

# CHAPTER 14

In this and the two following chapters we have the history of the reign of Asa, a good reign and a long one. In this chapter we have,

- I.** His piety (v. 1-5).
- II.** His policy (v. 6-8).
- III.** His prosperity, and particularly a glorious victory he obtained over a great army of Ethiopians that came out against him (v. 9-15).

## <440> 2 CHRONICLES 14:1-8

### ASA KING OF JUDAH

Here is,

**I.** Asa's general character (v. 2): He did *that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God*.

**1.** He aimed at pleasing God, studied to approve himself to him. Happy are those that walk by this rule, to do that which is right, not in their own eyes, or in the eye of the world, but in the eyes of God.

**2.** He saw God's eye always upon him, and that helped much to keep him to what was good and right.

**3.** God graciously accepted him in what he did, and approved his conduct as good and right.

**II.** A blessed work of reformation which he set on foot immediately upon his accession to the crown.

**1.** He removed and abolished idolatry. Since Solomon admitted idolatry, in the latter end of his reign, nothing had been done to suppress it, and so, we presume, it had got ground. Strange gods were worshipped and had their altars, images, and groves; and the temple service, though kept up by the priests (<4430> 2 Chronicles 13:10), was neglected by many of the people. Asa,

as soon as he had power in his hands, made it his business to destroy all those idolatrous altars and images (v. 3, 5), they being a great provocation to a jealous God and a great temptation to a careless unthinking people. He hoped by destroying the idols to reform the idolaters, which he aimed at, rather than to ruin them.

**2.** He revived and established the pure worship of God; and, since the priests did their part in attending God's altars, he obliged the people to do theirs (v. 4): *He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and not the gods of the heathen, and to do the law and the commandments,* that is, to observe all divine institutions, which many had utterly neglected. In doing this, *the land was quiet before him,* v. 5. Though they were much in love with their idols, and very loth to leave them, yet the convictions of their consciences sided with the commands of Asa, and they could not, for shame, refuse to comply with them. Note, Those that have power in their hands, and will use it vigorously for the suppression of profaneness and the reformation of manners, will not meet with so much difficulty and opposition therein as perhaps they feared. Vice is a sneaking thing, and virtue has reason enough on its side to make *all iniquity stop her mouth,* ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 107:42.

**III.** The tranquillity of his kingdom, after constant alarms of war during the last two reigns: *In his days the land was quiet ten years* (v. 1), no war with the kingdom of Israel, who did not recover the blow given them in the last reign for a great while. Abijah's victory, which was owing, under God, to his courage and bravery, laid a foundation for Asa's peace, which was the reward of his piety and reformation. Though Abijah had little religion himself, he was instrumental to prepare the way for one that had much. If Abijah had not done what he did to quiet the land, Asa could not have done what he did to reform it; for *inter arma silent leges — amidst the din of arms the voice of law is unheard.*

**IV.** The prudent improvement he made of that tranquillity: *The land had rest, for the Lord had given him rest.* Note, *If God give quietness, who then can make trouble?* ~~Job~~ Job 34:29. Those have rest indeed to whom God gives rest, peace indeed to whom Christ gives peace, *not as the world giveth,* ~~John~~ John 14:27. Now,

**1.** Asa takes notice of the rest they had as the gift of God (*He hath given us rest on every side.* Note, God must be acknowledged with thankfulness

in the rest we are blessed with, of body and mind, family and country), and as the reward of the reformation begun: *Because we have sought the Lord our God, he has given us rest.* Note, As the frowns and rebukes of Providence should be observed for a check to us in an evil way, so the smiles of Providence should be taken notice of for our encouragement in that which is good. See <sup><3128></sup>Haggai 2:18, 19; <sup><3130></sup>Malachi 3:10. We find by experience that it is good to *seek the Lord*; it *gives us rest.* While we pursue the world we meet with nothing but vexation.

**2.** He consults with his people, by their representatives, how to make a good use of the present gleams of peace they enjoyed, and concludes with them,

**(1.)** That they must not be idle, but busy. Times of rest from war should be employed in work, for we must always find ourselves something to do. In the years when he had no war he said, “Let us build; still let us be doing.” When the *churches had rest they were built up*, <sup><4031></sup>Acts 9:31. When the sword is sheathed take up the trowel.

**(2.)** That they must not be secure, but prepare for wars. In times of peace we must be getting ready for trouble, expect it and lay up in store for it.

