

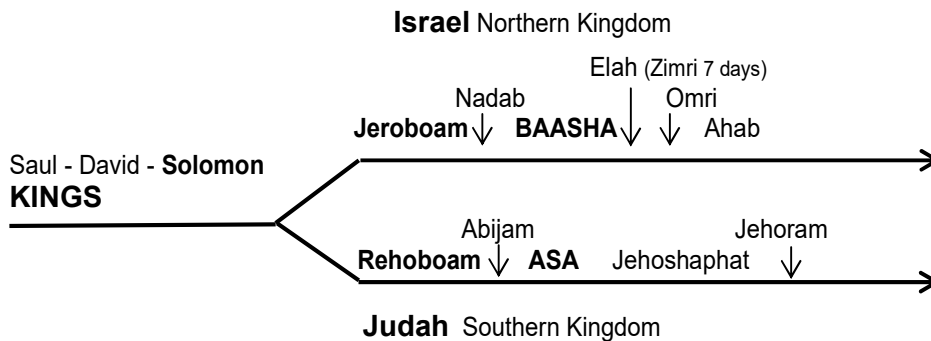
Starting Well - Finishing Badly ~ 2 Chronicles 14 - 16

→ Scripture Reading - 2 Chron. 14:1-6

INTRODUCTION

Did they... Bibleproject

- Worship the God of Israel ALONE?
- Purge Israel of IDOLATRY?
- Remain FAITHFUL to the Covenant?



EARLY Years ~ 2 Chronicles 14

² Asa did what was pleasing and good in the sight of the LORD his God. ³ He removed the foreign altars and the pagan shrines. He smashed the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah poles. ⁴ He commanded the people of Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his law and his commands. ⁵ Asa also removed the pagan shrines, as well as the incense altars from every one of Judah's towns. So Asa's kingdom enjoyed a period of peace.

Asa did what was GOOD in God's Eyes... vs. 2-5

- REMOVED pagan Altars
- REMOVED High Places
- SMASHED sacred pillars
- CUT DOWN Asherah poles
- REMOVED the Incense Altars

⁶ During those peaceful years, he was able to build up the fortified towns throughout Judah. No one tried to make war against him at this time, for the LORD was giving him REST from his enemies... ⁹ Once an Ethiopian named Zerah attacked Judah with an army of 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots. They advanced to the town of Mareshah,

→ Map

¹⁰ so Asa DEPLOYED his armies for battle in the valley north of Mareshah. ¹¹ Then Asa cried out to the LORD his God, "O LORD, no one but YOU can help the powerless against the mighty! Help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in YOU Alone. It is in Your NAME that we have come against this vast horde. O LORD, you are our God; do not let mere men prevail against you!" (NLT)

Asa Prayed...

- No one but You can HELP us
- HELP US for we Trust You ALONE
- It is in You NAME we have come
- Don't let MERE men PREVAIL

¹² So the LORD DEFEATED the Ethiopians in the presence of Asa and the army of Judah, and the enemy fled. ¹³ Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar, and so many Ethiopians fell that they were unable to rally. They were destroyed by the LORD and His army, and the army of Judah carried off a vast amount of plunder. (NLT)

IMPLICATION

Psalms 61:1–4 (NLT) ¹ O God, listen to my cry! Hear my prayer! ² From the ends of the earth, I cry to You for help when my heart is overwhelmed. Lead me to the towering rock of SAFETY, ³ for You are my safe refuge, a fortress where my enemies cannot reach me. ⁴ Let me live forever in Your sanctuary, safe beneath the shelter of your wings!

On-Going Renewal ~ 2 Chronicles 15

⁸ When Asa heard this message from Azariah the prophet, he took courage and removed all the detestable idols from the land of Judah and Benjamin and in the towns he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. And he repaired the altar of the LORD, which stood in front of the entry room of the LORD's Temple. ⁹ Then Asa called together ALL the people of Judah and Benjamin, along with the people of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had settled among them. For many from Israel had moved to JUDAH during Asa's reign when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. (NLT)

¹² Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with ALL their heart and soul... ¹⁴ They shouted out their oath of loyalty to the LORD with trumpets blaring and rams' horns sounding. ¹⁵ All in Judah were happy about this covenant, for they had entered into it with all their heart. They earnestly sought after God, and they found Him. And the LORD gave them rest from their enemies on every side. (NLT)

¹⁶ King Asa even DEPOSED his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made an obscene Asherah pole. He cut down her obscene pole, broke it up, and burned it in the Kidron Valley. (NLT)

¹⁹ So there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign. (NLT)

IMPLICATION

¹² Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with ALL their heart and soul...

Losing FOCUS ~ 2 Chronicles 16

¹ In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, King Baasha of Israel invaded Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from entering or leaving King Asa's territory in Judah. ² Asa responded by removing the silver and gold from the treasuries of the Temple of the LORD and the royal palace. He sent it to King Ben-hadad of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus, along with this message: (NLT)

⁸ Don't you remember what happened to the Ethiopians and Libyans and their vast army, with all of their chariots and charioteers? At that time you relied on the LORD, and He handed them over to you. ⁹ The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. What a FOOL you have been! From now on you will be at war." ¹⁰ Asa became so angry with Hanani for saying this that he threw him into prison and put him in stocks. At that time Asa also began to oppress some of his people.

¹² In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a serious foot disease. Yet even with the severity of his disease, he did not seek the LORD's help but turned only to his physicians.

TAKE AWAY ??

Romans 8:31–39 (NIV) ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.