

# Revival in the Land

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[ 0 : 00 ] We've been going through our series here looking at the kings and going through the transitions. Last time we got to the point there with Abijah, and as he had passed through, now passed on, we're going to look today here at his son Asa, who comes to the throne and the things with that on him. And then 2 Chronicles chapter 14 is where we're going to spend a little time. I encourage you to go ahead, if you don't know, when you get a Bible with a little ribbon in it, it's a benefit. You can use that to mark something. And one of the things you can do that for is when the preachers, because we're going to be bouncing between two books tonight, okay?

So you can put that one marker in 1 Kings chapter 15, and then you can put the other marker there in 2 Chronicles chapter 14, and that way it'll help you get back and forth a little faster here this evening, because we're going to be going back and forth on that. But the transition is tonight, from Abijah, we know that he sought to honor the Lord God of his fathers and had sparked some dynamics there within the people that want to worship God, but his heart was not perfect before God, in that he spoke about it out of one side, but did other things off the other? You know? When we realize that that has an impact upon everybody, it has an impact on society, especially as leaders. When we do that, we're going to find his son Asa is going to be different. A decade of peace and prosperity in the land was going to come. And we're going to see the things that led up to that, and the things associated with that. And why did that come about? Because really, as we're going to see Asa come on the scene here, there was going to be a revival in the land. There's going to be some things changed for the good. And some things that he did as a leader in this transition that made those things come to be.

That allowed God to work and to use those things, because we have a responsibility to the Lord. You know, Asa had seen the results of trusting the Lord. If you remember just a few years before he became king, his father had been at Mount Ephraim. And we know that Jeroboam and his forces had surrounded him with a superior force, and they cried out to God. You know, it tells us in 2 Chronicles 13, it says, and thus the children of Israel were brought under at that time, and the children of Judah prepared because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers. You know, there was a quasi, you might say, revival happening because God had their attention. But I want you to understand, oftentimes, even as we see today, things will happen and God will get people's attention.

But our attention span gets pretty short if it doesn't have an impact on us as a person. God wants us not to just understand the big picture, but understand the personal picture.

Because it's people that makes a difference. And the problem remained that Abijah outwardly recognized the Lord, but was still just the God of his fathers. It was making recognition to what had been. You know, and it's very easy to live off what others did, or what others accomplished, and not realizing that it's our responsibility for where we are to do what we're supposed to do, that others can look back at us and say, hey, we want to see God's blessing that they had because they served the Lord. You know, not to live in the past, but to realize God's blessing and those things.

[ 3 : 56 ] You know, they still just worshiping the God of their fathers, the God of David, the God of Solomon, and God of Rehoboam. You know, we realize that even Rehoboam, if you remember, he saw what the Lord had done through his father Solomon and recognized it, yet his problem was very simple.

We found in 2 Chronicles 12, where it says he did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord. You know, in other words, he knew things about God. He knew what he ought to do, but he made a choice that didn't prepare him to do what he ought to do. Because you don't do the right things by accident. You know, you don't do the right things. They don't just happen by happenstance.

Right things happen because of purpose, because of direction. Now, evil, on the other hand, you have to prepare to do evil. You know, evil usually finds you. You know, opportunity to do evil shows up. That's when preparation to do right is important because it is right there among us.

And so we find here that this cause caused Abijah to not draw close to the Lord, but he honored the Lord. It was more of a national God that they had. They worshiped God as a big picture. You know, remember he said that, you know, we worship God. All the sacrifices are happening. All the things are happening that ought to be happening, you know, according to the law, as far as the sacrifices and the honoring him with the priests and all the different elements that were there. He ensured the sacrifices were accomplished in the prescribed way, according to the law given by Moses. But now Abijah dies and his son Asa now comes to power. And we're going to see that his reign is made a note that he has a decade of peace that comes when Asa comes on the scene. And if you just read that part, you begin to think, well, man, that was pretty good. God just put it at peace. I want you to understand there's some decisions that Asa made when he became king that God could allow peace to come. Because he made a decision in a direction of what direction he was going to take and what he was going to do. And so we're going to pick up here this evening in 2 Chronicles chapter 14. Let's look here at verse 1 here tonight. And it says, And Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David.

And Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his day the land was quiet ten years. You know, we know that his father Abijah had been at conflict with Jeroboam, and they continued in conflict. But when Asa came on the scene, there was something that changed, that God gave peace. In his days the land was quiet.

[ 6 : 53 ] Ten years. That word there means there was a peace that lasted. There was not a conflict. There was a time of prosperity that took place during this. And between the devastating defeat of the northern tribes of Jeroboam, you know, some may say, well, Asa had enjoyed peace because his father destroyed those that were trying to stir up the peace. But I believe that was only part of it when you look at Scripture. It may have been the outward picture that you could put, but I think that whether his father did that or not, because of the choices that Asa made, there would have been quiet in the land.

Because of the choices that he made, and the things that God was blessing them. And we're going to see here that Asa began his reign with a different focus when it came to worship. It wasn't just going through the steps of worship. Have you ever noticed we can get caught up in the process of worship?

We can get caught up in this is what we do. This is, you know, you come to church and what we have, we sing some songs, we worship first, and then we listen to a message. By human nature, we can get caught up in repetition of this is just what we do, and it's an expectation of what we do, and the order that you do it in, and walking through those things, and we become very just focused upon the process. But we're going to find here that Asa moved from just the process to making it personal. Because true worship happens as individuals.

Now we can worship God together, but it's a congregation of individuals that are worshiping God. God is not concerned because we gather together to sing songs to Him as much as the individual hearts singing the songs.

And we're going to see here that Asa brings this out because notice here in verse 2 of chapter 14 it says, notice what it says, And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord.

[ 9 : 07 ] And notice that next phrase. His God. His father's comment was they were going to, he wanted to follow the God of his fathers. But now we find that Asa says that no, he's not just the God of my fathers, he is my God.

You know, that ought to be a desire as a parent that our kids move from following the God that you have presented to them, the God that you have hopefully brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

But you know, the danger is that sometimes it can become just that, it's what they do. It's a process and it hasn't impacted them personally. You know, we want our kids to say, you know, no matter what mom and dad do from here, God is my God.

He's mine. He's not just generic. He's personal. But Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord, his God. Asa's desire to do what was both, was right both personally and publicly, we need to remember that he was now king of Judah and had a responsibility to more than just himself.

You know, leaders have a great responsibility and we're going to see this play out because this position brought upon him a responsibility to do that was not only just right before the eyes of God, the good and right in the eyes of the Lord.

[10:33] What is that? He was doing that with jest and right along with restraining evil in the land. You know, because remember, we've been talking about government on Sunday morning and Sunday school.

What's the primary purpose of government? Is to do what? To allow good to prosper and to restrain evil. To remove evil from the land.

You know, we can apply this even in the election from yesterday. One thing that happened is we restrained some evil in the land. There's not, that's something to rejoice about that evil is restrained, but I want you to understand that you cannot totally control evil.

That's the reason you restrain evil. Because people will do evil things no matter what. You know, I always love when people say, well, if we just had a better environment for them to grow up in, they wouldn't do bad things.

You know what? If that was the case, Adam and Eve would have never rebelled against God. They were in a perfect environment. In a perfect creation that everything was good.

[11:42] It was right. Everything was operating correctly. And yet they turned against God. You know what that tells us? That the environment itself, environment helps, but environment doesn't direct.

A godly environment will help you make right choices, but it doesn't force you to make right choices. You still have a personal application. So we're going to see here, first, Asa did what his grandfather did not to, and that was prepare his heart to seek the Lord.

You know, knowing what God had established to do. You know, I think that Asa may have done, the Bible doesn't tell us, but I'm wondering if Asa did what the law said he was supposed to do as king. You know, it's always interesting as you read through it, do you realize that God gave instructions to kings in Deuteronomy? Now let me ask you a question.

Did they have kings in the time when they wrote Deuteronomy? No, there was not kings yet. You've got to go through the time of the judges. You have all these things. But turn over quick to Deuteronomy chapter 17. Because you'll find this interesting.

[12:48] Because I think if Asa did do this, it may be one of those things that led to what he did and the decisions that he made. Because look at what God commands him.

Turn to Deuteronomy chapter 17. Deuteronomy chapter 17. And we find here in Deuteronomy chapter 17, down there in verse 15. Go over there to the right spot here.

