

Asa's reign was the third in Judah since the great division of Israel during the reign of Rehoboam. You can read about his reign in 1 Kings 15:8-24 but there is more detail given in 2 Chronicles chapters 14, 15, and 16. Asa's father, Abijam, only reigned three years. Abijam was not a good king as the Lord counts goodness (1 Kings 15:3). In fact, the most notable thing about Abijam was that he managed to raise a good son. This, we are told was because of God's promise to David.

Asa's reign began peacefully. According to 2 Chronicles 14:1-6, he removed many idols and decreed that the worship of God be followed. He strengthened Judah's cities. He had one major battle with an army from Ethiopia during his tenth year of reigning. Though he was outnumbered about 2 to 1, he turned to God and was saved (2 Chronicles 14:11-12). God promised Asa to be with him as long as he remained faithful. Notice ***2 Chronicles 15:2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him.***

As a result, Asa threw himself into the work of purifying Judah (2 Chronicles 15:8 ff). People began to flock to him. Many left Israel to return to worshiping God in Judah (v9). They committed themselves to serving God (vs 12-15). Asa did not even let family ties stop him. Look at vs 16. ***2 Chronicles 15:16 And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.*** He wasn't perfect, but he followed God with his whole heart. ***2 Chronicles 15:17 But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.***

Peace continued for another 25 years until Asa's 35th year in reigning Judah. Israel's king Baasha became frustrated with numbers leaving his territory, so he closed the borders and began building a fortified city (2 Chronicles 16:1). It is at this time that we see a change in Asa's attitude. Instead of relying on God's help, Asa took the wealth of God's house as well as his own and used it to bribe the king of Syria to attack Israel (2 Chronicles 16:2-5). In verses 7-9 God sent a prophet (seer - KJV) to rebuke Asa. Asa didn't like the message, so he threw

the messenger into prison. ***2 Chronicles 16:10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.***

A few years later, Asa feet began to give him trouble. (2 Chronicles 16:12). Apparently he was still mad at God because in his disease he did not seek God's help. He sought out doctors instead of God. Two years later he died – (v 13).

Lessons to be learned.

One of the first things we learn from the example of Asa is that commitment needs to be until the end. While he showed loyalty to the Lord for thirty plus years, he tossed it all aside toward the end. Commitment to the Lord is a lifetime commitment. A person should consider this commitment when they decide to become a Christian. I know of a fella who died a few years ago who was a powerful gospel preacher for years. He when on several missionary trips and converted many people; but just a few years before his death he gave it all up and turned to the bottle. He died a drunk. At his funeral there were several testimonies of how he had touched so many lives. But he, like Asa tossed it all aside. ***Revelation 2:10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.***

Secondly, God meant it when he said there was to be no other gods before him. When God should the people out of the land of Egypt by the leadership of Moses, he gave them these instructions. ***Exodus 20:3-5 Thou shalt have no other gods before me. (4) Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: (5) Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.*** Not only were idols not to be worshiped, God expects his people to turn to him in times of trouble. It

cannot be in words only. To Asa's credit, he removed the idols from the land of Judah. We face the same problem today. While we don't have graven images, we have recreation, social media, career, etc that we often put before the Lord. Listen to principle put forth by Jesus himself. Let us understand that there is a cost for discipleship. ***Luke 14:26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.***

Thirdly we learn that we need to do God's way. When it comes to spiritual matters, many today think they can use their own wisdom. This is what Asa did with his conflict with Baasha and his failing health. Many religious groups vote on what they believe is acceptable to God and what laws they will or will not follow. They justify it by saying we must adapt the Bible to modern society, but this is backwards. Society needs to adapt itself to the ways of God. Even family must not stand between a man and his God. ***1 Corinthians 3:18-20 Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. (19) For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. (20) And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.***

Putting God first means trusting God. Trusting God means seeking God's solution in all things. Asa strayed when he began solving his problems with his own solutions. ***Proverbs 3:5-7 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (6) In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. (7) Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.*** Now there is much said in this passage, but one thing that stands out is let us be wise in our own estimation.

One other lesson we can learn is for us to be willing to listen to rebuke. A wise man listens to correction. Again let us listen to the wise-man of Proverbs. ***Proverbs 13:1 A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.*** Learning from a rebuke will make a deeper and more lasting impression. When we see someone straying, let us in love rebuke them. ***Luke 17:3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.*** Such, done in

love, shows true love. - Proverbs 27:5. Asa was a fool not to listen to the warning from God and then to treat God's messenger with such contempt. Perhaps it's from this story that we get the saying, "*Don't shoot the messenger.*"

The purpose of the rebuke in Luke 17:3 is to bring about repentance. Let us be people willing to repent of past mistakes. Some reported to Jesus the evil done by others. Jesus used the occasion to warn them about their own needs - Luke 13:1-5. So often we see the evils done by others and then congratulate ourselves for being better. Why is it that our own sins are always less than someone else's? Sin is sin. My sins can keep me out of heaven just as much as yours can keep you out of heaven. All men, everywhere need to repent - Acts 17:30.

Invitation