

~ Our Spiritual Safari crossed the first of several extremely dangerous spiritual bridges we are required to pass over on our road to revival in the last leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God. It was the easiest bridge we'll cross in the only available path to revival. We're following God's established road map for revival directly from the Word of God. What we're examining is the *ONLY* way revival ever has happened — and the only way it ever will happen on this earth — if it ever happens again.

The road to revival in a nation or an individual is *ALWAYS* unpaved, dangerous and rocky. If we merely create a colorful banner and proclaim we are having revival in our church, we couldn't be more wrong. What you are witnessing in that scenario is a dead emotion kicking for its last breath of life. Don't think so? – wrong again. Revival never comes easily because following the Lord Jesus Christ isn't easy. I don't care what the false teachers today tell you – revival is difficult – and certain axioms of truth *must* be established or, my friends, you can forget revival. The first one was: there must be a proper, correct and complete teaching of the Word of God.

In our last report, we witnessed the revival that came about under the reign of King Asa of Judah. Asa began as a man of outstanding integrity and brought the Word of God to the people in Judah; and that brought revival in Jerusalem at this time. Unfortunately, he didn't continue on the path of righteousness all the way to the end of his life....

XV

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.

~ Well, Asa sure sounds fanatical and harsh, I'll admit – because killing all unbelievers was radical. Do you really believe the Word of God, friends? Do you believe God? Maybe you don't accept God's relationship with man? Maybe you want to bring God up on criminal war charges at the Hague? Well, my friends, there was a resonating response from the people to this decree; and it was a response of the heart. Many reforms were brought about at this time in Israel.

If we seek the Lord, we're going to find Him, friends! And with that, we are immediately at the next bridge on our safari road to revival. This extremely dangerous next bridge is called *spiritual separation*. Spiritual separation is a highly abused term, and it is taught treacherously today. Let's see if we can bring out the true meaning of and get across the bridge of Scriptural spiritual separation now as we read on....

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.

~ We made some statements in our previous report concerning motherhood. If you have not read our last report, I suggest you go back and do so now. This queen was no friend of the people who were engaging in idolatry – she was the party host! We hear a lot of talk today about “love, love, love” and those people insist they hate controversy. They profess that if we all just have a mother's love for each other all the time then all of our problems will work out. And mother love is unanimously approved of and applauded. After all, the last person any respectable man will turn against is his mother, right? Any man who turns against his mother is certainly some

sort of villain, right? Well, that crowd never seems to love me much. You might want to read verse sixteen again....

17 But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

~ Asa was separated unto God, but a hypocrisy existed in his life that is now exposed. He took mom out of power for doing the same things he was doing; the same old sin but done a different way. See, friends, the idea that your job is to straighten the world out and make the world conform to your standard is *NOT* Scriptural spiritual separation. That just happens to be the narrowest form of bigotry we have in the world right now. Honestly, I believe some people need to separate from themselves! *THAT* would really be a separation.

If you want genuine revival, the place to begin is *NOT* by criticizing the man who believes God – and *ESPECIALLY* if that person is someone who God is using to further the Gospel to the entire world in sound doctrine. If you desire to experience revival, get into a room by yourself and draw an imaginary circle around you. Then, get inside the circle with your Bible in your hand and say, “... Lord, begin a revival right here inside this circle!” There is no other way – *THAT* is where the true unpaved path of revival will have to begin – or you’ll never see revival....

18 And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.

19 And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

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¹ In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

~ Baasha didn't want the people from the northern kingdom leaving Bethel to worship down in Jerusalem. He wanted them to remain in his own kingdom and bow down to those awesome golden calves. I mean, why go all the way to the temple in Jerusalem? That was a silly waste of time when they could worship right there — right? Of course, those who did go to Jerusalem to worship were taking all their offerings out of Baasha's kingdom. Instead of giving everything to him, they would have been giving to God as God had commanded. See how that works, friends? It's very simple. Baasha didn't want them to obey the True and Living God. Baasha wanted — and demanded — to be worshiped; albeit vicariously through his golden calves....

² Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

³ There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.

⁴ And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali.

⁵ And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

⁶ Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

⁹ For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

¹² And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

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

¹⁴ And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

~ Asa was judged for his lack of faith in God, friends. There is no other way to interpret this passage of Scripture. So, guess what the third bridge to

revival we have to cross on this troublesome path is going to be? - It's *FAITH!* That means faith in God; and *NOT* faith in the *method* of getting to God. Not faith in a man on earth, and certainly *NOT* faith in a church or churchy-type organized theoretical agenda, either. We're talking about taking the entire Word of God to the entire world in the sound doctrine of the apostles.

