

Session 2

July 28, 2019

DEPEND ON GOD

2 Chronicles 14:9-15

We have always been taught that it's easy to depend upon God when things are easy. But in reality, that's when we tend to forget about Him the most! After all, who needs God when everything is under control and life is going smoothly? The problem is, when we neglect God during the good times, it's mighty hard to fully trust Him in the hard times. This week's lesson provides a great example of someone who learned to trust God in the good times...and in the bad.

Depend on God when the odds are against you (vv. 9-13). Judah's decade of peace under King Asa finally came under assault when Zerah from the land of Cush (Ethiopia) set his sights on the people of God. The fortification of Judah's cities and the rebuilding of Asa's army still paled in comparison to the mighty army that Zerah brought. A million foot soldiers supported by 300 chariots is almost unheard of in ancient times. While 300 chariots is relatively few (in comparison to the size of the army), it was 300 more than Asa had! The untried king responded to the threat with three positive steps. First, *he was prepared* (v. 9). With a renewed army and fortified positions, Asa was ready to identify and track the advancement of Zerah's forces to the border city of Mareshah. Second, *he did his part* (v. 10). Rather than flinch, the king "marched out against him and lined up in battle formation." This was not a crazy act of bravado, but an intentional demonstration of the confidence he had in his God. Third, *he prayed* (v. 11), *acknowledging* God's power, *admitting* their dependence upon Him, and *asking* for His divine deliverance. The result? A smashing defeat of the enemy's army. Notice the severity of the words used: the Lord "routed" the Cushites (v. 12); and "they were crushed" before His army (v. 12). It's interesting that God so identified with His children, that He claimed ownership of Asa's army as His own! In the end the Lord got the victory, and His people got the loot (v. 13).

The lesson for us? When things look the worst, and the odds are against us, dependence on God tips the odds firmly back in our favor.

Depend on God when the odds are with you (vv. 14-15). Once the enemy army had been pursued and slaughtered, Asa turned his attention to the Philistine cities near the southern outpost of Gerar. While the connection to Zerah and his forces is not mentioned, the destruction of these cities was obviously approved by God. Most likely, the pagan Philistines had thrown their support behind Zerah, and those cities closest to Judah had likely housed the enemy army and stored its provisions. As the news of the destruction of the Cushite million resounded through the valley, a great terror went with it; and rightfully so! Those who acted on behalf of God's enemies would be considered God's enemies as well (see Matt. 12:30). With God's support clearly on their side, Asa continued to prevail. Again, the terms used are emphatic: "they attacked all the cities," and they "plundered all the cities" because "there was a great deal of plunder in them" (v. 14). But Asa did not stop there. The stretches of land between cities was home to the Philistine herdsmen who maintained the peoples' flocks of sheep and herds of camels, all of which Asa also plundered. Only when both the cities and the countryside had been fully subdued and unquestionably under the king's control, did the army return to their beloved city.

The lesson for us? There is no limit to what can (and will) do when His people are fully committed to Him and fully depending on Him.