

**1 Kings 15.9-24**

**Asa: “Because you relied on the LORD” [2 Chronicles 16.8]**

**Read 1 Kings 15.9-24 & 2 Chronicles 14-16**

### I / MAKING THE CONNECTION

1. After the united kingdom of Israel was divided, from now on, the stories of the various kings in **1-2 Kings** will alternate back and forth between accounts for the kings of **the northern kingdom called ‘Israel’** and **the southern kingdom called ‘Judah.’** So you need to look for that reference as you read the various accounts to keep track of which kingdom the king reigned over.
2. Also, each king’s overall record is evaluated by the phrase **“he did right in the eyes of the LORD”** or **“he did evil in the eyes of the LORD”** / **“and he walked in the sins that his father had done before him,”** or some similar overall assessment.
3. The king we will learn from in this lesson is King Asa of Judah.
4. He is the third king to reign over the southern kingdom of Judah:
  - a. Rehoboam
  - b. Abijam [or Abijah / **2 Chronicles 13.1**]
  - c. and Asa.

Each of these kings is the son of the king who reigned before him.

5. Asa’s fuller story is told in **2 Chronicles, chapters 14-16**, so we will toggle references from the **2 Chronicles** account as we try to fill in some of the pertinent acts of his reign.
6. Asa reigned for 41 years / **1 Kings 15.9-10 & 2 Chronicles 16.13**
7. Overall...
 

**“Asa did what right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his father had done” / 1 Kings 15.11**  
**“And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God” / 2 Chronicles 14.2**
8. He did have some lapses of his faith in Yahweh his God and some egregious acts of disobedience, especially in his last years – but his overall good assessment is recorded to his credit.
9. What we want to do here is to sketch out some of the prominent chapters of his life and reign as they are recorded in the Scriptures ... and learn from them.
 

**“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” / Romans 15.4**

### **II / ASA WAS A ‘RADICAL REFORMER’ IN JUDAH / vv 9-15**

1. Here are some of the several acts of sweeping reformation Asa instituted in Judah as he sought to rid the kingdom of the idolatrous and obscene rituals of worship that had become commonplace and the ‘norm’ in Judah’s worship
2. ...keeping in mind that these same idolatrous practices had been introduced generations before him, going all the way back even to Solomon [**ch 11.3-8, 33**] and his grandfather Rehoboam [**ch 14.22-24**].
  - a. He put away the male cult prostitutes out of the land / **v 12a**
  - b. He removed all the idols that his fathers had made / **v 12b**
  - c. He also removed Maacah his mother [grandmother] from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah / **v 13a**
  - d. And Asa cut down her image and burned it at the brook Kidron / **v 13b**
  - e. And he brought into the house of the LORD [*this was the Temple Solomon had built for the worship of Yahweh, chs 6-8*] the sacred gifts of his father and his own sacred gifts, silver, and gold, and vessels / **v 15**

3. All of these reforms were his efforts to re-establish the worship of Yahweh in Judah after they had become entrenched in their idolatrous 'love affairs' and vile worship practices of all the false gods of the nations around them.

### III / ASA RELIED ON YAHWEH FOR AN ASTOUNDING MILITARY VICTORY / 2 Chronicles 14.1-15

1. Let's pick up this story from **2 Chronicles 14** that graphically illustrates how God will fight for us and give us awesome victories even over the most formidable of our foes if we will trust and rely on Him.
2. This battle occurs after about ten years of peace and rest from wars and the assaults of their enemies / **see 2 Chronicles 14.1, 5b, 6a, 6b, 7**
3. Yahweh had given Asa this period of peace so he could begin to enact the religious reforms that were in his heart because **'the heart of Asa was wholly true to the LORD all his days' [1 Kings 15.14]**.
4. There was an attack from the south of Jerusalem by Zerah the Ethiopian. They came up from the north of Africa as far as Mareshah, only about 25 miles SW of Jerusalem.
5. This was a formidable army, an insurmountable foe, of 1,000,000 soldiers and 300 chariots / **v 9**
6. Asa knew he and Judah's forces were vastly outnumbered and they had no chariots! **BUT THEY HAD A GOD – YAHWEH!**
  - a. Here is a good testimony to God's promise: **"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" / Romans 8.31**
7. So – what does Asa 'say to these things'? [You need to mark this prayer and promise in your Bible so you can go back to it and pray and trust in when you are faced with your own insurmountable threats against you!]
 

**"And Asa cried out to Yahweh his God, 'O Yahweh, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Yahweh our God, for we rely on you, and your Name we have come against this multitude. O Yahweh, you are our God; let not man prevail against you!'" / v 11**
8. Yahweh did defeat the Ethiopians. In fact, **verse 13** says: **"for they were broken before Yahweh and His army!"** And Yahweh gave all the spoils of that battle to Asa and Judah. And He will do the same for you and me!

### IV / ASA IS FURTHER CHALLENGED AND CHARGED TO TAKE COURAGE FROM THIS VICTORY TO CONTINUE WITH HIS REFORMS / 2 Chronicles 15.1-19

1. Yahweh placed his Spirit on one of His prophets, Azariah, to meet Asa on his way back to Jerusalem with this charge:
 

**"Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Yahweh is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you..." / vv 1-2**

**"But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded" / v 7**
2. So Asa continued on still further with his reforms to restore the worship of Yahweh to Judah.
3. He even went so far as to proclaim a mandatory covenant for all Judah to forsake their idols and commit themselves to worship Yahweh only – under the penalty of death if they didn't!
 

