

# 2 Chronicles 16 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES						
The Kingdom of Israel						
From Splendor to Disaster						
Splendor			Disaster			
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36			
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split		The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23
Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1-7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1-9:31				
Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple			Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years			

Click chart to enlarge  
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
 Click Chart from [Charles Swindoll](#)

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

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**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**2 Chronicles 16:1 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.**

- In the six (KJV): See Note on 1 Ki 15:32. "From the rending of the ten tribes from Judah, over which Asa was now king." 1Ki 15:16-22
- to the intent (KJV): 2Ch 11:13-17 15:5,9 1Ki 12:27
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

**Related Passage:**

1 Kings 15:16 Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

Source: [ESV Study Bible p. 762](#)

The "Latter Rain" (Reign) of Asa—His Latter Years brought Sin and Failure this man of God turned his back on His God, 2Ch 16:1–14. Up to this point, King Asa had walked faithfully with the LORD, carrying on through trial after trial and witnessing the LORD's deliverance time and again. But now, in the latter years of his life, Asa is seen failing to persevere. Having begun well, he finishes up badly.

- Asa's treaty with Ben-Hadad of Syria, an unbeliever: the sin of evil associations (2Ch 16:1–6).
- Asa's rebuke by the seer (prophet) Hanani: the sin of rejecting and persecuting God's prophet (2Ch 16:7–10).
- Asa's severe disease and death: the sin of becoming hard-hearted—failing to repent (2Ch 16:11–14).

[Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible](#)

**THOUGHT** - King Asa's is like a "poster boy" for how not to finish your race! Dear older saint or one who has walked with Jesus for years, how are your latter years faring? Are you redeeming the time (Eph 5:16+) or are you wasting your short life left (Jas 4:14+) playing golf every day (once in a while is fine) or visiting every national park in the USA with your new fully equipped recreation vehicle? I do not mean to be mean, but you have only one life to store up for yourself treasure in heaven (and it won't be a set of Arnold Palmer golf clubs, etc) (Mt 6:19-21+). You will have all of eternity to rest in Jesus, but now there is kingdom work that the Lord gives you the privilege to join with His Spirit and accomplishing for His glory and honor. It's up to you to choose who you will serve. For some extra motivation, you might want to read John Piper's book [Don't Waste Your Life](#).

**Iain Duguid:** Baasha's aggressive act so close to Jerusalem hinted at his military strength in comparison to Judah's and presented a much more serious threat than the previous occasional raiding parties. Asa's response was to seek help from Syria, which bordered Israel to the northeast.

**Martin Selman:** Asa's last five years, recounted in chapter 16, completely reverse the pattern of the rest of his life, a decline that is all the more unexpected in that it seems to have started from an act of unprovoked hostility (v. 1). From that point on, however, Asa seemed determined to go his own way, and he followed his initial rejection of God's help (vv. 2-3) by persecuting a prophet (v. 10), oppressing his people (v. 10), and neglecting God (v. 12). A pattern therefore developed, which, though it may have begun by

accident, became a series of conscious decisions. (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#))

**In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign [Baasha](#) king of Israel came up against Judah and fortified [Ramah](#) ("height") in order to prevent anyone from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah - [Ramah](#) ("height" - see [note below](#))** tribal allocation of Benjamin, was a strategic city located about 4-5 miles north of Jerusalem on the main highway (and trade route) as shown on the magnified cutout in the map above.

This incursion by [Baasha](#) was a "test" allowed by the LORD, for Ramah was only about 5 miles from Jerusalem (see map above) and this would have been very threatening to King Asa. Baasha would also be able to control all traffic and trade routes running through that part of the Southern Kingdom, including the supplying of provisions for the capital Jerusalem. Eventually, the city would fall due to lack of provisions. In sum, this was a major test. Would Asa trust God or would He trust self. Unfortunately he opted for the latter and his unwise decision would mark the beginning of Asa's backsliding for the last 5 years of his reign.

**THOUGHT** - When the "Baasha's" of this world come against us and the odds of survival do not look good, where do we turn? We need to learn from Asa's mistake. The best place to turn first is to the Lord. He may use human agencies to help us, but we should seek Him first before seeking the human agencies!

**MacArthur Study Bible** - Because of the topography and fortification of that city, this would effectively block all traffic into Jerusalem from the N. Cf. 1Ki 15:16-22. (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Andrew Hill:** After two decades of peace, conflict once again breaks out between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (16:1). King Baasha of Israel is the aggressor in that the defensive measures he takes to fortify Ramah also threaten the territory of Judah economically and militarily. The town of Ramah (or er-Ram, a site some five miles north of Jerusalem) is strategically located on the major north-south ridge route that bypasses Jerusalem (cf. Judg. 19:10–13). According to Dillard, control of Ramah is also close enough to the Beth-Horon ridge to menace the east-west traffic traversing the central Benjamin plateau. From this choke point, Baasha can control traffic flow in and out of northern Judah—trade caravans, Israelite defectors heading south, or pious Hebrews journeying to the temple to celebrate the pilgrimage festivals. (The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

**Thomas Constable:** There is a chronological problem in verse 1, which says: "In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, Baasha king of Israel" attacked Judah. But in 1 Kings 16:8 we read: "In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel." Keil attributed the difference to a scribal error and concluded that the number in 1 Kings is correct.

**Believer's Study Bible** - The political and military alliance between Judah and Syria was the result of the building of fortifications by Baasha at Ramah, a mere five miles from Jerusalem. The temple and palace treasures gathered since the time of Rehoboam (cf. 12:2, note) and Asa (cf. 14:2-5, note) were used as a bribe to persuade Ben-Hadad of Syria to break his alliance with Baasha of Israel. This pattern of alliances is a typical "balance of power" strategy. It appeared to have been used successfully in this instance, since it compelled Baasha to leave off building and fortifying Ramah after Ben-Hadad struck several places in northern Israel, including all of the territory of Naphtali (cf. 1 Kin. 15:16-22). However, God sent Hanani with the message that security ought to be sought in God, not in Ben-Hadad (v. 7). Thus, apparent success is not always an indication of divine pleasure. Obedience would have resulted in victory even over Syria. Asa's thirty-sixth year was 875 B.C. Baasha, however, died 11 years earlier in 886 B.C. (cf. 1 Kin. 16:8). Therefore, the phrase *malkut ^asa^* (Heb.) should probably be understood here as referring to "Asa's kingdom," i.e., Judah, rather than "Asa's reign." Since the kingdom of Judah came into being in 931 B.C., the thirty-sixth year was 895 B.C., the year of war between Asa and Baasha. This was the sixteenth year of Asa, the year following the great assembly (15:10). Another possible solution is that "35" and "36" in 15:19 and 16:1 are inaccurate transmissions for "15" and "16." This would be possible when numbers were written with Hebrew letters, since the letters for 10 and 30 look very much alike in ancient Hebrew. (The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

**J.A. Thompson:** Asa withdrew silver and gold from the treasuries of the Lord's temple and his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad, king of Aram-Damascus, to encourage him to break the treaty he had with Baasha. The Arameans were implacable foes of the Northern Kingdom, and the drawing of Damascus into a hostile attitude to Judah would provide conflict for Baasha on a second front and ease pressure on Judah. By this political maneuver Asa's enlistment of Ben-Hadad's aid outmaneuvered Baasha. But however shrewd this scheme was politically, it displayed a lack of trust in the Lord and merited divine retribution.

**Mark Boda:** For the Chronicler, that Asa entered into a foreign alliance was bad enough; using the treasuries protected by the Levites at the Temple (1 Chr 9:26; 26:20, 22) was far worse.

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**Norman Geisler - 2 CHRONICLES 16:1—How can this verse say Baasha king of Israel built Ramah in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa?**

**PROBLEM:** Asa began his reign in about 911 B.C. The thirty-sixth year of his reign would have been about 876 or 875 B.C.

However, Baasha began his reign in 909 and reigned until 886 B.C. when Elah his son became king (1 Kings 16:8). How could 2 Chronicles 16:1 say Baasha built Ramah in the thirty-sixth year of Asa, 11 years after Baasha's death?

**SOLUTION:** The number "thirty-six" is undoubtedly a copyist error. The actual number was probably "sixteen." This error is explained by the fact that the numbers were probably written in numerical notation. In this type of notation, the difference between the letter representing the number 10 xx and the letter representing the number 30 xx was only two small strokes at the top of the letter. It is quite possible that a copyist misread the original and wrote the wrong letter for the number, possibly as the result of a smudged or damaged manuscript at his disposal. ([When Critics Ask](#))

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**Gleason Archer - [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#)** - How can 2 Chronicles 16:1 (thirty-sixth year of Asa) be reconciled with 1 Kings 16:8 (Elah began to reign in the twenty-sixth year of Asa)?

