



July 8, 2012
2 Chronicles 14:1-16:14
Pastor Rick Moe

The Lord is with You When You are with Him

Let me read something for you. It says:

Since December 1952 they keep this thing under glass that seals out any air getting to it. When it's not on display, it's kept underground in a vault, actually it's a bomb proof vault. It's the most important document in the history of the United States.

Many of you have guessed it. It is, of course, the Declaration of Independence ([Slide 1](#)). It is now housed in the National Archives in Washington D.C., but for 35 years – this was quite a while ago -- they housed it in the patent office on a wall getting direct sunlight so some of the signatures on the Declaration of Independence you can't read anymore. Some of them you can.

Of course, once every 4th of July we celebrate, and you can see up there "In Congress, July 4, 1776." So what we celebrated on Wednesday is really the creation of this document. But it's more than that, isn't it? It was the declaration by the founding fathers of our country and, of course, the states that made up that country, of our independence from Great Britain.

It had some pretty good results, didn't it? We're kinda glad that there's a United States of America. But thousands of years before that there was another declaration of independence by a guy named Adam and his wife, Eve. It didn't have quite the same results, did it? But isn't that kind of the state of mankind? We have declared our independence from God. We are no longer dependent upon him, and that has bad consequences.

Today, we wanna look at a passage that talks about independence or dependence upon God. Now, there's really three responses to God, isn't there? Well, there's probably more, but these are three that I could think of. A lot of people resist God, and that's that declaration of independence. "I am going to be on my own. I don't need you, God." In fact, there's an active resistance against the Lord. Then there is probably what most people respond to God with, kind of, they ignore him, an apathy toward him. "I really don't feel I need God. I can go on with my life without God. In fact, I'm not sure there is a God." We just kind of ignore him. Then the third option that I can think of, the main option, is that we actually seek God. We want to know God. We go to church. We read our Bible. We pray. We're trying to know God and find him. Three different responses.

Of course, God wants us to seek him, right? He actually in the Bible gives us incentives to seek him. The passage we're gonna look at today looks at one of those incentives. We're gonna talk little bit about what does it mean to seek God, and then what does it mean for God to be with us? What does he do for us?

There's times when we get confused about what God is gonna do for us. Doesn't that happen to you? It happens to me. We kinda expect that God's gonna do some good things, so we pray. Then when he doesn't, we kinda, well, we're not quite sure what to do with God. If it's a big enough deal we get disappointed in him, and then sometimes we begin to resist him or we ignore him even as Christians.

Today we want to look at that issue. If you would turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles -- I know, it's kind of an obscure passage. We're gonna be looking at an obscure king of the southern kingdom of Judah called Asa. I want to look at what the passage says. Then we wanna look at what the main lesson is and then apply that main lesson to us today. We're gonna be reading through the passage and gonna actually be reading several passages here. Follow along with me. We're gonna start 2 Chronicles 14, and not verse 1 but verse 2:

Asa

That's our main guy today. He is the king.

Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. ³ He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles.

Now what's an Asherah pole? If you think totem pole you get the idea. It was some sort of a wooden beam, and they carved it. Asherah was a goddess. You've heard of maybe Baal or Ba'al. Baal was the male. Asherah was the female, and the Israelites worshiped both Asherah and Baal.

Now it also says he smashed the sacred stones. If you look up on the screen there ([Slide 2](#)), these are some standing stones, or sacred stones, at a place called Gezer. It's west of Jerusalem. You can see the height of those. There's quite a few of them here on the path that leads up to the ancient city of Gezer. Here's another one. This is at Shechem ([Slide 3](#)). This is about midway in the country of Israel up in what was ancient Samaria. You've heard of the Samaritan woman. This was where she was from. This one is obviously broken. Who knows whether Asa smashed it or not, but this is another one there, and then a third one here ([Slide 4](#)). This is way down south, almost to the desert in Israel in a place called Arod. We've been there before. There is a temple that that was from the time of Solomon. Of course, Solomon's temple isn't standing, but Arod's temple is.

This would be a picture of the Holy of Holies. Only the priest would've been able to see this in ancient time. There are two incense altars there at the front, and then in the back you have two standing stones. Probably they were plastered with writing on them. Whether they stand for the Ten Commandments or a god and a goddess we don't really know, but those again are standing stones.

Now, back to our passage 14 verse 4:

⁴ He

Meaning Asa.

commanded Judah

That's the southern kingdom.

⁴ He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to obey his laws and commands. ⁵ He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him.

Notice that when he does the right thing here, his kingdom is at peace.

⁶ He built up the fortified cities of Judah, since the land was at peace. No one was at war with him during those years, for the LORD gave him rest.

He is at peace. He's got rest in the land because he's doing the right thing. Then verse 7 it says:

⁷ "Let us build up these towns," he said to Judah, "and put walls around them, with towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God; we sought him and he has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

⁸ Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men from Judah, equipped with large shields and with spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin, armed with small shields and with bows. All these were brave fighting men.

