

Why Relying on the Lord Matters

Second Chronicles 13–16

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Scripture Reader and Reading: Jackson Meyer – 2 Chronicles 12.15–16

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on Faithfulness

I. Second Chronicles 13.1–2 • Abijah

- A. After 18 years of King Jeroboam’s reign in the north,
- B. Abijah became king of Judah in the south, but
 - 1. he only reigned three years and
 - 2. he had war with Jeroboam.

II. Second Chronicles 13.3 • Two Great Armies of Brethren

- A. Next, Ezra showed the size of the two armies:
 - 1. Abijah had 400,000 and
 - 2. Jeroboam had 800,000.
- B. Remember how small these two nations were in land size.
 - 1. What was their respective populations?
 - 2. They grew just as God had promised Abraham.

III. Second Chronicles 13.4–12 • Relying on the Lord Brings Prosperity

4 Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, “Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: 5 Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. 7 Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. 8 And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you are a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods. 9 Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests, like the peoples of other lands, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of things that are not gods? 10 But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the

LORD are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites attend to their duties. 11 And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; they also set the showbread in order on the pure gold table, and the lampstand of gold with its lamps to burn every evening; for we keep the command of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him. 12 Now look, God Himself is with us as our head, and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!"

A. Summary of Abijah's speech:

1. Respect God's choices (5–6)
2. Be patient with the young and inexperienced (7)
3. Do not withstand the kingdom of God (8)
4. Do not look for a religion after your own desires (9)
5. Maintain the order of God (10)
6. Keep up with the regular worship times (11)
7. Do not fight against the Lord and his people (12)

B. Fail to recognize these points and you shall not prosper.

IV. Second Chronicles 13.13–18 • Relying on the Lord Brings Victory

A. Jeroboam did not consider the wise words of Abijah.

B. Therefore, he set up an ambush against Abijah and Judah.

1. However, since the latter remained faithful to the Lord,
2. he struck Jeroboam and
 - a) defeated him and his army,
 - b) which was twice the size.

C. The battle was so great that Abijah and Judah slaughtered 500,000 of Israel.

1. They slew more of the enemy
2. then they themselves numbered.
 - a) The Bible reveals an exact number of 1,004,209 men killed in war.

- b) However, that does not include this battle.
 - (1) This battle alone accounted for half
 - (2) of the rest of the wars combined.
- 3. Thus, the total for the whole Bible is 1,504,209!

D. Verse 18 provides insightful commentary:

18 Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.

- 1. Rely on the Lord and
- 2. have prosperity.

V. Second Chronicles 13.19–22 • Not Relying on the Lord Brings Loss

- A. Jeroboam never recovered from such a massive loss.
- B. Abijah captured cities and villages that belonged to Jeroboam.
- C. Verse 20 says it all:

20 So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died.

VI. Second Chronicles 14.1–6 • Maintaining Reliance on the Lord

- A. After Abijah died,
 - 1. his son Asa became king.
 - 2. During his first ten years,
 - a) there was no war, but quiet.
 - b) Verses 2 and following show why there was rest and quiet:

2 Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God, 3 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. 4 He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe 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 quiet under him.

- (1) He what was right and
- (2) destroyed what was wrong.

B. Then Ezra showed the blessing of following the Lord:

6 And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest.

VII. Second Chronicles 14.7 • Relying on the Lord Brings Rest

- A. Asa gave God the credit for their rest and
- B. he took advantage of that time to build up the cities.

VIII. Second Chronicles 14.8 • A Mighty Army

- A. The army of Judah grew:
 1. Tribe of Judah provided 300,000 and
 2. tribe of Benjamin provided 280,000,
 - a) making a total of 580,000,
 - b) whereas the army of Abijah was 400,000.

IX. Second Chronicles 14.9–15 • Relying on the Lord in Extreme Cases

- A. The army of the kingdom of Judah grew mightily, but then
- B. an even larger army than Jeroboam's attacked Judah.
 1. An army came out of Africa with 1,000,000 men!
 2. They also had 300 chariots.
- C. Asa did the best thing that he could do:

11 ...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!"

1. Such a prayer pleased the Lord and
2. he gave smaller Judah the victory over the much larger enemy.

D. Asa was right:

1. It is nothing for the Lord to help.
 - a) The odds mean nothing to him.
 - b) Just remember what the first sentence of the Bible says:

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

– Genesis 1.1

2. If God could create the heavens and the earth, the entire universe,
 - a) does a one million-man army intimidate him?
 - b) Can he make a much smaller force the victor?

