

How Kingdoms Fall
August 23, 2020
by C Benjamin Dill

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Before we get started this morning, I want to remind us of something concerning the nature and character of our incredible, great God.

That something is the fact that God simply does not change. The principles by which He governs and what does and does not please Him are the same as they have always been.

Malachi 3:1-6

1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

6 **For I am the LORD, I change not**; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

The next verses in this text accuse the Jews of robbing God because they were not tithing. However, as much as I enjoy teaching on this subject, this we must save for another day.

Hebrews 13:1-8

1 Let brotherly love continue.

2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

4 Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Let your* conversation *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

8 **Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever.**

God does not change! Jesus, (Who is God) is the same yesterday, today and always will be.

With that established, we are going to visit II Chronicles today.

After the death of King Solomon, Rehoboam, his son, reigned in his stead.

Rehoboam did not inherit the wisdom of his father, and through his foolish mistakes, the kingdom was divided:

Israel in the North and Judah in the South.

For the next 38 years, Israel went deeper and deeper into sin and idolatry.

For 18 years, Rehoboam took Judah further and further into sin, and he died.

When Abijah, his son, took the throne, he began to lead Judah back to the Lord before his reign ended, and then he died.

When his son Asa began to reign, it was said of Asa:

1 Kings 15:11 And Asa did *that which was right in the eyes of the LORD*, as *did David his father*.

If you do the math, Asa was somewhere around 20 years old when he became King of Judah.

His total reign was 41 years, even surpassing the reign of Solomon by one year.

About ten years into his reign, Asa faced his first great challenge.

Asa had built up Judah's defenses to an army of 580,000 men; "mighty men of valor" they were rightfully called.

It was during this time that Zerah the Ethiopian came up against him with an army of a million soldiers; Asa is outnumbered almost 2 to 1.

This was Asa's first great challenge as King.

This is when:

I. Asa learned to trust the Lord.

A. Why does God allow; yea, even SEND great trials and affliction into the lives of His faithful servants?

1. The answer to this is pretty plain; it is through great trials that we learn to rely on God. Let us read as the story unfolds:

2. **2 Chronicles 14:2-10**

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

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:

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

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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

3. It is one thing to depend on God in times of peace and prosperity: it is another to rely on Him when life and death is on the line.

4. Can you imagine looking out over a million-man army, a literal sea of soldiers, all marching to destroy you?

5. I'm sure many were freaking out, screaming, "Oh, no, we're all going to die".

6. But not young Asa, praise the Lord! He was just young and dumb enough to trust God!

7. **2 Chronicles 14:11** 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.

8. Asa prayed like a man who did it a lot and knew Who he was talking to.

B. People who love God, serve God and live for God get to pray with confidence.

1. 1 John 3:18-22

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.
19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.
20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.
22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

2. 1 John 5:11-15

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12 He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.
13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.
14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:
15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

3. Young or not, Asa placed his full confidence in the Lord and went out to face incredible danger depending solely on the Lord. (Remember, he is outnumbered about 2 to 1).

4. God honored Asa's faith and answered his prayer.

5. 2 Chronicles 14:12-15

12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.
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.
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.
15 They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

God gave Asa a great victory that day and then:

II. God sent Asa a message.

A. God, having just proven to Asa that He could be trusted, that He could be counted on:

1. God sent Azariah the prophet a message for good King Asa.

2. 2 Chronicles 15:1-2

1 And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

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

3. It is true that the Lord will not ever leave or forsake us; our salvation is forever, it is permanent.

4. **Hebrews 13:5-6**

5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

6 *So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

5. However, in the sense of rescuing us daily and protecting us from our various enemies and adverse circumstances, don't expect God to be there to answer your cry when you've turned your back on Him.

6. That warning God sent to King Asa is sent to you and me as well.

B. Asa responded to God's warning as delivered by the Prophet.

1. Even many who heard of it in Israel repented and turned to the Lord.

2. **2 Chronicles 15:3-4**

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

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

3. Asa responded to this with a wonderful covenant before the Lord.

4. **2 Chronicles 15:8-19**

8 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.

9 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.

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

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

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

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

14 And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

15 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.

16 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.

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

18 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.

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

5. Once again Asa's faith in the Lord granted him and his people great peace and prosperity.

6. But in this world, peace and prosperity does not last.

III. God warned Asa that trouble is coming once again.

A. Asa and the people of Judah who followed him were an island of peace in a world filled with turmoil...

1. And they stayed that way **as long as** Asa kept his covenant of seeking the Lord with all his heart.

2. The world around Judah and Asa was not at peace.

2 Chronicles 15:5-6

5 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.

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

3. But Asa and Judah were at peace, even for the next 25 years.

4. Verse 6 says of the countries round about that **God did vex them with all adversity**.

5. Has anyone considered that it is God that is vexing our world with adversity today?

6. Does not America and certainly our world deserve to be vexed with adversity from God?

7. If you listen carefully, you may understand why, as we finish up this message today.

B. Age and experience does not always result in wisdom.

1. After 25 years of peace, Asa and Judah got comfortable, and apparently forgot where their peace and prosperity had come from.

2. So it was that in Chapter 16 the next evil Israelite King came up to attack and lay siege to Judah.

3. **2 Chronicles 16:1** 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.

4. It seems that some of God's people, when they get older, just seem to lose their minds.

5. People who have sought the Lord in their trouble, people whom God has rescued time and time again from every kind of adversity; sickness, cancer, horrific accidents, bad relationships, drugs, alcohol, domestic abuse, war and more...and in their comfort, they just forget all about God's power and His love for them.

6. They forsake His house, they forsake His word, they forsake their fellow brothers and sisters and in doing so they forsake the Lord Himself.

C. It is difficult to imagine that someone who had experienced what Asa had experienced, a man who had personally witnessed God's incredible deliverance, could afterward do what he did.

1. Instead of crying out to the Lord and being delivered from his enemy as before, what did Asa do? Read it:

2. **2 Chronicles 16:2-6**

2 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,

3 *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.

4 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.

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

6 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.

3. Asa, instead of relying on the Lord, hired another of his enemies, the King of Syria, to fight for him.

4. Not only that, he paid for it with treasure belonging in God's house.

Conclusion: Do you supposed God was pleased with king Asa?

God was not pleased with King Asa.

2 Chronicles 16:7-8

7 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.

8 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.

Do you suppose God is pleased with us when we turn to masks and social distancing abandoning our assembling ourselves together to bring Him worship and glory because we are afraid?

Would you like to know why God allows, yea, even sends adversities into the world like COVID 19?

It is because He is looking for something: actually, some one; read the next verse:

2 Chronicles 16:9 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.

And then God said to Asa: Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

Asa proceeded to put God's messenger in prison and oppressed anyone else who disagreed with him...even though he knew he was dead wrong.

I have clearly told you and shown you in Scripture that you ought to be here, faithfully worshipping and serving God, as He has commanded us.

Some of our members have even quit listening and watching online because you just don't want to hear it...just like Asa.

We know how many watch, and the numbers have gone way down.

You cannot protect yourself from COVID 19.

Your masks and your social distancing cannot protect you from COVID 19.

And the only one who can protect you, you are forsaking.

Can you not remember when God stepped in and answered your cry before?

**Don't you remember how He was there for you in your darkest hour?
What has changed?**