

5/5/19

The Reform of Asa Pleased God
2Chron. 15-1-19

The nation of Israel destroyed itself from within, then it ultimately was conquered.

* Abraham Lincoln said, “America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves.”

The book of Second Chronicles gives emphasis to the family line through David to Solomon to Rehoboam, the line of Judah, resulting in the divided kingdom till the destruction of Jerusalem. 2Chron. 1-36

* We come to the times of reform or revival through five good kings, comprising twenty-one of the thirty-six chapters. 2Chron. 14-35

1. The reform of Asa. 2Chron. 14-16
2. The reform of Jehoshaphat. 2Chron. 17-20
3. The reform of Joash. 2Chron. 23-24
4. The reform of Hezekiah. 2Chron. 29-32
5. The reform of Josiah. 2Chron. 34-35

* The key to each reform and renewal of revival was repentance and returning to obey the Word of God. 2Chron. 15:8, 9; 17:3, 4; 23:16-21; 24:1-6; 29:3-36; 30:1, 15, 16; 34:18-21

The repeated theme in Second Chronicles is their need to repent found eleven times, the key verse used often quoted for revival is out of context, it is for the Jews

at the dedication of the Temple. 2Chron. 7:14; 2Chron. 6:38; 12:14; 16:9; 22:9; 30:19; 34:31

* “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.

The books of 1-2Chronicles focus on the kings and leaders responsibility, the kingdom of Judah.

1. The Northern kingdom had 19 kings all bad.
- 2, The Southern kingdom had 20 kings, 10 good, 10 bad, 5 outstanding by the five revivals or reforms.

King Asa is the first good king as he depended on God to defeat the Ethiopians and executed reforms.

* The parallel passage. 1Kings 15:9-15

We want to look at the proclamation of the Prophet Azariah to Asa about continuing to seek God, which unfolds in three movements. 2Chron. 15:1-19

- I. The exhortation to seek God. vs. 1-7
- II. The demonstration of seeking God. vs. 8-11
- III. The dedication to seek God. vs. 12-19

I. The exhortation to seek God. vs. 1-7

- A. The messenger of God was sent to Asa. vs. 1-2
 1. The preparation for the revelation, “Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded.”
 - a. The Spirit of God refers to the Third Person of the Trinity.

- 1) The Father.
- 2) The Son.
- 3) The Holy Spirit.
- b. The Spirit came upon Azariah.
 - 1) The purpose was to impart to him the words of God to be spoken through him to Asa and the nation.
 - 2) The Spirit anointed him to speak with the authority the trustworthy words of God to the people of God. 2Chron. 20:14; 24:20
- c. Azariah was the son of Obed.
 - 1) The name Azariah “Azaryah” means “Yahweh has helped”.
 - 2) Obed “Owded” means “restorer”, but we do not know who he was.
2. The proclamation to the king and the people. vs. 2a-e
 - a. The confrontation, “And he went out to meet Asa.” vs. 2a
 - 1) The first reform or revival was through Asa. 2Chron. 14:1-8
 - 2) The Ethiopians had attacked Asa. 2Chron. 14:9-10
 - 3) Asa cried out the LORD saying, “LORD, 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!” 2Chron. 14:11
- 3) The LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, as they fled Asa and the people pursued them, overcame them took much spoil, as well as from the cities around Gerar and were returning to Jerusalem. 2Chron. 14:12-15
 - b. The declaration, “and said to him: “Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. “ vs. 2b-e
 - 1) The word hear “shama”, it is an imperative command to harken with the implication to obey.
 - 2) The king “Asa” is the first held to the highest responsibility to God to obey.
 - 3) The people follow, “all of Judah and Benjamin” were responsible to obey.
 - a) The two tribes comprised the Southern Kingdom Rehoboam and his son Abijah.
 - b) This is the nature of the kingdom till captivity, divided, north and south.
 3. The stipulations are three. vs. 2f-j
 - a. “The LORD is with you while you are with Him. “ vs. 2f
 - b. “If you seek Him, He will be found by you.” vs. 2g-h
 - c. “but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.” vs. 2h-j

- B.** The messenger of God revealed God was for them now. vs. 3-7
1. There are different interpretations of verse 3-6.
 - a. Some interpret verse 3-6 to refer to the days of the judges,
 - b. Others to Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam and Abijah.
 - c. Still others to the future of Israel.
 - 1) I believe the most natural sense is dictated by the context, the departure of Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam and Abijah. 2Chron. 11-13
 - 2) Even though Chronicles is God's perspective of examining the past history the exhortation of the prophet to Asa was to continue to seek God and not forsake Him. vs. 2
 - 3) Certainly we can see what is described in verse 3-6 took place in the days of Judges, but the present is the context, contrasting Asa with Solomon, Rehoboam, Jeroboam and Abijah.
 2. The nation had departed from God, "For a long time Israel has been without the true God." vs. 3a
 - a. The false gods of Jeroboam were in Dan and Bethel.
 - b. The he goat and calf.

