

## Week Two: Asa

Introduction: I presented lots of material last week that speaks to the need for godly leadership. As someone said, [many claim it] "Everything rises and falls on leadership." I think I can agree with that statement for the most part.

Last time I declared our purpose and method for our study.

**Purpose:** We want discover positive character traits and recognize negative character traits in the people that want to lead us.

**Method:** We will do this by looking at a select group of leaders among the kings of Israel and Judah. We can't study all of the kings in a 10-12 week study. There are too many.

What are we looking for in a leader?

*Ex 18:21 Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*

Wow wouldn't that be wonderful. Just to know that before a person could even be considered as a candidate for election they had to be: 1) **Able** or capable 2) God fearing 3) people who tell the **truth** and love the truth 4) completely free of **greed**. Wow what a wonderful blessing that would be.

### **Asa – The King who almost finished well.**

Full Text: 1 Kings 15.9-24; 2 Chronicles 14-16

Background facts:

**HERITAGE:** Asa was the great grandson of **Solomon**, the grandson of Rehoboam, the son of Abijam. Abijam (also called Abijah) did not have a very good example in his father. Let's read a little about that in 1 Kings 14.21-24.

Count on it: God keep's his **promises**. God had promised that there would be a king on the throne from his line and there would be - Asa would be the king God would set up and bless (2 Samuel 7.18ff)

**SITUATION:** Asa inherited Judah in relative peace. Abijah, in his one shining moment, had defeated Jeroboam in a great slaughter (sadly in a civil war) where 500,000 men of Israel died. 2 Chronicles 13:18 says. *2 Ch 13:18 Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.* The result was that Judah enjoyed peace.

Chronology of Asa's leadership

**EARLY RULE:** He did right in times of **peace** and **prosperity** (2 Chronicles 14:1-8). I have said many times people get spiritual in a crisis. Notice that:

- Asa did right by using the **peace** time to remove the foreign altars, high places, asherim (v.3&5)
- Asa did right by motivating the people to seek God and to obey his law (v.4).
- He did right by building up his cities and their defenses while they were at peace. It is foolish to wait for a **battle** to get ready for **war**. (v.6-8).
- God rewarded them with rest and they were undisturbed on every side. Amen. Peace comes from a position of **strength** not weakness as far as nations are concerned.

**FIRST TEST:** 2 Chronicles 14:9-15:19

Back in chapter 12 Rehoboam and all of Judah had forsaken God and his law so God forsook them (12:1,5). God allowed Shishak of Egypt with a confederation of nations to come up and basically occupy and subjugate Judah. Well time has passed and the North Africans had loosened their grip on Judah. Asa's reforms and fortifications of the cities caused the Africans to try to reassert control. 2 Chronicles 14:9 says they came up again this time with Ethiopia in the lead. They had a million-man army. Notice Asa's leadership.

- His first test included a **military** test 2 Chronicles 14:9-15. He called on God in time of need. *2 Ch 14:11* Notice that he understood it was God who could give the victory and it didn't depend on his military acumen. God responded with deliverance. That did not mean that Judah did not have to **fight**!
- His first test included a **spiritual** test (2 Chronicles 15:1-15).

- He listened to and heeded the voice of God's **messenger** (15.1-2).
- He took action to further right the **wrongs** in his kingdom. He had done great things at the first (14.3-5) but there was more to do and surely as soon as he turned his back the wicked practices would start up again. You don't only **weed** a garden once! Look at (v.8).
- He led the people to greater dedication and obedience (v.9-15)
  - He led the people to honor God with their **increase** – they made a sacrifice. V.9-11).
  - He led the people (by covenant) to **seek** the Lord with all their heart and soul (v.12-13). *Dt 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* He enforced the covenant. *Ex 22:20 "He who sacrifices to any god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.*
  - His actions led to public joy, rejoicing and **security** (v.14-15). The Lord gave them rest all around. *Ps 127:1*
- His first test included an issue of **Nepotism** (2 Chronicles 15.16-19). Maacah was either the granddaughter of Absalom, David's son, or the daughter of another Absalom. The Queen mother was Asa's Grandmother. Normally she held a position of honor and authority in the king's court. He did not regard his grandmother more than he did God and his commands. He deposed her because she rejected his reforms and made an Asherah of her own. He cut it down.

## SECOND TEST: Chapter 16

Note that this second test came when he was old, experienced and **successful**. It happened in the 36<sup>th</sup> year of his reign of 41 years.

- His second test involved a military challenge from **Israel** (King Baasha). It was actually a road block at Ramah north of Judah in the hill country.
  - He did not seek the Lord the second time.
  - He used the **gold** and treasures from the Lord's house to incite Ben-Hadad of Syria (Aram) to break a treaty with Israel and make one with Judah (v.2). He did not send out his own army – he hired one.

- He tried to make an **alliance** with the enemies of God (v.3-6). Isa chapter 7 records a future time when Syria (Aram) will come in the days of Ahaz and fight against them. If he trusted God he could have defeated Baasha and Ben-Hadad.
- His second test was a spiritual test as well.
  - He **forgot** the Lord's faithfulness in the past (v.8).
  - He **attacked** the messenger that corrected him. He oppressed his own people who questioned him. (Wow! sound familiar?) (v.10).
  - He **refused** to seek the Lord at all even in time of sickness. He ask for help form doctors but not God.
  - He became self-consumed and **proud** – erecting his own memorial (v.14). They had a big bon-fire for his memorial.
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What can we learn about proper leadership?

- A good leader has a **good sense** of right and wrong.
- A good leader inspires people by **example** to do right.
- A good leader does not waste times of peace and prosperity. He **prepares** to protect his people.
- A good leader knows that he alone cannot lead the nation in war or peace times.
- A good leader stays **vigilant** about the rise of evil among his people
- A good leader does not make exceptions for **family**.
- A good leader doesn't become proud and **self-confident**.
- A good leader doesn't **attack** the bearer of bad news.
- A good leader doesn't forget **where they came from**.
- A good leader **finishes well**.

The most important verse may be: *2 Chronicles 16.9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.*

This is still what God is looking for today. God will strongly support those that are **loyal to Him!**