If Asa began his reign in 911 B.C., the thirty-sixth year of his reign would have been 876 or 875. He reigned for forty-one years (1 Kings 15:10); so this would have been a possible date—except for the fact that Baasha himself reigned from 909 to 886. Therefore he could not have built a fortress at Ramah in 875, eleven years after his death. Here we have a clear discrepancy in the Received Text. There are two possible solutions.

One solution is that the phrase *male-kú-t 'Āsā* in 2 Chronicles 16:1 does not refer to Asa's own reign but rather should be understood as "the kingdom of Asa," i.e., the southern kingdom of Judah as distinguished from the northern kingdom of the Ten Tribes. Since the southern kingdom began under Rehoboam in 931 or 930 B.C., the thirty-sixth year would come out to 895 for the expedition of Baasha—which is the correct year, in all probability. (Leon Wood, *Israel's History*, p. 346, dates it as occurring in the sixteenth year of Asa, or 895.) This would mean that the Chronicler copied out his information from an older official record in Judah that at first used 931 as the "era" date rather than a regnal date. Later on, however, the Chronicler's sources seem to have shifted to a regular regnal system of dating; for there are no other examples of such an era date except 2 Chronicles 15:19, which puts the war between Asa and Baasha in the thirty-fifth year of his reign. Jamieson (*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, Commentary*, 1:274) favors this solution, saying, "The best Biblical critics are agreed in considering this date to be calculated from the separation of the kingdoms, and coincident with the sixteenth year of Asa's reign. This mode of reckoning was, in all likelihood, generally followed in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel, the public annals of the time (v.11), the source from which the inspired historian drew his account."

In defense of this theory it should be said that *malekūt* is often used even in the post-Exilic books to mean "kingdom" or "realm" rather than "reign" (e.g., 2 Chron. 1:1; 11:17; 20:30; Neh. 9:35; Esth. 1:14, etc.) In 1 Chronicles 17:14 it is used of "royalty" as belonging to Yahweh; in Esther 1:2 and 5:1 as the "kingdom" of Persia. But it is without parallel to refer to the kingdom of a nation as a whole and identify it thus with one particular king who comes later on in the ruling dynasty. And the fact that in its account of the later history of Judah no such usage can be instanced in Chronicles raises a formidable difficulty to this solution, even though it does avoid the necessity of textual emendation.

The other solution, presented by Keil (*Keil and Delitzsch, Chronicles*, pp. 366–67), prefers to regard the number "thirty-six" in 2 Chronicles 16:1 and the number "thirty-five" in 15:19 as a copyist's error for "sixteen" and "fifteen," respectively. There is no way in which such an error could have arisen if the Vorlage recorded the number of words fully spelled out (for "sixteen"—*šīššāh 'āsār*—cannot possibly be misunderstood as "thirty-six"—*še lōšīm wāšēš*). But if the number was written in numerical notation of the Hebrew alphabetic type (rather than the Egyptian multiple-stroke type used in the Elephantine Papyri), then "sixteen" could quite easily be confused with "thirty-six." The reason for this is that up through the seventh century B.C. the letter yod (= 10) greatly resembled the letter lamed (= 30), except for two tiny strokes attached to the left of the main vertical stroke. That is to say, yod looked like a "Z" tilted to the left with a second line parallel to the top of the "Z," and lamed looked like a "Z" tilted to the left but with no top member. It required only a smudge from excessive wear on the scroll-column to result in making the yod look like a lamed—with a resultant error of twenty. It is possible that this error occurred first in the earlier passage, in 2 Chronicles 15:19 (with its "thirty-five" wrongly copied from an original "fifteen"); then to make it consistent in 16:1, the same scribe (or perhaps a later one) concluded that "sixteen" must be an error for "thirty-six" and changed it accordingly on his copy.

If this is the true explanation for the discrepancy, then it would bear a similarity to the problem arising in 2 Kings 18:13, in which the relevant data compel an emendation of the "fourteenth year of King Hezekiah" to the "twenty-fourth year of King Hezekiah." Another example of this involves 2 Chronicles 36:9, which gives the age of Jehoiachin as eight at the time of his accession, whereas the parallel in 2 Kings 24:8 indicates the true number as "eighteen." Still another instance is 2 Chronicles 22:2, which gives the age of Ahaziah son of Jehoram as "forty-two" when he began to reign, whereas 2 Kings 8:26 gives it as "twenty-two" (which is more probably the correct number).

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### [A Brilliant Idea](#)

Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You. —2 Chronicles 14:11

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 16:1-13

An ancient Indonesian fable tells of a turtle that could fly. He would hold on to a stick with his mouth as it was carried by geese. When the turtle heard the onlookers on the ground saying, "Aren't those geese brilliant!" his pride was so hurt that he shouted, "It was my idea!" Of course he lost his grip. His pride became his downfall.

For 41 years, Asa was a strong and humble king. He brought peace and prosperity to the kingdom of Judah. During the early years of Asa's reign he prayed, "Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You" (2 Chronicles 14:11).

But toward the end of his reign, when the army of the northern kingdom of Israel confronted him, Asa sought help from the king of Syria instead of from God. Because of his foolishness, his rule weakened and his nation experienced wars. What went wrong? Proud of past achievements, Asa had forgotten to depend on the Lord, so the Lord was no longer showing "Himself strong" on Asa's behalf (16:9).

God is still looking for those who will allow Him to show Himself strong in their lives. Living a humble, God-dependent life is truly a brilliant idea! By: Albert Lee (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

We must depend upon our God  
With deep humility,  
Lest pride should rob us of His strength  
And bring futility.  
—D. De Haan

No one is stronger than the one who depends on God.

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**D A Carson - BEGINNING WELL DOES NOT mean ending well.** Judas Iscariot began as an apostle; Demas began as an apostolic helper. We know how they ended up. Asa began as a reforming king zealous for God, a man who displayed formidable faith and courage when the Cushites attacked (review yesterday's meditation)—but how he ends up in 2 Chronicles 16 is frankly disquieting.

The crisis was precipitated when Baasha, king of Israel, attacked some of Judah's outlying towns and cities. Instead of displaying the same kind of resolute faith he had shown twenty-five years earlier, when he had to face the more formidable Cushites, Asa opts for a costly political expedient. He strips both the temple and his own palace of wealth, and sends it to Ben-Hadad, ruler of the rising regional power of Aram, centered in Damascus. Asa wants Ben-Hadad to attack Israel from the north, thereby forcing Baasha to withdraw his troops from the southern assault and defend himself in the north. The ploy worked.

This was also linking Judah with Aram in dangerous ways. More importantly, the prophet Hanani puts his finger on the worst element in this strategy: Asa is depending on politics and money, and not on the Lord God. "Were 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. For 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" (16:8–9).

Even then the situation might have been retrieved: God so regularly listens to the truly repentant. But Asa merely becomes angry, so enraged that he throws Hanani the prophet into prison. His dictatorial urges multiply, and Asa begins to brutalize the people (16:10). Four years later he contracts a wretched disease, but instead of asking for the Lord's help (let alone his forgiveness), he entrenches himself in bitterness and seeks help only from the physicians. Two years of disease later, he dies.

What about all those years of godly reform? We are not in the position, of course, to offer a final accounting: that belongs to God alone. But people can be on the side of goodness or reform for all kinds of reasons other than love of God; phenomenologically, people can have a heart for God for a long time (15:17) but wilt before demonstrating final perseverance. In a disciplined person, it may take a while before the truth comes out. But when it does, the test, as always, is fundamental: Am I number one, or is God? (BORROW [For the Love of God, Combined Edition, Volumes One and Two](#))

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**QUESTION - [What is the significance of Ramah in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER -** Ramah is the name of several different cities in the Bible.

Ramah of Asher is a village near the northern border of Asher in the region of Tyre (Joshua 19:29). Ramah of Naphtali is a village

allotted to the tribe of Naphtali (Joshua 19:36). Ramah of Asher and Ramah of Naphtali may have been the same community since Asher's and Naphtali's boundaries were connected. Ramah of Benjamin is a town assigned to the tribe Benjamin near where [Deborah](#) ruled as judge over Israel (Judges 4:5). And Ramah of Simeon (also called Ramah of the Negev) is a desert village in the Negev allocated to the tribe of Simeon (Joshua 19:8). King David once gave presents to the people there from the spoils of war after successfully defeating the Amalekites (1 Samuel 30:27).

