

HARD HEAD BUT BLAMELESS HEART

2 Chronicles 14 - 16

2 Chronicles 14:1-7 NASB

¹ So Abijah lay down with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David, and his son Asa became king in his place. The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days.

² And Asa did *what was* good and right in the sight of the LORD his God, ³ for he removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the memorial stones, cut down the Asherim, ⁴ and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to comply with the Law and the commandment. ⁵ He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. And the kingdom was undisturbed under him. ⁶ He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest. ⁷ For he said to Judah, “Let’s build these cities and surround *them* with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side.” So they built and prospered.

- Asa becomes king and “does right in the sight of the Lord.” (v2)
 - He succeeds Abijah as king. (v2)
 - He does what is good and right. (v3)
 - He removes the foreign altars, the wooden pillars of a female deity and the high places. (v3)
 - He commands God’s people to seek God and follow God’s Word. (v4-5)
 - He built walls and cities. (v6-7)
 - He declared that the land was still theirs because they had sought the Lord so they built, prospered and had peace. (v6-7)

2 Chronicles 14:8-15 NASB

⁸ Now Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah, carrying large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, carrying shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors.

⁹ Now Zerah the Ethiopian went out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. ¹⁰ So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the Valley of Zephathah at

Mareshah. ¹¹ Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, “LORD, there is no one besides You to help *in the battle* between the powerful and those who have no strength; help us, LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You.” ¹² So the LORD routed the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. ¹³ Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them as far as Gerar; and so many Ethiopians fell that they could not recover, for they were shattered before the LORD and before His army. And they carried away a very large *amount of* plunder. ¹⁴ They destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and they pillaged all the cities, for there was much plunder in them. ¹⁵ They also fatally struck those who owned livestock, and they led away large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

- The war with Zerah.
 - One million Ethiopians vs. 580,000 Jews
 - Asa’s battle plan... **Call on the Name of the Lord.**
 - Asa’s prayer, “You are our God; let not man prevail against You...” (v11)
 - The Lord shatters the enemy forces, and Asa’s troops destroy the Ethiopian troops and take away a great amount of spoils.

- Asa and his army return to Jerusalem and he receives a powerful prophetic word.

2 Chronicles 15:1-7 NASB

¹Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded, ² and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, “Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you abandon Him, He will abandon you. ³ For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without *the* Law. ⁴ But in their distress they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him. ⁵ In those times there was no peace for him who went out or him who came in, because many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. ⁶ Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress. ⁷ But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is a reward for your work.”

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- A powerful prophetic word came to Asa and God’s people.
 - God is with you...seek Him. You will find Him...and stay faithful. (v1-3)
 - “...Be strong and do not lose courage for there is reward for your work.” (v7)
 - “...and let not your hands be weak and slack, for your work shall be rewarded.” (v7 AMP)
 - “...be strong and courageous, for your work will be rewarded...” (v7 NLT)
 - “...be strong. Take heart. Payday is coming.” (v7 MSG)

2 Chronicles 15:8-16 NASB

⁸ Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and from the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He then restored the altar of the LORD which was in front of the porch of the LORD. ⁹ And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. ¹⁰ So they assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa’s reign. ¹¹ They sacrificed to the LORD on that day seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep from the spoils they had brought. ¹² They entered into the covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and soul; ¹³ and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman.

¹⁴ Moreover, they made an oath to the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting, trumpets, and with horns. ¹⁵ All Judah rejoiced concerning the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and had sought Him earnestly, and He let them find Him. So the LORD gave them rest on every side.

¹⁶ He also removed Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the *position of* queen mother, because she had made an abominable image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her abominable image, crushed *it*, and burned *it* at the brook Kidron.

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- Asa's response to the Word of the Lord.
 - All the idols in the cities they captured were removed and the altar of the Lord was restored. (v8)
 - A huge worship service was enacted with 7700 animals sacrificed. (v9-11)
 - The people entered into a covenant that committed them to seek God with all their heart or die. (v12-15)
 - Asa 'dethrones' his mother from being the Queen Mother and tore down the crude image she had built. (v16)
 - Wouldn't you call that whole-hearted?!

2 Chronicles 15:17-19 NASB

¹⁷ But the high places were not removed from Israel; nevertheless Asa's heart was blameless all his days. ¹⁸ He brought into the house of God the dedicated things of his father and his own dedicated things: silver, gold, and utensils. ¹⁹ And there was no *more* war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

- BUT... the 'high places' (idol worship) had been rebuilt in many areas and Asa did not remove them.
- Never The Less... Asa's heart was blameless all his days.
- You can be a *hard headed human* with a *blameless heart*!
- In chapter 15 Asa has a radical and faithful response to the Word of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 16:1-10 NASB

¹ In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent *anyone* from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah. ² Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent it to Ben-hadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying, ³ "A treaty *must be made* between you and me, *as there was* between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me." ⁴ And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa, and he sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. ⁵ When Baasha heard *about it*, he stopped fortifying Ramah and put an

end to his work. ⁶ Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had been building, and with it he fortified Geba and Mizpah.

⁷ At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, “Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the LORD your God, for that reason the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. ⁸ Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, He handed them over to you. ⁹ For the eyes of the LORD roam throughout the earth, so that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will have wars.” ¹⁰ Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa mistreated some of the people at the same time.

In chapter 16 Asa messes things up, he doesn't trust God, he doesn't respond to the Word of the Lord... He even has God's prophet put in jail!

2 Chronicles 16:11-14 NASB

¹¹ Now, the acts of Asa *from* the first to the last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ¹² In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. ¹³ So Asa lay down with his fathers, and died in the forty-first year of his reign. ¹⁴ They buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire for him.

- He became diseased in his feet. He is sick but fails to seek the Lord and dies...
- He has a significantly *hard-human-head*. But never-the-less, he had a *blameless heart*.
- Note, we are not expected to be sinless, but we are to *live blameless* and thank God we can...
- Interestingly, 'Asa' means, he healed, or curing, or physician. Yet he did not seek God for his sick, damaged, diseased feet.