Now, I want to explain something here. Asa was blessed by the Lord at this point because he was walking with God. It says the Lord blessed him, gave him peace.

([Slide 5](#)) I talked with Luis Palau. He was just up in Sacramento, did a big conference campaign up there a lot like Billy Graham kinda campaign. I asked him as a college student -- had a chance to meet him -- "How do you know how to do God's will? Do you just guess and, you know, do you just wait and pray?"

He says, "No, no, no. Pray as if it all depends on God, but act as if it all depends on you."

So Asa was doing that kind of thing. He was trusting in God. He was walking with God, doing the right thing. But at the same time, notice he had a huge army and he built up the fortified cities. So, it's not just, "Lord, help me get a job. Lord, help me find a husband or wife," but it's also going out looking for a job. It's also going out and looking for friends. It's both. It's not either/or, it's both and pray as if it all depends on God, and act as if it all depends on you.

Now, let's go back to the passage verse 9:

⁹ Zerah the Cushite

Wow, Cushite. That's an Egyptian, another phrase for them, a subset in a sense, another people group down in that area of Egypt.

⁹ Zerah the Cushite marched out against them

Asa and the Judites.

With a vast army and three hundred chariots, and he came as far as Mareshah.
¹⁰ Asa went out to meet him, and they took up battle positions in the Valley of Zephathah near Mareshah.

Aren't you glad you're not having to read those words?

Okay, who was Zerah? ([Slide 6](#)) The Cushites were also known as Nubians, and they were most likely Egyptian mercenaries. Zerah was either Pharaoh Osorkon or his top general. We know who the Pharaoh was of this time frame. His name was Osorkon I. We do not know from historical records who Zerah was. It might have been his general. It might have been the Pharaoh himself. We don't know.

Okay, the New American Standard version reads that Zerah had an army of a million men. The NIV we just read said just a large army, but the Bible actually says a million men and 300 chariots - literally a thousand thousands. Okay?

([Slide 7](#)) Here's a map you can see Egypt on the left, Mediterranean Sea, up at the top is Israel. Zerah was down there at Egypt. He marched north along the Mediterranean Sea up to Israel to a place called Mareshah. It's about a 9-10 day trip.

([Slide 8](#)) Let's zero in up there. You can see now Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. You can see Jericho up at the top right.

Two other cities. You've heard of the Gaza Strip. There it is down there on the coast on the Mediterranean. Mareshah is about halfway between Gaza and Jerusalem. So, Zerah marched all the way up to Mareshah. Asa came from Jerusalem down to Mareshah because there is quite a bit difference in height, and the battle took place right there right near Mareshah.

([Slide 9](#)) Now, let me show you Mareshah. Here is an aerial of the Tel of Mareshah. You can see they haven't done a whole lot of excavation up on the top there. Later in history, another town named Bet Guvrin came into existence because Tel Mareshah was destroyed. So they moved the city two miles, you can see, kind of to the north.

([Slide 10](#)) If you go those two miles you will come to Bet Guvrin. Guvrin means "mighty men." I love that name, Bet Guvrin, City of Mighty Men. But there's a valley just to the north of Bet Guvrin, the Guvrin Valley, and this is probably where this battle took place. It wasn't their Guvrin, so it's the valley right near Mareshah.

([Slide 11](#)) Here's another picture of that. So if you can imagine a million Egyptian-Nubians-Cushites coming up this valley and camping here. Asa then comes down from the north, and the battle takes place in this valley.

([Slide 12](#)) Now, when did this happen? You kinda need to know that because that's very important in terms of the story. You can see there the dates the exodus happened -- about 1445. There is another time some scholars say, but this fits with the biblical data that date of 1445. After Moses there were the three kings -- well, there was other rulers in there -- but then King Saul, King David, and King Solomon. When Solomon died, his kingdom was divided. The southern kingdom became known as Judah with Jerusalem as its capitol. The northern kingdom became known as Israel. Sometimes you read about Israel in the Bible it's not talking about whole of the country, it's talking about the northern half. That's the section we're in when the kingdom is divided.

Two kings, Solomon's son was Rehoboam. One of his lieutenants was a guy named Jeroboam. He took over the northern kingdom. Pharaoh Shishak attacked after Solomon died. You can see it wasn't too long, about five years after that, and really ransack both the south and the north of Israel. Then there was two kings, Abijah and Nadab, very short lived -- at least on the throne, only two and three years -- and then Abijah's son is Asa. That's the king we're looking at. In the north was Baasha or Basha, depends on how you want to say it with two "a's" in there. Now that's the pharaoh of our battle, Pharaoh Osorkon (or Zerah). So, this battle happens right around 900 BC.