*Ramah* means "height" or "high" and is often applied to military strongholds.

**Ramah of Benjamin** plays the most prominent role in the biblical narrative. Ramah of Benjamin, situated about five miles north of Jerusalem and west of Geba and Michmash, is associated today with modern er-Ram. This Ramah was the birthplace, hometown, and burial site of the [prophet Samuel](#) (1 Samuel 1:1, 19–20; 25:1). The book of 1 Samuel places Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim—a vast mountainous territory comprising the tribal lands of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.

Deborah, Israel's only female judge, set up headquarters in a location near Ramah of Benjamin: "She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided" (Judges 4:5). Ramah's nearness to Gibeah, [King Saul's](#) hometown (1 Samuel 10:26), made it the ideal refuge for [David](#) when fleeing from Saul to meet up with Samuel (1 Samuel 19:18–19).

**Ramah of Benjamin** appears again during the divided monarchy and the rival kingdoms of Israel and Judah. [King Baasha](#) of Israel built a fortress at Ramah in Benjamin to stop people from entering or leaving Judah. But [King Asa](#), who was ruling in Judah at the time, entered into an alliance with Ben-hadad of Damascus, king of Syria. When Baasha heard that Ben-hadad had attacked and conquered cities in Israel, he stopped fortifying Ramah and left for Tirzah. Asa then dismantled Baasha's fortress in Ramah (1 Kings 15:17–22).

**Ramah of Benjamin** is mentioned a few times in the prophetic books. Isaiah 10:29 tells how the [Assyrians](#) would advance toward Jerusalem by way of Ramah. This same Ramah is one of the cities that sounded a warning in Hosea's judgment cry against Israel (Hosea 5:8). And after [Jeremiah](#) had been imprisoned and later thrown into a cistern by [King Zedekiah](#), he was delivered to Ramah and released (Jeremiah 40:1). When the captives returned from exile in Babylon, Ramah of Benjamin is listed among the places where Jews settled (Ezra 2:26; Nehemiah 7:30).

Jacob's wife Rachel's burial site is also associated with this Ramah. [Rachel](#) died giving birth to her son Benjamin and was buried near Bethlehem. Jacob marked her grave with a large pillar (Genesis 35:20). Later, Rachel is mentioned in a passage of lament: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more" (Jeremiah 31:15). Speaking of the plight of the Hebrew exiles, the prophet portrays Rachel as weeping over her "children." Ramah, a city in the territory of Rachel's son Benjamin, was, in fact, populated by her descendants. In the New Testament, Matthew applies Jeremiah's words to the weeping in Bethlehem when Herod massacred the children there after the birth of Christ (Matthew 2:17–18). It is the only time Ramah is mentioned in the New Testament. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Baasha in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Baasha was king of Israel from 909–886 BC. His contemporary in Judah was [King Asa](#), the great-grandson of King Solomon. The two kings were polar opposites—while Asa "did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done" (1 Kings 15:11), King Baasha was an evil ruler and followed idolatrous practices.

Baasha took the throne after assassinating [King Nadab](#) son of [Jeroboam](#) while Nadab was attacking a Philistine town (1 Kings 15:27). Baasha then killed Jeroboam's entire family. Although Baasha may not have known it, his actions to secure his throne were actually a part of God's will. Years earlier, through Ahijah the prophet, God had pronounced judgment on Jeroboam and his descendants for their evil practices (1 Kings 14:1–16). It could be that Baasha had heard of the prophecy against Jeroboam, but he did not learn any lessons from Jeroboam's fate; instead, he continued in Jeroboam's wickedness. Because of Baasha's rebellion against God's Law, God spoke to the prophet Jehu and proclaimed the same judgment on Baasha's house that Jeroboam's family had received: complete destruction (1 Kings 16:1–4).

Throughout his reign, King Baasha was at war against King Asa (1 Kings 15:16, 32). Baasha originally had a treaty with the king of Syria, [Ben-Hadad](#), but, while Baasha was building fortifications in Ramah to keep anyone from going in or out of Judah, Asa took all the silver and gold from the Jerusalem treasuries and sent it to Ben-Hadad, asking the Syrians to ally with him instead. Ben-Hadad agreed, switched alliances, and sent his armies to attack the northern kingdom of Israel. This proved disastrous for Israel, as Ben-Hadad took the cities of Ijon, Dan, Abel, and Beth Maakah, as well as the region of Kinnereth and the territory of the tribe of Naphtali (verse 20).

It seems that Baasha died of natural causes (1 Kings 16:6), but, when his son Elah succeeded him, the Lord's judgment was swift in

coming. After King Elah had reigned only two years, one of his commanders, [Zimri](#), assassinated him while he was getting drunk at the house of one of his administrators (verses 9–10). Zimri then did as Baasha had done to Jeroboam's household and killed Baasha's entire family, not sparing "a single male, whether relative or friend" (verse 11). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## James Smith - ASA'S FAITH AND FAILURE 2 CHRONICLES 14–16

"Belief's fire, once in us,  
Makes all else mere stuff to show itself;  
We penetrate our life with such a glow  
As fire lends wood and iron."  
—Browning.

In these chapters we have a faithful biography of Asa. The features of his character, both good and bad, are equally prominent. In the Bible there is no touching up of the negative to give the photograph a more pleasing appearance. As an historian the Spirit of God knows nothing of the art of flattery. As a man is in his heart so is he before God. The life of Asa is full of encouragement and warning to us. We observe his—

### I. Good Character.

"Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God" (chap. 14:2). This was a noble start. He refused to be guided by the light of his own eyes, or by the opinions and prejudices of others. It is a good thing to remember that the eyes of the Lord are ever in search of those whose hearts are right with Him, that He might show Himself strong in their behalf (chap. 16:9). Right thinking will lead to right acting, and God's strength is on the side of the righteous. Asa not only "broke down the images," he also "commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers." It is not enough to put away the wrong. We must seek the right. To give up our idols will avail us nothing unless we turn to God (1 Thess. 1:9).

### II. Great Faith.

Asa's faith was put to the test when his army of 580,000 was met by 1,000,000 Ethiopians and 300 chariots, but it stood the test. "Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power. We rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go against this multitude" (2Ch 14:11, 12). He looks upon the many as nothing, but the "help of God" as everything. To have God's help is to get an almighty lift. The way to secure His help is to "rest on Him," and go in His Name. This is the work of faith, and faith gains the day, for the "Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa." He did it, for Asa rested on Him, and trusted in His Name to do it. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

### III. Timely Warning.

"The Spirit of God came upon Azariah, and he went out to meet Asa, and said, Hear ye me, Asa, the Lord is with you while ye be with Him ... Be ye strong therefore, ... for your work shall be rewarded" (2Ch 15:1–7). This is emphatically a Spirit-inspired message. Why did it come to Asa immediately after his great victory of faith? Because the Spirit of God knew that at that moment there was a danger of him being lifted up with pride, and of falling back into a state of self-confidence. Oh, how anxious the Holy Spirit still is to maintain our faith in God, that His Name might be honoured by doing great things for us! "If thou wouldst believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God" (John 11:40). Take heed how you hear.

### IV. Mighty Influence.

"They fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him" (2Ch 15:9). Many strangers from the kingdom of Israel joined the ranks of the king of Judah when they saw that God was on his side. Those who gain victories by faith are the most influential of all leaders. All are not born leaders. Many are ready to follow a tune who could never raise it. But the supernatural element must be self-evident in the divinely appointed leader. "My sheep," says Christ, "hear My voice, and they follow Me." Are there not many who would fall out of the kingdom of darkness to-day if they could but see that the Lord our God is with us? Not with us in theory, but in mighty conquering deeds. Asa's influence was not only attractive, but it was most effectual in turning the whole heart of Judah unto the Lord (2Ch 15:12–14). He constrained them to seek the Lord until "He was found of them." He used his great influence for the best of all purposes—to bring men to God.

### V. Sudden Failure.

When "Baasha, king of Israel, came up against Judah ... Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord, and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Syria" (2Ch 16:1–4). This was a bribe sent to the king of Syria to help him against the king of Judah. Has he forgotten already that Spirit-inspired message of Azariah? (2Ch 15:1, 2). Where is his faith now? He began in the spirit. Is he going to end in the flesh? His present unbelief leads him to desecrate the things of God (2Ch 15:18). When in his

greater trouble with the Ethiopian host he cried unto the Lord and rested on Him, but this is not such a formidable affair, so he thinks to manage it by his own skill and stratagem. God is ignored, and Asa has fallen from grace. Our greatest dangers do not always lie in our greatest temptations, for when we are made conscious of our own helplessness in the face of a great trial, we fortify ourselves by leaning upon God. It is thinking ourselves wise enough and strong enough for the petty occasion that our greatest danger lies. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:6).