Hanani came from God to tell Asa that Asa was holding evidence that God would deliver Judah. See, it's one thing to have a saving faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is another thing to *live* by that faith! The Gospel is the power unto salvation, according to Paul; which means the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are saved by faith, and we are to live by faith! Any sincere Christian can feel the eyes of God upon them at all times. Let's get real, God is looking for a man or woman who is willing to believe Him! Do you?

Faith isn't fanaticism, though – it rests on the solid ground testimony of how we believed God, trusted Him, and experienced the results that were the undeniable leading of the Lord in our lives. Even so, let's remember we couldn't even get into His presence without faith, because without faith it is impossible to please Him! When Asa put away the abominations in his younger years, that meant putting away *UNBELIEF!* Later in life, we find him not so sure. He didn't live by faith to the end. How tragic. Let's not only be saved by faith — let's live by faith — right now.

Asa is Scriptural proof that many honest Christians appear agnostic, but some are truly saved people. It is amazing that Asa would not accept the seers rebuke. I guess he didn't *BELIEVE* Hanani? Well, Asa obviously didn't believe God, either! Asa had no real joyful experience of total and complete dependence upon God. Living without God means spiritual death, friends – you can label it whatever you want to.

There will be no way for us to ever be used of God without faith in and a resulting obedience to His truth. God struck King Asa with a disease for his unbelief in verse twelve. No other reason given by God except for unbelief!

When Asa's disease became serious, he was smart going to the doctor. Where he messed up is by *NOT* going to God! Not one word in prayer. Think self-prescribing medicines here. Get real — Asa was the king, so he told the doctor's what to do. There is everything wise in going to the best doctor you can find if you become physically ill; but there is everything exactly wrong in not going to God with your problems and questions at the same time. The end result is there is no *complete* turning to God at this time. So, the road to revival is not complete.

Asa was a king who experienced revival *in spite of* not walking properly, correctly and completely with God in faith. I would have you make a note of that. We need to take our problems and turn them over to Him, my friends. That means accepting the answer — whatever it may be. It means understanding He answers us His way — not ours; and I will assure you of one thing: your ways are not His ways. If you ask for and follow the prescription of true faith in God, you may be sure you are going to receive His will for your life — one way or the other. So, be careful with that. Of course, it will always be the best answer we can get — irrespective of the personal prognosis. Our eulogy for Asa is not the best it could have been. We'll have to say "... *he had a touch of revival*" — and that's about it for him. They burned a lot of candles for Asa, I promise you; but God never thought twice about those earthly deeds....

XVII

¹ And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.

² And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.

³ And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;

4 But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

5 Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.

6 And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

8 And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests.

9 And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

~ So, our Spiritual Safari concludes this report by entering the third great period of historical revival in the nation Israel at the time in which we are studying. Jehoshaphat was marvelously used by God in connection with revival. The accounts written in Chronicles are God's viewpoint of the things God says are important. We see it in the reign of these men who very definitely experienced revival. Jehoshaphat has crossed the first two bridges in the road to revival – he has the Word of God – he has faith, and he believes God! Jehoshaphat “... sought to the Lord God of his father” and walked in His commandments. His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Can you say that about yourself, friends?

Did you read verse nine carefully? They went through the cities and taught all the people. It seems Jehoshaphat had his own little spiritual safari going. His method was a little different, as he sends all those men out to teach the Word of God! That, my friend, is the way of revival! Today, until the church gets back to the *TOTAL* Word of God, there will be no revival. Any movement not anchored in the Word of God will eventually come to nothing. I don't care who goes to church or what church; if it isn't rooted and grounded in the Word of God, it is wrong, and you'll never see a revival.

The Word of God is a complete and continual re-affirmation of itself, safari readers. We don't even have to have experience on the debate team! Just remember this: in order for the Word of God to make a difference in your life, it is going to mean studying it and knowing it properly, correctly and completely. The Word of God doesn't get planted deeply in our heads, hearts or spirits until we take the time to write the laws of the Bible into our lives. Reading, studying, meditating on the Word of God, and praying for wisdom, judgment and discernment have no replacement. Alright, we'll just leave it at that for now but in our next report we will take a good long look at Jehoshaphat's reign and revival ~

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So That They Made No War >>>

<<< 2 Chronicles 15:13 – 17:9