

Spiritually Defeeted
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2 Chron 16:12

(BHS)	(NKJV)
	1 And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign,
וַיִּהְיֶה אֲסָא	2 Asa became diseased
בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלוּשִׁים וְתֵשַׁע לְמַלְכוּתוֹ	3
בְּרַגְלָיו	4 in his feet,
עַד־לְמַעַלְהָ קָלְיוֹ	5 and his malady was severe;
וְגַם־בְּקָלְיוֹ לֹא־דָרַשׁ אֶת־יְהוָה	6 yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD,
כִּי בְרֹפְאִים:	7 but the physicians.

Obviously lines 1 and 3 go together. You can recognize Asa's name. You may remember "foot" from first year Hebrew class. One interesting word is in red, *rophe'im*, "physicians." This is built from the verb "to heal," *rapha'*. But the word can also mean "spirits of the dead." "But he does not know that the *Rephaim* are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol" (Prov 9:18). So whom did Asa seek? Doctors? Or occult spirits? Perhaps in this case there is not much difference. The point is not what he sought, but whom he did not. Asa's death is connected with his stinky feet. He seems to have died of the worst foot disease ever.

The key verse in 1 – 2 Chronicles is also its most famous.

If My people who are called by My name will 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 Chron 7:14)

This can be used as a way to distinguish whether a king is good or bad. A good king 1) humbles himself, 2) prays, 3) seeks God's face, and 4) turns from his wicked ways.

There is no better example of this than King Manasseh. Although he was very wicked—more wicked even than the Canaanites that Israel drove from the land—according to Chronicles, when he was taken into exile he proved to be redeemable. He changed and became a model king. This even though according to Kings he was the worst king ever who directly caused the fall of Judah.

Kings that are judged to be evil in 1 – 2 Kings can be good in Chronicles; kings that are good in Kings can come to a bad end in Chronicles. This is because the books judge by different criteria. (The OT prof I replaced at Erskine told me that Josiah was his favorite king. I thought to myself, “You must mean the Josiah of Kings, not Chronicles.”)

And good King Asa is an example of this. Instead of “seeking” Yahweh, he “sought” other agents of healing. This is a great spiritual failing in Chronicles—and also instructive for the church today. When you are under various sorts of pressure, where do you go with your distress?

In the EPC we claim to confess the sovereignty of God. God, so we say, is in charge. God is in control. He is a big God who is omnipotent and omniscient. So, theoretically, we believe that nothing happens outside of his plan or by chance. Right?

Why then do we get anxious about many things? In what do you trust with your financial future? In God? Or in your investments? (It’s unwise to ignore financial advice. Yes, invest, but when the coronavirus crashes the market or cripples your business, you should be able to trust that God will care for you.)

In what do you trust with your promotion? In God? Or in that manager that you flatter and fawn over?

In what do you trust during a pandemic? In medical science and government stimulus checks? Or in God? (Yes, practice social distancing and stay at home and so on, but whatever happens, you should be able to trust your Father and live without fear. Even if life might become harder than you expected.) Go ahead and read our verse again.

In what do you trust with your future happiness? In God? Or in that person that you feel that you *must* have?

Jesus, of course, trusted in his Father in all things, no matter how severe or serious the situation was (Heb 2:13). And he sees you turning to all of these other things for your serenity. He sees you putting your hopes and dreams in the Dow, or in your job, or in your love relationship, or in the quarantine. And do you know what he says about it? He says to you, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:1).

Your life is in his hands. Although you still must live wisely with all of these things, you need not place your hope in them. And you need not live in fear.

Something to think about.