## VI. Rebellious Attitude.

When Hanani the seer rebuked Asa "because he had relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the Lord his God," Asa, we read, "was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house, for he was in a rage with him because of this thing" (2Ch 16:7-10). It is an infallible sign of backsliding when a man gets into a rage at the seer of God because he tells him the truth. Casting the man of vision into the prison does not make the vision any the less true. The man of faith will always be a seer, while the man of unbelief will always be blind. Asa makes no attempt to bribe the seer, but he attempts to bridle his lips. Instead of repenting his folly in putting his trust in an arm of flesh, he seeks to justify himself, even to the condemnation of the warning voice of God. To get beyond repentance is to get beyond the hope of recovery. "If we sin we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the Righteous" (1 John 2:1).

## VII. Miserable End.

"Asa ... was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceedingly great, yet in his disease he sought not the Lord, but to the physicians" (2Ch 16:12). His sin lay not in seeking the help of the physicians, but in not seeking the help of the Lord. Had not his heart been diseased as well as his feet this sin would never have been laid to his charge. A physician may be a gift from God as much as a seer, but when we trust the gift instead of the Giver, we dishonour God, and expose ourselves to failure and death. It is a melancholy fact that this otherwise great and good man's life is closed with these sorrowful words, "He sought not the Lord." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). Remember the words of the son of Oded, "The Lord is with you while ye be with Him" (2Ch 15:2).

**2 Chronicles 16:2 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,**

- brought out (KJV): 2Ch 28:21 2Ki 12:18 16:8 18:15

### Related Passages:

1 Kings 15:18-19 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold which were left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying, 19 "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you a present of silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me."

## RELIANCE OF ARM OF MAN NOT STRONG ARM OF THE LORD

**Then - Then** marks progression in a narrative and in this case sadly marks the beginning of declension in the spiritual life of Asa! God condemns foreign alliances for they are ultimately pacts with pagans whose father is the devil (Jn 8:44+) - 2Ch 19:2; 2Ch 20:35-37; 2Ch 22:5; 2Ch 28:16-21. King Asa resorts to human wisdom which says if a country is faced with war on two fronts, it will have to pull back it's aggression on one of the fronts in order to defend the homeland. And indeed in keeping with Asa's human way of thinking, Baasha did withdraw from fortifying Ramah! For a while King Asa must have been quite self-satisfied, thinking "I pulled this coup off on my own!" Little did he know that he was about to meet His Maker's prophet who would clarify his humanistic logic!

**THOUGHT** - Human wisdom to the exclusion of God's wisdom, may sound good and "wise" and even yield "good" results, but in the end human wisdom will fail and is no comparison to divine wisdom. This begs a question - How do you make your decisions? Do you allow God's Spirit and God's Word to prayerfully enter into your decision making? If not, you might end up being a fool like Asa! Results may look good for a time, but ultimately they do not honor God for He was excluded from the equation. Our goal in this short time on earth is clearly stated in the Westminster Shorter Catechism which declares "The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever." God grant us the grace to let godly wisdom saturate our human decisions, doing so for Your honor and glory in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.



**Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and sent them to Benhadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying** - This passage continues the description of Asa's decline spiritually. And it was a costly mistake in more ways than one, because he seems to virtually empty the national treasury to secure a treaty. Whether Pr 3:5 ("Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.") was available for him to read is uncertain, but he is clearly doing just the opposite, not trusting the LORD, and instead leaning on his own understanding. **Ben-Hadad** means "son of Hadad" and is a royal title of the kings of Syria.

**THOUGHT** - Remember that there is only one letter difference between "GOD" and "GOLD" but it is a letter that can make all the difference in the world and the world to come!!!

**Utley** points out that "'hadad" is an ANE storm god who gave rain for fertility (BDB 212). He is analogous with Ba'al, the Canaanite storm god. He is known by several names (ABA, p. 11) *Hadad* – Amorites, Arameans (Syria) *Adad* – Mesopotamia *Hadda/Ba'al* – Canaan (Ras Shamra texts) *Ramman/Rimmon* – 2 Kgs. 5:18 also (Syrian, Zech. 12:11 he was the war god of the Assyrians; his symbol was a young bull like *Ba'al*)." This background helps us understand why God would be so opposed to forming an alliance with a pagan worshipping king!

**Spurgeon** - "I will say nothing about what belonged to his own house. He might do as he liked with that so long as he did not spend it upon sin, but he took of the treasure that belonged to the house of the Lord, and gave it to Benhadad to bribe him to break his league with Bassha, and be in league with himself. Thus God was robbed that the unbelieving king might find help in an arm of flesh."

**Ron Daniel - Asa Pays The Arameans** For 35 years, Asa had walked with God. Unfortunately, his last four years were not marked by the same faithfulness. Twenty-six years before, Asa faced the Ethiopians attacking from the south. Now, he is being assaulted by Israel to the north. Asa's plan 26 years before was to pray, 2Ch 14:11 ..."LORD, there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength..." But now he has found someone else to help. He paid Ben-had-AD, king of Aram to be his ally. Asa's plan worked. But at what cost?

**Andrew Hill:** The Chronicler's report of Baasha's activity at Ramah and Asa's response is based on 1 Kings 15:17–22. Asa resorts to the oft-used political ploy of paying tribute to a third party for the purpose of engaging an aggressor nation on a second front (2 Chron. 16:3–4). The cost of contracting Ben-Hadad king of Aram to wage war against Israel is apparently steep, because Asa has to siphon monies from two treasuries (the temple and the palace, 15:6) to seal the pact. This is probably due to the fact that Aram and Israel are already partners in an alliance, and Ben-Hadad will need a greater offer to break his treaty with Baasha (16:3b).

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Ben-Hadad in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Ben-Hadad seems to have been the title of the reigning king of [Aram \(Syria\)](#). *Ben-Hadad* means "son of Hadad." Hadad or Adad was the god of storm and thunder, and, as was common in that epoch of history, kings were seen as sons of the primary god of the region.

In the Bible, Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram, is mentioned in 1 Kings 15:18–22; throughout 1 Kings 20; 2 Kings 6:24; 8:9; 13:24–25; 2 Chronicles 16:2–4; Jeremiah 49:27; and Amos 1:4. Since *Ben-Hadad* is a title much like *Pharaoh* or *President*, the term can refer to different individuals at different times. The context of each passage must be studied to determine just who is involved. Most students of history accept the existence of three Ben-Hadads who ruled in Damascus: Ben-Hadad I, who ruled c. 900–860 BC; his son (or grandson) Ben-Hadad II, who ruled 860–841; and another, unrelated Ben-Hadad, the son of the man who assassinated Ben-Hadad II.

In 1 Kings 15:18, Ben-Hadad is designated as the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion. In this passage, [King Asa](#) of Judah makes a treaty with Ben-Hadad to help protect himself against the king of Israel, who was threatening Judah. (This is also recorded in 2 Chronicles 16:2–4.) Ben-Hadad sent soldiers against Israel and King Baasha and conquered a number of towns, bringing some relief to Judah.

In 1 Kings 20, Ben-Hadad once again attacks the northern kingdom of Israel, where [Ahab](#) is now the king. It is possible that this is the same Ben-Hadad who attacked in 1 Kings 15, or it could be a son, Ben-Hadad II. It seems that this time Ben-Hadad is attacking on his own without consideration for any treaty with Judah. And this time, although he had 32 kings helping him (1 Kings 20:1), he is defeated by King Ahab and the army of Israel. About three years later, Israel and Syria renew their conflict, leading to Ahab's final battle and death (1 Kings 22).

In 2 Kings 6–7, about nine years after Ahab's death, Ben-Hadad II invades Israel and lays siege to Samaria, the capital. The siege went on for so long that the people in the city were starving to death. However, in the middle of the night, the Lord caused the Aramean army to hear sounds of an advancing army. Thinking the king of Israel was receiving help from foreign nations, all of Ben-

Hadad's men fled, leaving everything behind.

In 2 Kings 8, the [prophet Elisha](#) travels to Damascus and relays a paradoxical prophecy to Ben-Hadad II, who was ill: "Go and say to him, 'You will certainly recover.' Nevertheless, the Lord has revealed to me that he will in fact die" (verse 10). Just as Elisha said, Ben-Hadad began to recover from his illness, but then a man named [Hazael](#) murdered Ben-Hadad and took the throne of Aram. In 2 Kings 13, Hazael is succeeded by his son, who is also named Ben-Hadad. This final Ben-Hadad was defeated three times by King Jehoash of Israel, fulfilling another prophecy of Elisha (2 Kings 13:1–25).

