

Last time we were discussing the rule of King Asa of Judah and how he had sought the Lord all his days and was acknowledged as such by God according to the word of God.

2 Chronicles 15:14-19 ¹⁴ Moreover, they made an oath to the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets and with horns. ¹⁵ All Judah rejoiced concerning the oath, for they had sworn with their whole 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 a horrid image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her horrid image, crushed *it* and burned *it* at the brook Kidron. 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 and gold and utensils. ¹⁹ And there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

And so, for all intents and purposes Asa appeared to be a man after God's own heart and since he is described as one whose heart was blameless all his days can we assume that he never was out of accord with God's heart and will?

We can ask this same question in another way.

When the Lord Jesus caused us to be born again and gave us a faith to believe did we become blameless from a positional standpoint as we were given new hearts and a new nature?

Absolutely.

1 Corinthians 1:6-8 ⁶ even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, ⁷ so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, *blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Jude 1:24-25 ²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, ²⁵ to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

If then we are blameless with God as we stand justified and forgiven of all our sin, are we incapable of sin?

Of course not. And so, there is an aspect of being blameless where God declares us just, and yet we are told to be blameless in our daily lives which suggests that there are times when we are not.

Acts 24:16 ¹⁶ "In view of this, I also *do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both* before God and before men.

Philippians 2:14-15 ¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing; ¹⁵ so that *you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent*, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

And so, there is a sense in which God calls us to be blameless in a crooked and perverse world as we prove to the world that we are lights in a dark place. But there is also the reality that we are blameless in a legal sense in which there is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, which is to say in His blamelessness or righteousness.

But as to proving ourselves blameless in this world with our works, no one, not even Asa, of whom we are told his heart was blameless all his days, could live perfectly in this world.

And this is what we see in chapter 16 where Asa makes an alliance with Ben-hadad king of Aram so that Israel will not go to war with him.

And in this alliance Asa thwarts any efforts of Israel to advance on Judah.

2 Chronicles 16:2-5 ² Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying, ³ "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as 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 So Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all the store cities of Naphtali. ⁵ When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and stopped his work.

But who is the one person who is conspicuously missing from Asa's plan of keeping Israel from attacking him?

God. And God takes notice and then gives notice to Asa.

2 Chronicles 16:7-9 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, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of 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 delivered them into your hand. ⁹ "For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars."

And of course Asa recognizes his sin and immediately repents and turns to God for forgiveness. Or not.

2 Chronicles 16:10 ¹⁰ Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.

It seems that this one incident hardened Asa's heart to the things of the Lord as it pertained to daily life. And we see this when he is struck with a disease in his feet.

2 Chronicles 16:12 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.

Was Asa's sin in seeking the physicians?

No. His sin was in not seeking the Lord in his ailment and instead relying only on the physicians.

Physicians are not necessarily opposed to God and His will. We know that Luke was a physician.

Colossians 4:14 ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and *also* Demas.

Even Jesus acknowledges the proper place of physicians in the world.

Matthew 9:12 ¹² But when Jesus heard *this*, He said, "*It is* not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.

So, calling on a physician is not ungodly nor a lack of faith. The problem arises when we exclude God from the equation by ignoring that He is the great physician. And in those cases where He does not heal us directly He may and often times will use men and women in the medical community to help the healing process.

By the way, the other thing to point out is that even when a physician becomes involved with our healing it is the body itself that is programmed by God to actually heal itself as he has given the body those properties to begin healing.

So, the only credit a physician can take is to acknowledge that whatever technique or medicine or manipulation that he employs it is ultimately God who heals and so we need to acknowledge God in all things even our healing at the hands of physicians.

It would seem that Asa never went to God seeking a healing or when the physicians gave what aid they could he never thanked God for their assistance.

And keep in mind this is the same man of whom we are told that his heart was blameless all his days. So, it would seem that on the one hand God elevates the faith of Asa and yet on the other shows him to be quite human and fallible.

It's unfortunate that this is the last event of his life that we are told about and then the next event is his death.

2 Chronicles 16:13 - 17:1 ¹³ So Asa slept with his fathers, having 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.

And so, as with all of the kings of Judah and Israel, their descendants would assume the throne and so Asa's son, Jehoshaphat becomes king.

2 Chronicles 17:1-6 ^{NAU} Jehoshaphat his son then became king in his place, and made his position over Israel firm. ² He placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the

land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had captured. ³ The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals, ⁴ but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did. ⁵ So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. ⁶ He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.

Because Jehoshaphat taught the law of the Lord to all of Judah the Lord blessed him with peace on all sides and the neighboring kings even brought him tribute in similar fashion as they did with Solomon, and the Lord blessed him mightily.

It was Jehoshaphat who entered into an alliance with the king of Israel to fight against Ramoth-gilead. The name of the king of Israel in those days was king Ahab.

Does that name ring a bell?

He is the one who married Jezebel and entertained her gods while maintaining some semblance to the law of the Lord. It is this Ahab who also fought against Elijah the prophet of God who prophesied against Ahab telling him that it wouldn't rain for three years.

Ahab spent a great deal of time trying to find and kill Elijah because he didn't like the message that Elijah brought to him from the Lord.

By the way, simply because you don't like God's message to you, is that a good excuse to disobey God?

