

ASA, THE KING OF JUDAH



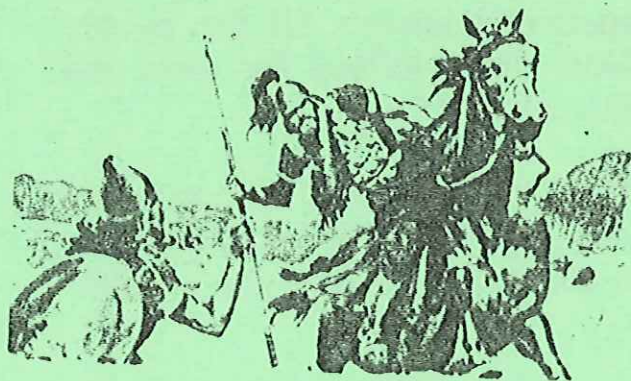
After King Rehoboam of Judah died, Abijah, his son reigned as king over Judah. He only reigned as king for 3 years. Abijah chose to do evil things rather than follow God. At the end of the 3 years, Abijah died and his son, Asa, became the next king of Judah.

King Asa Destroys the Idols of Judah

Asa did what the Lord said was right. He removed the foreign altars used for idol worship. He destroyed the places where false gods were worshiped. He smashed the stone pillars that honored false gods. Asa commanded the people of Judah to obey Yahweh. So God gave the kingdom of Judah peace for 10 years while Asa was king. We can learn a big lesson from Asa's example. If we remove the things in our lives that take us away from God, then our God will bless us too!

King Zerah Attacks Asa

King Zerah from Africa gathered his army and traveled to Judah to fight. Zerah had a large army and 300 chariots! Asa gathered 580,000 men from Judah and Benjamin together and went to fight with King Zerah in Southern Judah. Asa called out to Yahweh his God. He said, "Lord, only you can help weak people against the strong. Help us, Yahweh our God. We depend on you. We fight against this large army in your name. Yahweh, you are our God. Don't let anyone win against you."



Then the Lord helped Asa defeat King Zerah's army. When the men of Judah and Benjamin attacked Zerah, his army ran away. So many men of Zerah's army were killed that they could not fight again another day. Then Asa and his army returned to Jerusalem.

Someday you may have some problems that you can't solve by yourself. Try to remember how Asa asked God for help and trusted God to get him out of his trouble. If you ask God and trust in him, he will help you with your problems just like he helped King Asa!

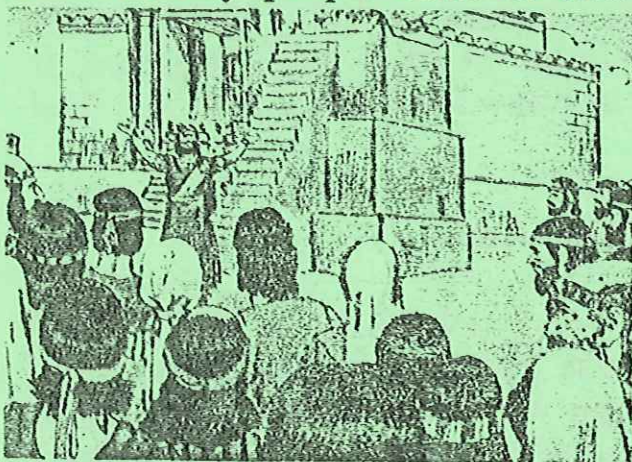
Azariah Encourages King Asa

Then the Spirit of God entered Azariah son of Obed. Azariah went to meet Asa. Azariah said, "Listen to me, Asa and all you people of Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you obey the Lord, you will find him. But if you leave him, he will leave you."

Asa felt brave when he heard these words from Azariah. So Asa removed the hated idols from all of Judah and Benjamin. He removed them from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He repaired the Lord's altar that was in front of the porch of the temple.

Asa Brings the People to God

Then Asa gathered all the people from Judah and Benjamin. He also gathered people of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who were living in Judah. Many people came to Asa from the kingdom of Israel in the North.



They came because they saw that Yahweh, Asa's God, was with him.

