

# KING ASA'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE PROPHET AZARIAH: A CHALLENGE TO BE STRONG IN THE LORD 2 CHRONICLES 15:01–07

## *Introduction*

If there has ever been a day when *commitment* is needed, it is today. Businesses desperately need committed workers. Far too many workers are nonchalant — easygoing and laid back — about their jobs. Far too many show up late, call in sick or carry out their work activities with little emotion, dedication or commitment to quality. There is little appreciation for the privilege of having a job, feeling that one is due an income by society. Apathy and carelessness, disinterest and unconcern, indifference and negligence — these negative attitudes fill the hearts of too many workers.

But it is not only in the workplace where commitment is so desperately needed. Commitment is needed in marriage, in friendships and in the relationships of any and all organizations. Consider the church, how few are genuinely knowledgeable and loyal to the church and its mission. For generations, the church has been upon this earth. Yet the manpower and money has never been committed to reach every generation with the gospel of God's salvation. Imagine what a terrible tragedy this is, for every person who rejects the LORD spends an eternity doomed to separation from God. This is the most horrible tragedy imaginable; yet we still fail to make the total commitment to carry the gospel to every generation of people.

In addition, look at all the desperate needs in the world. The manpower and money are available to meet all the needs. But the commitment to meet the needs is lacking. Far too many people bank and hoard, living extravagant and indulgent lives. As a result, most of the wealth of the world is amassed and stockpiled by the powerful and rich of this earth. Total commitment to being a true brother or sister to the rest of the world is sadly lacking in the hearts of most people. Thus, desperate needs flood even the industrial and wealthy nations of the earth. But most tragic is the fact that multitudes die without ever having the privilege of hearing about the love of God demonstrated in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Many die never having heard about the death of Jesus Christ, the penalty He personally paid for the sins of the world. All because so few are totally committed to meeting the desperate needs of the world and to carrying the gospel of Christ's love to every human being.

The present passage covers the reign of King Asa, a young man who was totally committed to the LORD. He ruled from 911-870 B.C. over the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Although totally committed at the beginning of his reign, he slipped away from the LORD in the latter years, failing to persevere to the end. When studying these three chapters that covered his life, the returning exiles would see how God blessed those who

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walked faithfully before Him. But they would also see how God executed discipline upon those who forsook him. Reading about both the blessings and judgments of God would encourage the returning exiles to be faithful as they sought to restore true worship to the temple and rebuild their nation. This is, *The Reign of Asa (Part 1) – His Reforms: An Example of Total Commitment to the LORD*, 2 Chronicles 14:1-15:19.

- I. Asa's first reform: a committed, faithful young ruler (vv. 14:1-8).
- II. Asa's victory over Zerah the Cushite: a deliverance through prayer (vv. 14:9-15).
- III. Asa's confrontation with the prophet Azariah: a challenge to be strong in the LORD (vv. 15:1-7).
- IV. Asa's response to the prophet Azariah and his second reformation: an example of total commitment to the LORD (vv. 15:8-19).

### ***2 Chronicles 15:01–07 King Asa's Confrontation with the Prophet Azariah: A Challenge to Be Strong in the LORD***

As soon as King Asa and the troops returned from the victorious battle, they were confronted by the prophet Azariah with a message from God. The message was for the king, his troops and all the citizens of Judah. In a clear-cut, straightforward manner, Scripture lays out the message for the reader:

1. A strong warning was being sent from God to the king and the people (vv. 1-2). Although they had just experienced a wonderful victory, they must remember one truth: the LORD's presence and help were conditional. The LORD would always be with them and give them victory as long as they were walking faithfully with Him. If they sought Him, they would always find Him. But if they forsook the LORD, He would forsake them. Being victorious throughout life was dependent upon their seeking the LORD, upon their living obedient and righteous lives.
2. To illustrate his point, the prophet referred to the era of the judges (vv. 3-6). During the period of the judges, the people had rejected the LORD and turned to false worship and false gods. As a result, the nation was flooded with worshippers of false gods, atheists and agnostics. Great numbers of people followed all sorts of religions or had no religion at all. For a long time — during the entire days of the judges — the Israelites had lived without the true God and without a priest to teach them the word of the Living LORD. Consequently, they were ignorant of God's commandments that would have guided them as they walked through life. The result was catastrophic: society became a cesspool of lawlessness and wickedness, of the most horrible evil imaginable...
  - idolatry                      • drunkenness                      • mob rape                      • child abuse
  - brutality                      • murder                      • war                      • sexual perversion
  - kidnapping                      • terrorist attacks                      • spousal abuse
  - continued rage by marauders (Jud 17-21)

But in addition, Asa and his people must remember another truth: God is compassionate and merciful. When the ancient Israelites were suffering so much distress, they repented by turning away from their sin and turning back to the LORD. In their distress they sought the LORD; and when they sought Him, He met their need and delivered them (v. 4).

In those difficult, troublesome, dark times, it was unsafe to travel due to the lawlessness of the land. War after war was being fought, and nation after nation was being crushed due to the rampage of corruption and violence sweeping the nations of that day. God was using the lawlessness and violence to discipline and chastise the people. He sought to arouse them to turn to Him in repentance. He longed for them to seek His help and deliverance.

3. Having used the era of the judges as an example, the prophet Azariah issued a forceful challenge to Asa and the people. They must be strong and courageous, never letting their hands become weak and never giving up. They must put their hands to the plough and never look back. If they were faithful in doing so, their work would be rewarded (v. 7).

**Thought 1.** What a challenge for us! We must be strong, taking hold of the task before us and never letting our hands weaken. When we tackle a particular task or job, we must be committed and determined in our efforts. Completing the task must become our focus. Quirting a task, backing away from it or doing a poor job are not to be options; they are not even to be in our vocabulary. We are never to quit, not as believers. Far too many people give up on the job or on themselves and are known as quitters or as being slothful. Far too many people make only half-hearted commitments, just nonchalantly pursuing their duties and obligations. How many students really put their whole hearts into their studies and learning? How many workers are really committed to their employment, being diligent in their day by day work? Once married and living together, how many husbands and wives continue to focus upon building their love for one another? After professing to become a follower of Christ, how many of us have continued to grow stronger and stronger? And how many have slipped away and turned back to a worldly and sinful life?

The commandment of God stands as a warning: once we have made a commitment — a promise, a pledge, an oath, a vow — we must be strong and never let our hands weaken. We must never falter or waver in our determination to follow through with all commitments. Being steadfast, enduring, and persevering to the end — this is the commandment of the LORD.

**Mat 10:22** “All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

**John 15:9** “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.”

**1 Cor 15:58** *Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

**1 Cor 16:13** *Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong.*

**Gal 5:1** *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.*

**Gal 6:9** *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time He will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*

**Eph 3:16** *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.*

**Eph 6:10-12** *Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

**Phil 1:27-28** *Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel. Without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved — and that by God.*

**2 Tim 2:1** *You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

**2 Tim 4:6-8** *For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day — and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*

**Heb 12:1** *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*

**1 Pet 1:13** *Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.*

**1 Pet 5:8-9** *Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*

**Rev 3:11** *I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown.*

**Deut 31:6** *“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

**Josh 23:8** *But you are to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have until now.*

**Job 23:11** *My feet have closely followed his steps; I have kept to his way without turning aside.*

**Isa 40:31** *But those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.*

**Isa 41:10** *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

**Isa 41:13** *For I am the LORD, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you. ■*