

June 3

1 Kings 14-16, 21, 22; 2 Chronicles 13-18, 20

Now we will look at the new king of Judah. The good news is that Abija's son Asa is a good godly man. He has a heart to obey God. It says "he did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God." He got rid of all of the foreign worship centers and the idols. He then commanded his people to seek the Lord. And God rewarded him by giving him peace in his land for 10 years.

During this time of peace, he built up the towns – he built walls around them – he fortified the cities in Judah and he prospered and his army grew. During the time of Asa's reign, Jeramiah died, and his son Nadab took over. He continued in the evil ways of his father and after a short time he was assassinated.

Baasha took Nadab's place in fulfillment of the prophecy. So, Baasha went on to exterminate the whole family of Jeraboam – just as the Lord had spoken through the prophet years ago. Unfortunately, Baasha was no better than his predecessors. He walked in the ways of Jeraboam .

After a time of peace, Judah is once again tested. A vast army of Ethiopians with hundreds of chariots came out to fight against Asa. In this story, we see Asa's heart, when he cries out

**"Lord, there's no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us O Lord, our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this cast army. O Lord, you are our God, do not let man prevail against you."**

God gave them an amazing victory. The army of Judah crushed the enemy forces. Besides it says "the men of Judah carried off a large amount of plunder." Aside from the plunder from the armies, they carried off all kinds of wealth and livestock from the enemy towns.

Asa's story is one of a man who started out really strong – with a devoted heart to God. God brought amazing victories from him. He brought reformation. It said that "Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord, all his life." He got the people to commit themselves to God – and his record is great. He even had to depose his grandmother as queen because she had worshipped idols. He was ruthless to his devotion to God.

But towards the end of his life he made some mistakes. He made some crucial mistakes. He went to Siria for help instead of trusting God and the prophet had to rebuke him for him. Asa even angrily punished the prophet by throwing him in jail. On his way back from the battle, from the great victory...God gave him a warning

He got self sufficient – he got independent. As a result, when he got older he had a foot disease. And instead of going to the Lord, he went to the doctors – and then he died.

During all of these all these kings that come and go through. While Asa is enjoying a long reign, while in Israel there is a number of kings. All of these kings have one thing in common – they all don't have a heart for God. Some of them only reigned for short times – Zimri for example, he only reigned for 7 days.

You might notice here that there are many tests of God's people. There are tests with adversaries (enemies) and there are also tests of prosperity. Asa did really well with the enemy test but not as well with prosperity.

With the enemy test, he did really well – he was vastly outnumbered and in over his head. He had to cry out to God. And in the prosperity test he didn't do as well. He had the resources – so he hired the Sirians to help him instead of relying on God.

And as he was tested with health issues, he relied on physicians instead of going to God first.

Good application: Go to God first. And always to God. Only to God.