In Jeremiah 49:27, the word of the Lord says, "I will set fire to the walls of Damascus; it will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad." At the time of Jeremiah's prophecy, none of the Ben-Hadads mentioned above would have been alive. The reference may be to the current king of Aram or perhaps to a fortress that had been built by and now bore the name of a former king. In Amos 1:4 we have a similar prophecy: "I will send fire on the house of Hazael that will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad." By this time, the original Ben-Hadad had been killed, and Hazael was king. As above, "the fortress of Ben-Hadad" could simply refer to a fortress of the current king or to a specific fortress that was known by that name.

In summary, *Ben-Hadad* is the title of the Aramean king, "son of Hadad," a prominent deity in the region. Several kings of Aram had extensive interaction with the kingdom of Israel and attacked several times. The Lord used Ben-Hadad and the Arameans to bring judgment on rebellious Israel, but He punished Aram for her evil, as well. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 16:3 "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."**

- a league (KJV): 2Ch 18:3 19:2 Jud 2:2 Isa 31:1-3 2Co 6:16
- break (KJV): Ge 20:9,10 Ex 32:21 Jos 9:19,20 2Sa 21:2 Ps 15:4 Eze 17:18,19 Ro 1:31,32 2Ti 3:3

### **ASA PLACES TRUST IN TEMPLE TREASURY - IN GOLD NOT GOD**

**Let there be a treaty** (actually "a covenant" [berit/berith/beriyth](#)) **between you and me, as between my father and your father** - Note the total absence to prayer in this section. There is no record of Asa's seeking the face of the LORD for deliverance in the face of his adversity. To the contrary he actually seeks to make a covenant with a pagan. Recall that **covenant** ([berit/berith/beriyth](#)) was the most solemn and binding agreement known in the ancient world. Recall also that Dt 17:18-19+ says "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. "It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, **that he may learn to fear the LORD his God by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes.**" While we cannot state with certainty, it is very likely that Asa was not obeying this instruction for all the kings of Israel, because if he had been, he would have learned the **fear of the LORD his God**. And the **fear of LORD** is a powerful "antidote" to sinning against the LORD. Proverbs 3:7 says "Do not be wise in your own eyes; **Fear the LORD** and turn away from evil." Note the dynamic in this passage - Fear of Yahweh precedes and leads to turning from evil! If you doubt this dynamic, note that Pr 8:13 says "'The fear of the LORD is to hate evil." And do you remember the great description of Job? "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, **fearing God and turning away from evil.**" (Job 1:1) Notice once again that "fearing God" is placed before "turning away from evil," clearly because godly fear impedes ungodly actions.

**THOUGHT** - The preceding truths beg the simple question - **Do you fear the LORD?** We are not speaking of shaking, quaking fear, but of reverential, honoring fear. Peter issues a command to believers we would all do well to obey "If (SINCE) you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work (THIS TRUTH SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO OBEY), **conduct** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in **FEAR** during the time of your (SHORT - Ps 144:4) stay on earth." (1Pe 1:17+)

**POSB** - With one tragic stroke Asa had turned away from trusting the LORD to trusting the "arm of the flesh," relying on his own ability to deliver himself and his people rather than relying on God.

**Guzik** - Asa seems to have forgotten that his covenant was with God, not with a pagan king. Under the covenant they made with God, the LORD was responsible to protect Judah. Now they put their treasure and their trust into a pagan king.. Asa would find that Ben-Hadad and Syria were worse enemies than Israel.

**Spurgeon** - The power of Ethiopia was broken before him, and Judah's armies returned laden with the spoil. You would not have

thought that a man who could perform that grand action would become, a little after, full of unbelief; but the greatest faith of yesterday will not give us confidence for to-day, unless the fresh springs which are in God shall overflow again.....But this was a smaller trouble altogether, and somehow, I fancy, it was because it was a smaller trouble Asa thought that he could manage it very well himself by the help of an arm of flesh. In the case of the invasion by countless hordes of Ethiopians, Asa must have felt that it was of no use calling in Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, or asking any of the nations to help him, for with all their help he would not have been equal to the tremendous struggle. Therefore he was driven to God. But this being a smaller trial, he does not seem to have been so thoroughly divorced from confidence in man."

**NIV Study Bible (BORROW)** - Note on "**your father and my father**" - A reference to a previously unmentioned treaty between Abijah and Tabrimmon of Aram. When Tabrimmon died, Baasha succeeded in establishing a treaty with his successor Ben-Hadad. Asa saw no hope for success against Baasha without the assistance provided by a renewal of the old treaty with Aram. Although his plan seemed to be successful, it was condemned by Hanani the prophet as a foolish act and a denial of reliance on the Lord (see 2Ch 16:7-10). The true theocratic king was never to fear his enemies but to trust in the God of the covenant for security and protection (see note on 1Sa 17:11). Ahaz was later to follow Asa's bad example and seek Assyria's help when he was attacked by Israel and Aram (see 2Ki 16:5-9 and note on 16:7; Isa 7).

**Utley** suggests that "The alliance with Syria would have involved rituals using the names of Syrian's gods." adding that "Several of Judah's kings sought foreign/pagan military alliances. Asa – here (Syria), Jehoshaphat – 2 Chr. 20:35-37 (Israel), Ahaziah – 2 Chr. 22:1-9 (Israel), Ahaz – 2 Chr. 28:16-21 (Assyria).

**Behold, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me."** Let's face it, money talks in this world and as we see in the next verse Ben-hadad listened to the clinking sound of gold and silver coins!

**2 Chronicles 16:4 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.**

- hearkened (KJV): 1Ti 6:10 2Pe 2:15
- his armies (KJV): Heb. armies which were his
- Ijon (KJV): 1Ki 15:20
- Dan (KJV): Ge 14:14 Jud 18:28,29 20:1
- Abelmaim (KJV): Abel-maim is called Abel-beth-maachah in 1 Ki 15:20, and elsewhere, on account of its belonging to the district of Beth-maachah.
- the store cities (KJV): 2Ch 8:6 17:12 1Ki 9:19

### **BEN-HADAD BRIBED TO BREAK TREATY WITH BAASHA**

**So** - As the saying goes "money talks" and Ben-hadad accepted Asa's money.

**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.** The cities that Ben-Hadad conquered were located north and east of the Sea of Galilee in Naphtali were important because it was the location of the major trade routes from Damascus going west to Tyre and SW through the plain of Jezreel to the coastal plain and Egypt. This same territory was later seized by the Assyrian ruler Tiglath-Pileser III (2Ki 15:29).

It is interesting to note that Asa's costly covenant with the Syrian Ben-hadad did not endure for long, because during the reign of his son Jehoshaphat, Judah would be at war with Syria (2Ch 18:30). So much for the integrity of human covenants, which are so unlike God's everlasting covenants!

**Andrew Hill:** The Arameans were irrepressible foes of Israel throughout the history of the northern kingdom, so there is doubtless little reservation about renegeing on a treaty with Baasha as long as the price is right. The Arameans invade Israelite cities along the northeastern border between the two nations (16:4). When Baasha hears the news that several important cities have fallen to Ben-Hadad, he has to abandon his plan to fortify Ramah and divert his attention to the war with Aram in the northern extremities of his territory (16:5). After Baasha withdraws from Ramah, Judah destroys the fortifications under construction and reuses the stones and timber to fortify Geba (modern day Jeba, a town of Benjamin some six miles northeast of Jerusalem) and Mizpah, thus extending Judah's defensive perimeter north of Ramah (16:6, assuming this is the Mizpah of Benjamin or Tell en-Nasbeh, nearly eight miles northeast of Jerusalem; cf. Josh 18:24, 26).

**Spurgeon** - Now, many people in the world judge actions by their immediate results. If a Christian does a wrong thing, and it prospers, then at once they conclude he was justified in doing it; but, ah! Brethren, this is a poor, blind way of judging the actions of men and the providence of God. Do you not know that there are devil's providences as well as God's providences?"