And it seems that Ahab had a history of trying to dispose of God's prophets when they didn't give him the message that he wanted and we see this again in our passage before us with a different prophet by the name of Micaiah.

Apparently when Jehoshaphat aligned himself with Ahab, Ahab played the role of being very religious by supplying the animals for sacrifice to seal the deal if you will. But before Jehoshaphat commits himself fully he slows down the process by asking Ahab something that Ahab had no intention of doing.

2 Chronicles 18:3-4 ³ Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me *against* Ramoth-gilead?" And

he said to him, "I am as you are, and my people as your people, and *we will be* with you in the battle." ⁴ Moreover, Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."

Why do you suppose Jehoshaphat does this?

He knows that God is the only who can deliver them and he also knows that Ahab has no intention of seeking God in this matter.

And yet notice what Ahab does next only after Jehoshaphat raises the issue of seeking God.

2 Chronicles 18:5 ⁵ Then the king of Israel assembled the prophets, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for God will give *it* into the hand of the king."

Should this not be enough for Jehoshaphat; the fact that the prophets of Israel who unanimously say that God will go before us and will deliver our enemies into our hands?

With Ahab's background of attacking the true prophets of God, Elijah in particular, Jehoshaphat knows that there's a good chance that these guys are mere yes men and not true prophets of God.

And so, before he takes the word of these 400 guys he asks one more question.

2 Chronicles 18:6 ⁶ But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there not yet a prophet of the LORD here that we may inquire of him?"

In other words, I appreciate that you've assembled these 400 prophets, but isn't there someone else that you may have left behind? Jehoshaphat must have known of the reputation of this particular prophet who was not a yes man and he wanted to hear from him.

2 Chronicles 18:7 ⁷ The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD, but I hate him, for he never prophesies good concerning me but always evil. He is Micaiah, son of Imla." But Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say so."

Ahab acknowledges that there is another prophet of God, number 401, but he doesn't really put any credence in his word because he never prophesies in favor of Ahab.

What does that tell us about the other 400?

Jehoshaphat's response is, 'don't say those things about a prophet of God Ahab, and above all don't say that you hate him because you could be saying that you hate a holy man of God who speaks for God.'

By the way, why do you suppose Ahab doesn't simply kill Micaiah, since he has no regard for him, being someone he can't manipulate?

Because God always has a remnant even among His prophets and even though he's outnumbered 400 to 1, he is still a majority with God on his side.

So, both Ahab and Jehoshaphat call the prophets into their presence to get the final word from the Lord. And not surprisingly the 400 prophets are unanimous that God will fight for them and defeat their enemies.

2 Chronicles 18:11 ¹¹ All the prophets were prophesying thus, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and succeed, for the LORD will give *it* into the hand of the king."

However, Micaiah is yet to be summoned but when he is the messenger who went to get him told him that the response from the 400 was unanimous and that he should agree with them in their prophecies. In other words, don't rock the boat, get with the program.

By the way, this same sort of attitude is rampant in the church today where if anyone who really wants to teach God's word is forthright in their perspective regarding the truth of God's word they are often either shouted down or ignored and told to keep their opinions to themselves.

But notice Micaiah's response.

2 Chronicles 18:13 ¹³ But Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what my God says, that I will speak."

Then notice what he says.

2 Chronicles 18:14 ¹⁴ When he came to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I refrain?" He said, "Go up and succeed, for they will be given into your hand."

Is this not exactly what the other 400 said?

But with this response there is something lost in the translation or maybe we should say, in the delivery, because in all likelihood the way Micaiah delivers the message is with complete sarcasm. However he delivered the message Ahab knows for certain that he doesn't mean a word he says.

2 Chronicles 18:15 ¹⁵ Then the king said to him, "How many times must I adjure you to speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

'Don't embarrass me before the king of Judah. If you have something to say then say it, but don't mock me.'

'Okay, then listen to word of the Lord.'

2 Chronicles 18:18-22 ¹⁸ Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left. ¹⁹ "The LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one said this while another said that. ²⁰ "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.' And the LORD said to him, 'How?' ²¹ "He said, 'I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' Then He said, 'You are to entice *him* and prevail also. Go and do so.' ²² "Now therefore, behold, the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of these your prophets, for the LORD has proclaimed disaster against you."

By the way, how can one of the host of heaven be a deceiving spirit if in fact he is part of the army of God?

Judges 9:22-23 ²² Now Abimelech ruled over Israel three years. ²³ Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,

^{NAU} **2 Thessalonians 2:11** For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false,

There is not an aspect of God's own creation that He cannot use to advance His will and declare His glory, and if that's using Satan to tempt Job or sending an evil spirit to accomplish His desire then God will use that asset which can certainly be called part of His tool bag or in this case part of His army.

Well, Ahab's prophets have all been given false information by God and the information given by the prophet Micaiah is a message that Ahab doesn't like, and so there's only one thing left to do and that is put him in prison for speaking the truth.

2 Chronicles 18:25-26 ²⁵ Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; ²⁶ and say, 'Thus says the king, "Put this *man* in prison and feed him sparingly with bread and water until I return safely.'""

At this point the credibility of Micaiah's word from the Lord is being tested and so he says this.

2 Chronicles 18:27-28 ²⁷ Micaiah said, "If you indeed return safely, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Listen, all you people." ²⁸ So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth-gilead.

And next week we'll look to see what happened.