

1  **The Enemy Within**

2 Chronicles 16

2  **REVIEW**

How to Fight For the Hearts of Your Family (Parts 1&2)

3  **Asa (905-874 B.C.)**4  **Meet Asa**

- Asa is the son of Abijah (who reigned as king for 3 years) and the grandson of Maachah, the favorite wife of Rehoboam and granddaughter of Absalom.
- Asa is the first truly good king of Judah since David, and he institutes substantial religious and social reforms.

5  **The Enemy**

- The enemy of the nations of Israel and Judah throughout the divided kingdom period is idolatry.
 - Idolatry is when we look to people, possessions, or positions to fulfill a need that only God can meet.
 - Idolatry is when we substitute creaturely things for our creator.

6  **How to Prepare for Battle**

- 1. Get Rid of External Distractions
 - Removing the outward sins that are keeping you from being able to focus on inner idols
- 2. Arm Yourself
 - Take advantage of the tools available to us (Scripture, the Church, curriculum, etc.) to fight for the hearts of our families.

7  **How to Prepare for Battle**

- 3. Acknowledge the Threat
 - Realize the overwhelming number of idols that are vying for yours and your family's attention.
- 4. Meet the Enemy
 - Taking the battle to the enemy – the world, the flesh, and the devil – rather than simply waiting for problems to arise in your family.
- 5. Adjust Your Priorities
 - Be more concerned about God's reputation than your own.

8  **How to Fight the Battle**

- 1. Choose Life & Liberty
 - Asa is given the example of the Judges cycle and is given the choice to choose between life and liberty (worshipping God) or death and bondage (idolatry).
- 2. Take Courage
 - Take courage knowing that there is a reward in sight, that what you are doing for your family has meaning.

9  **How to Fight the Battle**

- 3. Purge Your Home
 - This can be a literal object, a specific kind of entertainment, or an attitude or relationship that hinders growth and leads to bondage rather than life or liberty.
- 4. Purge Your Leadership
 - Principles enforced in the home will never stick with your children unless the parents live out those principles on a daily basis.

10  **FINISHING WELL**

2 Chronicles 16

11 **2 Chronicles 16:1-3**

- *In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa took silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the LORD and the king's house and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Syria, who lived in Damascus, saying, "There is a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me."*

12 **2 Chronicles 16:4-6**

- *And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. And when Baasha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah and let his work cease. Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building, and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.*

13 **Another Threat**

- Recall that Asa (by God's help) has already successfully defeated the threat of over 1 million Ethiopians early in his reign.
- Now, in the middle of his reign, Asa is being threatened by an alliance between Israel (the northern kingdom), and Syria (Aram-Damascus, to the northeast).

14 **Ramah**

- The threat comes in the form of a fortification called "Ramah", that Baasha was building in order to block trade going to and from Judah.
- "Ramah" signifies a "high place consecrated to idols."
- The enemy here is still idolatry – idolatry that seeks to cause bondage and slavery instead of life and liberty.

15 **Asa's Solution**

- Asa's solution this time, rather than going to God for help, is to take the treasures from the temple (that he'd previously given to God) and use them to bribe the king of Syria into breaking his alliance with Israel.
- Asa then tears down the city that was being built (Ramah) and uses the build materials to fortify his own border cities.

16 **2 Chronicles 16:7-9**

- *At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you. Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen?"*

17 **2 Chronicles 16:7-9**

- *Yet because you relied on the LORD, he gave them into your hand. For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars."*

18 **2 Chronicles 16:10-12**

- *Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time. The acts of Asa, from first to last, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was diseased in his feet, and his disease became severe. Yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but sought help from physicians.*

19 **2 Chronicles 16:13-14**

- *And Asa slept with his fathers, dying in the forty-first year of his reign. They buried him in the tomb that he had cut for himself in the city of David. They laid him on a bier that had been filled with various kinds of spices prepared by the perfumer's art, and they made a very great fire in his honor.*

20 **God's Response**

- God responds to Asa by sending Hanani the prophet to condemn Asa for his sin.
- While there are many sins that God could have condemned Asa for:
 - Bribery
 - Inciting one nation to break its oath with another
 - The destruction he brought upon the nation of Israel (and the lives that were lost)
 - Stealing from the temple treasury

21 **God's Response**

- The thing that God primarily condemned Asa for was specifically this: that he trusted in himself to solve his own problems rather than putting confidence in God.
- Asa is so angry with Hanani that he throws him in prison, and then begins to oppress some of the people (possibly those who supported Hanani).

