

# THE REIGN OF ASA, KING OF JUDAH

BIBLE TEXT : **II Chronicles 14:1-15; 15:1-19; 16:1-14.**

LESSON 295 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chronicles 15:2).

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

### **2 Chronicles 14:1-15**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> And Asa did *that which was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

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

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

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

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> 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

## BIBLE REFERENCES:

### **I Asa's Good Beginning**

1. He destroyed idolatry, II Chronicles 14:1-3; 15:8, 16, 17.
2. He exhorted Judah to seek God, II Chronicles 14:4.
3. He gave to God silver and gold, II Chronicles 15:18;

**Malachi 3:8-12**

<sup>8</sup> Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

<sup>9</sup> Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.

<sup>10</sup> Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be* room *enough* to receive it.

<sup>11</sup> And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

<sup>12</sup> And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightful land, saith the LORD of hosts.

4. He obeyed the Prophet, II Chronicles 15:1-8.
5. He made a covenant with God, II Chronicles 15:9-15.
6. He prayed, II Chronicles 14:11.

### **II The Results of Asa's Right Doing**

1. The land had rest, II Chronicles 14:5, 6; 15:19;

**Deuteronomy 28:1-14**

<sup>1</sup> And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

<sup>2</sup> And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

<sup>3</sup> Blessed *shalt thou be* in the city, and blessed *shalt thou be* in the field.

<sup>4</sup> Blessed *shall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

<sup>5</sup> Blessed *shall be* thy basket and thy store.

<sup>6</sup> Blessed *shalt thou be* when thou comest in, and blessed *shalt thou be* when thou goest out.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

<sup>10</sup> And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee.

<sup>11</sup> And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the

valour.

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

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

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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.

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

## 2 Chronicles 15:1-19

<sup>1</sup> And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

<sup>2</sup> 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, he

fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

<sup>12</sup> The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

<sup>13</sup> And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do *them*:

<sup>14</sup> And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, *to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them.*

2. They built and prospered, II Chronicles 14:7, 8.

3. God answered Asa's prayer, II Chronicles 14:9-15.

### III Asa's Failure

1. Asa makes a league with the ungodly, II Chronicles 16:1-6;

2 Corinthians 6:14

<sup>14</sup> Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:17-18

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,

<sup>18</sup> And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Psalms 118:8

<sup>8</sup> *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.*

Psalms 118:9

<sup>9</sup> *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.*

2. God condemns the league, II Chronicles 16:7-9;

Psalms 33:16

<sup>16</sup> There is no king saved by the multitude of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

Psalms 146:3

<sup>3</sup> Put not your trust in princes, *nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.*

Isaiah 31:1

<sup>1</sup> Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are many*; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

3. Asa is angry at the Word of the Lord, II Chronicles 16:10;

1 Peter 2:20

<sup>20</sup> For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently, *this is acceptable with God.*

4. Asa turns to the physicians, II Chronicles 16:11, 12;

Jeremiah 17:5-8

<sup>5</sup> Thus saith the LORD; Cursed *be* the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.

<sup>6</sup> For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, *in a salt land and not inhabited.*

<sup>7</sup> Blessed *is* the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.

<sup>8</sup> For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and *that* spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

<sup>3</sup> Now for a long season Israel *hath been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

<sup>4</sup> But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

<sup>5</sup> And in those times *there was* no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

<sup>6</sup> And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.

<sup>7</sup> Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

<sup>8</sup> And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD.

<sup>9</sup> And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him.

<sup>10</sup> So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

<sup>11</sup> And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil *which* they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.

<sup>12</sup> And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;

**Job 13:15**

<sup>15</sup> **Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.**

5. Asa dies, II Chronicles 16:13, 14;

**Ezekiel 33:13**

<sup>13</sup> **When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.**

#### **IV Our Trust in God for Healing**

1. Healing is provided in the Atonement,

**Isaiah 53:4**

<sup>4</sup> **Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**Isaiah 53:5**

<sup>5</sup> **But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**

2. The elders are to be called,

**James 5:13-15**

<sup>13</sup> **Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.**

<sup>14</sup> **Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:**

<sup>15</sup> **And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.**

**Acts 19:11-12**

<sup>11</sup> **And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:**

<sup>12</sup> **So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.**

3. Healing is promised us,

**Mark 16:18**

<sup>18</sup> **They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**

#### **NOTES:**

##### **Asa's Campaign Against Idolatry**

Asa started his reign with a campaign against idolatry. "He took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places." However, we read that "the high places were not removed" (I Kings 15:14). It is evident that Asa made a distinction between the high places where altars were erected to strange gods, and the high places that had been used to offer sacrifices to the true God. (1 Samuel 9:12 <sup>12</sup> **And they answered them, and said, He is; behold, he is before you: make haste now, for he came to day to the city; for *there is* a sacrifice of the people to day in the high place: 1 Samuel 10:5 <sup>5</sup> **After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garrison of the Philistines: and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they shall prophesy: 1 Kings 3:4 <sup>4</sup> **And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar**) "The high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days." This indicates that God would have all the high places removed and sacrifices made only at the****

<sup>13</sup> That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

<sup>14</sup> And they sware unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

<sup>15</sup> And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

<sup>18</sup> And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

<sup>19</sup> And there was no *more* war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

## 2 Chronicles 16:1-14

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

<sup>3</sup> *There is* a league between me and thee, as *there was* between my father and thy father: behold, I

Temple in Jerusalem. (**Deuteronomy 12:13-14** <sup>13</sup> **Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: <sup>14</sup> But in the place which the LORD shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee.**) It also lets us know that Asa never turned to idolatry. The statement that Asa's heart was perfect all his days refer only to the matter of idolatry and does not refer to his entire conduct or to Christian perfection as we know it today.

### Prosperity and Trials

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34). God has promised great and numerous blessings to those who hearken unto His voice: "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. . . . Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store" (Deuteronomy 28:3, 5). Judah enjoyed these blessings under the reign of Asa, and at the beginning of his reign God gave them peace for ten years. "So they built and prospered" (II Chronicles 14:7).

When one enjoys the blessings of God and everything is coming his way, and he is riding, as it were, on the crest of the wave, he may think that things will always be favourable. Such is not always the case. Trials sometimes come — unexpected and unprovoked. An army one million strong confronted Asa. When Judah was apparently in the midst of peace and prosperity, this huge host of the Ethiopians came against them. But Asa had not forgotten God; he had fortified himself in the time of plenty. Often men forget God under favourable circumstances, but it is possible to build up a spiritual reserve so that when the testing time comes one will not be overthrown. (**Jude 1:20-21** <sup>20</sup> **But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, <sup>21</sup> Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life**) It is true that the testing time should cause heart-searching and renewing of vows, but if one's confidence has remained steadfast, he can say: "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" (II Chronicles 14:11).

"So the Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa" (II Chronicles 14:12). It means much to be prayed up and in good standing so that in times of emergency our faith channels are clear. It is well to know when sickness or distresses come that there is nothing between us and God, and that we are in His hands. The Lord turned this battle into a great victory for Asa. The people that were with him carried away exceedingly much spoil, and sheep and camels in abundance. Just so, our trials will be turned into victories if we keep ourselves in God's care. "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2). "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory" (I Peter 1:7).

### Enduring to the End

When Asa returned to Jerusalem with the spoils, the Prophet Azariah met him with this message from God: "The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chronicles 15:2). This message is a warning to all who would make Heaven their home: that it is necessary to "endure unto the end" (Matthew 24:13). The word of the Lord through the Prophet Ezekiel is very emphatic concerning this subject: "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his

have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

<sup>4</sup> And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali.

<sup>5</sup> And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *it*, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it" (Ezekiel 33:13). Eternal life depends upon continuing steadfastly until the end.

From the pages of history the Prophet showed Judah the period when Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. It was a dark picture indeed — a time when there was no peace. We read that the "highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. The inhabitants of the villages ceased" (Judges 5:6, 7), for Israel dwelt in dens and caves. All this came to pass because they had forsaken the Lord: "The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; . . . but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (II Chronicles 15:2).

### **Wholehearted Service**

King Asa and the people accepted the words of the Prophet and entered into a covenant to serve the Lord. Seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep, which the Lord had given them in the battle were offered upon the altar, and the covenant was sealed, "that whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death" (II Chronicles 15:13). It was a drastic oath, but God honoured it. God was pleased: "And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them" (II Chronicles 15:15). When you shall search for Him with all your heart the promise of God is, "I will be found of you" (Jeremiah 29:13, 14). Anything short of wholehearted service is displeasing to God. To be spewed out of God's mouth is the indictment against the lukewarm.

### **Failure**

It was in the thirty-sixth year of his reign that Asa began to slip. Think of it! Thirty-five years of faithful service, thirty-five years of running well, thirty-five years filled with good deeds — and then to fail! This emphasizes the necessity of daily consecration, of watching, and of prayer. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" (Galatians 5:7). What is the matter, Asa? Did you forget to pray? Did you get so big and self-sufficient that you thought you could handle the situation without the help of God? Are you now so rich that you can buy your way out instead of looking to the Lord? Are you now so far away from God that the message of the Prophet makes you angry? Humble yourself, Asa, and the Lord will hear you. But Asa did not humble himself. He hardened himself, and put the Prophet in prison, and oppressed some of the people, too.

### **Divine Healing**

Thus the Sacred Writ would end the acts of Asa except to add: "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" (II Chronicles 16:12). Once again Asa shows a lack of trust in God and a distinct leaning to the arm of flesh. Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5). Some people think the Lord heals through the work of physicians; others feel that divine healing is optional -- to be resorted to if one has faith, or to be shunned as one sees fit. But the implication given here is that Asa did wrong: first, in not seeking the Lord; and second, in turning to the physicians.

The Bible clearly teaches divine healing in both the Old and New Testaments. "I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:26). "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his

<sup>12</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

<sup>14</sup> And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds *of spices* prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Palm 103:2, 3). "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. . . . Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5:13-15). May God help his people to put their trust in Him and not lean upon the arm of flesh. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, . . . Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5, 7). Would you be like Asa who sought the physicians, or like Job who said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15)?

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Over what country did Asa rule?
2. Describe the first years of Asa's reign.
3. How long did Asa reign before any evil is told of him?
4. How large was the Ethiopian army that came against Asa?
5. Name two instances in which Asa failed to trust God.
6. To what is a man likened who trusts in man? in the Lord?
7. Find Scriptural proof that it is possible to backslide and be lost.
8. Give Scriptural proof that we can profit from our trials as Asa did from his battle with the Ethiopians.
9. Find four expressions in the lesson that show that Judah wholeheartedly sought God.
10. Compare Job's afflictions and trust in God with that of Asa's.