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**IJON** [ISBE]- i'-jon (i'yon; Septuagint in Kings has Ain, or Nain; in Chronicles Ion; Aion): A town in the territory of Naphtali, first mentioned in connection with the invasion of Ben-hadad, in the reign of Baasha. It was captured along with Dan and Abel-beth-maacah (1 Ki 15:20; 2 Ch 16:4). It shared with these cities a similar fate at the hands of Tiglath-pileser in the reign of Pekah (2 Ki 15:29). The name survives in that of Merj A'yun, "meadow of springs," a rich, oval-shaped plain to the Northwest of Tell el Qady, where the LiTany turns sharply westward to the sea. The ancient city may be represented by Tell Dibbin, an important site to the North of the plain. W. Ewing

**Dan** was a city of the tribe of Dan. Called also Laish, and Leshem, Gen. 14:14; Deut. 34:1; Judg. 20:1; Jer. 8:16. It was captured by the people of Dan in Josh. 19:47. Idolatry established at Dan in Jdg. 18; 1 Ki 12:28, 29; Amos 8:14. It was captured by Ben-hadad, 1 Ki 15:20; 2Chr. 16:4.

**DAN** [ISBE] - A city familiar as marking the northern limit of the land of Israel in the common phrase "from Dan even to Beer-sheba" (Jdg 20:1; 1 Sam 3:20, etc.). Its ancient name was Laish or Leshem (Jdg 18:7, etc.). It was probably an outlying settlement of Tyre of Sidon. Its inhabitants, pursuing the ends of peaceful traders, were defenseless against the onset of the Danite raiders. Having captured the city the Danites gave it the name of their own tribal ancestor (Jdg 18). It lay in the valley near Beth-rehob (Jdg 18:28). Josephus places it near Mt. Lebanon and the fountain of the lesser Jordan, a day's journey from Sidon (Ant., V, iii, 1; VIII, viii, 4; BJ, IV, i, 1). Eusebius, Onomasticon says it lay 4 Roman miles from Paneas on the way to Tyre, at the source of the Jordan. This points decisively to Tell el-Qady, in the plain West of Banias. The mound of this name--Kady is the exact Arabic equivalent of the Hebrew Dan--rises from among the bushes and reeds to a height varying from 40 to 80 ft. The largest of all the springs of the Jordan rises on the west side. The waters join with those of a smaller spring on the other side to form Nahr el-Leddán which flows southward to meet the streams from Banias and Chasbeiyeh. The mound, which is the crater of an extinct volcano, has certain ancient remains on the south side, while the tomb of Sheikh Marzuk is sheltered by two holy trees. The sanctuary and ritual established by the Danites persisted as long as the house of God was in Shiloh, and the priesthood in this idolatrous shrine remained in the family of Jonathan till the conquest of Tiglath-pileser (Jdg 18:30; 2 Ki 15:29). Here Jeroboam I set up the golden calf. The ancient sanctity of the place would tend to promote the success of his scheme (1 Ki 12:28 f, etc.). The calf, according to a Jewish tradition, was taken away by Tiglath-pileser. Dan fell before Benhadad, king of Syria (1 Ki 15:20; 2 Ch 16:4). It was regained by Jeroboam II (2 Ki 14:25). It shared the country's fate at th hands of Tiglath-pileser (2 Ki 15:29). It was to this district that Abraham pursued the army of Chedorlaomer (Gen 14:14). For Dr. G. A. Smith's suggestion that Dan may have been at Banias see HGHL1, 473, 480 f. W. Ewing

**Abel-maim** is either another name for Abel-beth-maacah, or the name of another place in the same vicinity.

**Store** - storehouses, storage areas. It indicates a structure or even a city used for storage or supplies of various kinds, chiefly military supplies (Ex. 1:11; 1 Ki. 9:19; 2 Chr. 8:4, 6; 17:12); grain (2 Chr. 16:4); or wine and oil (2 Chr. 32:28). Gilbrant adds "Occurring seven times in the OT, this feminine noun is likely a loanword from Akkadian. During the sojourn in Egypt, Israelite forced labor was used by Pharaoh to build the store cities of Pithom and Rameses (Exo. 1:11). Of the references in which this noun is found, all but this one refer to Hebrew cities. Strictly speaking, miskenôth does not appear to mean a fortified city per se. Solomon built these throughout Israel (1 Kings 9:19; cf. 2 Chr. 8:6, "store cities" and "chariot cities," along with those near Hamath, 2 Chr. 8:4). The proximity of horses and chariots (i.e., the military) indicates, not only the storage of produce for civilian use and trade, but a repositioning of provisions for soldiers should the need arise.

Both Jehoshaphat (2 Chr. 17:12) and Hezekiah (during the days of the Assyrian threat, 2 Chr. 32:28) stockpiled provisions in an effort to strengthen their kingdoms and to prepare for the possibility of a siege. These may have been built within the villages established for livestock (v. 29). A textual variation has possibly occurred with reference to the "store cities" of Naphtali (2 Chr. 16:4). These were conquered in the aftermath of a pact between King Ben-Hadad of Damascus and King Asa of Judah. The territory lost by King Asa of Israel may indicate a fertile region in the Northern Kingdom rather than "store cities."

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**2 Chronicles 16:5 When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and stopped his work.**

- that he left off (KJV): 2Ch 16:1

**BAASHA REACTS AND  
RETRACTS FROM RAMAH**

**When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and stopped his work** - King Baasha was forced to retreat from Judah in order to deal with the Syrian invasion.

**2 Chronicles 16:6 Then King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had been building, and with them he fortified Geba and Mizpah.**

- they carried (KJV): 1Ki 15:22
- Geba (KJV): Jos 18:24-26, Gaba, 2Ch 21:17 1Ch 6:60 Isa 10:29 Zec 14:10
- Mizpah (KJV): Jos 15:38 18:26 1Sa 7:6,16 10:17, Mizpeh

## KING ASA RETAKES RAMAH

**When King Asa brought all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had been building, and with them he fortified Geba and Mizpah.** Asa confiscated the building materials Baasha was using to fortify Ramah and used them to reinforce Geba and Mizpah, two major cities that could serve as military strongholds and strengthen the border between the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Clearly Asa hoped to prevent any future invasion by the Northern Kingdom. **Geba and Mizpah** were both very near Ramah as [shown on the map above](#).

**THOUGHT** - Asa formed an alliance with an unbeliever, thus overtly disobeying God's command to separate from pagans. Believers are not to form alliances or close associations with the evil people of this world. We are not to become unequally yoked with those who deny God, curse His name, reject His commandments, and worship idols. The end result will not be good!

**Do not be bound** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 16 Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. (2Co 6:14-16+).

**GEBA [ISBE]- ge'-ba (gebha` , "hill"):** A town on the Northeast boundary of the territory of Benjamin (Josh 18:24), given to the Levites (Josh 21:17; 1 Ch 6:60). It stood on the northern frontier of the kingdom of Judah, Geba and Beersheba marking respectively the northern and southern limits (2 Ki 23:8). In 2 Sam 5:25 "Geba" should be altered to "Gibeon," which stands in the corresponding passage, 1 Ch 14:16. In Jdg 20:10,33; 1 Sam 13:3,16, the Hebrew reads "Geba," the translation "Gibeah" being due to confusion of the two names. From 1 Sam 14:5 we gather that Geba stood to the South of the great gorge, Wady Suweinit, commanding the pass at Michmash. This was the scene of Jonathan's daring enterprise against the Philistines, when, accompanied by his armor-bearer, he accomplished an apparently impossible feat, climbing the rocky steep of the gorge to the North and putting the enemy to flight. There can be no doubt that the modern village of Jeba` occupies the ancient site. It stands to the South of Wady Suweinit, looking toward Michmash--modern Mukhmas--with Seneh, the crag on the southern lip of the gorge, in front of it. The distance from Jerusalem is about 6 miles. It was fortified by Asa with materials that his enemy Baasha had used to fortify Ramah against him (1 Ki 15:22). It is named by Isaiah in his description of the terrifying march of the Assyrians upon Jerusalem from the North (1Ki 10:28 ff). It appears among the cities which were reoccupied by Israel after the Exile (Ezr 2:26, etc.; Neh 11:31).

