

2 Chronicles 14 - Abijah Dies; Asa's Good Reign in Judah; King Asa's Obedience; Victory Over Zerah the Ethiopian

IV. Judah's Kings (2 Chr 10:1—36:23)

(2) Reform and apostasy in Judah (2 Chr 12:1—36:14)

(C) Asa (2 Chr 14:1—16:14)

(a) Asa's reforms and military victories through the dependence upon God (14:1—15:19)

(i) Reforms (14:1-8)

(ii) Victory over Zerah and the Ethiopians (14:9-15)

2 Chronicles 14

(a) Asa's reforms and military victories through the dependence upon God (14:1—15:19) (Cf. 1 Kings 15:9-24)

(i) Reforms (14:1-8)

1 So Abijah lay down with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David, and his son Asa became king in his place. **The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days.**

1 So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David, and his son Asa became king in his place. The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days.

1 Then Abijah died, as had his ancestors, and he was buried in the City of David. Abijah's son Asa reigned in his place, and during his lifetime the land enjoyed rest for ten years.

1 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.

- "...The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days" - Asa's reign began with 10 years of peace. It was probably during this period that he instituted his first series of religious reforms (v2-5).

— At that time he also fortified Judah's defenses (v6-8)

2 And **Asa** did *what was* good and right in the sight of the LORD his God,

2 Asa did good and right in the sight of the LORD his God,

2 Asa practiced what the LORD his God considered to be right

2 And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

- "...Asa" - began his reign in Judah in the 20th year of Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:9), close to the end of Jeroboam's reign over Israel (910 BC)
— Asa was the first good king of Judah (v11) and the first reformer (Jehoshaphat, Hezekian, Josiah were the others)
— He reigned 41 years in Jerusalem (911-870 BC), an unusually long reign that probably began when he was quite young

3 for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the memorial stones, cut down the Asherim,

3 for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the *sacred* pillars, cut down the Asherim,

3 by removing the foreign altars and high places, tearing down the sacred pillars, cutting down the Asherim, and

3 For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves:

- The sacred stones and Asherah poles were Canaanite fertility symbols which played an important role in the people's depraved religion

4 and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to comply with the Law and the commandment.

4 and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment.

4 commanding Judah to seek the LORD God of their ancestors and to keep the Law and the commandments.

4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.

5 He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. And the kingdom was undisturbed under him.

5 He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. And the kingdom was undisturbed under him.

5 He also removed the high places and incense altars from all of the cities of Judah. As a result, the kingdom enjoyed rest under Asa's leadership.

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

- Asa removed some of the high places (v3) but not all of them (1 Kings 15:14)

— Nevertheless his heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life. In view of Asa's self-reliance later in his life (Cf. 2 Chr 16:7-10), this statement probably means that he did not

tolerate idolatry but worshiped only the true God.

6 He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest.

6 He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest.

6 Asa built fortified cities throughout Judah while the land lay undisturbed, because the LORD had given him peace so that no one went to war against him during those years.

6 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.

- He fortified his defenses against future attacks from the north, apparently the ones his grandfather Rehoboam had fortified and which Shishak had captured

7 For he said to Judah, "Let's build these cities and surround *them* with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

7 For he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround *them* with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

7 He had told Judah, "Let's build up these cities, surrounding them with walls, towers, gates, and bars. The land still belongs to us, because we have kept on seeking the LORD our God. We have sought him out, and he has given us rest all around us." So the people built and prospered.

7 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.

8 Now Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah, carrying large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, carrying shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors.

8 Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors.

8 Asa kept a standing army of 300,000 soldiers from Judah equipped with large shields and spears, as well as 280,000 soldiers from Benjamin, also bearing shields and wielding bows. All of them were valiant soldiers.

8 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.

- Asa had an army of 580,000 compared to Abijah's 400,000

(ii) Victory over Zerah and the Ethiopians (14:9-15)

9 Now **Zerah** the Ethiopian went out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to **Mareshah**.

9 Now Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah.

9 Sometime later, Zerah the Ethiopian went to war against him at Mareshah with an army of one million troops and 300 chariots.

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

- Asa raised an army from Judah and Benjamin of 580,000 brave spearmen and bowmen, in anticipation of the invasion by Zerah the Cushite (southern Egypt, Sudan, and northern Ethiopia)

- "...Zerah" - apparently was the mercenary general under Osorkon I of Egypt (914-874 BC), successor to Shishak

- "...Mareshah" - 25 miles SW of Jerusalem

10 So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

10 So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

10 Asa went out to engage him in battle, and they drew up their battle lines at Mareshah in the Zephathah Valley.

10 Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help *in the battle* between the powerful and those who have no strength; help us, LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You."

11 Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help *in the battle* between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You."

11 Asa cried out to the LORD his God, telling him, "LORD, there is no one except for you to help between the powerful and the weak. So help us, LORD God, because we're depending on you and have come against this vast group in your name. LORD, you are our God. Let no mere mortal man defeat you!"

11 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.

- Asa was a man of prayer. We have a glimpse into the private life of the king, and it is commendable.

— Asa's poetic prayer here is a model for all who are in distress to follow (Cf. Phil 4:7)

12 So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.

12 So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled.

12 So the Lord defeated the Ethiopians right in front of Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians ran away.

12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

13 Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them as far as Gerar; and so many Ethiopians fell that they could not recover, for they were shattered before the LORD and before His army. And they carried away a very large *amount of* plunder.

13 Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them as far as Gerar; and so many Ethiopians fell that they could not recover, for they were shattered before the LORD and before His army. And they carried away very much plunder.

13 Asa and his army pursued the Ethiopians as far as Gerar. So many Ethiopians died that their army could not recover, because it had been shattered in the LORD's presence and in the presence of his army. The Israelis carried off a lot of plunder, too.

13 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.

- Whereas Shishak had been successful in his invasion of Judah, Zerah was not

— Shishak's success was because of Rehoboam's sins, whereas Zerah's defeat was because of Asa's faithfulness (Cf. v2)

14 **They** destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and **they** pillaged all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.

14 They destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and they despoiled all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.

14 They attacked all the cities that surrounded Gerar, because fear of the LORD had overwhelmed them. The Israelis spoiled all the cities, because there was a lot to plunder in them.

14 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...they" - Asa's troops

15 They also fatally struck those who owned livestock, and they led away large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

15 They also struck down those who owned livestock, and they carried away large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

15 They also attacked the tents of those who owned livestock and carried off lots of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

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

- The Cushites fled to Gerar (~20 miles farther SW of Mareshah), to an area that may have already been in Egyptian hands

— When Asa got there, he plundered Gerar and the surrounding villages

— Judah had no more war with Egypt until Josiah and Necho met in battle in 609 BC (2 Chr 35:20-24)