

June 24 Answers

- 1) The reign of Asa. Asa's early years were marked by religious **reform**. He removed the foreign altars, tore down the sacred pillars and told the people of Judah to obey God. God rewarded Asa's reforms with ten years of **peace**: "He had no war in those years, for the Lord gave him peace" (2 Chr 14:6b). This reminds us of the proverb: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his **enemies** to be at peace with him" (Prov 16:7). Asa used this time to build up Judah's defenses, but nothing he did prepared him for Zerah's million-man army. Asa knew he had no hope of defeating such a foe, and he called out to God, "O Lord, You are our God; let not **man** prevail against You" (2 Chr 14:11b). God honored Asa's request and routed the Ethiopians. So many fell that they could not recover, and the people carried away great plunder. This teaches us that no battle is too great for God. When we put our trust in God and obey His word, He is faithful to give us **victory** over the enemy. After the battle, God sent Azariah to **encourage** Asa to continue his religious reforms: "The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you **seek** him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. Be **strong** and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded" (2 Chr 15:2, 7 NIV). Asa took courage when he heard these words, and he led Judah in a national **revival**. Asa was so committed to following God that he removed Maacah, his **grandmother**, from being the 'Queen-Mother' of Judah. Yet later in his reign, Asa leaned on his own **understanding**, bought off the Syrians rather than **trusting** in God, and when he was rebuked, he **harden** his heart. What a tragic end to a godly man!