**MIZPAH; MIZPEH [ISBE] - miz'-pa, miz'-pe:** This name is pointed both ways in the Hebrew, and is found usually with the article. The meaning seems to be "outlook" or "watchtower." It is natural, therefore, to look for the places so named in high positions commanding wide prospects. **Mizpah** was a town in the territory of Benjamin (Josh 18:26). Hither came the men of Israel to deal with the Benjamites after the outrage on the Levite's concubine (Jdg 20:1,3; 21:1,5,8). At Mizpah, Samuel gathered his countrymen. While there crying to God in their distress, they were attacked by the Philistines, whom they defeated with great slaughter (1 Sam 7:5, etc.). Here also Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen king, after which Samuel told the people the "manner of the kingdom" (10:17, etc.). Mizpah was fortified by Asa, king of Judah, with materials which Baasha, king of Israel, had used to fortify Ramah (1 Ki 15:22; 2 Ch 16:6). When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and made Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, governor of the remnant of the people left in the land of Judah, the governor's residence was fixed at Mizpah (2 Ki 25:23). Here he was joined by Jeremiah, whom Nebuzaradan, captain of the Babylonian guard, had set free. At Mizpah, Ishmael, son of Nathaniah, treacherously slew Gedaliah and many who were with him. Two days later he murdered a company of pilgrims, throwing their dead bodies into the great cistern which Asa had made when strengthening the place against possible attack by Baasha of Samaria. He then made prisoners

of the people, including the king's daughters, and attempted to convey them away to the Ammonites, an attempt that was frustrated by Johanan, son of Kareah (Jer 40; 41). Mizpah was the scene of memorable assembly in a day of sore anxiety for Judah, when Judas Maccabeus called the warriors of Judah together for counsel and prayer (1 Macc 3:46). From this passage we also learn that the place was an ancient sanctuary--"for in Mizpah there was a place of prayer aforesaid for Israel."

**2 Chronicles 16:7 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.**

- Hanani (KJV): 2Ch 19:2 20:34 1Ki 16:1
- Because (KJV): Ps 146:3-6 Isa 31:1 32:2 Jer 17:5,6 Eph 1:12,13
- relied on (KJV): 2Ch 13:18 32:7,8 2Ki 18:5 1Ch 5:20
- the host (KJV): 2Ch 16:3

## THE PROPHET'S PITHY PRONOUNCEMENT

**At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you have relied on([sha'an](#)) the king of Aram and have not relied on ([sha'an](#)) the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand** - Hanani's son Jehu was also a prophet who spoke to Baasha the king of Israel (1Ki 16:1, 16:7) and to Jehoshaphat king of Judah (2Ch 19:2). **Relied on** is the Hebrew verb [sha'an](#) in both uses in this passage and means to lean on or the trust in and is used in Proverbs 3:5+

Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not **lean on** ([sha'an](#)) your own understanding.

Asa selected the wrong "support" to lean on, one that would prove detrimental and bring affliction the rest of his 5 year reign. The Septuagint translates sha'an with [peitho](#) which means to depend on, to trust in, to put one's confidence in (see 2Co 1:9 - confidence in flesh versus in God Who raises the dead!)

**THOUGHT** - The preceding discussion on reliance (confidence) begs the question, in whom are you trusting in the midst of your "test" (trial, affliction, etc), the "arm of flesh" (like Asa did with Ben-hadad) or the good hand of the LORD? Beloved, may God grant us all the grace to choose to lean on the everlasting arms of our omnipotent God the next time the winds of adversity begin to blow. In Jesus' Name. Amen

### LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.  
Leaning, leaning,  
Safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.  
Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.  
Leaning, leaning,  
Safe and secure from all alarms;  
Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.  
What have I to dread, what have I to fear,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms;  
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.  
Leaning, leaning,  
Safe and secure from all alarms;

Leaning, leaning,  
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

It is so sad to see Asa's dramatically antithetical responses to two of God's prophets. The prophet Azariah gave God's warning to King Asa, encouraging him to rid the nation of Judah of idols (2 Chronicles 15:1–7), a warning Asa heeded and for which he was blessed by Yahweh (2Ch 15:8ff). But the second prophet Hanani receives a rejection and a rebuke rather than a reception! Asa clearly has developed "heart disease," a hardening of his heart to God's truth. Recall Asa's words when his heart was tender to the LORD "Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, **there is no one besides You to help in the battle between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You**, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You." (2Ch 14:11) This is an amazing declaration of confidence in the unseen God's omnipotence! Asa was walking by faith in those early years, but now he is walking by sight.

**THOUGHT** - There is a lesson here for all of us. Faith is a dynamic entity. It is not static. We don't just reach an "apex" or "mountain top" in our faith and remain there. In fact if we think we have reached the "mountain top" in our faith, we need to take heed lest we fall down the other side of the mountain! (1Co 10:12+, cf Pr 16:18, Pr 28:14 = like Asa fell into calamity!) Faith is like riding a bicycle -- stop pedaling and you will eventually fall! Faith must be fed and must lead to Spirit enabled obedience, which demonstrates that it is authentic faith. If it is not "fed," it will fade! And ultimately we will fail the next divine "pop test" that God sends/allows (like He always does!) So feed your faith with the Word of Truth (Ro 10:17+), something Asa neglected to do to his great chagrin!

*Things which appear successful may,  
in the life of faith, prove to be most disastrous.*  
-- G Campbell Morgan

**MacArthur Study Bible on the army of the king of Aram has escaped out of your hand**- Asa forfeited by this sin the opportunity of gaining victory not only over Israel, but also Aram, or Syria. This could have been a greater victory than over the Ethiopians, which would have deprived Syria of any future successful attacks on Judah. Though God had delivered them when they were outnumbered (2Ch 13:3ff.; 2Ch 14:9ff.), the king showed his own spiritual decline both in lack of trust and in his treatment of the prophet of God who spoke truth (2Ch 16:10). (BORROW [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**David Guzik** - This was a complete surprise to Asa. He believed that the main enemy was Israel, because of King Baasha's aggressive building of the Ramah fortress. He succeeded in gaining Syria's help against Baasha and Israel, but he failed to see what God saw: that the bigger enemy was Syria, and God wanted to give him victory over the greater enemy.

**THOUGHT** - Compromise blinds us to who our true enemies are and it leads us into alliances with those whom God would rather give us victory over. (Guzik)

**Ron Daniel** - vv7-10 Asa Rebuked, Hanani Imprisoned. This time, the prophet sent to King Asa was Khan-aw-NEE. God's rebuke of the king was delivered. Unbelievably, King Asa became so angry that he had Khan-aw-NEE locked up in prison. We could expect this sort of behavior from Herod or King Ahab. But Asa? Even the godliest of people are able to walk away from God if they don't maintain their heart. Asa stopped trusting in God, became offended at the Word, and started dealing with people brutally. Obvious signs of a hardened heart.

**Frederick Mabie:** The arrival of Hanani is the second recorded prophetic visit to Asa (the first from Azariah is recorded at 2Ch 15:1-7). While the prophet Azariah's visit to Asa was full of the possibilities and blessings of seeking God and exercising covenantal obedience, this visit is full of rebuke and critique in the light of the lack of faith implied in Asa's request for help from the Arameans. Instead of relying on God, Asa has sought protection by pursuing a more tangible means to military aid – namely, by paying the Arameans a bounty pillaged from the temple treasury and royal treasury (cf. 16:2-3). Ultimately, as the prophet notes, to place trust in humankind or human institutions rather than completely in God is foolishness that reaps broad consequences (v.9).

#### **Related Resource:**

- [SPECIAL TOPIC: THE DIFFERENT HEBREW TERMS FOR PROPHET](#)

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**Relied on** (leaned on, trusted in) (08172) [sha'an](#) primarily means to lean on something (Saul on his sword = 2Sa 1:6) or someone (2Ki 5:16, 7:2, 17), to rest on, to support oneself (Jdg 16:26), figuratively to trust (2Chr 13:18NAS, Job 8:15NAS, other versions render with rely), to rest (Ge 18:4). Rely on (2Chr 16:7 - twice). **Gilbrant** - The meaning of the verb shā'an is "to lean on" something or someone. Saul leaned on his spear (2 Sam. 1:6). Samson leaned against the pillar (Judg. 16:26). This meaning led to the common usage of this verb as a figurative idea of "relying on" someone for help. Kings had a close aide or officer to "lean on" or accompany them and give advice, help and even protection (2 Ki. 5:18; 7:2, 17). The idea of having a sense of security and support

is found in Job 24:23. A person can trust in his house (8:15). Abraham told the three angels to rest or recline under the tree, using this verb (Gen. 18:4). A graphic picture of leaning on someone for help who is the wrong source is Judah trusting in and leaning on Egypt like a staff and having it break like a reed and hurt them (Ezek. 29:7). Asa quit looking to or "leaning on" the Lord for help against enemies as he used to do and so was rebuked and punished (2 Chr. 14:11; 16:7f). Isaiah rebuked the people for rejecting God's Word and depending on oppression and deceit (Isa. 30:12), and for depending on horses and chariots instead of seeking the Lord (31:1). Micah 3:11 says the leaders were falsely ministering out of greed. They claimed that they leaned on the Lord and assumed that they were secure from enemy attack because God was in Judah. Often, this verb is used in parallel with the more common verb for "trusting," [batach](#). The most well-known verse which uses both verbs is Prov. 3:5: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding." ([Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary](#))