Now, back to our passage. You know a little bit now what's going on. There is a battle between the Egyptians, Pharaoh, and small Judah. Verse 11 says:

¹¹ Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty.

You think about it, Zerah has got a million guys. Asa's got 580. It's almost a 2 to 1 advantage for the Egyptians, right? I mean this is the big military power of its day.

"LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. Oh, LORD, you are our God; do not let man prevail against --

Us? No.

Against you, God."

¹² The LORD struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled,
¹³ and Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar.

([Slide 13](#)) Now, where is Gerar? You remember here, Asa is up there at Jerusalem. Mareshah is halfway between that and Gaza. You can see just to the south and east of Gaza is Gerar. So, the Egyptians are fleeing back to Egypt, and the Judahites are pursuing them as far as Gerar. They don't keep going, so some of the Egyptians escape, but they go that far.

([Slide 14](#)) Now, good for Asa, right? It says here when faced with a huge problem, Asa took it to the Lord and expressed his faith that with the Lord's help it would be overcome and solved. Then Asa acted with wisdom. He had a good battle strategy and won the battle. Doesn't tell us the battle strategy, but he won the battle. Again, it's not pray and hope God comes through for me. It's pray and plan and act. It's a both-and. We're in the second half of verse 13. It says:

Such a great number of Cushites fell that they could not recover; they were crushed before the LORD and his forces.

Indeed, history tells us that it's not for another 160 years, almost the length of the time the United States has been around, 160 years before the Egyptians gained power back and were able to come up and harass the nation of Israel. Verse 13 again:

The men of Judah carried off a large amount of plunder. ¹⁴ They destroyed all the villages around Gerar, for the terror of the LORD had fallen upon them. They plundered all these villages, since there was much booty there. ¹⁵ They also

attacked the camps of the herdsmen and carried off droves of sheep and goats and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

Chapter 15.

The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded. ² He went out to meet Asa and said to him,

So these guys are coming back from the battle from the plunder. They've got all this wealth now with them, and Azariah says:

“Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him.”

([Slide 15](#)) “The Lord is with you when you are with him.” What does that mean? “You just won a great victory, Asa. You ask God for help and, guess what? Because you were with him the Lord was with you, and he gave you the victory.” Now, verse 2:

If you seek him,

Asa --- Israel --- Golden Hills.

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 was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. ⁴ But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them. ⁵ In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. ⁶ One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress.

Now we think this happened probably during the time of the judges. There was just a big turmoil all over the world really at that time, at least the Middle East.

⁷ But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.”

⁸ When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded the prophet, he took courage. He removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of the LORD's temple.

([Slide 16](#)) Now, we don't have a picture of Solomon's temple, but we do have a model in Jerusalem. You can go and look at this. It's fairly large. It covers almost the size of the auditorium here. This is a picture of the temple in the first century. The outer court, and then inside there is a smaller court in the front, that's the court of the women. In the back where the altar was behind that wall, halfway up the slide was the altar, and then, of course, the building in there that was the temple itself. So the priests only could go in the temple. The altar is what he repaired, so it was out of repair at this point in time in history. Can you imagine that? It's like having your church here and the auditoriums out of repair. He repaired it. Verse 9:

⁹ Then he assembled all Judah and Benjamin and the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon

Those are other tribes in Israel.

Who had settled among them, for large numbers had come over to him from Israel

Now, this is the northern kingdom of Israel. A number of those folks had come down to Judah, to the southern kingdom. Why? It says:

They saw that the LORD his God was with him.

“The Lord is with you, Asa, when you are with him,” and it says the people noticed this that the Lord was with Asa.

Now, I want you to skip down with me to Chapter 16 and verse 1. We’re gonna look at Asa’s later years. This is about ten years into his kingship when this battle takes place. In 16:1 it says:

In the thirty-sixth year of Asa’s reign Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah.

So now we’re introduced to that guy, Baasha, or Basha, king of Israel. (Slide 12) Now, again, this I’ve already shown you, but if you notice down at the bottom, Asa on the left was king of Judah in the south. So, this guy Baasha is king of Israel in the north. It says he is, in a sense, creating troubles between the north and the south. We’ve had that in our country, right? He’s actually fortifying cities on the border between Judah in the south and Israel in the north. Why? Because there’s war going on between the two countries, the two parts of Israel.

([Slide 17](#)) So here you have a map that I got from the New Moody Atlas of the Bible. You’ll see in the south is Judah. That’s that pink area down there. Israel and Baasha is just to the north - that territory. So right on that border between the two, Baasha is fortifying some of the cities there.

Back to our passage. Chapter 16 verse 2 says:

² Asa then took the silver and gold out of the treasuries of the LORD’s temple and of his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus.

Modern Syria.

³ “Let there be a treaty between me and you,” he said, “as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me.”

