

Asa Brings Revival

Lesson Scope: 2 Chronicles chapters 14 through 16

References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

Idolatry had taken root in Judah, being introduced by Solomon's heathen wives. It continued through the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam and the brief three-year reign of Abijah, Solomon's grandson. Asa, Abijah's son, became the third king of Judah after the dividing of Israel. He led a revival by removing the idols and destroying the places where they were worshiped. At the encouragement of the prophet, Asa led his people to enter into a covenant to seek the Lord and to renew right worship.

As a result of this revival, Asa enjoyed a lengthy reign of forty-one years, which overlapped with seven of Israel's kings. The people had rest and victory. Many in the Northern Kingdom joined with him after they saw that the Lord was with him. In his later years, Asa failed to rely on the Lord, but sought help from the king of Syria. In his disease he sought the physicians rather than the Lord. Thereafter Asa had wars.

Revival is needed when God's people fail. In Israel's history we see repeated cycles of people forsaking the Lord and turning to idols, followed by God's chastisement, and resulting in a return to God and the revival of true Worship. Explore the question "Are times lukewarmness and mediocrity a normal part of church life?" In Israel's history, we note that unfaithfulness to God characterized them often enough that it could be considered "normal" for them.

But how does God view it? Would He not rather see His people staying revived rather than losing spiritual vitality soon after a revival and be in need of revival again? Yes, obviously. What suggestions would you make and in what ways would you keep revival alive.

True revival issues from a wholehearted commitment to the Lord. Continuing in faith ensures continued revival, but failing to rely on the Lord begins a course of failure.

Lesson Aim: To see principles related to revival.

Theme Verse: [2 Chronicles 7:14](#). If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Lesson Text

A Decisive Leader

[2 Chronicles 14:1-6](#)

¹ (KJV) So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years. ² And Asa did *that which was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God: ³ For he took away the altars of the strange *gods*, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: ⁴ And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. ⁵ Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. ⁶ And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest.

A Dedicated Nation

[2 Chronicles 15:1-4](#)

¹ (KJV) And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: 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. ³ Now for a long season Israel *hath been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. ⁴ But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

[2 Chronicles 15:8-9](#)

⁸ (KJV) 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. ⁹ And he gathered all Judah and Benja-

min, 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.

2 Chronicles 15:12-16

¹² (KJV) And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; ¹³ That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. ¹⁴ And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets. 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. 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.

A Disappointing End

2 Chronicles 16:7

⁷ (KJV) And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

2 Chronicles 16:10

¹⁰ (KJV) Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for *he was* in a rage with him because of this *thing*. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people the same time.

2 Chronicles 16:13

¹³ (KJV) And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

Questions for Study

A Decisive Leader

1. How did Asa's actions prevent idol worship from taking root again?
2. In what way does Asa's reign stand in contrast to the time of the judges? See Judges 21:25.
3. What can be done so that the spiritual gains of a time of revival are not soon lost?

A Dedicated Nation

4. What did God expect Asa to do after hearing that “the LORD is with you, while ye be with him”?
5. What elements of true revival do we note in Asa’s response to the prophet’s message?
6. How does a covenant strengthen those who seek to serve God?

A Disappointing End

7. What may have caused Asa to seek human help rather than relying on the Lord?
8. What happens to people who reject God’s messengers?

Analysing the Passage

Quiet (14:1, 5) indicates that the land was enjoying peace. This was a result of Asa's leadership. He removed idol worship and commanded Judah to seek God and obey the Law. God blessed his efforts, giving them rest (14:6; 15:15).

Asa wisely strengthened and fortified the cities in a time of peace (14:6-7). To wait until the enemy attacks and losses are suffered is like "putting a lock on the barn door after the horse is stolen."

High places were places selected for pagan worship. Groves were clusters of trees among which altars were erected for Ashtaroath (14:3). Sometimes groves were poles set up as idols for worship.

Maachah (15:16) was called the mother of Asa. However, according to 1 Kings 15:2, she was his father's mother, and thus his grandmother. Asa removed her from being queen and destroyed her idol in an effort to cut off the influence toward idolatry coming from persons in high positions. Near the end of Asa's reign (in the thirty-sixth year), he failed to trust God when Baasha, king of Israel, came against him (16:1). Hanani the seer told Asa that he could henceforth expect wars (16:9).

Principles and Applications

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1. Destroying idolatry is necessary for revival (14:3, 5). An idol could be something other than a graven image. It is anything that stands between us and God. To destroy idolatry today, self and one's carnal desires must be dethroned. We must allow no person or thing to hinder us from full surrender to God. He is able to compensate us for any costs arising from our efforts to remove the idols.

2. True revival is based on obedience to God's Word (14:4). Removing and destroying the idols is only the first step to true revival. The next step is to apply the principles of God's Word in worship and in daily life. Full obedience to God replaces devotion to idols. Newness of life springs up in place of the spiritual deadness of idolatry.

