

2 Chronicles Chapter 15

Verses 1-2

After Asa's victory over the Ethiopians, the Spirit of God spoke powerfully to him through a prophet, "Azariah the son of Oded".

Perhaps God wanted to remind Asa to give Him credit for the victory and not take it for himself.

Furthermore, this word encouraged Asa to continue to cleanse Judah from idols (15:8).

2 Chronicles 15:1 "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:"

"Spirit of God":

An act of the Holy Spirit common in the Old Testament enabling servants of God to speak or act uniquely for Him.

"Azariah":

This man was a prophet mentioned only here, who met Asa as he returned from the victory and spoke to him before all his army.

Asa's early years were spent wisely, his godly piety (14:2), being put to spiritual (14:4-5), and political purposes (14:5-8).

The encouragement of "Azariah" (verses 1-7), only increased his faithful activities, including a further religious purge of idolatry (verse 8), that, unfortunately, stopped short of full cleansing (verse 17).

Even his powerful grandmother, Maachah, saw the influence of her apostate religion terminated (verse 16; see the note on 1 Kings 15:2).

Oded was the prophet, who had encouraged Asa in the beginning.

His son Azariah, covered with the Spirit of God, would now speak to him.

2 Chronicles 15:2 "And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD [is] with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you."

The spiritual truth here is basic, namely that God is present and powerful in defense of His obedient people (compare Deut. 20:1; 1 Chron. 28:9; Isa. 55:6-7; Jer. 29:12-14; James 4:8).

While good Asa ruled for 41 years, 8 wicked kings ruled in Israel, including Jeroboam, who along with the others, was a negative illustration of this truth (compare 12:1).

Everyone should take to heart the words Azariah spoke to those who follow Him (See Romans 8:35-37).

Azariah was speaking the Words the LORD had put into his mouth.

These were not the words of Azariah, but of the LORD.

A prophet is a leader of those God has sent him to, for spiritual direction in his life.

The LORD had been with them in the past, and would be with them in the future as long as they sought Him.

He would bless them, as long as they were faithful to Him.

He would curse them, if they were unfaithful to Him.

The message was simple, but clear.

2 Chronicles 15:3 "Now for a long season Israel [hath been] without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law."

The fear, worship, and service of him being greatly neglected by them for a long time.

What period of time is referred to is not expressed.

Whether past, present, or to come, but left to be supplied.

The Targum refers this to the time of the separation of the ten tribes, and the days of Jeroboam, when the calves were worshipped, and not the true God.

And the teaching priests of the LORD were cast out, and the law of the LORD.

Especially with respect to worship, was not regarded, in which it is followed by many interpreters.

Others think it refers to time to come, and to what would be the case, should they forsake the LORD.

And was fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity (see Hosea 3:4).

And the Jews say, that" Oded prophesied that the days should come, when Israel would be "without the true God", since judgment should not be done in the world.

“And without a teaching priest”:

Since the high priesthood should cease (see Heb. 7:12)

"And without the law”:

Since the Sanhedrim should cease.

"But according to our supplement, and which seems most correct, it refers to time past.

Not to the case of the ten tribes from the times of Jeroboam.

Nor to the case of Judah from the times of Rehoboam.

But to times more remote, even the times of the judges.

When they worshipped Baal and Ashtaroth, and not the true God (Judges 2:10).

Yet at the same time suggesting, that should the present inhabitants of Judah go into the same practices, their case would be like theirs, described in the following verses.

It appeared that for many years before the time of Asa, there had not been the teaching of the law by the priests, that God knew was necessary.

They had a form of godliness, but had wandered from the Truth.

That is the same as our society today.

Many of our churches have a form of godliness, but are not teaching the people the Word of God.

That is exactly what this was saying about worship then.

To do the will of God, a person must know what the will of God for his or her life is.

The only way to know is to study His Word, the Bible.

In their case, they needed to be taught the law of God.

2 Chronicles 15:4 "But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them."

When being carried captive by neighboring nations, and oppressed.

And they cried unto the LORD, and repented of their sins, and turned from them to him.

"And sought him":

By prayer and supplication.

"He was found of them":

And appeared for their help and deliverance, of which there are many instances in the book of Judges.

It is the same throughout all ages.

If we truly seek God, we will find Him.

Asa certainly found this to be true, when the Ethiopians had come against him.

God is our very present help in trouble.

He does expect us to seek to know His Truth, and live by that Truth.

He helped them, now they must keep His law.

2 Chronicles 15:5 "And in those times [there was] no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations [were] upon all the inhabitants of the countries."

There was no safety in going abroad for travelers from one part to another on account of trade and business.

The highways being infested with thieves and robbers.