([Slide 17](#)) So let’s go back and look at our map. You see Asa and Baasha, up there at the north is Ben-Hadad, and Damascus is at the very top right of that map just off the map. So Ben-Hadad has a large kingdom. He and Israel had been aligned . Now, Asa is saying, “Break your alignment and align yourself with me.” Ben-Hadad, it says decided to do that. Let’s go back to our passage here. Verse 4:

⁴ Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel.

In the north.

They conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim and all the store cities of the tribe of Naphtali.

Naphtali is a tribe.

⁵When Baasha heard this,

That's the king of the north.

He stopped building Ramah and abandoned his work. ⁶Then King Asa brought all the men of Judah, and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using. With them he built up Geba and Mizpah

Those are the two cities in the northernmost part of the kingdom of Judah. Verse 7:

⁷At that time Hanani

Another prophet. Here is called "the seer," it's another word for prophet.

The seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him:

This is not good.

"Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand.

Now, that's a prediction of something that was going to happen but did not because of the actions of Asa. That's quite interesting, isn't it? God knows what would have happened, not just what will happen. (Slide 18) God knows the future. The point is that Aram as Baasha's ally would presumably have joined with Israel in attacking Judah, and God would then have delivered over the entire enemy force to Asa.

(Slide 19) What would have happened is Ben-Hadad and Baasha would have joined, at least that's what we surmise, and they would have then come against Asa. Asa would have gone out and attacked them and what this prophet is saying is that God would have delivered Ben-Hadad and Baasha into Asa's hand just like he delivered Zerah the Cushite into Asa's hand. "But this is not what's gonna happen now," he says. Back to our passage. Verse 7:

"Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. ⁸Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand. ⁹For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war. "

(Slide 20) Okay, here's a lesson. Big troubles in our lives, little troubles in our lives. Big troubles in Asa's life, little troubles. When we are in big trouble we often turn to the Lord, don't we? When Asa saw the overwhelming Cushite/Egypt threat he turned to the Lord. This was a problem too big, too powerful an army coming against him, so he turns to

the Lord. But when things are going along normally or troubles -- may be little troubles, maybe medium-size troubles -- come, we think we can handle it so we don't turn to the Lord.

When Asa saw the threat from Israel he felt he could handle it, so he came up with a plan to ask Aram for help. Do we pray or do we act? What have I been saying? It's both-and. What did he do here? Did he pray? Did we read about that? Not this time. Did he plan and act? Yes. But the prophet says he neglected to pray. He neglected to ask the Lord for help, and now what's gonna happen? "You thought you solved the problem, but you didn't, right? From now on there's going to be troubles in your land."

It worked temporarily, right? Israel withdrew. But he says, "From now on you're gonna have troubles with these two kingdoms. They're gonna keep on at war. God would have delivered them in your hand but no longer.

Back to our passage. Interesting response from Asa, verse 10:

¹⁰ Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people.

¹¹ The events of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. ¹² In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians. ¹³ Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his fathers. ¹⁴ They buried him in the tomb he had cut out for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bier covered with spices and various blended perfumes, and they made a huge fire in his honor.

Now, when they put him on the bier there they didn't burn him; rather, they laid him in a tomb, and they made this big fire in his honor.

([Slide 21](#)) Here is the ancient city of Jerusalem. You can see the Temple Mount up there and then you have King David's palace. Yes, they found that in Jerusalem. Down there at the bottom of this sliver of land -- looks like a tie, doesn't it? -- is King David's tomb. They found that as well. We went there.

([Slide 22](#)) This is a tour group from last year. There's a couple folks you might recognize from this church. On the left there you see a little house -- well, it's something you can sit under there -- and then two kind of cave-like entrances behind them.

([Slide 23](#)) This is those two cave-like entrances. They are man-made.

Now, why isn't there a top on the one? It's because the Romans used this as a quarry and took off a lot of the stones. They wanted to desecrate some of the Israelite-the Jerusalem sites that were honored by the Jews, so they went here, I believe, because they knew it was that place where the kings of Israel were buried. They took a lot of the stone. You can see how it's quarried there.

([Slide 24](#)) Now, that is a huge tomb. They don't know what it's for -- at least some of the archaeologists, but it's very clear it was one of the tombs. They never buried people inside a city unless you were a king. The kings were buried inside Jerusalem. This is the only spot in Jerusalem where this could've happened. That is a huge opening. You can

see me standing there. You can see things on the wall where they would've had two layers. That black area in there has even more stuff. So they buried King Asa there.

Now, what is the Lord saying to us through this passage? We understand the story now, right? There is a number of things. Let me go back through some of the things we've already read, and I think you'll kinda go, "Whoa, I can understand now what God's saying in this passage." Let's read then. It says ([Slide 25](#)):

The Lord is with you when you're with him.

We've already looked at that one.

If you seek the Lord (or seek him), he will be found by you. If you forsake him, he will forsake you.

This is the opposite, right?