Follow along. It says, Look at verse 17.

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself that his heart turn not away. Now remember, what happened to Solomon? His heart was turned away from what? Or by what?

When he multiplied wives. And his wives turned his heart away from God. Now it's interesting. This is hundreds of years previous that God gave him warning.

[14:08] Notice what's next here as we look at this. It says in verse 18, And when he, it shall be, when he sit up upon the throne of his kingdom. Now notice this, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites.

And it shall be with him and he shall read therein all the days of his life. Now I want you to notice this. What did God command the kings to do? They were supposed to go into the temple and make a personal copy of the law.

Have you ever tried to copy something? Do you get a better grasp on something when you have to copy something? But notice what the purpose of this self-copy was, was that he might take it back and do what with it?

And read it, you know? That he had his own copy of the word of God, you know? That it shall be with him and he shall read therein all the days of his life.

Now notice this, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them. You know, I want you to understand, God knew what was going to happen when the kings, the time of the kings would come.

[15:23] And I think, you know, like I said, the Bible doesn't tell us, but from Ace's response here, I think he might have actually done this. Because we see his turn for revival in the land, because it wasn't just being, let's go through the motions, he says this needs to be personal.

And he took his responsibility personal. And we see here, it caused him to see the necessity even to purge the kingdom of the idols and the abominations that had been allowed by his fathers before him.

And even Solomon allowed them after his wives turned his heart away from the Lord. They worshipped Ashtaroah and they had all sorts of abominations that they allowed in the land. But we find here, Asa sparks a revival because, you know, the one thing we understand that the closer you get to God, the clearer sin becomes.

And not just the sin of somebody else, but your own. Because it reveals our heart when we draw close to God. It reveals who we are and who he is.

[16:33] And so I think as Asa drew close to the Lord, it impacted him, you know. He understood that if he was going to be able to deal with what was outside, he had to deal with what was inside. He had to deal with what was inside himself first.

Have you ever noticed it's a lot easier to point out somebody else's sin? You know? Have you ever noticed that it's a lot easier to point at somebody else's? And look at them.

But it's a big difference when we have to reflect upon ourself, isn't it? To understand, who am I before God? What's my responsibility?

You know, take a look at, we'll look at a little application here. Go over to Colossians chapter 3 for a moment. Colossians chapter 3. Because as a believer, now I want you to understand that you're going to find things operated a different way, some in the Old Testament than it does today.

Because we are under the age of grace, there's a little, some different things that happen. And as we're going to go through this, you're going to see this come about. Because I want you to remember in the Old Testament, the Spirit of God would come and go off of people.

[17:42] The Spirit of God would come and be upon somebody and then the Spirit of God could depart. In our age, what does God promise?

He says, the Spirit is the earnest of our salvation. He says, I will never leave thee, nor what? Forsake thee. He says, I am with you always, even unto the end of the earth.

You know, we live in a blessed generation when it comes to even our relationship with God. That we have the Spirit of God that indwells the believer. Notice here in Colossians, in chapter 3, look at verse 1, it says, If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

Set your affections on the things above, not the things of earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

You know, look down at verse 8, it says, But now ye also put off these things, anger, malice, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, saying that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

[19:00] In other words, how do we grow closer to Christ even today? It's by knowing the Word of God. To know what God has and what he would have for us. And Asa had a desire to keep the law, not in part, but in whole.

Just as David did. You know, look up to 1 Kings. 1 Kings chapter 15. See, if you had your little ribbon there, or something, note card, you can find it quick, see? Look down at verse 11.

It says, And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord as David his father. We see here something very important here. We see that he took it personally.

Just as David did. Did David take his relationship with God personally? I mean, I don't think you can read through the things that David wrote and not say that God didn't take his relationship with God personally.

You know, it was a personal communication with God. He wanted to restore the joy of his salvation even after he sinned. That was his desire. God, take this away. Restore that relationship.

[20:05] Restore that connection that we had. But he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord. And we find here that he took away the idol worship that had plagued the kingdom from his grandfather Solomon on.

And what he had brought in in the second part we're going to see here is Asa first took it personally but then he took a responsibility publicly. There was a public responsibility that he did that was even partially personal.

Look back over in 2 Chronicles chapter 14. 2 Chronicles chapter 14. And we find down here as we continue reading in here in 2 Chronicles 14 down in verse 3 notice what he did what his action was. It says he took away the altars of the strange gods in the high places and break down the images and cut down the groves. You know his father Abijah promoted keeping the temple sacrifices but where his problem was is that was just a religious function.

He also said hey if you want to do something else go do it. He allowed all the other sacrifices to take place all the other abominations that we're going to see here tonight you know we understand that his father had promoted you know this dual idea it was not a personal obligation towards God which is what we're going to find Asa puts forth and not allow co-worship with false gods.

[ 21 : 32 ] He says you have to choose who you're going to worship. But he says under my leadership we're not going to allow these things to be here because it's his responsibility.

What direction is the nation going to go? It was upon him to make that decision and we're going to find here it starts not only with him personally but it starts in his household. Because he does something here that would probably be pretty tough to do.

His first order of business was going to remove the idols that officially sanctioned sin. Abijah his father had allowed those things to take place he had not removed them because of Asa's grandmother.

His grandmother was an open worshiper of Ashtaroath. Matter of fact we're going to find here that she made her own idol that she worshipped. In other words it wasn't even incognito it was blatantly public.

Everybody could see it. He removed those things and we're going to look at this here in a little bit but Asa did so and he's rising to the occasion because God had first moved within him that he wanted to do right in the eyes of the Lord and he removed and destroyed the idols and removed even the idols his father had made.

[ 22 : 50 ] He cleansed his household from the false worship and the things that they had worshipped. You know look over in 1 Kings chapter 15 and you'll find there look down at verse 12 we'll get back to the first part of verse 12 a little later but I want you to see this note of his household because notice what it says in verse 12 he took away the sodomites out of the land and removed all the idols that what his father had done what?

Made. Remember his father was trying to blend all the worship together no matter what you worship you come together you know we see a lot of that spirit today do don't we?

We can all get along just worship what you want to worship the problem is it doesn't work that way a society doesn't function that way and we're going to see this he removed his father's idols but also his grandmother's idols you know that's stepping it up a notch isn't it?

Because we're going to find here what he did you know we find here that he removed those things he removed the high places that were before him and we're going to see here as we look through here in this passage that let's see here put a note in here that I wanted see if that's yep over to 1 Kings back to 1 Kings chapter 15 yep verse 13 and also Micaiah and his mother which you remember this is his grandmother remember we talked about that last time about how they marked generations here it was his father's mother and even her he removed from being queen because she made an idol in a grove and Asa destroyed her idol and burnt it by the brook Kidron now this is important to see what's happening here he takes and puts that away he took that responsibility very seriously of what he would

God would have for him and he took that responsibility out even under the public square because we find in 2nd Chronicles 14 in verse 5 he said he also took away out of this all the cities of Judah the high places and the images and the kingdom was quiet before him remember it said at the beginning that he had 10 years of quiet now we find out why that peace was in the kingdom it's attached to the decisions that Asa made the things that Asa made made a decision why?

[ 25 : 31 ] because he had the authority from his position to make those but he was following God first and trusting God in those things and he took out from the cities the places that drew people away from God you know he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and images what did he do?

he says hey the things that are going to take people away from God I'm going to take away from them I'm going to destroy them I'm going to put them away that we might worship and focus upon God the one that we ought to be encouraged others to do so and it was not just a superficial change but a personal change that was needed notice back in 2nd chronicles chapter 14 look at the verse

before that in verse 4 he says this he commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers and to do the law and the commandments remember if you're going to find God what do you got to do some seeking if you don't want to avoid evil you need to seek the Lord that was very clear with Rehoboam wasn't it they did evil in the eyes of the Lord because he didn't seek God first but what does Asa do he understands that he cannot make somebody else worship God but he said he commanded them to seek God to be aware of who God is and what God has done and why God is doing it because you cannot make somebody become a

Christian the same is true here you can't force somebody to worship something you can make them go through the actions you know and some people go through the actions well this just makes life easier this makes life simpler if I just walk through and kind of blend in and move with the crowd of whatever direction it's going we need to realize we have to take a stand for what's right and to do what's right you know it's easy to fall into the idea of well if I just go with the crowd I can kind of do and nobody really notices but God tells us that we ought to take a stand just as Asa did and he did this very clearly it was just not a superficial change but a personal change that was needed in the people now we're going to talk just a little bit about something here because Asa made some decisions here in this passage that I know some will come up with look in 1st Kings chapter 15 and verse 14 what I'd encourage you to do as we go through this

I encourage you to read through 1st Kings and read through Chronicles there and just kind of before we talk about it because you'll probably have some questions because it's interesting it says he removed all the high places out of the cities now look down here in verse 14 it says but the high places were not removed you know some people oh oh the Bible I want you to understand the difference here it says he removed them out of the cities but in the countryside they were still present and you say why did he not remove the ones from the countryside because notice the next phrase there of what it says and it says nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days in other words he had sought the Lord and his heart was at peace with God but yet he still allowed the high places to be out in the areas around the cities good question you know what the good thing is the Bible gives us an answer why those things why would Asa allow them well this is where sometimes tradition and what others have done before you can get you in trouble because he was following and allowing something that had been a tradition turn over to first kings chapter 3 for a moment because sometimes people do something and have a make a tradition or make a practice out of something that may be practical for the time of where they are or what's happening but it's not a command of

God and sometimes we find that what we're doing even in a tradition needs to change because it doesn't line up with the word of God but why would Asa say okay we're going to leave them in the far reaches of my kingdom and still have his right it says nevertheless his heart was perfect before God all his days how could those two things be functioning look what happens here in first kings chapter three what happened earlier says only the people sacrificed in high places because there was no house built under the name of the Lord unto those days in other words what were the people doing there was the temple had not been established in other words this practice began sometimes this while practices begin well intended in other words a place set aside to sacrifice or to give praise unto God or to focus upon God but what had happened is people instead of keeping it just to focus upon God they started to do the same thing all the other people did why they go to the high places to do this because that's what the people in the land did now I want you to understand as you see this you're going to find that God didn't necessarily have a problem it's what the people did with it was the problem but

[ 30 : 33 ] Asa I believe allowed this because this is what had been a tradition because notice verse 3 it says and Solomon loved the Lord walking in the statutes of David his father only he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places Solomon had a practice of going out to the high places upon the hilltops and giving honor to God at the beginning of his kingdom before the temple was built because remember David never built the temple remember God told him that Solomon was going to do it and it didn't just have a prefab you know they didn't just move it in one day you know it took years and time processed and so they had a tradition that they were doing and I think Asa left those because he wanted the people to have a place to do that because of tradition which we get caught up into pretty easy don't we but you know what the problem was is that he left it for good intention and people would continue to use it for the wrong thing use it to worship the false gods look over to

Psalm 78 for a moment because I want you to understand it's not wrong to worship God and you can worship God any place I mean after all everything every place here is his he's there he's present but we need to understand God also gives us direction for purpose because not for his sake but for ours because notice what happened look down verse 57 in Psalm 78 it says but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers they were turned aside like a deceitful bow and they provoked him to anger with their high places and moved him to jealousy with their graven images when God heard this he was wroth and greatly abhorred Israel in other words they took something that was a tradition that somebody did in honor of God and took it and superficially placed it as a higher priority or higher substance and then they started blending other things in with it we can very easily do the same thing that's the reason we always have to go back and filter things through the word of

God are those things lining up with what scripture says or has it began good and migrated because you know as people we have a tendency to migrate off the chart don't we kind of go go astray just as the children of Israel we can take something that was intended for good but outside the parameters of God's instructions can cause yourself or others to sin we have to keep it within the confines of what God has instructed and what God has given us in God's parameters in those things and so as we understand this he brought he's going to we're going to see how Asa continues to bring those things and to put those things together in his kingdom as we're going to continue on here because we're out of time here tonight you're going to get to I get a five minute reprieve so I get five more extra minutes on Sunday you know when that'd be nice you know preacher gets to bank his time you know I yield back but we're going to pick up here in Asa's life but I want you to understand that our time and our purpose and our connection with God needs to be personal it can't be abstract if something you got from somebody else it needs to be yours in serving the Lord let's pray heavenly fathers we come before you tonight Lord we just thank you