

Forsaking God

God has always expected His people to submit to and obey Him. Such submission and obedience to Him garnered His protection and blessing (Exodus 23:20-32). However, His expectations brought dread if He was forsaken (Exodus 23:33). Solomon will later write, "As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and commandments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, you shall not fail to have a man as ruler in Israel. But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and byword among all peoples" (2 Chronicles 7:17-20).

Later Asa will become king. The prophet Azariah, the son of Oded, will issue the same warning. "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" (2 Chronicles 15:2). Initially, Asa shows courage, fortitude, and submissive obedience to God. He and the people take great measures to show their dedication to serving God (2 Chronicles 15:8-15). King Asa even removes his own mother, the queen mother, from her position because she made an obscene image of the false god Asherah (2 Chronicles 15:16). God was with them until He was forsaken.

Asa, in complete disobedience to God, entered into a covenant with Ben-Hadad the king of Syria. Rather than trusting in God for political safety, Asa sought political

safety in the alliance of men. The seer Hanani rebuked him because he relied on the king of Syria instead of relying upon God (2 Chronicles 16:7-8). Instead of heeding the words of the seer, Asa has Hanani cast into prison (2 Chronicles 16:10). Even when facing further calamity, rather than placing his trust in God, Asa continues to forsake God by seeking the advice of men (doctors) instead of submitting through obedience to God (2 Chronicles 16:2).

Under the Old Covenant, if one were faithful in seeking god, one would be blessed in that effort. Additionally, if one forsook the God, one would be cursed with evil and difficult consequences. Submissive obedience, true faithfulness, is much more than a onetime belief or acceptance of facts. One can believe in the existence of God and still be unfaithful to Him.

Faithfulness is more than a moment in one's life. Jesus states, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). Let us each determine to gain that crown.