In their distress they turned to the Lord

They sought him.

He was found by them.

Last one:

Be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.

There's actually more. It says ([Slide 26](#)):

They entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, . . . with all their heart and soul.

They sought God eagerly, and he was found by him.

Asa's heart was fully committed to the Lord all his life.

Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God . . .

A couple more ([Slide 27](#)).

When you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand.

The eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.

Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians.

Two parts, right? Seek the Lord and plan and do and what happens then? God's with you. Omit the part where you're seeking the Lord. Is God with you? The Lord's with you when you're with him. What's the opposite of that? The Lord is not with you when you are not with him. They forsook the Lord and he forsook them, right?

This is the main sentence ([Slide 15](#)). It is the first one of the prophet.

The Lord is with you when you were with him.

Now, what in the world does that mean? Easy to say, a little hard to understand it. Let's start with the first half, "The Lord is with you." In what way is the Lord with you? Now, will you have the same kinda thing happen as what happened to Asa? Well, no, because you're not king of Judah you don't have an army of 580,000, so you can't expect that the Lord will do the same thing for you that he's done for Asa. But what would it look like in modern times? "I'm without a job. The Lord is with me when I'm with him. Let's go to the Lord. Let's talk to the Lord about this and guess what he's gonna do for me? Get me a job. He's gonna help me with my finances because we're in debt. He's gonna help me with the problem I'm having at work with my boss or my kids or my wife and I are struggling. My husband and I we're not getting along. My roommates – ah, if I'm with the Lord then he'll be with me."

Does it work that way? No. Sorry to disappoint you but, no. How many of you have prayed for a job and not gotten one? How many you have prayed for help with your spouse and your kids but things don't get better? So what in the world does that mean "The Lord's with you when you're with him"?

You see, what happened there was a change from the Old Testament to the New. There's a passage in 1 Corinthians Chapter 10:

These things

In other words, the things that happened to Asa.

Happen to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

You see, in the Old Testament God was saving Israel from their enemies, and that is, in a sense, a picture of how he wants to save us. In the Old Testament he was saving them from physical enemies but also from spiritual. It's always kinda both. But the pictures that he uses, the stories, are about physical events, but there is a spiritual world as well. God formed man of the dust of the earth and then breathed into him the breath of God, the breath of life. External, internal. Did Jesus not talk about this? Yes.

When Jesus came, there was a change in what God was doing. He says to Nicodemus, "**You must be born again.**" What does that mean? Nicodemus didn't understand. Jesus says, "**Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.**" You see, there is a physical and external, and a spiritual and an internal. He says to the woman at the well, "**If you knew who this was talking to you, you would ask him** (in other words, Jesus) **for water and you would never be thirsty again.**"

She's thinking, "Give me this physical water so that I don't have to come to the well and keep drawing. I don't want to be thirsty again." He's not talking about the physical, he's talking about the spiritual, the internal.

In the Old Testament the pictures were external to draw our attention to what God is trying to do internally. Who were their enemies? The Egyptians. Who are our enemies? Sin, death, separation from God, our independence. Remember we talked about that? Jesus came to solve these spiritual issues in our life. In fact, he says, "**In this world from now on you're gonna have troubles.**" That's the external. Some things will go well; some things will go not so well just like for other people. And, yes, I want you to come and pray for help on those things, but God is primarily interested in helping me to

be different, and that then translates into my world being different. I begin to act more healthily, more wisely. I use my money more wisely. I get education so that I can get a good job or I go back for education. I have good relationships with people so when I get into trouble people are willing to help me versus me being a total idiot and pushing everybody in my family away and all my friends away. Then I get into trouble and nobody's there to help me.

Do you see how changing the inside of the person results in external help? This is tough because we get disappointed with God. We pray. We ask God for help and usually it's in the external world. And when he doesn't come through for us in that realm we get very disappointed in him. The Lord is with you when I am with him, and I am with him but I don't see him with me.

I know. I almost lost my faith over this issue. I expected God to do certain things, and he didn't come through. I decided, "I don't know what's going on here, but I'm gonna hang in there with God until I understand." I came to understand that God made a change from the Old Testament to the New. In the New Testament he's primarily working on the inside. There's a first coming of Christ and the second coming. What did Jesus do the first time? He died for our sins, was raised so that we would have new life. What's he gonna do the second coming? Primarily take care of this world, the external, but it comes out of the internal. As we are changed he will establish a righteous kingdom.

First coming – internal. Second coming - external. We're living in the internal primarily. It's not all just one or the other. They're all interrelated. But now is when he's working on the internal.

The Lord is with you when you are with him.

What does it mean to be with him? What are the two greatest commandments?

Love the Lord your God

And

Love your neighbor.

