

King Asa's Example

I would like for us to take some time and consider some of the things that we see from King Asa. King Asa was a king of Judah, the son of Abijah, and the great grandson of King Solomon. In fact, he became king only 20 years after the death of King Solomon. King Asa was one of the few good kings in Judah's history. It mentions in 2 Chronicles 14:2-4 that he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, took away the altars of foreign gods and the high places and the images and cut down the groves. Not only that, but he commanded Judah to seek the Lord and to do the law and the commandments. In 2 Chronicles 15:13 the commandment was made that anyone that did not seek the Lord God of Israel would be put to death. He had a heart toward God that was uncommon among the kings.

In 1 Chronicles 14:9 it speaks of the Ethiopians that came to battle against Asa. In verse 8 it mentions that Asa had an army of 580,000 men from Judah and Benjamin. The Ethiopians army was just under double that with 1,000,000 men and with 300 chariots. It is not likely that even the greatest of armies could succeed when they are outnumbered as Judah was in this battle. But King Asa didn't just go out and try his luck. King Asa cried out to the Lord, saying in verse 11

"Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go out against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee."

And as a result, we see in 2 Chronicles 14:12-15 that the Lord smote the Ethiopians and they were destroyed before the Lord. This is certainly an impressive account, though not uncommon in the scriptures.

What I find of particular note is what took place in another battle that King Asa found himself in. In 2 Chronicles 16:1 we see that King Baasha, king of Israel, came up against Judah and began to build Raamah with the intent of cutting off Judah from everything, which would likely eventually starve those that did not surrender to him. Here we see no mention of the size of Judah's or Israel's armies, though Israel typically outnumbered Judah. But we see something that is particularly surprising after having read the previous two chapters. King Asa, instead of crying out to the Lord for help, sent to Ben-Hadad the king of Syria. King Asa sent him silver and gold and made a covenant with him and Syria. Indeed, King Ben-Hadad attacked some of the cities of Israel and King Baasha and to leave Judah alone to fight those battles.

Certainly, in both cases, it would seem that King Asa was delivered. But this latter account is not to King Asa's credit. We see that a seer was sent to King Asa in 2 Chronicles 16:7-10. As a result of his relying on the king of Syria instead of relying on God, the host of the king of Syria escaped out of his hand. He was reminded of the Ethiopians and the Lubims and a huge host that he had been delivered from previously. Verse 9 reads as follows

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

King Asa, at one point, understood the power and the grace and the love of God. At one point he had faith that the Lord would show himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him. But as is the case with people far too often, he forgot. He lost this faith, he lost the knowledge of this love. He had the seer that was sent to him thrown into prison for the things that he had said to him.

I love reading the many passages that speak of the mercy of God. The passages that talk about all the bad that Israel would do and then mention that if they turn back to God and repent that He will remember them and deliver them from the situations they find themselves in. The longsuffering of God is such a wonderful thing. But on the other side of that, all of the good that a person may have done in their lives can be forgotten in the day that they turn back to their evil ways. We see in the end of 2 Chronicles 16 that King Asa became diseased and died. And while he was diseased he never sought the Lord, but rather turned to physicians. Such a sad ending to what began so promising.

What you have done, good or bad, matters very little. There may be consequences that one has to face for past decisions that they have made. But with God, the only thing that matters is what you choose to do today. Will you seek God and seek His ways, or will you try to find the solutions through the world? Let us not be like King Asa and let ourselves forget that the Lord seeks to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. For the rest of our lives, let us seek Him today. Let us always remember His love and longsuffering and that good that He does for His people.