

MUST STAY COMMITTED TO GODS WORD

S244R

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The importance of our taking heed to God's Word, and then making the choice to follow it in our decisions and actions, reveal an ongoing commitment of our faith that cannot be over emphasized in the Christian life of trust on the Son of God. Old Testament examples give us timely warnings and admonitions, as they reveal the contrast of the results for those who (by their enduring in the faith), stayed committed to God's Word which never changes,... and what the results were for those who did not stay committed in faith.

The Bible give several examples in (1 Cor. 10:) of those who had been faithful to God's Word, but then stopped obeying His Word in faith, and followed a path of worldly conduct or the pathway of unbelief (or idolatry). And it says of those examples of unbelief (in verse 11), "but it was put on record by way of admonition to us upon whom the ends of the Ages have come." Thus, we are to learn lessons from those examples, which also expose the basic wrong teaching of many false religions today.

A good example is King Asa who succeeded his idolatrous father on the throne of Judah). Asa had made a good start in the Christian life of obedient faith. He took heed to God's Word and commands which were given through the prophets in those days, (before God spoke His Message to us through His Son, the predestined Lord of the universe). (Heb. 2:1-3 says) "For this reason we ought to pay the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, for fear we should drift away from them. For if the message delivered through angels proved to be true, and every transgression and act of disobedience met with just retribution, how shall *we* escape if we are indifferent to a salvation as great as that now offered to us? (What a Holy Spirit inspired admonition that is, for us to take heed and be committed to following God's command to trust on His Son not on other things, because we believe in His Atonement work on the Cross for us.)

Getting back to the example of King Asa's right start in the Christian life of trust on God's Word, (2 Chron. 14:2-3 says), "Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God, for he removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places, and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the wooden images." (Asa wanted to eliminate idolatry from the land of Judah, by removing the false places of trust from the people of Judah, just as we are to remove all the false places of trust from our lives). The Bible says, "He commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment."

King Asa (who in the last years of his life, fell away from trusting God), had first given his life fully to God. He taught his people to live according to the Word of God by trusting in God alone, instead of the gods that his fathers had trusted in (which were false places of trust that stood between the living God and His people of Judah). There can be many false gods (or false places of trust) in the

life of self-dependence, if we do not know and heed God's plan and use our God given power of choice to reject them.

Every man-made plan for avenging wrongs, seeking medical help from doctors, accepting laid up pension money, money in bank accounts, any type of insurance plans, Social Security, or welfare money from the government, are all false places of trust of the self-life. It is the sin of unbelief in God. Those things must be confessed to God and gotten rid of, just as King Asa got rid of the idols from the land of Judah. The sin of unbelief in God, is the most grievous of all sins, because it is a rejection of what an Atonement work of Christ on the Cross has already done, to protect, to guide, and to keep us.

The apostle Paul referred to unbelief as the sin of idolatry, and he forbid the Corinthians "Do not come into close association with unbelievers, like oxen yoked with asses. Or what participation has a believer with an unbeliever? And, what compact has the Temple of God with idols?"

God's Will is for us to believe on the One whom He has sent to redeem us (and not to accept the plans of man, or to be found trusting on them). When we truly believe on the Atonement work of Jesus Christ, (and make a final surrender of the self-will), the Holy Spirit will make it easy to reject the plans of man. He will enable a surrendered person to keep their trust centered on God's way and plan for us (no matter what the cost). The Holy Spirit will inspire one to use their power of choice correctly, and to get rid of the plans of man, and the human places of trust in our life (with God's blessing as the result, as Jesus taught). (Matt. 19:29), "And whoever has forsaken houses, or brothers or sisters, or father or mother, or children or lands, for my sake, shall receive many times as much (in this life), and shall have as his inheritance the Life of the Ages."

We can also enjoy God's blessings for getting rid of any false places of trust (dependence on other people or human plans), just like King Asa, who "did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God",...as he sought to eliminate idolatry from the land of Judah, by removing the false places of trust,... (Before he fell away from his faith in God). And, he was blessed by God, for the Bible says, "In his days the land was quiet for ten years." (Instead of the constant war and turmoil that his fathers had during their reign).

