

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 9/2/15

Living Successfully In Christ

HOW TO FIND THE TRUE GOD

In this series we are to consider some of the Secrets of Successful Living. Of course, no one can begin to live successfully without knowing God, and first of all we must understand how we can come to know Him for ourselves. The subject is brought before us in 2 Chronicles 15:1-19, and it is pin-pointed in the below key verses. There is only one true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 1:3), and the greatest blessing which anyone can experience in this life is to find the true God, but the greatest tragedy is to pass through life without ever finding Him.

2 Chronicles 15: 1-19

The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded. ² He went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. 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. 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. ⁹ Then he assembled all Judah and Benjamin and the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who had settled among them, for large numbers had come over to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. ¹⁰ They assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. ¹¹ At that time they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred head of cattle and seven thousand sheep and goats from the plunder they had brought back. ¹² They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul. ¹³ All who would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. ¹⁴ They took an oath to the LORD with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns. ¹⁵ All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side.

In our key verses we have a brief description of one phase of Israel's history, but it also describes thousands of people throughout the world. Notice how this brief portion of scripture unfolds to give us a sequence of teaching.

Key Verses: "For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought Him, and He was found by them." (2 Chronicles 15: 3-4)

1. THEY WERE WITHOUT THE TRUE GOD

Verse 3 tells us that this had been true of them "for a long time". They were Godless, less God - look at **Ephesians 2:12**. - "remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world."

This is a perfect description of multitudes of people today; they are living without God. He does not enter into their thoughts, except in times of emergency, and He has not been welcomed into their lives. The Israelites still believed in the existence of God, and they experienced and benefited from His providences, but for all that they were "without the true God". We are not told they were without a god, for everyone worships a god of some kind - the god of self, money, pleasure or ambition. These words in verse 3, therefore, are descriptive of many people - "for a long time...without the true God".

2. THEY WERE WITHOUT A TEACHING PRIEST

A "teaching priest" was one whose duty it was to teach the people the truth of God. Who are the teaching priests today? Every faithful preacher and teacher of the Word of God is one of God's teaching priests. But the majority of people are outside the influence of these teachers and preachers; they do not attend church or listen to an exposition of the scriptures, and they do not read the Bible or the kind of literature which would inform them about the truths of God. In consequence of this, there is an appalling ignorance of the things of God, and the average person knows nothing of God's way of salvation - look up **Ephesians 2:8-10**. Many have experienced a taste of "churchianity" or "religiosity", but very few know the way of salvation as it is revealed in the person of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ - compare **John 14:6; Acts 4:12** and **Romans 1:16**.

3. THEY WERE WITHOUT LAW

Verse 3 tells us this. The priests were the guardians of the law, and to be without a priest meant, therefore, to be without the law. If anyone wanted to know the law in those days he had to go to a priest; but today, thank God! we have His law, His Word, in the Bible. However, the majority of people do not read the Bible, and therefore they are "without (the) law". The law is God's standard of what is right and wrong, but the vast majority of people take their standard from the media: (1) the newspaper; (2) the radio; (3) the television; (4) the cinema. Therefore, because God's standard has been rejected and the world's, or man's or the Devil's standard has been substituted, our civilization has become increasingly corrupted. The great need today is to get back to the Bible, the true standard, the only book which contains the authentic revelation of God and of His love, His grace, His Son and of His way of saving men and women.

4. WHEN TROUBLE CAME THEY TURNED TO THE LORD

Verse 4 tells us this, and from verses 5 and 6 we find that the trouble came because they had left God out of their reckoning and out of their lives. Trouble will always come to nations and to individuals if they reject the Lord. Notice that it was the Lord who sent the trouble; it was His judgment on sin and His loving method of causing them to turn back to Him - see what it says at the end of verse 6. Does God work like this today? He does! He often sends trouble into a man's life in order that that man, who for many years has lived only for himself, might turn back to the Lord and find Him. The Prodigal had to come to himself before he was ready to come to his father (Luke 15:11-24). For a further illustration of this truth read Psalm 106, where we see that when these people had been severely chastened they turned to the Lord. Then what happened?

5. THEY FOUND THE TRUE GOD

In verse 4 there are three words which tell us how to find God, or, more correctly, how to be found of Him. We must:

TURN from sin and from self (1 Thessalonians 1:9);

SEEK the Lord and His pardon (Isaiah 55:6-7); and

FIND the true God (2 Chronicles 15:2,4 and 15).

How wonderfully this little bit of ancient history ends - "He was found by them" (2 Chronicles 15:4 and 15)! Have you found Him? - look up Proverbs 8:17.

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