It's all about relationships, isn't it? Loving God - that's a relationship, and loving others. So what does it mean, "The Lord is with me when I am with him"? It's loving him. It's relating to him in the little troubles with my feet, with the boss, with the king of the north, not just in the big troubles when I'm out of a job, when I'm losing my house, when I'm sick, when my kids are having troubles. Not just in the big times, but in the little times. You see, God wants us to correctly relate ourselves to him.

Now, has he given us guidelines on how to do that? Yes, in the Bible. I've used this illustration before. Let's say you're adopted by the President of the United States and you have been living here in Brentwood and attending Freedom High School. Now, all of a sudden you are the son or daughter of the President of the United States. Do you think when you go to Washington they're gonna sit you down and say, "Okay, now you're President of the United States' son or daughter. You're gonna have to act like it, so let's tell you how you need to act. There are certain protocols when the Queen of England comes. There are certain protocols you have to do." Do you think they'd teach you all of that so you knew how to live now as the President's child? Yes.

Now that you're the King of the Universe's son or daughter, he's given you a manual for how he wants you to live. He's wanting you to study it so you know how to relate to him and how to relate to others. He doesn't want you to be domineering over people or passive. He wants you to be a mature adult who knows how to relate to people, how to hear their "no," how to give them boundaries and enforce your own boundaries. There's a lot we have to learn about how to relate to each other. There's a lot we need to learn about how to live in this world: how to do banking, how to drive, how to get a job, how to keep a job, all these things. There's a lot of things he wants us to learn and a lot of those are in the Scriptures, about how to relate to each other, how to forgive, how to love, how to be healthy with our body and exercise. That's part of taking care of the temple of God. All of these things start with the internal and end up with the external. The Lord wants you to work on that.

So, he's given you the Scriptures, and he says, **"Study it to show yourself approved to God, a workman who correctly handles it,"** which means you can incorrectly handle it.

Now, did God work this way with the people in the Old Testament? Yes, let me give you a couple of examples. Did Joseph get a dream? Yes, he did - that he was gonna have his brothers and his mother and father bow down to him? Yes. And he is expecting that. "Things are gonna go great in my life just like Asa." And what happens? He gets sold into slavery in Egypt. If you're Joseph, what are you thinking? "What in the world are you doing, God?" You think Joseph might've gotten disappointed in God? "This is not what I expected. I expected a job. I expected health. I expected help with my wife and my kids. I'm not expecting this, God."

And God says, "I know. This is what I have for you."

Now, how are you gonna deal with it? Wow, that's the internal, isn't it? Are you gonna get bitter and shake your fist at God. "God, what are you doing and why."

No, Joseph had to say, "Okay. This is what God's got for me. I'm gonna trust him in it. I'm gonna keep loving him. I'm gonna keep believing that God is there, that God is a good God, that he is on my side, that this isn't happening just by accident, and I gotta learn how to live in Egypt now. I gotta learn the language. I gotta learn how the Egyptians dress. I gotta learn how they relate to each other. It's a whole new culture." That's tough. And then he does the right thing with Potiphar's wife and what happens? Prison.

"Wait, God, I did the right thing. I told the truth at work. I didn't lie to the customer, and I got fired as a result of that. I did the right thing, God, and now look where I'm at."

Joseph had that problem. What do you think Joseph had to go through? He had to stop being bitter over it. He had to forgive. He had to say, "Okay, God, what's the next stage in my life? Prison. How do I handle myself here?" And Joseph rises to the top.

How about David? Gonna be crowned king and yet what ends up happening in his life is he runs for his life for probably 10 years maybe more from King Saul. What's God doing? "God, I don't understand."

Was the Lord still with David when David was with the Lord? Yeah. Was God still with Joseph in prison in Potiphar's house when Joseph was with the Lord? Yes, but it wasn't a big victory over the enemy, was it? It was an internal victory. So even in the Old Testament, God was working with this way with his servants. The Lord is with you when you are with him.

I want to just read the first verse of the song we're gonna sing in closing. We sang, "Great is Thy Faithfulness" this morning at the beginning – actually Chris sang it for us, right? But I sang along. My other favorite hymn -- "Great is Thy Faithfulness" is one – "Trust and Obey" is the second.

When we walk with the Lord,
In the light of his word,
What a glory he sheds on our way.
While we do his good will,
He abides with us still
And with all who will trust and obey.

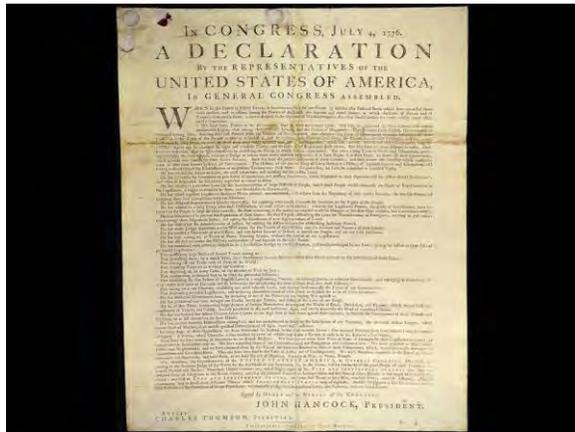
Let's pray.

