

2 Chronicles 14 • Asa Part I: Allowing God to Reign

Introduction

[Note: This study is suitable in and of itself, but it is recommended to follow-up with the second part to see the complete picture of the example of King Asa.]

What we should be drawing out of our reading of the kings of Judah is not so much the historical facts as the example they provide of both a personal relationship with God and how that is a good or bad example to others as a spiritual leader. Whether one was a prophet, priest, or king, they were supposed to be a living example of the right way to live according to God's Word, just as we are supposed to be to others today. Just as there are personal versus corporate consequences for sin, there are like benefits for obedience. The real value of studying each character in the Bible is in personally comparing and contrasting them to our own behavior and beliefs.

¹So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David, and his son Asa became king in his place. The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days.

²Asa did good and right in the sight of the LORD his God, ³for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim, ⁴and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment.

⁵He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. And the kingdom was undisturbed under him.

[Read v.1-5]

Q: What does it mean when a king is identified as having done “good and right in the sight of the LORD his God”? Does it mean he led a perfect life?

A: It's not that he led a perfect life, but were usually faithful to God's Word and ways even when they faltered. Although we know that in the end Asa develops a “listening” problem when it comes to his relationship with God, he does not do what bad kings are most noted for, leading the people back into idolatry and false worship. Even during his personal down-turns, he upholds the Word of God regarding his overall government, the operation of the temple and the priesthood, and encouraging the people in general to follow God's ways. He doesn't lead them back into sin.

Q: Other kings appear to have done some of the same things as Asa regarding the removal of idols and places of false worship. What is the additional step Asa takes which is not actually something every good king did?

A: In conjunction with removing the idols, he “commanded Judah to seek the LORD...and to observe the law and the commandment”. In other words, he didn't stop at removing “things”, but sought to reform them from the heart by inducing personal obedience to God's Word.

Point: You can make a show of burning all your “evil” rock-and-roll records, but if you haven't embraced God's Word to the degree that your heart and behavior have changed, you'll find yourself going right back and replacing those things either with exact duplicates or something similar to fill the “void”.

Q: How do we know that not all of the things and places of false worship were removed?

A: It's specifically limited to the southern kingdom of Judah. The northern kingdom of Israel continued to embrace those things.

Application: Is there anything from your old life that you're having difficulty letting go? Or something you repeatedly let go but also keep returning to? Do you see the connection between this issue and a personal commitment to God's Word?

⁶He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest. ⁷For he said to Judah, “Let us build these cities and surround *them* with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.” So they built and prospered.

⁸Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors.

⁹Now Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah. ¹⁰So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

¹¹Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, “LORD, there is no one besides You to help *in the battle* between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You.”

¹²So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. ¹³Asa and the people who were with him pursued them as far as Gerar; and so many Ethiopians fell that they could not recover, for they were shattered before the LORD and before His army. And they carried away very much plunder. ¹⁴They destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and they despoiled all the cities, for there was much plunder in them. ¹⁵They also struck down those who owned livestock, and they carried away large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

[Read v.6-7]

Q: What did Asa do with the peace provided by God? What kind of steward was he with that which God entrusted to him?

A: Asa took advantage of the “good” times to build and strengthen them in the Lord. Whereas some kings and people backslid during times of peace because they didn’t feel the need for a sustained commitment to the Lord, they were faithful in times of peace to build upon what God provided.

Point: *There are many biblical examples of people running to God in times of trouble, but this is one of the few where they allowed God to reign in times of peace. This is probably why they were able to deal correctly with the problem to come.*

Application: *Just as an athlete trains for race day, can you see that a sustained commitment to God in times of prosperity develops the character to remain committed during times of trial? How do you/are you/should you treat times of peace?*

[Read v.8-15]

Q: How might Asa’s prayer to God in v.11 relate to the work they did in v.6-8?

A: Although they undertook programs to strengthen their positions and equip an army, they did not come to trust in those things over and above God. Asa’s admission regarding all their earthly endeavors is that they are “*those who have no strength, so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You*”.

Application: *Do you have possessions, skills, experience, etc. which you believe you can rely on because they were given by God? How well do you acknowledge the continued need for God to always be in charge of them?*

Q: Because they’ve been faithful and built-up spiritually in the times of peace leading up to this, what wisdom have they gained? How do they correctly discern and describe the situation they’re in?

A: “*Let not man prevail against You*”. (v.11) They recognize that what is taking place physically in their land is actually a greater spiritual issue. They’re more concerned for God’s name than their own.

Q: What confirms that there is a greater spiritual issue at work here?

A: In v.12 it states that “*the LORD routed the Ethiopians*”. Victory came not by man’s will or strength, but God’s. It’s further substantiated in v.14 when stated, “*the dread of the LORD had fallen on them*”.

Point: *Asa not only fostered an environment which allowed God to reign in times of peace, but to reign in times of war as well. Because of their commitment during the years of peace, they were ready in the most important way that matters during a time of crisis – they were ready spiritually.*