E. Whatever you face,

1. remember who our God is.
2. Remember the Scriptures show us what he has already done.
 - a) Then pray to him as Asa did.
 - b) Asa recognized and magnified the power of God.

X. **Second Chronicles 15.1–7 • Relying on the Lord Shall Be Rewarded**

1 Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. 2 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; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. 3 For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; 4 but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. 5 And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. 7 But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

A. That says it all:

1. that God is with us when we are with him,
2. that if we seek him we will find him, and
3. that if we forsake him he will forsake us.

B. The prophet also said it all when he said:

1. that when we are without the true God,
2. that when we are without teaching, and
3. that when we are without God's law,
 - a) there is no peace,
 - b) there is great turmoil, and
 - c) there is fighting.

C. Moreover, he said that if we are in trouble and

1. turn to the Lord our God,
2. he will be found by us,
 - a) implying that we will have help in getting out of the trouble.
 - b) This is what our nation needs right now.

XI. Second Chronicles 15.8–19 • Relying on the Lord in Everything

A. That encouraged Asa and

1. he continued to remove any leftovers of idolatry, and
2. he restored the altar of the Lord.

B. What he did was so effective

1. that people again came from the northern kingdom and
2. joined the southern kingdom, because
 - a) they saw the Lord was with Asa, and
 - b) they wanted to be part of that.

C. They celebrated with offering a great sacrifice to God in worship.

D. They also made a covenant to seek the Lord

1. with the whole heart and soul.
2. Whoever would not do so they would be put to death.

E. God blessed them with rest all around because

1. they sought him and
2. he was found by them.
 - a) Therefore, Judah rejoiced.

F. Asa did another bold thing,

1. he removed his mother from being queen, because
2. she had made an obscene image in honor of an idol.
 - a) He also destroyed the image.
 - b) He showed that we must love the Lord more than anyone, even family.

G. Then Ezra mentioned this:

17 But the high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days.

1. Why did he not remove the high places
2. where people often worshiped either idols or the Lord,
 - a) I do not know but
 - b) Ezra assured us that Asa himself remained loyal to the Lord.

XII. Second Chronicles 16.1–4 • Failing to Rely on the Lord

A. The new king of the north

1. worked to prevent anyone from going to Asa.
2. He wanted to keep everyone in the northern kingdom.

B. To prevent King Baasha of Israel from doing that,

1. Asa took silver and gold from the treasuries of the Lord and

2. gave it to King Ben-Hadad of Syria
 - a) that the two of them might have a treaty and
 - b) that Ben-Hadad might break his treaty with Baasha.
 - (1) The king of Syria accepted the gift and
 - (2) sent his armies to attack cities in Israel.

XIII. Second Chronicles 16.5–6 • Building Cities

- A. Baasha stopped building his blockade of Judah and
- B. Asa took the material from that blockade and
- C. used it to build other places.

XIV. Second Chronicles 16.7–9 • Failing to Rely on the Lord Has Consequences

7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. 8 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. 9 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."

- A. Why didn't Asa rely on the Lord as he had before?
- B. The prophet reminded Asa
 1. that the Lord looks for people
 2. whose heart is loyal to him, and
 - a) when he finds those people,
 - b) he shows himself strong for them.
- C. Asa forgot this important truth for daily living.
- D. Therefore, he would experience wars...in the plural.

XV. Second Chronicles 16.10 • Persecuting the Righteous

10 Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

- A. What happened to Asa?
- B. He had been doing so well.
 - 1. His irritation with the seer
 - 2. moved him to put the seer/prophet in prison and
 - a) Asa started to oppress some of his own people.
 - b) He had forgotten what it meant to be king of God's people.

XVI. Second Chronicles 16.11–12 • Rely on the Lord, Not on Physicians

- A. Ezra said that the rest of Asa's acts have been recorded by others.
- B. After Asa had reigned for 39 years,
 - 1. something went wrong with his feet, but
 - 2. he did not put his trust in the Lord,
 - a) rather he put his trust in physicians,
 - b) just like some people who
 - (1) trust the Lord for the great troubles, like facing a million-man army,
 - (2) yet, not seeking him for the smaller things in life.

XVII. Second Chronicles 16.13–14 • A Great Burning for a Great Leader

- A. Asa finally died when he had been king for 41 years.
- B. Judah honored him when he died,
 - 1. putting him in the tomb he had made, and
 - 2. filling his coffin with spices and other ingredients.
- C. They then made a burning for him.