"But great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries":

Of the country villages, which were deserted, because of the plunders and depredations of them (Judges 5:6).

Without God, there is danger at every hand.

There is no peace aside from what God can bring.

Those away from God, are constantly vexed.

2 Chronicles 15:6 "And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity."

Or one tribe of another; as the Ephraimites by the Gileadites.

And the tribe of Benjamin by the other tribes.

And Shechem by Abimelech (Judges 9:45).

"For God did vex them with all adversity":

Both with foreign enemies and civil wars.

And now it is intimated that this would be their case again, should they not keep close to the LORD their God.

Without the blessings of God, there was war on every side.

Vile men killed each other for what little self-gain there was in it, when they did not know God.

2 Chronicles 15:7 "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."

Be hearty, earnest, and vigorous, and not languid and remiss in reforming the worship of God, which Asa had begun.

"For your work shall be rewarded":

With peace and prosperity at home, and success against enemies abroad, of which they had had a recent instance.

Their strength lay in their faith in God.

They were strong because He made them strong.

Everything they put their hands to would prosper, because of their faith in God.

Verses 8-15

Asa fostered revival in his nation.

First, "he removed the abominable idols".

Second, "he renewed the altar of the LORD".

Third, he reassembled (unified), his people.

As a result, God granted them "rest round around".

Three components of revival are reflected here: Repentance and confession; restoring worship and teaching; unifying the people before God.

2 Chronicles 15:8 "And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that [was] before the porch of the LORD."

“Porch”:

This refers to the area outside the Holy Place, where the altar of the burnt offering was located.

This speaks of the prophet Oded telling Asa of these things.

We do know that Asa had done away with the evil in the land at the very first of his reign.

This could be saying, just as Oded the prophet had said before.

Oded had warned Asa, and Asa had taken the warning.

Asa would still receive warning from Azariah as well.

Asa made sure all of the idols were destroyed and he re-established the brazen altar before the porch of the temple in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 15:9 "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God [was] with him."

“Ephraim ... Manasseh ... Simeon”:

This indicates that not all the people in the 10 tribes which constituted the apostate northern kingdom of Israel had abandoned God.

Many migrated south into Judah, so that all tribes were represented in the mix of Jews in Judah.

Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon had the law as well as Judah and Benjamin.

Many of them followed Asa, when they saw he was a man willing to humble himself before God.

There was no question that the LORD was with Asa.

They came to Judah, so they could be counted on the side of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 15:10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

“Fifteenth year”:

Ca. 897 B.C. in May/June.

The Feast of Weeks would have been the occasion.

This was during the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.

This victory celebration would take place after the war with Zerah.

The war began probably, about the 11th year, and this was 4 years later.

We are not told why this was so long a period of time.

Verses 11-15

The assembled worshipers entered into a renewed promise to obey (compare Exodus 24:1), and to rigorously enforce the laws which made idolatry punishable by death (compare Deut. 17:2-5).

This was inaugurated with the sacrifices of animals taken in spoil from the Ethiopians (14:15).

2 Chronicles 15:11 "And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil [which] they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep."

The Targum adds, on the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost.

Of the spoil which they had brought; from the camp of the Ethiopians, and the cities of the Philistines.

"Seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep":

Partly for burnt offerings, and partly for peace offerings, by way of thankfulness to the LORD for the victory he had given them.

And for a feast at the making of the following covenant with him.

This was a tremendously large amount of offering.

It was possibly a peace offering.

It would not be thought of as too much however, considering the hundreds of thousands of soldiers involved in the victory.

"Seven" means spiritually complete, and is not unusual to see in various offerings.

2 Chronicles 15:12 "And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;"

Asa's spiritual fidelity showed itself further in his leading of the people in an act of "covenant" renewal (compare Joshua 24:2).

All true Israelites from all quarters were invited to the ceremony (verse 9).

2 Chronicles 15:13 "That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman."

That obstinately refused to worship him, and served other gods, which by the law was deserving of death (Deut. 17:2).

"Whether small or great, whether man or woman":

Without any regard to rank or dignity, age or sex.

A "covenant" is an unbreakable agreement between man and his God.

If a person does not seek God, he is in a sense dead already.

Life is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who do not accept the Lord as their Savior will be thrown into the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

2 Chronicles 15:14 "And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets."

As not being ashamed of the oath they took, and that there might be witnesses of it, and that it might be clear they did not equivocate in but expressed themselves in plain words.

"And with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets":

Showing that the oath was not extorted from them unwillingly.

But that they took it with the utmost cheerfulness, and with all the demonstrations of joy and gladness imaginable.

This was a time of great rejoicing.

This was not just a victory over Ethiopia, but was a victory over their own lives.

They decided to follow the LORD and Him only.