3. The confirmation was two-fold, "without a teaching priest, and without law." vs. 3b-c
 - a. The teaching of God's word had been abandoned by Israel, yet eaching is imperative to know God.
 - b. The law was God's revelation of His will and ways.
 - * In the days of Josiah the Book of the law, the Pentetauch was found by Shaphan the scribe and Josiah tore his clothes and commanded the word to be taught and obeyed. 1Kings 22:8-13
4. The decision to turn to God, "but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them." vs. 4
 - a. The contrast is between Asa and the recent kings.
 - b. The battle against the Ethipians provided the material being referred to.
 - c. God confirmed the repentance genuine.
5. The condtion of the nation had not been good, "And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands." vs. 5
 - a. Travel was not safe or security on the roads and country.
 - b. The lawless terrorized, brutalized, stole their good, even murdered the people.

- c. These things also occurred in the days of Judges, but the context is the divided kingdom.
- 6. The judgment was from God, “So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity.” vs. 6
 - a. The nation had been divided and fighting against each other.
 - b. The nations around Judah invaded them.
 - c. This was God’s doing by the judgment over Solomon and through Rehoboam.
- 7. The situation had change. vs. 7
 - a. The sharp contrast is marked by the word “but you”, Asa and the people had not been defeated by the Ethiopians. vs. 7a
 - * The king and the people had repented and called on God. vs. 4
 - b. They were exhorted by the prophet, “you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak.” vs. 7a-b
 - 1) The phrase “Be strong” is an imperative command!
 - 2) The tendency of God’s sheep is to stray and forsake God!
 - c. The reason is stated, “for your work shall be rewarded!” vs. 7c
 - 1) The motive to be faithful to God is never to receive rewards for that would be an impure motive and God could not reward the person.

- 2) The exhortation is to be faithful and loyal by seeking God, studying the word, praying and abiding continually trusting God.

Illustration

When you put a plant in the grown, it must remain in the ground, receive water, sunshine and it will have deep strong roots. The believer is no different!

Application

- 1. How we need to sit under Spirit, called and anointed Pastors-teachers to learn the word of God.
 - a. To grow, develop and mature spiritually.
 - b. To serve the Lord Jesus in the church.
 - c. To decern false doctrine and warn others.
 - * “Be diligent to present yourself **approved** to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some.”
2Tim. 2:15-18
- 2. The warning is to the believer it has never changed, Old or New Testament,
 - a. To walk with God and not be distracted by the things in the world.

- b. To walk with God and not be deceived with false teachers, sin, Satan or self.
- c. Every one of these warning in the New Testament are to the beleiver because
 - * “Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you **continue** in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not **continue** in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.” Rom. 11:22-23

The exhortation to seek God came through the prophet of God!

II. The demonstration to continue to seek God. vs. 8-11

- A. The response of king Asa was one of obediecne. vs. 8
 - 1. The king responded personally to the proclamation of God to him, “And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage.” vs. 8a-b
 - a. The hearing of the words of God were like sunshine and life.
 - 1) A person cannot catch revival from another, it is not a disease.
 - 2) Revival first took place in him being a man of prayer, the word and seeking

God, then the people. 2Chron. 14:11; 15:3

- b. The king hearing the word of God from the prophet sent by God encouraged him.
 - 1) The transliteration of the phrase “he took courage” is “strengthen yourself” and is an imperative command to Asa.
 - 2) But not in himself, but in God who approved of his love and seeking of God, turning the people back to God.
- 2. The king led the spiritual revival by removing the idols that contradicted and opposed the reform or revival. vs. 8c
 - a. He took away the thing that offened to God, “and removed the abominable idols.
 - 1) This verse is not a contradiction to the previous removal in the land of Judah in the first reform, Asa now removes “from all the land of Judah”.
 - 2) This is the second reform dealing also with those from Ephraim.
 - 3) The people had syncretized the worship of Yahweh with idolatry, deceiving and corrupting the people.
 - b. He took away the thing that were defiling the land, “from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim.”
 - 1) The two tribes God gave Rehoboam, the southern kingdom of Judah.

