When we prevail over the enemy, we win new territory and greater strength (13:19-20). The devil has many strongholds throughout the World. In the midst of them are colonies (churches) of godly people in whose lives the enemy is defeated. Let us be diligent to extend the borders of God's kingdom today.

Important Teachings

1. Strength and courage are required to face the enemy (13:3).
2. The knowledge of God's past work and present will is essential to prevailing (13:15).
3. Knowledge of the enemy's goals, tactics, and weaknesses will aid in defeating him (13:7-9).
4. Proper worship is required before we can claim God's help (13:10).
5. Victory is promised to those who make God the Lord of their lives (13:12).
6. We overcome the enemy by recognizing our weakness and crying out to God for aid (13:14-15).
7. Victory comes to those who courageously engage the enemy (13:15-16).
8. Those who wholly rely on God will prevail (13:18).
9. When we prevail over the enemy, we win new territory and greater strength (13:19-20).

Answers to Questions

1. How could Abijah have courage to face an army twice the size of his?

He knew the power of the God he served and in whom he trusted for victory. He knew the golden calves Jeroboam's army worshiped were powerless to defend them.

2. In what ways had Jeroboam rebelled against God?

He had forsaken the worship of God and set up golden calves for his people to worship. He cast out the priests God had called to serve and set up other priests to lead in idol worship. He fought against God by going to war against Judah.

3. Why is proper worship essential for spiritual victory?

God comes to the aid of those who fear Him and serve Him in sincerity and in truth. Those who expect God's help in time of need must worship Him in spirit and in truth at all times. God had made it plain how He is to be worshiped and under what conditions He is to be worshiped acceptably.

4. What advantages did Jeroboam have over Abijah?

His army was twice the size of Abijah's. His tactic of an ambushment from behind to trap Abijah's army put him at an advantage.

5. What did Judah do to win the battle? What did God do?

Judah cried to the Lord. The priests blew the trumpets, calling the people to stand together against the enemy. They shouted in victory before the battle began, showing their confidence in God's ability to defeat the enemy. God smote Jeroboam and all Israel, giving Judah a decisive victory so that Jeroboam no longer troubled Judah.

6. How can we be assured of victory against the spiritual foes we face? We must be realistic about our inability to overcome the enemy in our own strength. We must acknowledge that our enemies are stronger than we are and will surely overcome us unless we have someone to help us. We must confidently look to God, who can give us the victory.

7. In what practical ways can we demonstrate our reliance upon God? We should not trust in our own cleverness or ingenuity to outsmart the enemy. We should not depend on our financial resources, on commercial insurances, or on litigation to insulate us from difficulty or danger. We should not expect the government with its military might to put down infidels and all others who might oppose us. We, in simple faith, claim God as our shield and defender. We pray for His help. Having done that, we can lie down in peace and sleep, placing ourselves in God's tender keeping.

8. What can an individual do to contribute to the victory of the group? As individuals we should avoid placing confidence in ourselves and in our own strength. When we each move in step with other faithful persons, it boosts our own faith and confidence. We can claim victory together when we are united behind one cause and one goal. "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27).

Summarizing the Lesson

When God's people look to Him in the time of battle, they can count on His help to gain the victory over their enemies. Those who depend on their own strength or on other sources of help will be defeated. Without God we have much to fear. With God we have no fear. "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Hebrews 13:6).

Research Guide

See the parallel passage in 1 Kings 15:1-8. Here Abijah's name is given as Abijam, and his character is more fully described.