King Asa had started out to trust God, to serve Him (as he tells us in His Word), and to depend on Him for everything. Thus, he enjoyed a peace in the land like Adam and Eve did (before they fell away from trusting God, to begin trusting on their own plans of self, ... and lost their ability to see things from a spiritual viewpoint).

King Asa's faith was tested several years after he became king, just as our faith will be tested, (because it has to be tested by God). A great army from Ethiopia (composed of a million men) came to attack him and the men of Judah. Their commander-in-chief was named Zerah. Asa was unable to meet that great host in a human way, but he chose not to anyway. Rather, he just started to trust God right away (the same as you or I can do when faced with temptation or trial). When they were forced go into battle at Mareshah, Asa offered a prayer before he went out there.

(2 Chron. 14:11), "And Asa cried out to the Lord his God, and said, '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!'" (Verse 12), "So the Lord struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled." By praying in faith in that way (and with the surrender of self) Asa had made it a question of divine power against human power.

Whenever God could get anybody to take an attitude of faith like that (and take their stand according to His Word and allow Him to work for them, by depending on Him alone), no power of man could ever stand for a moment against God. Nothing could stand against Him, whether it is a fiery furnace seven times hot (which could not even singe a hair on the Hebrew children),... a den of lions, or a foreign army. It is a fulfillment of (Romans 8:31-33), "If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."

When King Asa took that attitude of trust in God alone, He routed and conquered that vast host of a million-man army. As he was returning from the battle, (2 Chron. 15:1-2), "the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the prophet, And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: 'Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you.'" (Or, if you follow God's Word and trust Him, letting Him work for you, He will stand by you),... "but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you." (the prophet said). He meant that if you trust in anything and everything besides Him, He will have to forsake you (unless you will repent and return to trusting Him).

(The prophet continued, verses 3-6), "For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; "but when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel and sought Him, He was found by them. "And in those times (during the reign of Asa's father and other kings of Judah), there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in" (they had no protection while traveling, the NIV says), "but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. So, nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity."

(Think of what turmoil the world is in today, and how far it has gotten away from the peace of God (like it was in the Garden of Eden), .. while trying by every effort of the self-life for 6000 years, to try to find peace and happiness, instead of turning back to seeking God and depending on Him.)

(In vs 7) God's prophet encouraged Asa (just as His Word encourages us to place our trust on Him in the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ, because of the foundation that He provided on which to place our trust, by His Atonement work on Calvary's Cross). He said to Asa, "But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded." (Or do not give up your faith, as your fathers did, and God "troubled them with every adversity", the Bible says). (Vs 8) "When

Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah, he took courage. He removed the detestable idols (the false places of trust) from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin." Asa had believed God when the prophet said, "your work will be rewarded".

So, it turned out that he and the land of Judah had peace and prosperity for about thirty years, because they repented and returned to trusting on God instead of self, and they believed and depended on the fulfillment of God's Word. "If you seek Him, He will be found by you;" God said through the prophet. By remaining committed to following His Word, they enjoyed God's peace, prosperity, and protection.

After those thirty years, Baasha, King of Israel rose up to war against King Asa and the land of Judah. The Bible does not reveal the exact cause or wrong action that Asa committed, or where his trouble started (to have died spiritually). Asa had at least had the guidance of the Holy Spirit, when he trusted God alone to defeat the Ethiopian army of a million men. But we find however, that Satan and self had gotten back in to control his life.

This is very important for us to realize, and very valuable and enlightening for us to understand, because it proves that we cannot live on a 'past experience'. This example completely destroys the delusion (the myth and false teaching) that a great majority of people believe in—that when you are once saved you are always saved. Angels in Heaven fell from Grace and lost their first position (the Bible says). If they could fall from Grace, how about mankind who were born in sin and conceived in iniquity. (As Psalm 51 says).

If Adam (born as a perfect man), had the power of choice to leave trusting God and become an idolater, surely Asa could also fall away (even though he had started out right in the Christian life, and he had the guidance of the Holy Spirit for many years). It makes no difference how thoroughly he was saved, or how fully he was controlled by the Holy Spirit (and it must have been a full baptism of the Holy Spirit that Asa had to be able to surrender the will of self as he did, and to go out in faith on God only to win the victory that he did). But, even after that great victory through trusting God, he still had the power of choice, to leave trusting God and listen to Satan's plans. And that is what Asa did when he was tested many years later, for he returned to using efforts of the self-life.