- 2) The cities Asa had conquered from the Northern kingdom of Israel, “in the mountains of Ephraim”.
- 3. The king led the spiritual revival by re-establishing the legitimate access to God, “and he restored the altar of the LORD that was before the vestibule of the LORD.” vs. 8
 - a. The altar of brass was where all the sin offerings were offered to God, having confessed their sins.
 - * Brass or bronze represents judgment.
 - b. The altar of brass gave access to be one with God and have fellowship with God.
 - * To please and enjoy God!
 - c. This again is the second reform of Asa, the first is in the previous chapter. 2Chron. 14:2-7
 - * Trusting and having confidence in God Asa called upon Him for help to defeat the Ethiopians!
- B. The response of king Asa was one of leading the people to God. vs. 9-11
 - 1. He welcomed all those who deflected from the northern kingdom of Israel to be one with the southern kingdom, “Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon.” vs. 9a-d

- a. Those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon, like those that left Jereboam when he rejected the priests and Levites.
- b. Then he established his own false pagan priests, the worship of the he goat and calf at the two worship centers of Dan and Bethel.
- 2. The reason they deflected to king Asa is stated, “for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. vs. 9e
 - a. The number was not a few, but rather large, “in great numbers”.
 - 1) Those that could discern the false worship.
 - 2) Those loyal and faithful to Yahweh.
 - b. The people witnessed the hand of God upon Asa.
 - 1) God had given Asa victory over the overwhelming force of the Ethiopians.
 - 2) God had sent the prophet Azariah to tell Asa the LORD was with him while he was with God and if he sought God, He would be found by Asa.
 - 3) But God warned Asa that if Asa forsook God, God would forsake Asa.
- 3. The people came to attend the one of the Feast day, “So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.” vs. 10

- a. The location was the city of David, the capital of Israel.
- b. The time was the Feast of Weeks of Pentecost, May/June 895 B.C
- c. Three Feast commanded in the law that every male of 20 had to present himself to God. Ex. 23:14-19; Deut. 16:16
 - 1) The Feast of Unleaven followed by Passover, celebrated as one, April.
 - 2) The Feast of Ingathering, Booths or Tabernacles, October.
- 4. The celebration was in great worship, “And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought.” vs. 11
 - a. The offerings were according to the Law. Lev. 23:15-21
 - 1) This was the new grain offering to the LORD, the first fruits to the LORD.
 - 2) Seven lambs of the first year.
 - 3) One kid of the goat for a sin offering.
 - 4) The priest would offer a wave offering before the LORD.
 - b. The offerings were from the spoil that God had given to them from their victory in battle against the Ethiopians.
 - 1) All that is ever given to God is from all that God has given to us.
 - 2) An expression of their thankfulness, gratitude and love for God.

Illustration

Jesus will save you from your sin, not in your sin!

Application

1. What a joy it is when we see backsliders come back to God.
 - a. Some who grew up in this church and went back to the world and you came back and recommitted your life to Jesus.
 - b. Others who were saved and used in leadership and have gotten caught up with the compromising of God’s word and still call themselves Christian, but are so far from God and God has restored them.
 - * “The **backslider** in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man will be satisfied from above.” Prov. 14:14
2. What a miracle to see broken marriages restored.
 - a. Some of you were ready to call it quits, other of you did and you responded to the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. You obeyed the word of God, gave yourself to it and the word began to transform you.
 - c. You had no joy in your life, but merely existing, but God filled you with His joy.
 - * “Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our **LORD**. Do not sorrow, for the **joy** of the **LORD** is your strength.”” Neh. 8:10

3. What an encouragement many of you are to those around you as you now are seeking and trusting God.
- a. Seeing the witness of all things handled and done in obedience to God's word, prayer and the power of the Spirit of God.
 - b. Seeing that you could never have done it on their own!
 - c. Knowing that things would have never get better without the help of Jesus.
 - d. Seeing your obedience inspite the difficulty and consequences, evidence of your love for God.
 - * Jesus said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves **Me**. And he who loves **Me** will be loved by My Father, and I will **love** him and manifest Myself to him." Jn. 14:21

The demonstration of continuing to seek God was in obedience to the word of God!

