

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY
Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Davidic Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36
B. Learning To Rely On God ALONE Versus HUMAN Effort For Blessing
(2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14)

I. Introduction

- A. Many churches and organizations promote extensive human efforts and develop expansive programs to achieve the discipling objective of Christ's Matthew 28:18-20 Great Commission.
- B. However, this often comes at the price of properly trusting God and obeying His Word, a price that leads to the loss of divine blessing as we note in the life and times of Judah's king Asa (as follows):

II. Learning To Rely On God ALONE Versus HUMAN Effort For Blessing, 2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14.

- A. After Abijah died, his son, Asa began to rule in Judah, and enjoyed ten years of peace, 2 Chronicles 14:1.
- B. This peace was God's reward for Asa's rightly ridding Judah of many idols and urging his people to turn to the Lord and to heed His written Word, 2 Chronicles 14:2-3, 5 with 2 Chronicles 14:4.
- C. However, Asa failed to heed and trust God **alone** like Scripture directed the kings to do, 2 Chron. 14:6-7:
 - 1. Though Asa recognized God had given him peace for his trust and obedience to Him (2 Chron. 14:7b), Asa led Judah to start fortifying various cities and edifying its armament and infantry, 14:6-7a, 8.
 - 2. This was an illogical for him to do, for if Asa knew God had given him peace because he trusted and obeyed Him, Asa should not have expected to need to invest in defending himself for future war!
 - 3. Also, building up his defenses countered the spirit of God's directive for Asa in Deuteronomy 17:16:
 - a. God had commanded the kings of His people not acquire many horses from Egypt, Deut. 17:14, 16.
 - b. This command was directed at the tendency of the king to fail to trust God for His military needs: (1) If God directed the king not obtain horses (Deut. 17:16), his army would be decidedly weaker than his Gentile foes who used horses and chariots, Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 295. (2) Yet, God wanted the king ". . . to depend not on military strength but on **the LORD** alone," Ibid.
 - c. Thus, Asa's work to fortify his cities and build up his armament and army, though not technically disobeying Deuteronomy 17:16, it did disobey in spirit as doing so left him relying on human might.
- D. So, to get Asa back to depending upon Him and not on human might, God let a humanly massive army of Cushites come out against Asa to threaten him with war, 2 Chronicles 14:9-10.
- E. Asa wisely sought God's help, admitting victory came only from Him and not from human might, 14:11.
- F. Consequently, God rewarded Asa with a great victory over his Cushite foes, 2 Chronicles 14:12-15.
- G. However, the Lord then sent the prophet, Azariah the son of Oded to tell Asa and his subjects that He would bless them if they heeded Him, but that He would forsake them if they refused to do so, and used as proof of this claim the witness of Israel's history (especially the era of the Judges), 15:1-7, Ibid., p. 631.
- H. Asa then tried hard to eradicate the land of its idols and call Judah back to God, moves that were met with God's great blessing and an influx of people from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, 2 Chronicles 15:8-18.
- I. However, when the Northern Kingdom's king Baasha reacted to the loss of these subjects to Judah's Asa, and so built up Ramah near Asa's border, instead of trusting and heeding God, Asa hired Gentile king Ben-hadad of Syria with gold and silver out of the treasures of the Lord's temple to break his treaty with Baasha so that Baasha might be plagued by Ben-hadad and stop fortifying Ramah, 2 Chronicles 16:1-5.
- J. This plan temporarily worked and Asa dismantled Ramah and fortified some of his own towns, 16:6.
- K. Nevertheless, God's prophet, Hanani then informed Asa that relying on Syria's king meant he failed to recall God's help at his battle with the Cushites, and so Asa would face war after that, 2 Chron. 16:6, 7-9.
- L. Instead of repenting, Asa was furious with Hanani, and imprisoned him and abused other people, 16:10.
- M. God then struck Asa with a disease in his feet, but he refused to repent even to his death, 16:11-14.

Lesson: To the **DEGREE** Asa **TRULY** trusted God and obeyed Scripture **ALONE**, God blessed him. However, to the **DEGREE** Asa **SHIFTED** from trusting and heeding God **ALONE**, he faced trouble.

Application: (1) May we (a) heed God's Word in **SPIRIT** and (b) trust Him **ALONE** versus (b) relying on human power independent of God. (2) If God lets trials arise that expose our shift to human might, may we **ADJUST** and **REMEMBER** them that we **STAY** faithful to Him. (3) May we **NOT** rely on human effort or program free of God's leading, but follow Him and His Word, Hag. 2:1-5; Zech. 4:6-9.