22 **Asa's End**

- During the last year of his life Asa suffered from some very painful sort of foot disease (possibly gout or diabetes).
- The phrase "exceeding great" has been interpreted by some to mean that it was a disease that started in his feet and worked its way up to Asa's head.

23 **Asa's End**

- Throughout his disease, Asa chooses to trust to his doctors rather than to God for healing.
- His sin was not in consulting doctors – rather it was in trusting them over God. It was a mistake that would cost him his life.
- So the question remains: where did Asa go wrong? What was Asa's mistake that caused him to finish life so poorly?"

24 **The Enemy Within**

- The true enemy Asa faced here was not Baasha or Ben-Hadad – it was his own pride.
- We face this same enemy in the fight for our families and our church. This is a particularly difficult enemy to fight since it has the ability to disguise itself as good intentions.
- Ultimately it's an attitude that says "I'm in charge, I know best."

25 **1. Pride Seeks the Word of God Only as a Last Resort**

- Notice that when Asa felt like he was clearly overwhelmed and had no other recourse, he turned to God for deliverance from the Ethiopians.
- With Israel and Syria, however, Asa felt like he had a plan and could handle this on his own.

26 **1. Pride Seeks the Word of God Only as a Last Resort**

- Christians have a huge problem with going to the world, or even going to good Christian resources without first consulting the Word of God itself to see what it has to say about our problem.
- We often want to devise solutions and consult experts. Turning to the actual Word of God itself, however, is a last resort.

27 **The Primacy of the Word of God**

- The Word of God is to be the focal point of our families and our Church. God's Word is so important to Him, he has exalted it even above his name:
- *I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.* (Psa 138:2)

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- 28  **2. Pride Ignores God's Track Record**
- Asa completely ignored his previous experiences with the provision and sovereignty of God in His deliverance from the Ethiopians.
 - Instead, he favors them over his own plan – one of bribery, theft, and deceit.
- 29  **2. Pride Ignores God's Track Record**
- Our pride will often ignore the past ways in which God has provided for us and dealt with us in favor of pursuing our own plans and strategies.
 - How many times has God provided/delivered in the past? Do we still look for ways to solve our own problems using human means?
- 30  **3. Pride Ignores God's Providence**
- *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him...* (2Ch 16:9)
 - God is actively seeking to show Himself strong on the behalf of His children.
 - At no point was God unaware of Asa's situation.
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- 31  **3. Pride Ignores God's Providence**
- One of the tendencies of pride is to not trust God in the "little things."
 - Pride seeks to solve its own problems instead of relying on God's provision – why? Because the one who solves the problem or saves the day gets the glory.
- 32  **The Glory Issue**
- All of life comes down to this question: Who will get the glory?
 - Sheltering our family from the influences of the world, homeschooling, worldview studies, family integrated churches... All of these things are worthless if we do not teach our children their primary purpose for existence.
- 33  **The Glory Issue**
- Without a focus on God's glory, all of our ministry (missions, witnessing, community outreach) and all our fighting for our families becomes simply one other thing that we do so that people can be impressed with our devotion or religion.
 - It will produce children who are rebellious and self-righteous.
- 34  **4. Pride Leads to Bondage and Death**
- Asa is not interested in hearing Hanani's rebuke, so he has Hanani imprisoned and then oppresses some of the people at this time.
 - Pride and idolatry both lead to bondage and death because pride is simply the idolatry of self.
 - Eventually, Asa's pride was his undoing, because he refused to seek the Lord.
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- 35  **4. Pride Leads to Bondage and Death**
- If you lead your family pridefully, you will lead them into bondage: bondage to rules, bondage to regulations, bondage to doing things a certain "way".
 - If you lead your family humbly, you will lead them into grace: because God resists the proud, but He gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).