III. The dedication to seek God. vs. 12-19

- A. The king and the people renewed the covenant with God to be sanctified to Him. vs. 12
 1. They went back to the beginning of their history. vs. 12
 - a. The decisive action, "Then they entered into a covenant."
 - 1) The word covenant "b@riyth" has the idea of cuttings with the sense of making a treaty or alliance.

- 2) God made a covenant with Abraham by dividing the animals. Gen. 15:9-19
 - 3) Jeremiah describes it, "And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when they **cut** the calf in **two** and passed between the parts of it." Jer. 34:18
 - 4) The word appears 29 times in the books of Chronicles and 285 times in the Old Testament and 28 in the New Testament.
 - 5) Moses and the nation had entered into a covenant with God at Mount Sinai and sprinkled the blood on the people. Ex 24:1-8
- b. The determined purpose, "to seek the LORD God of their fathers."
 - 1) To be guided and directed by God.
 - 2) To do His will and obey God.
 - 3) To be under the protection of God.
 - 4) These and many more things that Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple for his people to call on His name.
 - c. The sincerity devotion is stated, "with all their heart and with all their soul."
 - 1) The heart "lebad" refers to the inner man, who you are in character.

- * Without God ruling my heart, it is deceitful and desperately wicked. Jer. 17:9
- 2) The soul “nephesh” deals with our intellect, emotions and will, without God giving us a new heart, we will do and live for ourselves.
 2. They pledged to be accountable to God and man. vs. 13-15
 - a. He expressed the most extreme commitment, “and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.” vs. 13
 - b. The small and great deals with their social position.
 - c. The indication of “man or woman” refers to no exception.
 2. They spoke an oath before God, “Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams’ horns.” vs. 14
 - a. The oath was a swearing to follow through with their commitment.
 - b. The “loud voice” was that all might hear, certainly not God.
 - c. The trumpets and ram’s horns to mark the solemn act and transaction.
 3. The summary statement, “And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their

- soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.” vs. 15
- a. There was a sense of joy over the covenant oath.
 - b. Their joy was over their total commitment to God.
 - c. The result was “He was found by them”.
 - d. The benefit was God’s protection, “gave them rest all around.”
- B.** The king corrected and put in order the things that violated the covenant. vs. 16-19
1. The obedience of Asa was admirable fulfilling his oath by taking action against his own family. vs. 16
 - a. The unthinkable, “Also he removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from being queen mother.” vs. 16a-b
* Maachah “Ma’akah”, means ppprsson.
 - b. The reason, “because she had made an obscene image of Asherah.” vs. 16c
 - c. The casting out of the idols, “and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned it by the Brook Kidron.” vs. 16d-e
* “And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.” 1kings 15:12
 2. The exception of Asa, “But the high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless

the heart of Asa was loyal all his days.” vs. 17

- a. Removed them to this point.
 - b. He would trust the help of the king of Syria, king Ben-Hadad instead of the Lord, so the prophet Hanani rebuked him and reminded him of the victory over the Ethiopians, tolling him he had done foolishly, so he became angry and imprisoned the prophet. 2Chron. 16:7-10
 - c. He had a severe diseased of his feet, did not seek the LORD, but the physicians and he died. 2Chron. 16:12-13
3. The sanctifying of the house of God, “He also brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils.” vs. 18
- a. The Chronicales bypass a number of the sins of individuals.
 - b. Are you glad God has bypassed all of your sins? I am!
4. The summary statement of peace, And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.” vs. 19
- * He reigned for 41 years. 2Chron. 16:13

Illustration

Think of how rick we would be if we sough God the way men seek silver, gold and gems in the ground. Job 28

Application

1. The covenant of grace has saved us from our sins.
 - a. We live one day at a time.
 - b. We study on book at a time.
 - c. We tackle one problem at a time.
 - d. We grow old and wise one step at a time.
 - * I beg you to present your bodies a living... Rom. 12:1-2
2. The standard of the word of God must be uphold by us regardless of who opposes it.
 - a. Mother, Father or family.
 - b. Friends or acquaintances.
 - c. Educational institutions, etc.
 - d. Government.
 - * “for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” 1Sam. 2:30e-f

The dedication to seek God was by covenant with God!

Conclusion

This was the proclamation of the Prophet Azariah to Asa about continuing to seek God in three movements.

- I. The exhortation to seek God came through the prophet of God!
- II. The demonstration of continuing to seek God was in obedience to the word of God!
- III. The dedication to seek God was by covenant with God!