**"And they entered into a covenant to seek Yahweh, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul..."** **"And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought Him with their whole desire, and He was found by them, and Yahweh gave them rest all around."** / vv 12-15

4. After this, there was another period of rest and peace from warfare for about 25 years...

**Now, let's turn back to the 1 Kings 15 story ... and pick up the next threat against them – Asa didn't do so valiantly this time...**

**V / ASA BUCKLES IN FEAR AND FALTERS IN HIS FAITH IN YAHWEH /  
1 Kings 15.16-22 & 2 Chronicles 16.1-6**

1. There was another threat and military attack – this time from the north, from Baasha who was the king of the northern kingdom of Israel:  
**And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.**  
**[This was the 36<sup>th</sup> year of his 41 year reign / 2 Chronicles 16.1]**
2. Ramah was only about 5 miles N of Jerusalem on the main travel route between the two kingdoms. What Baasha was attempting to do was to effectively blockade any travel up or down that route. He was building a fortress in Ramah – obviously with the intention of using it to stage future attacks on Jerusalem. This was a bold, brash act of aggression!  
...not only against Asa and Judah ... but Judah was Yahweh's Kingdom!  
Surely Yahweh will defend His kingdom again!
3. Asa plumb forget about the victory Yahweh had given him and Judah against the Ethiopians 25 years earlier. He had relied upon Yahweh in that battle, and Yahweh had delivered them.
4. But this time, Asa completely bypassed relying on Yahweh and opted instead to rely on Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, to deliver them from Baasha. Asa even plundered the very treasures and gifts that he had previously returned and restored to the Temple ... and sent them to Ben-hadad as a bribe-gift to fight Baasha for him. / **1 Kings 15.18-19**
5. Ben-hadad did what Asa had 'bribed' him to do – he broke his previous alliance with Baasha and went to war against some of Israel's cities to the north of where Baasha was building in Ramah.
6. The bribe and resulting attack against Baasha worked. Baasha had to abandon building Ramah and go north to defend his cities that were under attack by Ben-hadad. Asa then plundered the very building supplies that Baasha had brought to Ramah, carried them off, and built other cities for himself with them.
7. But – in so doing, Asa had forsaken his trust in and reliance on Yahweh. The prophet Azariah had charged him after Yahweh's victory over the Ethiopians:  
**“Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: Yahweh is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you...” / 2 Chronicles 15.2.**  
Now Asa had gone and done just that!

**Now, let's go back to 2 Chronicles 16 for the follow-up to that breach of faith and reliance on Yahweh...**

**VI / ASA IS REBUKED BY ANOTHER PROPHET FOR HIS BREACH OF RELIANCE ON YAHWEH / 2 Chronicles 16.7-10**

1. Yahweh sends another prophet, Hanani, to Asa with His rebuke:  
**At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, “Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you. <sup>8</sup>Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army**

**with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, He gave them into your hand. / vv 7-8**

2. And then Hanani gives Asa another great and encouraging promise that you would do well to mark in your Bible ... and let it encourage you to remember this!

**For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward Him / v 9**

The LORD's eyes are still running to and fro throughout the whole heart ... searching for all of us who are in trouble, searching our hearts also to see if we are committed to being faithful to Him so He can show Himself to be strong to defend and deliver us! *When His searching eyes find you ... what will He see your eyes looking at or looking to? May He find our eyes of love, faith, and trust locked in on His eyes of Grace and salvation!*

3. BUT – because Asa's heart had grown calloused and cold toward Yahweh ... he didn't take this rebuke to his heart. He resented Yahweh's rebuke and correction. Yahweh would do what He had said He would do – He would plague Asa with more and further wars because he had relied on human helpers instead of giving Yahweh the opportunity to show His own power and glory by defending them and fighting their [and His] enemies!
4. He took out his anger and resentment against Yahweh on Hanani, Yahweh's prophet: **Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time. / v 10**

#### **VII / ASA WAS AFFLICTED WITH DISEASES IN HIS FEET / 1 Kings 15.23 & 2 Chronicles 16.11-12**

1. This came upon him “**in his old age**” and “**In the thirty-ninth year of his reign.**” Since he reigned 41 years, this was in the last and final 2-3 years of his reign.
2. Whatever this disease was [gout or some kind of paralysis], it had the effect of crippling him at the end of what had otherwise been a sterling and stellar record of faithfulness and obedience to Yahweh.  
We might even apply Paul's rebuke of the Galatians to King Asa: “**You were running well. Who hindered [tripped you up / hobbled you / cut you off] from obeying the truth?**” / **Galatians 5.7**
3. This was the final sad entry on his record. He stumbled and fell at the finish line of his life's race and service for Yahweh and died at the end of his 41-year reign ... an angry, bitter, resentful old man. “**Yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but sought help from the physicians.**”  
Don't be that guy!
4. **Hebrews 12.1-2: Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup>looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.**

#### **TAKEAWAYS...**

1. **Pray that God will keep you faithful to the end! Your spirit may indeed be willing ... but your flesh indeed is weak!**
2. **Resolve to finish well!**
3. **Keep your eyes of love, faith, trust, and reliance fixed on Jesus!**