



Asa

*The King Who
Rejected Correction*

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Overview

ASA BELIEVED THAT THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

Asa's story is told in 1 Kings 15:8-24 and 2 Chron. 14-16. He is also mentioned in Jeremiah 41:9; Matthew 1:7, 18

God has never accepted the idea that “the ends justify the means.” He is just and perfect in all his ways. People, on the other hand, are far from perfect. That a bond can exist between a loving and merciful Creator and a resisting and rebellious creation is as great a miracle as creation itself!

As a king, Asa came very close to being good. He traveled a long way with God before getting off track. His sin was not so much deliberate disobedience as choosing the easy way rather than the right way. When the odds seemed impossible in the battle with the Cushites, Asa recognized his need to depend on God.

Following that victory, God's promise of peace based on obedience spurred the king and people to many years of right living. But Asa was to face a tougher test. Years of animosity between Asa and Israel's king Baasha took an ugly turn. Baasha, king of the rival northern kingdom, was building a fort that threatened both the peace and the economy of Judah.

Asa thought he saw a way out—he bribed King Ben-Hadad of Aram to break his alliance with King Baasha.

The plan worked brilliantly, but it wasn't God's way. When Asa was confronted by God's prophet Hanani, he flew into a rage, jailed Hanani, and took out his anger on his people.

Asa rejected correction and refused to admit his error to God. His greatest failure was missing what God could have done with his life if he had been willing to be humble. His pride ruined the health of his reign. He stubbornly held on to his failure until his death. Does this attitude sound familiar?

Asa King of Judah

1 Kings 15:8-24

And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom.

And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father. And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron.

But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days. And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels.

And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezron, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

So Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.

And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.

Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.

The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Nevertheless in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

Good Reign of Asa, King of Judah

Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. That is right indeed which so is in God's eyes. Asa's times were times of reformation.

He removed that which was evil; there reformation begins, and a great deal he found to do.

When Asa found idolatry in the court, he rooted it out thence. Reformation must begin at home. Asa honours and respects his mother; he loves her well, but he loves God better.

Those that have power are happy when thus they have hearts to use it well. We must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well; not only cast away the idols of our iniquity, but dedicate ourselves and our all to God's honour and glory.

Asa was cordially devoted to the service of God, his sins not arising from presumption. But his league with Benhadad arose from unbelief.

Even true believers find it hard, in times of urgent danger, to trust in the Lord with all their heart. Unbelief makes way for carnal policy, and thus for one sin after another.

Unbelief has often led Christians to call in the help of the Lord's enemies in their contests with their brethren; and some who once shone brightly, have thus been covered with a dark cloud towards the end of their days

Asa was the son of Solomon.

1 Chron. 3:10

And Solomon's son was Rehoboam, Abia his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son.

Of all the families of Israel, none were so illustrious as the family of David: here we have a full account of it. From this family, as concerning the flesh, Christ came. The attentive observer will perceive that the children of the righteous enjoy many advantages.

Asa reigns as king after the death of Abijah

2 Chron. 14:1-15

So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God:

For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: And commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.

Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.

And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the Lord had given him rest. Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the Lord our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.

And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these were mighty men of valour.

And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with a host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah.

Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, 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 against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.

So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the Lord, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil.

And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the Lord came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.

They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

Asa aimed at pleasing God.

Asa aimed at pleasing God, and studied to approve himself to him. Happy those that walk by this rule, not to do that which is right in their own eyes, or in the eye of the world, but which is so in God's sight.

We find by experience that it is good to seek the Lord; it gives us rest; while we pursue the world, we meet with nothing but vexation.

Asa consulted with his people how to make a good use of the peace they enjoyed; and concluded with them that they must not be idle, nor secure.

A formidable army of Ethiopians invaded Asa's kingdom. This evil came upon them, that their faith in God might be tried.

Asa's prayer is short, but it is the real language of faith and expectation from God. When we go forth in God's name, we cannot but prosper, and all things work together for the good of those whom he favours.

Asa makes a league with Syria

2 Chron. 16:1-14

In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel that he may depart from me.

And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen?

Yet, because thou did not rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand.

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. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

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.

And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.

And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

And they buried him in his own sepulchers, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odors and divers' kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

Asa is reproved for making a league with Syria.

A plain and faithful reproof was given to Asa by a prophet of the Lord, for making a league with Syria.

God is displeased when he is distrusted, and when an arm of flesh is relied on, more than his power and goodness. It is foolish to lean on a broken reed, when we have the Rock of ages to rely upon.

To convince Asa of his folly, the prophet shows that he, of all men, had no reason to distrust God, who had found him such a powerful Helper.

The many experiences we have had of the goodness of God to us, aggravate our distrust of him.

But see how deceitful our hearts are! We trust in God when we have nothing else to trust to, when need drives us to him; but when we have other things to stay on, we are apt to depend too much on them. Observe Asa's displeasure at this reproof.

What is man, when God leaves him to himself! He that abused his power for persecuting God's prophet, was left to himself, to abuse it further for crushing his own subjects.

Two years before he died, Asa was diseased in his feet. Making use of physicians was his duty; but trusting to them, and expecting that from them which was to be had from God only, were his sin and folly.

In all conflicts and sufferings we need especially to look to our own hearts, that they may be perfect towards God, by faith, patience, and obedience.

Life Application

Can you identify failures in your life that you have continued to rationalize rather than admit them to God and accept his forgiveness? The ends do not justify the means. Such a belief leads to sin and failure. The stubborn refusal to admit a failure due to sin can become a big problem because it makes you spend time rationalizing rather than learning from your mistakes and moving on.

Key verse: “For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war” (2 Chron. 16:9).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry's Concept Bible Commentary.