

KING ASA

1 Kings 15:1-24; 2 Chronicles 14:1 - 16:14

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Asa

Key-location: Judah (Southern Kingdom), Jerusalem

Key-repetitions:

- Asa did good: Asa imitated David in doing right (1 Kin 15:11); he removed male prostitutes (1 Kin 15:12); he got rid of idols (1 Kin 15:12); he removed his idolatrous grandmother from her position (1 Kin 15:13); he commanded Judah to seek the Lord (2 Chr 14:4); he assembled the people to make a covenant to seek the Lord (2 Chr 15:9-12).
- Asa did evil: he neglected to remove illegal worship sites in high places (1 Kin 15:14); he sent payment to the king of Aram for him to fight Israel (1 Kin 15:18-19; 2 Chr 16:2-3); he relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord (2 Chr 16:7); Asa put the prophet in prison who condemned him (2 Chr 16:10); he became cruel to some people (2 Chr 16:10); he only sought help from doctors when he was afflicted with a severe foot disease (2 Chr 16:12).
- Prophets spoke to Asa: a prophet encouraged Asa when he was faithful to God (2 Chr 15:2-7); Prophet Hanani condemned Asa because he relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord (2 Chr 16:7-9).

Key-attitudes:

- Asa's devotion to the Lord for the first thirty-six years of his reign.
- First prophet's encouraging words.
- Prophet Hanani's condemnation.
- Negative attitude toward King Asa for last five years of his reign.
- Asa's arrogance when criticized by the prophet.

Initial-situation:

The twelve tribes of Israel divided after King Solomon's death. Ten tribes rebelled against Solomon's son, Rehoboam, and made Jeroboam king. Rehoboam continued to rule over two tribes. Rehoboam followed God's commands and laws until he secured his kingdom and was strong again. Then Rehoboam abandoned the law of the Lord and set up illegal worship sites in high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles (sex-and-religious idols) on high hills and under spreading trees. Male religious prostitutes were at the places built to worship their gods. Rehoboam died and his son, Abijam, succeeded him as king. King Abijam continued to sin just like his father.

Initial-problem:

King Abijam died and his son Asa became king. Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

Final-situation:

The prophet condemned King Asa because he had not relied on the Lord. Asa put the prophet in prison and started being cruel to some of the people. In Asa's thirty-ninth year of reign, Asa was afflicted with a severe disease in his feet. Asa did not seek help from the Lord. He only sought help from doctors.

BIBLE STORY

King Abijam died and his son Asa became king (1 Kin 15:1-8).

Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as his ancestor David had done. Asa expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols made by his predecessors. Asa's grandmother had made a memorial to the whore-goddess Asherah. Therefore, Asa removed his grandmother from her position as queen mother. Asa cut the idol pole down and burned it. Asa neglected to remove illegal worship sites in high places, but Asa's heart was committed to the Lord (1 Kin 15:11-15). Asa commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his commands (2 Chr 14:4).

A prophet told Asa, "The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you. But, if you forsake him, he will forsake you. Be strong and don't give up, for your good work will be rewarded."

Asa heard the prophecy and he took courage. He removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah. Then he assembled all the people in Judah and Benjamin and the people from other tribes of Israel who had settled in the Southern Kingdom. Many from Israel left their homes and joined Asa when they saw that the Lord God was with him. The people assembled at Jerusalem in Asa's fifteenth year of reign. They sacrificed to the Lord and entered into a covenant to seek the Lord with all their heart and soul. They sought God eagerly, and God was found by them. The Lord gave them rest from war. Judah experienced no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign (2 Chr 15:1-19).

During King Asa's thirty-sixth year of reign, King Baasha of Israel attacked Judah. Asa sent silver and gold to the king of Aram, and asked him to fight against the towns of Israel (1 Kin 15:16-22; 2 Chr 16:1-6).

Prophet Hanani condemned Asa, because Asa relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord. Asa put Hanani in prison and became cruel to some of the people (2 Chr 16:7-10).