3. Those who are truly revived re-establish defences against the enemy (14:6). In a time of peace the need for defences against the enemy may not be so apparent. But our enemy, the devil, is not content to release his hold on those who renounce him and turn to God. So the church must establish safeguards and strengthen convictions before the tests and challenges come. Then we can hold on to what has been gained.

A Dedicated Nation

4. God uses Spirit-filled men to encourage revival (15: 1). "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah." God is eager to assist men who are serious about serving Him. God's Spirit works within men's hearts. When that work bears fruit, others are inspired.

5. The Lord will revive those who seek Him (15:2-4). God stands ready to revive, but man must choose to seek Him. There is no such thing as a passive revival—one that occurs without anyone promoting or desiring it. God responds to those who ask, seek, and knock (Matthew 7:7-8).

6. Revival can take place when men heed God's messengers (15:8). Asa acted on what the prophet told him. When we hear good preaching, do we say, "That was a good sermon," and then continue living as we had before? Or do we lay it to heart and take corrective action to align our lives with God's standard of truth?

7. Following God's prescribed worship patterns is essential to true revival (15:8-9). When people hold an inadequate view of God, their worship will lack proper reverence and dignity. On the merits of Jesus' high priestly work, we can "come boldly unto the throne of grace" (Hebrews 4:16). And yet we should approach God with a sense of humility, recognizing our own unworthiness. Living in God's grace inspires us to grow into the likeness of the God we worship.

8. True revival brings joy and rest (15: 15). This is the God-given result of true revival. All men desire joy and rest, but few will do what it takes to have the benefits that remain elusive apart from full surrender to God.

A Disappointing End

9. Failure to rely on the Lord brings defeat (16:7). Does a person ever get to a place where he no longer needs God? Obviously not. But sometimes one's sense of needing God diminishes. Reliance on God can be displaced by increased riches and human "help" in the form of insurance and government subsidies. When this happens, one drifts away from God and places less value on spiritual things.

10. Anger at God's message brings an end to spiritual growth (16:10). Rejecting God's message brought to us by His chosen ministers is a serious matter because it initiates a course away from God. We cannot afford to take an attitude of indifference toward sound Biblical preaching. God's Word nourishes and sustains us spiritually.

Important Teachings

1. Destroying idolatry is necessary for revival (14:23, 5).
2. True revival is based on obedience to God's Word (14:4).
3. Those who are truly revived re-establish defences against the enemy (14:6).
4. God uses Spirit-filled men to encourage revival (15:1).
5. The Lord will revive those who seek Him (15:2-4).
6. Revival can take place when men heed God's messengers (15:8).
7. Following God's prescribed worship patterns is essential to true revival (15:28-9).
8. True revival brings joy and rest (15:15).
9. Failure to rely on the Lord brings defeat (16:7).
10. Anger at God's message brings an end to spiritual growth (16:10).

Answers to Questions

1. How did Asa's actions prevent idol worship from taking root again? He not only destroyed the images that the people worshiped but also the altars used for sacrifices to the images. By cutting down the groves, he made these locations unsuitable for idol worship in the future.

2. In what way does Asa's reign stand in contrast to the time of the judges? See Judges 21:25.

During the time of the judges, men did what was right in their own eyes. Asa provided positive leadership by doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord and commanded Judah to do likewise.

3. What can be done so that the spiritual gains of a time of revival are not soon lost?

We must strengthen our guard in the areas where there was failure in the past. We must walk circumspectly, being aware that new tests and challenges are sure to come. Our resolve to hold fast to what we have gained should help us to not look back to the idols of our past life.

4. What did God expect Asa to do after hearing that “the LORD is with you, while ye be with him”?

God expected Asa to make the choice to be on the Lord’s side and follow Him in obedience. Asa needed God’s presence and power in order to experience true revival. Man cannot have revival solely by his own work.

5. What elements of true revival do we note in Asa’s response to the prophet’s message?

He not only removed the idols connected with false worship but also restored the practices of true worship. He also removed the people who would likely rekindle interest in idolatry. Asa and his people entered into a covenant to seek the Lord with their whole heart.

6. How does a covenant strengthen those who seek to serve God?

All of Judah took an oath and swore to seek God with all their hearts. It was a solemn promise to follow through with what they committed themselves to do. We are commanded by Jesus not to swear or take oaths. However, we make a vow at baptism. We should remember what we promised to do and faithfully carry it out.

7. What may have caused Asa to seek human help rather than relying on the Lord?

Perhaps he had forgotten the past victories he had won by God’s help. Maybe he wanted helpers he could see rather than looking to God who could not be seen.

8. What happens to people who reject God’s messengers?

Those who refuse to hear the messages God sends through His appointed messengers cut themselves off from the counsels and warning God sends for their good.

Summarizing the Lesson

Can revival continue, can it be sustained? Church history shows us that revivals like the one that occurred Judah during Asa’s reign can begin

with much zeal and sincerity. Then, as time passes, those who had been revived leave their first love, allow their devotion to God to dwindle, and set their affection on earthly things rather than spiritual things. Let us determine to hold fast to the Lord so at we do not lose the benefits revival brings.

Research Guide

Read the parallel passage in 1 Kings 15:8-24.