Asa gathered all these people to Jerusalem in his 15th year as king. They sacrificed thousands of animals to the Lord. They made an agreement and promised to obey the Lord with their whole heart. Anyone who refused to obey Yahweh, the God of Israel, was to be killed! The people shouted with a loud voice before the Lord and they blew on trumpets and horns. All the people were happy about the promise they made to God. They looked for God and found him. So the Lord gave them peace in all the country.

Notice how Asa helped so many people to turn to the Lord and follow in his ways. Did you know that you can be like Asa? If you read your Bible and talk to your friends about it, you can help them learn about God. When you do that, you are just like Asa!

King Asa also removed Maacah, his mother, from being queen mother. He did this because she had made an Asherah idol, which the Lord hated. Asa cut down that idol and smashed it into pieces. Then he burned it in the Kidron Valley. There was no more war until the 36th year of Asa's rule.

King Asa's Mistake

In the 36th year of Asa's rule, Baasha king of Israel attacked Judah. Asa took silver and gold out of the treasuries of the temple. He also took silver and gold out of his own palace. Then Asa sent a letter to Ben-Hadad king of Syria. Asa's letter said: "Let's make an agreement between you and me. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your agreement with Baasha king of Israel. Then he will take his army away from my country."

Ben-Hadad agreed, so he attacked Baasha king of Israel. Baasha had to quit fighting with Judah so he could defend himself against Ben-Hadad. The King of Syria defeated Baasha. King Asa thought his plan had worked.

Hanani Tells Asa About His Mistake

But at that time, Hanani the prophet came to Asa. Hanani told him, "You depended on Ben-Hadad the king of Syria to help you. You did not depend on Yahweh your God. So the Syrian army has escaped from you. Remember that Zerah had a large army with many chariots. But you depended on the Lord to help you. So the Lord let you defeat him. The Lord searches all the earth for people who completely trust him. God wants to make them strong. Asa, you did a foolish thing. From now on you will have wars."

Asa was angry with Hanani because of what he had said. Asa was so angry that he put Hanani in prison! Asa was cruel with some of the people at that same time. We can learn a lesson from Asa's mistake. Sometimes we will make mistakes in life. When someone comes to us and explains to us our mistake, we should ask God to forgive us of our mistake and thank the person who told us about it. That's very hard to do, but that way we will learn from our mistake and grow to be more like Jesus Christ.



Asa Gets a Foot Disease

Three years later Asa got a disease in his feet. His disease was very bad. But he did not ask the Lord for help. He only asked for help from the doctors. About two years later, Asa died. He had been king over Judah for 41 years! Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, became the next king over Judah.

King Aza's Mistake

In the 36th year of Aza's rule, Basaha king of Israel attacked Judah. Aza took silver and gold out of the treasures of the temple. He also took silver and gold out of his own palace. Then Aza sent a letter to Ben-Habad king of Syria. Aza's letter said, "Let's make an agreement between you and me. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your agreement with Basaha king of Israel. Then he will take his army away from my country."

Ben-Habad agreed, so he attacked Basaha king of Israel. Basaha had to quit fighting with Judah so he could defend himself against Ben-Habad. The King of Syria defeated Basaha. King Aza thought his plan had worked.

Hanani Tells Aza About His Mistake

But at that time, Hanani the prophet came to Aza. Hanani told him, "You depended on Ben-Habad the king of Syria to help you. You did not depend on Yahweh your God. So the Syrian army has escaped from you. Remember that Zerah had a large army with many chariots. But you depended on the Lord to help you. So the Lord let you defeat him. The Lord searches all the earth for people who completely trust him. God wants to make them strong. Aza, you did a foolish thing. From now on you will have war."



Aza was angry with Hanani because of what he had said. Aza was so angry that he put Hanani in prison! Aza was cruel with some of the people at that same time. We can learn a lesson from Aza's mistake. Sometimes we will make mistakes in life. When someone comes to us and explains to us our mistake, we should ask God to forgive us of our mistake and thank the person who told us about it. That's very hard to do, but that way we will learn from our mistakes and grow to be more like Jesus Christ.

Aza Gets a Foot Disease

Three years later Aza got a disease in his feet. His disease was very bad. But he did not ask the Lord for help. He only asked for help from the doctor. About two years later, Aza died. He had been king over Judah for 41 years! Aza's son, Jeshophat, became the next king over Judah.