*Father, you said, "**The Lord is with you when you are with him,**" and we want to learn how to be with you, how to bring all of our problems not just the big ones to you. When our feet hurt, to bring those to you and not just go to the doctors. When we are having troubles with our finances, when we are having troubles at work with a boss or a co-worker and we don't know how to get along with them, Lord, help us to turn to you and to ask you for help. Help us to rely on you to guide us. Lord, help us to study your word enough so that we can understand how you want us to live as your sons as your daughters as the King of this world. Lord, we ask for your help. Help us to understand what it means to be with you because, Lord, we know when we're doing that you will indeed be with us to change us, to grow us, to make us more like you.*

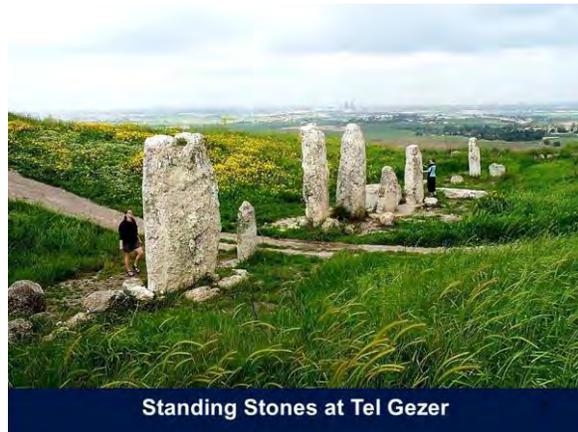
Thank you for the example of Asa both good and bad. Help us to learn from him for we pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

The next pages begin the slides with links from spots in the sermon.

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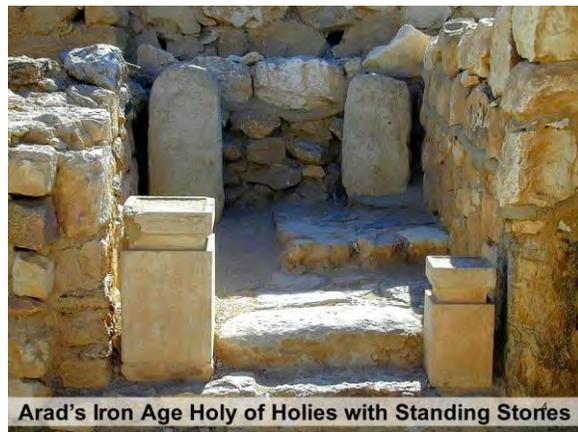
Standing Stones at Tel Gezer

Slide 3



Broken Standing Stone at Shechem in Samaria

Slide 4



Arad's Iron Age Holy of Holies with Standing Stones

Slide 5 [↑ return to page 3](#)

Trust God & Plan

Luis Palau: "Pray as if it all depends on God; plan and act as if it all depends on you."

Asa: God has given us rest [from war among other things], so let's fortify these towns. He also built up a large, well-prepared army!

Judah	300,000
Benjamin	+ 280,000
TOTAL	580,000

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Who Was Zerah?

The Cushites were also known as Nubians, and were most likely Egyptian mercenaries. Zerah was either Pharaoh Osorkon I, or his top general.

The NASB Version reads that Zerah had "an army of **a million men** and 300 chariots."

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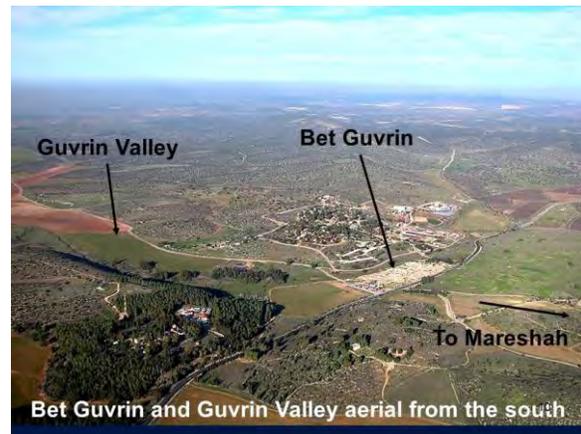
Slide 8



Slide 9



Slide 10



Slide 11



Slide 12

When Did This Happen?

Moses 1525-1405 B.C. (Exodus 1445 B.C.)
 King Saul 1050-1010 B.C.
 King David 1003-970 B.C.
 King Solomon 970-930 B.C.

Judah (South)
Israel (North)

Rehoboam (930-913)
Jeroboam (930-909)

Pharaoh Shishak Attack (925 B.C.)