Again, his example proves that the delusion of being once saved, always saved is fully and completely a delusion from Satan. The truth is most of those people never were saved! Because they claim that if you simply declare that Jesus Christ is your Savior, that makes you a Christian and gives you a through ticket to Heaven. Anyone could say that without having a particle of 'change of heart', no new birth whatsoever (as Jesus said we must have), and, without one particle of preparation for Eternal Life (through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, who is the One who perfects our faith in God through the trials we meet with). But, genuine 'believers' do the 'will of God'.

A person may put up a false front for awhile, but eventually will be recognized 'by their fruits' (decisions), that their place of trust has changed from God to man. Jesus said (Matt.7:15-16) "Beware of

false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits."

Although the Bible does not reveal what wrong decisions or actions that King Asa had taken (and of which he was unwilling to repent when God gave him the opportunity), we can see from his decisions and actions that his attitude toward God had reversed. Instead of trusting on God, he had returned to trusting on the self efforts of man (as his fathers had done). In many other examples, God had revealed where they had stepped aside from trusting Him right.

The fruit of being controlled by the devil, is to always trust in some human plan for the things of this present life. To be filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit, will always lead us, and empower us to trust in God alone. That reveals the character and fruits of those who are surrendered to do God's will, and are being controlled by the Holy Spirit,... and, those who are being controlled by the devil.

The reversal of Asa's character was revealed when the army of King Baasha came against him. Instead of calling on God in prayer as he did thirty years before that, he sent to the King of Syria for him to break his alliance with Baasha, and thus, stop his attack on Judah. The King of Syria agreed, and Asa got his deliverance in a human way,... but what a 'costly deliverance' that was from a 'spiritual standpoint'. It is not the deliverance that we get that is important, it is how we get that deliverance. Whether we trust God or trust on a human plan for help, is the most important factor in the Christian life of growth and development in God's Truth.

We cannot even afford to turn to a family member or a relative to help us in our time of trial or need, for that would be a backward step in the true Christian life of faith on God. If we get deliverance or what we need according to God's will and way, it will prove to be a rich, valuable blessing to us in every way now, and will bear spiritual fruit and blessing that can last for time and eternity.

But, if we get our deliverance in a human way, it will be an actual curse (a stumbling block) to our spirituality here, and it will send us to the Lake of Fire if it is not repented of.

In Asa's case, God saw his condition of heart, and that the devil and self had regained control of him. The only way it could be exposed, and the only way his heart could be searched, was to have the battle come against him a second time. Unfortunately, this time (after Asa had gotten outside of God's will somewhere and had not repented), he was under the control of the devil, which became very apparent by where he placed his trust. Also, by the way he reacted when God in His great mercy sent the prophet Hanani to give Asa a faithful warning. It was a real chance for Asa to repent and get back to God (maybe a second or even a 'third chance' by God's mercy).

(2 Chron. 16:8-9), "Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the Lord, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly, therefore from now on you shall have wars."

That was a faithful and timely warning, and another admonition to

bring repentance (that was sent right from God). If Asa had received it like David did, he would have had a real chance to repent, make a new start in the Christian life, and to be prepared for Heaven. Unfortunately, instead of humbling himself and repenting, Asa became very angry with the prophet and put him in prison. What a seriously wrong and spiritually fatal choice that was! Furthermore, Asa began to unjustly oppress and persecute the people, ... but within a year or so 'the fruits of his evil doings' began to appear.

(Vs 12), "In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians." He died about two years later with no indication that he ever repented, even though God had given him opportunity to repent.

What a solemn warning that should be to us, as well as a clear perception of 'God's faithfulness' in seeking "to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him." Also, what an exposure of the deceitfulness and wickedness of the human heart, and of how we should pay attention to the serious warnings we were given in the New Testament. (1 Cor. 10:12-13) "Therefore let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall." (Scripture again refutes the once saved always saved 'delusion'). "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." That means God provides our deliverance, and we should never turn to human help (a most serious mistake), because it could have most far-reaching results that could ever befall a human being (if not repented of).

And for those who refuse to compromise with God's Word (and do not turn to human help), we are given encouragement from (1 Pet. 5:10-11), "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, ... (will) 'perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

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The First Century Gospel Church/Philadelphia