In Asa's thirty-ninth year of reign, Asa was afflicted with a severe foot disease. Asa didn't seek help from the Lord. Asa only sought help from doctors. Asa died in the forty-first year of his reign (2 Chr 16:11-14; 1 Kin 15:23-24).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 4. What problems did the characters face? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |

7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was King Asa different from King Rehoboam and his son?
2. Why did King Asa remove his grandmother from the position of queen mother?
3. What were some positive things that King Asa did?
4. What encouraging word did the prophet give King Asa?
5. Why did another prophet give condemning words to Asa?
6. How did Asa respond to the prophet's condemnation?
7. What were some negative things that King Asa did in the last years of his life?
8. How did King Asa treat other people after he disobeyed God?
9. Why does disobeying God often result in being cruel to others?
10. When does God's spokesperson need to encourage, and when does he need to condemn?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Children, whose parents have rebelled against God, can faithfully serve the Lord.** Asa is an example. The heart of Asa was totally committed to the Lord (1 Kin 15:14). Asa's reign was a time of powerful religious reform (1 Kin 15:12-15). However, Asa's father Abijam committed serious sins, following in the footsteps of Asa's grandfather Rehoboam (1 Kin 15:3). Asa's grandmother worshiped the whore-goddess Asherah (1 Kin 15:13).
2. **Years of faithfulness to God will come to an end if a person rejects God's words in a specific situation.** Asa faithfully served the Lord for thirty-six years. In the thirty-sixth year of his reign, Asa relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord God during a war. The Prophet Hanani brought Asa the Lord's word, reprimanding him. Asa put Hanani in prison and started being cruel to some of the people (2 Chr 16:7-10). Asa was afflicted with a severe disease in the thirty-ninth year of his reign. He did not seek help from the Lord. He only sought help from doctors (2 Chr 16:11-14).
3. **The person who pleases God, must both combat evil and promote good.** (1) Asa removed that which was evil. Asa struck at immorality by forcing male prostitutes out of the land (1 Kin 15:12). He removed all the idols, even those that his father had made (1 Kin 15:12). Asa's grandmother (but called his mother because she raised him in his childhood), had an idol and Asa removed her from being queen mother (1 Kin 15:13). (2) Asa re-established that which was good. Asa told the people to dedicate their lives to serving the Lord God (2 Chr 14:4). Asa brought into the Lord's temple the silver, gold, and utensils he and his father had set apart as holy (1 Kin 15:15).

4. **Faults are found in the best of people.** Asa took away the idols. That was good; however, illegal worship sites on high places were not removed; therein his reformation fell short (1 Kin 15:14). He removed all images which were rivals with the true God or false representations of him; but he didn't remove the illegal altars which were set up in high places. Sacrifices were brought to the high places which should have been offered on the altar in the temple. Asa was king for forty-one years. He faithfully served God for thirty-six years. During the thirty-sixth year of King Asa's reign, Asa sent silver and gold to the king of Aram, and asked him to fight against the towns of Israel (1 Kin 15:16-22; 2 Chr 16:1-6). Prophet Hanani condemned Asa because he relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord. Asa put Hanani in prison and started being cruel to some of the people (2 Chr 16:7-10). In Asa's thirty-ninth year of reign, Asa was afflicted with a severe disease in his feet. Asa did not seek help from the Lord; he only sought help from doctors (2 Chr 16:11-14).
5. **God's spokesperson must know when to encourage and when to condemn.** When Asa was pleasing the Lord, one prophet encouraged him, "The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. Be strong and don't give up, for your good work will be rewarded." Asa heard the prophecy and he took courage. However, when Asa didn't trust the Lord, a prophet condemned him. Hanani, the prophet, condemned Asa because he relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord (2 Chr 16:7-10).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Interaction with Characters in the Story:**
Invite listeners to interact with characters in the story with a question. What would you like to say:
 - To King Asa when the prophet encouraged him?
 - To King Asa when the prophet condemned Asa for not relying on God?
 - To King Asa when he became sick?
2. **Twitter Prayers** (short, concise prayers):
Invite listeners to pray about the story in "twitter" length prayers. Tell God:
 - How they feel about the story.
 - About occasions when they need to be like Asa and stand for what is right.
 - About occasions when they need to be like Asa and combat what is wrong.
 - Decisions they need to make as a result of hearing how Asa served God for thirty-six years and disobeyed God for five years.
 - How the story helps them to know God better.