Abijah (913-910)
Nadab (909-908)

Asa (910-869)
Baasha (908-886)

Pharaoh Osorkon I (Zerah) Attack (895 B.C.)

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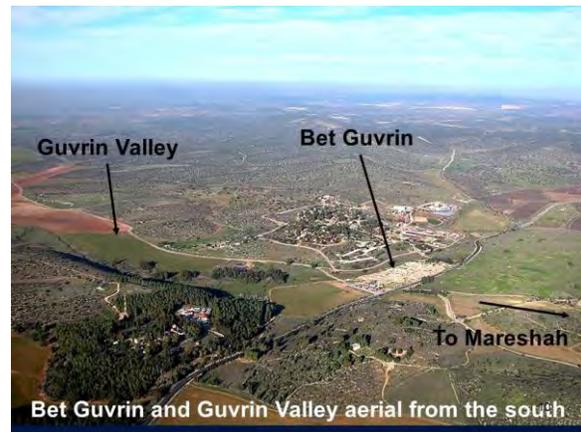
Slide 14



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Slide 16



Slide 17 [↑ return to page 7](#)



Slide 18

When Did This Happen?

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Judah (South)	↔	Israel (North)
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Pharaoh Shishak Attack (925 B.C.)		
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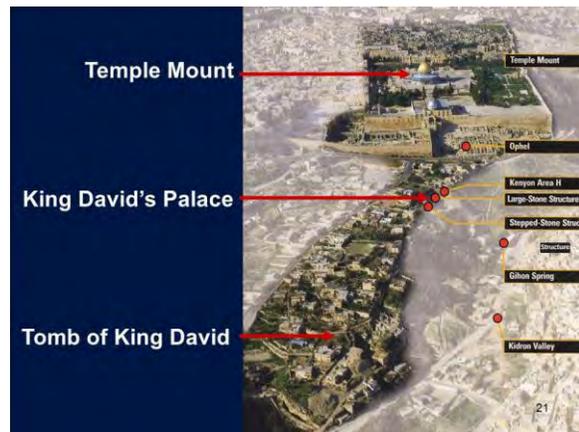


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Big Troubles; Little Troubles

- ✓ When we are in big trouble we often turn to the LORD. When Asa saw the overwhelming Cushite/Egypt threat, he turned to the LORD.
- ✓ When things are going along normally and little troubles come, we think we can handle it so we don't turn to the LORD. When Asa saw the threat from Israel, he felt he could handle it and came up with a plan to ask Aram for help.
- ✓ Guess what? It worked—temporarily.
- ✓ However, “from now on you will be at war.”

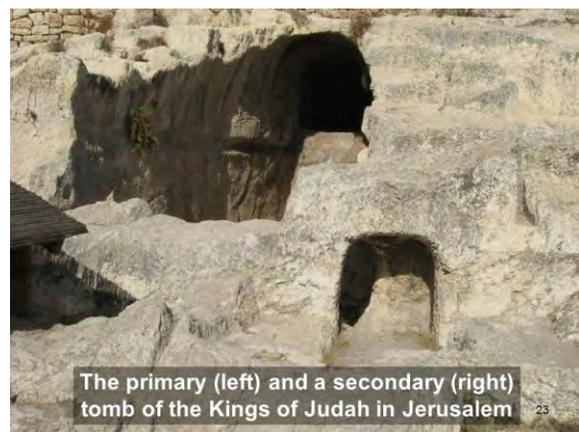
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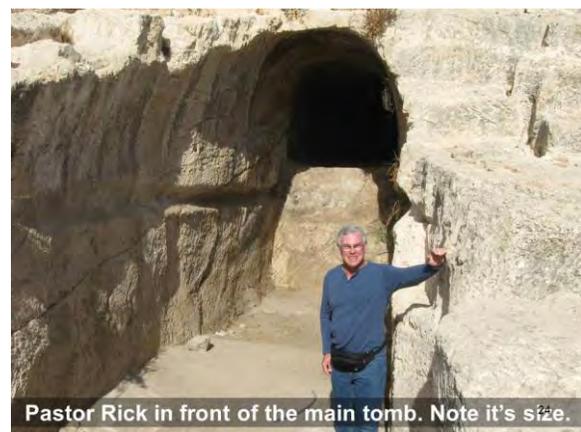
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Slide 23



Slide 24



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Other Ways of Saying It

- ✓ The LORD is with you when you are with him.
- ✓ If you seek him, he will be found by you.
- ✓ If you forsake him, he will forsake you.
- ✓ In their distress they turned to the LORD.
- ✓ They sought him, and he was found by them.
- ✓ Be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded.

Slide 26

Other Ways of Saying It

- ✓ They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, . . . with all their heart and soul.
- ✓ They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them.
- ✓ Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life.
- ✓ Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God.

Slide 27

Other Ways of Saying It

- ✓ When you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand.
- ✓ The eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.
- ✓ Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians.