

**2Chronicles 15:1 ¶ And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:
2Chronicles 15:2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.**

Continuing the narrative from the last chapter...

The Spirit of God came upon Azariah, son of Oded, giving him a message to deliver to King Asa. He went out to meet the king as he returned from defeating the Ethiopians and delivered his message to publicly (before all the troops). He declared that the LORD would be with them as long as they aligned themselves with Him. As long as they sought to worship (from Hebrew for *seek*) Him, He would be there to deliver (from Hebrew for *found*) them. If, however, they decided to quit following the LORD in obedience, they would not be able to count on His deliverance.

I believe that principle is true for every believer today. Jesus declares that same principle in the New Testament.

Luke 11:9 "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Azariah is an example of one of God's prophets that is only referenced once in the scripture. In fact, the wording makes it sound like this could have been the one instance that the LORD empowered this man as a prophet. The important truth is that he was a willing vessel before the LORD deemed worthy of being His spokesman to the king. My prayer is that the LORD will see me as always ready to speak boldly on His behalf whenever, wherever and however He so chooses.

2Chronicles 15:3 Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

2Chronicles 15:4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

2Chronicles 15:5 And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

2Chronicles 15:6 And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.

2Chronicles 15:7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

The prophet went on to state how the people of Israel throughout their history (especially during the time of the judges) had forsaken the "true God" for long stretches of time, without benefit of a teaching priest or the law (Hebrew references 10 Commandments and Pentateuch).

He noted that when they encountered trouble, they turned back to the LORD in

repentance and worship and He responded to them. I like the NLT translation for vs 5-6 that reference those days of rebellion: *“In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress.”*

The prophet ended his message from the LORD by encouraging the king and his troops to stand strong (in the LORD is implied I believe) and not let down or become slack in their commitment because they would surely be rewarded.

2Chronicles 15:8 ¶ And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD.

2Chronicles 15:9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him.

When Asa heard the words of the prophet, he was emboldened to do even more. He got rid of all the idols in the land of Judah and Benjamin and out of the cities of Ephraim (the Northern Kingdom) that he had conquered. He also repaired the altar that was in front of the porch of the temple—the altar of burnt offering.

It was actually Asa’s father Abijah that conquered the cities of Ephraim as noted in chapter 13.

I liked the application Guzik made: “King Asa did more than remove the wrong; he also restored the right. This is an important part of any reform, and any time of renewal must be more than speaking out against the wrong. It must also take positive steps towards the good.”

The king then gathered all those in his kingdom. His kingdom had grown quite a bit because of the multitudes from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon that migrated to Judah (the Southern Kingdom) when they saw that the LORD was with him as testified by the way He delivered the king from his enemies.

Gill offers this explanation on the discrepancy of the prophet’s name in vs. 1&8: “Some think that besides the above words of Azariah the son of Oded, a prophecy of Oded his father was related by him, though not recorded; but rather Oded here is the same with the son of Oded; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions read Azariah the son of Oded; and so does the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint version.”

2Chronicles 15:10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

2Chronicles 15:11 And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil *which* they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.

2Chronicles 15:12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;

2Chronicles 15:13 That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

2Chronicles 15:14 And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.

2Chronicles 15:15 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.

The gathering took place in Jerusalem during the 3rd month (probably to coincide with the Feast of Weeks, aka Pentecost) of the 15th year of Asa's reign. At that time they made an offering to the LORD from the spoils of their battle with the Ethiopians—700 oxen and 7000 sheep.

Although we know that the whole nation had made a covenant with the LORD before entering the Promised Land, they made a new covenant with the LORD God of their fathers to seek (follow after and worship) Him with all their heart and soul as commanded by Moses.

Deuteronomy 6:4–5 “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”

As a whole, they determined to put to death anyone that refused to follow after and worship the LORD God of Israel; this would be enforced without regard to social standing or gender.

They made an oath to the LORD with a loud voice and great celebration. It is emphasized that ALL of Judah rejoiced at the oath because they were committed to it with “all their heart.” To worship the LORD was their main desire. The LORD responded to their commitment by giving them rest all around from their enemies.

2Chronicles 15:16 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.

2Chronicles 15:17 But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.

2Chronicles 15:18 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.

I made reference to this action regarding his mother in the previous chapter, but it seems it must have been one of the actions taken after the defeat of the Ethiopians. Though his reforms weren't thorough, it is noted that Asa's heart was perfect before the LORD throughout his life.

That should be the epitaph for which every true believer should strive—that

his/her heart was perfect before the LORD after accepting His gift of salvation. That doesn't mean your life was perfect, but that the desire of your heart was to serve the LORD. The Hebrew makes reference to being friendly and at peace with Him. In other words, people would be able to remember that you did your best to act in accordance with God's will.

It is also noted that King Asa brought into the house of God (the temple) the things that his father had dedicated and added the things he had personally dedicated of silver, gold and jewels (from the Hebrew for *vessels*).

2Chronicles 15:19 And there was no *more* war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.

The chapter closes with a statement that there was no more war until the 35th year of Asa's reign, 20 years after they had made their covenant with the LORD.