**[1.]** He fortified his principle cities with *walls, towers, gates, and bars*, v. 7. “This let us do,” says he, “*while the land is yet before us*,” that is, “while we have opportunity and advantage for it and have nothing to hinder us.” He speaks as if he expected that, some way or other, trouble would arise, when it would be too late to fortify, and when they would wish they had done it. *So they built and prospered.*

**[2.]** He had a good army ready to bring into the field (v. 8), not a standing army, but the militia or trained-bands of the country. Judah and Benjamin were mustered severally; and Benjamin (which not long ago was called *little Benjamin*, <sup><1106></sup>Psalm 68:27) had almost as many soldiers as Judah, came as near as 28 to 30, so strangely had that tribe increased of late. The blessing of God can make a *little one to become a thousand*. It should seem, these two tribes were differently armed, both offensively and defensively. The men of Judah guarded themselves with targets, the men of Benjamin with shields, the former of which were much larger than the latter, <sup><1106></sup>1 Kings 10:16, 17. The men of Judah fought with spears when they closed in with the enemy; the men of Benjamin drew bows, to reach the enemy at a distance. Both did good service, and neither could say to

the other, I have *no need of thee*. Different gifts and employments are for the common good.

## ~~440~~ 2 CHRONICLES 14:9-15

### ASA DEFEATS THE ETHIOPIANS

Here is,

**I.** Disturbance given to the peace of Asa's kingdom by a formidable army of Ethiopians that invaded them, v. 9, 10. Though still they sought God, yet this fear came upon them, that their faith in God might be tried, and that God might have an opportunity of doing great things for them. It was a vast number that the Ethiopians brought against him: 1,000,000 *men*; and now he found the benefit of having an army ready raised against such a time of need. That provision which we thought needless may soon appear to be of great advantage.

**II.** The application Asa made to God on occasion of the threatening cloud which now hung over his head, v. 11. He that sought God in the day of his peace and prosperity could with holy boldness cry to God in the day of his trouble, and call him *his God*. His prayer is short, but has much in it.

**1.** He gives to God the glory of his infinite power and sovereignty: *It is nothing with thee to help and save by many or few, by those that are mighty or by those that have no power*. See ~~946~~ 1 Samuel 14:6. God works in his own strength, not in the strength of instruments (~~9213~~ Psalm 21:13), nay, it is his glory to *help the weakest* and to *perfect strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings*. “We do not say, Lord, take our part, for we have a good army for thee to work by; but, take our part, for without thee we have no power.”

**2.** He takes hold of their covenant-relation to God as theirs. *O Lord, our God!* and again, “*Thou art our God*, whom we have chosen and cleave to as ours, and who hast promised to be ours.”

**3.** He pleads their dependence upon God, and the eye they had to him in this expedition. he was well prepared for it, yet trusted not to his preparations; but, “*Lord, we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against*

*this multitude*, by warrant from thee, aiming at thy glory, and trusting to thy strength.”

**4.** He interests God in their cause: “*Let not man*” (*mortal man*, so the word is) “*prevail against thee*. If he prevail against us, it will be said that he prevails against thee, because thou art our God, and we rest on thee and go forth in thy name, which thou hast encouraged us to do. The enemy is a mortal man; make it to appear what an unequal match he is for an immortal God. Lord, maintain thy own honour; *hallowed by thy name*.”

**III.** The glorious victory God gave him over his enemies.

**1.** God defeated the enemy, and put their forces into disorder (v. 12): *The Lord smote the Ethiopians*, smote them with terror, and an unaccountable consternation, so that they fled, and knew neither why nor whither.

**2.** Asa and his soldiers took the advantage God gave them against the enemy.

**(1.)** They destroyed them. They fell *before the Lord* (for who can stand before him?) and before his host, either an invisible host of angels that were employed to destroy them or the host of Israel, called *God's host* because owned by him.

**(2.)** They took the plunder of their camp, *carried away very much spoil* from the slain and from the baggage.

**(3.)** They *smote the cities* that were in league with them, to which they fled for shelter, and carried off the spoil of them (v. 14); and they were not able to make any resistance, *for the fear of the Lord came upon them*, that is, a fear which God struck them with to such a degree that they had no heart to withstand the conquerors.

**(4.)** They fetched away the cattle out of the enemy's country, in vast numbers, v. 15. Thus the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.