

Story: God Defeats a Million Man Army (Asa)

Theme: Trust in God

Text: 2 Chronicles 14

Approximate Story Time: 3-4 minutes

Discussion Questions: 3

PBA Questions from Story: 8

Total PBA Questions: 15

## God Defeats a Million Man Army (the Story of Asa and Zerah)

After Abijah died, Asa followed his father as king. 2 Chronicles 14 says Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God and God blessed him with peace for ten years. Unlike some of us who seem to not focus on seeking God when things are going smoothly, Asa took advantage of the peace God gave him by strengthening his kingdom both spiritually and militarily. He removed the altars of the foreign gods and high places, broke down the sacred pillars, and cut down the wooden images that some of the people worshipped, and removed the high places and incense altars from all the cities in Judah. He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment of the LORD. He led his people by his example and constantly sought after God himself. He also took advantage of the period of peace by strengthening the defenses of Judah. He built fortified cities with strong walls and towers, gates, and bars. His army consisted of 300,000 men from Judah who carried shields and spears and 280,000 men from Benjamin who carried shields and drew bows.

Despite all the preparations for defense Asa managed to accomplish during the ten years of peace, he was still taken aback when Zerah the Ethiopian arrived at Mareshah with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots. Asa knew that even with the army of valiant men he had under his command, he would be no match for the army of Zerah. He took his army and formed them in battle lines in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah to withstand Zerah and his million man army. Then he did the wisest thing he could do. He prayed. His prayer is good for us to remember when people oppose us when we are doing right. "LORD", he prayed, "it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!" What a prayer. Asa recognized that God was his only help, even though he had quite a good sized army on his side. Asa knew that his army couldn't defeat Zerah and his million men through their own military power, but they had to rest, or rely, on God. Asa did not go into battle thinking that his name would lead his army to victory. He did not try to impress his soldiers with his military strategy, thinking that would win the war, he led his army in the name of the LORD. Asa asked God to provide the victory for the honor of God against the supposed power of man. After Asa prayed that prayer of faith in the power of God, he led his army into battle. And God answered Asa's prayer by striking the Ethiopians, who fled before the army of Asa. We should remember Asa's prayer when we have people who attack us when we are following what Jesus wants us to do. We can rest in Jesus and trust Him to fight our battles. We don't have to strike out in anger because of the unfairness being done against us, we can let God defend us and bring honor to His name when the time is right. We can have courage to stand with Jesus, because we know Jesus has the power to help with many **and** is able to help those who have no power.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Can you think of any other stories where someone faced what must have seemed like a million man army?
  - a. David and Goliath
  - b. Joshua and children of Israel against Jericho
  - c. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego against Nebuchadnezzar
  - d. Jesus against the leaders of Israel and the Roman power
2. Was Asa afraid of Zerah's army? Can we be afraid and still be brave?
  - a. Why are we afraid when we know God is strong and can help us?

- i. Our weakness
    - ii. Some are more timid than others
    - iii. Not strong in faith yet, still growing.
  - b. Do we have to be afraid?
    - i. Remember God's promises
      - 1. Psalm 34:7 "The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them."
      - 2. 1 Corinthians 10:13 "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."
    - ii. Those who are more afraid or timid can build an arsenal of God's promises for defense. (Memorize texts that promise God's help like those above and 2 Chronicles 14:11.)
- 3. When things are going smoothly with us like they did for the 10 years Asa had peace, what should we do so we will have the courage to stand with Jesus when problems come?
  - a. Seek God
    - i. Study the Bible
    - ii. Pray continuously
  - b. Witness for Jesus so He can build our faith by seeing him work wonders in others lives.

PBA Questions: (Do as many as there is time for, at least one or two.) (The first 8 can be answered from the above story, more or less.)

1. According to 2 Chronicles 14:1, how long was the land quiet in the days of Asa?  
ANS: 10 years

2. True or False. According to 2 Chronicles 14:2, Asa did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab.  
ANS: False (Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God)

3. According to 2 Chronicles 14:10, where did Asa set the troops in battle array against the Ethiopians?  
ANS: in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah

4. According to 2 Chronicles 14:9, who led an army of a million men and three hundred chariots against Judah?  
ANS: Zerah the Ethiopian

5. According to 2 Chronicles 14:8, how many mighty men of valor did Asa have from Judah and Benjamin?  
ANS: 580,000 (three hundred thousand from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows)

6. According to 2 Chronicles 14:4, what did Asa command Judah to seek?  
ANS: seek the LORD God of their fathers

7. According to 2 Chronicles 14:12, what did the Ethiopians do after the LORD struck them

before Asa and Judah?

ANS: the Ethiopians fled

8. 2 points. According to 2 Chronicles 14:5, what did Asa remove from all the cities of Judah?

ANS: the high places and the incense altars

9. 8 points. According to 2 Chronicles 14:2-6, what did Asa do that was good and right in the eyes of the LORD?

ANS: 1-removed the altars of the foreign *gods* and the high places; 2-broke down the *sacred* pillars; 3-cut down the wooden images; 4-commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, 5-and to observe the law and the commandment; 6-removed the high places and 7-the incense altars from all the cities of Judah; 8-built fortified cities in Judah (note: how many individual things is subject to interpretation)

10. 5 points. According to 2 Chronicles 14:11, Asa prayed "LORD, *it is* nothing for You to \_\_\_\_, whether with many or with those who have no \_\_\_\_; help us, O LORD our God, for we \_\_\_\_ on You, and in \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ we go against this multitude."

ANS: help, power, rest, Your, name

11. According to 2 Chronicles 14:6, why did Asa have no war in those years?

ANS: because the LORD had given him rest

12. 2 points. According to 2 Chronicles 14:7, what did Asa and the people of Judah do because the LORD had given them rest on every side?

ANS: built and prospered

13. 2 points. According to 2 Chronicles 14:14-15, when Asa and Judah plundered the cities around Gerar, what did they carry away from the livestock enclosures?

ANS: sheep and camels in abundance

14. 2 points. According to 2 Chronicles 14:14, what did Asa and Judah do to all the cities around Gerar?

ANS: defeated them and plundered them

15. According to 2 Chronicles 14:13, where did Asa and the people with him pursue the Ethiopians to?

ANS: Gerar