

## East Cooper Baptist Church

August 13, 2017

### Spiritual Warfare: Godliness on Display and the Erosion Thereof (Lessons from the life of King Asa)

Spiritual warfare is the daily battle against a mortally wounded enemy who tirelessly works to destroy believers.

**King Asa** was the great-great-grandson of King David and was the king of Judah for 41 years. He was preceded by his father Abijah who reigned for 3 years.

#### Why Asa was a godly and gracious king (for the first 35 years):

1. He understood the abundant goodness of the Lord and responded by a continual godly reformation of character.

"And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God. He took away the foreign altars and the high places and broke down the pillars and cut down the Asherim and commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to keep the law and the commandment. He also took out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the incense altars. And the kingdom had rest under him. He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest. He had no war in those years, for the Lord gave him peace." **2 Chronicles 14:2-6**

2. He embraced the promise and the hope of **2 Chronicles 7:13-14, 16:9**.

"When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, if my people who are called by my name **humble themselves**, and **pray** and **seek my face** and **turn from their wicked ways**, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."  
**2 Chronicles 7:13-14**

"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." **2 Chronicles 16:9a**

3. He humbly depended upon the Lord amidst overwhelming difficulties.

"And Asa cried to the Lord his God, "O Lord, there is none like you to help, between the mighty and the weak. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this multitude. O Lord, you are our God; let not man prevail against you." **2 Chronicles 14:11**

4. He obediently received God's revelation, **2 Chronicles 15:8-9, 12:15**.

"As soon as Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded, he took courage and put away the detestable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim, and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the Lord. And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing with them, for great numbers had deserted to him from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him."  
**2 Chronicles 15:8-9**

"And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and with all their soul." **2 Chronicles 12:15**

“And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought him with their whole desire, and he was found by them, and the Lord gave them rest all around.” **2 Chronicles 15:15**

5. (Once again) He embraced 2 Chronicles 16:9a.
6. His allegiance to the living God was supreme (it even superseded his love for his mother) (2 Chronicles 15:16).

“So, we must turn down or disqualify our nearest and dearest when they come between us and our obedience to God. Heaven knows, it will seem to them sufficiently like hatred. We must not act on the pity we feel; we must be blind to tears and deaf to pleadings...it will be too late when the crisis comes, to begin telling a wife or husband or mother or friend, that your love all along had a secret reservation- “under God” or “so far as a higher Love permits.” They ought to have been warned; not, to be sure, explicitly, but by the implication of a thousand talks, by the principle revealed in a hundred decisions upon small matters. Indeed, a real disagreement on this issue should make itself felt early enough to prevent a marriage or Friendship from existing at all.”

**C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, pg. 19, 124-125**

Why did Asa spend his last 6 years as king in futility?

1. The “good times” (20+ years of peace and prosperity) ruined his perspective on the spiritual battle which is part of daily living.
2. He forgot 2 Chronicles 16:9a and 2 Chronicles 7:13-14.
3. He placed himself above God’s revelation.

“Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in the stocks in prison, for he was in a rage with him because of this. And Asa inflicted cruelties upon some of the people at the same time.” **2 Chronicles 16:10**

“Every wrong thought, feeling, word, or act, every failure to think, feel, speak, or act rightly, at once alters a man’s character for the worse. Hence forth he will find it easier to sin and more difficult to do right; he has twisted another strand into the cord of habit: and though each may be as fine as the threads of a spider’s web, in time there will be cords strong enough to have bound Samson before Delilah shaved off his seven locks. This is true punishment of sin: to lose the fine instincts, the generous impulses, and the nobler ambitions of manhood, and become every day more of a beast and a devil.” **W. H. Bennett, *The Books of Chronicles*, pg. 365**

### Questions for Discussion

1. What is the biblical basis for obedience, repentance, and the continual reformation of character?
2. What do 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 and 2 Chronicles 16:9 underscore?
3. What are the “thousand talks,” (see [The Four Loves](#) by C.S. Lewis) which we have with ourselves, contemporaries, and family members which should underscore the supremacy and worship of the living Christ?
4. How can good times of peace, prosperity, and wellness blind us to our daily need of the empowering presence of Christ?
5. How do we place ourselves above God’s revelation?
6. How do we silence the voice of godly community, as Asa did, when he received the revelation from God? Or who are the people in your life who serve as your “Nathans”? (2 Samuel 12:1 and following)