2 Chronicles 15:15 "And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about."

The greater part of them; for some there might be who were dissemblers.

"For they had sworn with all their heart":

In the sincerity and uprightness of their souls.

"And sought him with their whole desire":

None being more or so desirable as he.

"And he was found of them":

And favored them with his presence.

"And the LORD gave them rest round about":

From all their enemies.

Judah was not just paying lip service to the LORD.

They really were thrilled in their hearts, that they had made covenant with their God.

It was the desire of their hearts to serve the LORD.

There is no happier person in the world, than the one who is serving the LORD in his heart as well as in his actions.

Verses 16-18 (see note on 1 Kings 15:11-15).

2 Chronicles 15:16 "And also [concerning] Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from [being] queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped [it], and burnt [it] at the brook Kidron."

When revival touched Asa, it affected his relationships, including that with his grandmother "Maachah".

(Hebrew uses the same word for mother and grandmother).

“She had made an idol in a grove”

(the Canaanite fertility goddess); Asa did not want her influencing others in the kingdom to worship false gods.

Maachah was really the grand-mother of Asa.

She was acting queen, but Asa did not let that stop him.

He removed her as queen because she had an idol.

He also burned her idol.

Asa had determined there would be no idols in Judah.

2 Chronicles 15:17 "But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days."

Or rather his grandmother (1 Kings 15:10).

"He removed her from being queen":

The Septuagint version is, "that she should not minister to Astarte"; which was the goddess of the Zidonians.

Of this and the two next verses (see notes on 1 Kings 15:13-15).

These high places had been used, before the temple was built in Jerusalem, and had never been destroyed.

There was no worship of false gods going on there.

Asa loved God, and lived perfect before the LORD.

He tried to see that all of the people he was reigning over did too.

Verses 18-19

The revival that took place under Asa's leadership prompted the return of the “dedicated” things to “the house of God”.

This likely refers to the temple treasures that Shishak had been given (12:9).

The result of this revival was “no more war” – a time of rest in Judah.

2 Chronicles 15:18 "And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels."

The verse is identical with (1 Kings 15:15), substituting God for Jehovah.

“The things that his father had dedicated”, were doubtless taken from the spoils after Abijah’s great victory over Jeroboam (2 Chron. 13:16-19).

And “the things that he himself had dedicated” were a portion of the Cushite booty (2 Chronicles 14:13-15).

"The things that his father had dedicated":

Probably spoils of war (compare 1 Chron. 18:11).

The verse seems to say that Abijah had vowed a portion of his spoils, but that Asa first actually presented them in the Temple.

May we not take the passage (which occurs also in 1 Kings), as an indirect confirmation of Abijah’s victory (2 Chron. chapter 13).

"And that he himself had dedicated":

Of the booty taken from the Ethiopians.

Both of these were now deposited in the temple as votive offerings to Him whose Right Hand and Holy Arm had given them the victory.

So many of the beautiful things had been taken from the temple, while Rehoboam was king.

It appears, that Abijah and Asa had gathered things of gold and silver, and dedicated them to the LORD.

Asa put them in the temple.

2 Chronicles 15:19 "And there was no [more] war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa."

That is, from the Ethiopian war to that time; after that there was no war with any foreign enemy.

There were animosities and discords, bickering and hostilities of some sort continually between Asa and Baasha king of Israel as long as he lived (see 1 Kings 15:16).

“Five and thirtieth year”:

Ca. 875 B.C.

It was on the fifteenth year, Asa and the people had made covenant with God.

The peace from that moment lasted 20 years.

Baasha was a constant threat, but it appears no war actually broke out until the 35th year of Asa's reign.

2 Chronicles Chapter 15 Questions

1. And the _____ of God came upon Azariah.
2. Who did he go out to meet with a message from God?
3. What was Azariah speaking?
4. How long would God bless them?
5. What terrible thing had gone on in the land, before Asa became king?
6. Many of our churches today have a form of _____.
7. What must you do, before you can do the will of God?
8. When they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, he was _____ of them.
9. Their strength lay in their _____ in God.
10. What did Asa do when he heard these things from Oded and Azariah?
11. What was the altar that was before the porch of the temple?
12. Why did some of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon come to Judah?
13. When did they gather in Jerusalem for the celebration?
14. When is the Feast of Weeks?
15. What did they offer to the LORD of the spoil?
16. What does "seven" mean?
17. What is a "covenant"?
18. What covenant had they made with God?
19. Why was there such rejoicing?

20. Who did Asa remove as queen?
21. Why did he remove her?
22. What did he do with her idol?
23. What wonderful thing was said of Asa in verse 17?
24. What did Asa bring into the temple?
25. How long was there peace after this celebration?