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**G Campbell Morgan** - This is a very sad chapter, telling as it does the story of the lapse and failure of a man who for six-and-thirty years had—considering the conditions under which he lived—been remarkably true to God. When Baasha, king of Israel, commenced to build Ramah with the express purpose of troubling Judah, Asa, who had so often been led and delivered by God, turned to Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, for help. It seemed, moreover, to have been a successful policy, for Ben-hadad spoiled the cities of Israel, and Baasha was compelled to leave off his building of Ramah. Yet such seeming was false. It was the result of shortsightedness, failure to see the long issues. Things which appear successful may, in the life of faith, prove to be most disastrous. It was so in this case. The Syrians were, as a matter of fact, far more dangerous foes of Judah than was Israel. As Hanani, the seer, told the king, by this act they had escaped out of his hand. How perpetually men defeat their own ends when, either through lack of faith, or overconfidence in their own cleverness—which are practically the same thing—they attempt to do by policy what God is prepared to do for them in answer to their obedient faith. The story is the more sad in that there seems to have been no repentance on the part of the king. He persecuted the prophet, flinging him into prison. Surely none is ever safe from falling, however long loyalty has lasted. To the end there is need of watchfulness.

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#### **John Kitto - The Contrast—I Kings 16:15–23; II Chronicles 16:7–10**

The conduct of Asa, on receiving tidings of the Cushite invasion, was in all respects most praiseworthy, and in perfect conformity with the principles of the theocratic constitution. It seems also to evince much sound judgment in a military point of view. Instead of waiting in Jerusalem the appearance of the enemy, after they had ravaged the country in the march to that city, it appeared to him better to spare his people this misery, by marching to the southern frontier, and giving battle to the enemy at one of the great passes into the country (that of Zephathah), where, and to guard which, his grandfather had built the strong fortress is of Mareshah. The situation for posting his army, at this pass, was admirably chosen. But Asa, while doing the best that circumstances allowed, and taking every advantage in his power, did not rely upon this, and was deeply conscious of his inability to resist the invaders in any strength of his own. His reliance was elsewhere, even in Him who, in taking the position of real Head of the Hebrew commonwealth, had pledged himself to the defence and deliverance of his people. Viewed from the theocratic point of view, or indeed from any point of view, nothing can be finer than the prayer which Asa uttered before he fell to mortal conflict with the enemy:—"Lord, it is nothing to Thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in thy name go against this multitude. O Lord, Thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee."

The Israelites never, from the commencement of their history, failed to be victorious in any battle undertaken in this spirit,—evincing that faith in Him, to which the Lord, by all his covenants, had bound himself to respond. This was so much a matter of course, that the historian simply, but with a truly grand laconism under the circumstances, adds,—“So the Lord smote the Cushites before Asa, and before Judah, and the Cushites fled.” They were pursued with great slaughter to their encampments, and to their towns about Gerar; and the spoil with which the Judahites returned was prodigious, and being largely in sheep and camels, it must have made a material contribution to the substantial wealth of the country.

This victory, so signally the doing of the Lord, together with the encouragements given to the king by a prophet named Azariah, who came out to meet him on his return, greatly stimulated the king in his great work of religious reform and purification. A great festival sacrifice was held at Jerusalem, at which 700 oxen and 7000 sheep were offered, and the assembled people then and there entered into a high and solemn covenant, “to seek the Lord their God with all their heart and with all their soul.”

The result was peace and prosperity for many years. This was so signal and apparent, that after a time so strong a tide of migration into this kingdom from the more troubled one of Israel set in, as excited the serious apprehension of Baasha, who was then upon the throne, and incited him to a bold measure for the purpose of preventing it, or holding it in check. He seized the town of Ramah, which lay within the territory of Judah, six miles from Jerusalem, on the way to Bethel, and began to turn it into a strong fortress. This audacious measure, which held out to Asa the prospect of having so able and resolute an enemy holding a position of great strength within so short a distance of his capital, filled with dismay the royal heart which had not quailed before the hosts of Zerah. He lost that faith which had ennobled his past career, and betook himself to miserable diplomacies, no less impolitic than degrading.



The now important Syrian power seated at Damascus, was at this time under a treaty of peace with the kingdom of Israel, to which it was naturally from its position, and had been before, and was afterwards, most hostile. Asa, knowing the really adverse temper of Syria towards Israel, thought it not unlikely, that the king might be induced to break the existing treaty, and by appearing in the north, compel Baasha to abandon his designs in the south. He tried it, and succeeded; but only received this aid from Benhadad, at a most costly sacrifice; for he sent all his silver and gold, whether in the form of treasure or vessels, which he could make available, sparing neither the precious things of his own palace nor of the temple. He reckoned, probably, that it was better to give it up in this way, than to have it taken by force from him; while, if peace resulted from the sacrifice, he would be able to replace it with interest in a few years. For this part of his conduct, it is worthy of note, he was not blamed. The treasure which the ambassadors brought was doubtless more effectual than their arguments in prevailing upon Ben-hadad to accede to a course so dishonorable. He did accede, and sent an army against the north of Israel, which captured and plundered many important towns, and ravaged the whole land of Naphtali, and the country about the sea of Galilee. On hearing this, Baasha at once abandoned Ramah, and went to protect his own country; and the war between him and the Syrians being thus renewed, he found too much employment to resume his former design.

But, however successful it seemed in its immediate object, the thing that Asa had done displeased the Lord. Its offence was gross and accumulated. It was a want of that reliance upon the Lord, which once, in a really more urgent strait, had won him so much honor; it was the tempting of another to do a dishonorable breach of faith; and it was the bringing of a heathen destroyer into that land which was still the Lord's heritage, though it belonged not to Judah; and upon that people who were still his, although they had strayed from him. For this—but especially for his relying upon the king of Syria more than upon the King of Heaven—a prophet was sent to rebuke and threaten him. It was intimated that, for this, he had not only lost a great victory over the Syrians, which the Lord would have given to him, but his future reign should be troubled with wars. The former intimation is worthy of notice, as being of that rare kind which indicates what would have occurred had a certain course not been taken. We understand it to mean that Baasha would have called the Syrians to his aid, and that Asa would have been afforded a signal victory over them.

To be thus rebuked in the moment when his diplomatic stroke seemed to have fulfilled its purpose so well, was more than one so little used to contradiction could bear; and in his rage he sent the faithful prophet to prison—adding to his original fault the grievous sin of persecuting an inspired messenger of Jehovah. Here we have the melancholy spectacle of a prophet of God imprisoned—not by an idolatrous or notoriously wicked king, but by one who has hitherto borne a noble character, and whose heart was substantially right with God. Not so did David receive Nathan's more stern rebuke. This descendant of his does that, for only attempting to do which Jeroboam had his arm palsied. But, as Bishop Hall charitably remarks: "It were a pity that the best man should be judged by each of his actions, and not by all; the course of our life must either allow or condemn us, not these sudden exceptions."

**2 Chronicles 16:8 "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."**

- the Ethiopians (KJV): 2Ch 12:3 2Ch 14:9-15
- the Lubims (KJV): 2Ch 12:3
- a huge host (KJV): Heb. in abundance
- because (KJV): 2Ch 16:7 Ps 9:9,10 37:39,40

## **REMEMBER WHAT YAHWEH HAS DONE**

**Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen?** Answer? Yes! This should have been a faith building experience in Asa's life, but sadly he shelved this truth and seems to have forgotten how great and mighty was His God and that He is still that same God in the face of Baasha's bashing!

**Yet because you relied on ([sha'an](#)) the LORD, He delivered them into your hand.** The conclusion. Asa had trusted in (leaned on) Yahweh and the result was victory of the enemy that outnumbered them! See 2Ch 14:9-15+. This should have been motivation for Asa to choose God over gold to Ben-hadad, but for some reason it did not.

**THOUGHT** - What is the lesson? The remembrance of the times we experienced the good hand of the LORD in adversity events in our past should motivate us to seek His face in the present adversity! That's easy to "preach" but not easy to practice, because we are so forgetful of God's past mercies and deliverances. Oh Spirit of the Living God, stir our heart and mind to more quickly recall Your past deliverances in our life, so that we choose to lean on You when winds of adversity begin to blow. In Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen. One thing you can do is journal and record those victories so you can look back and refresh your memory. Or you

might do like Joshua did and put up a pile of stones as a memorial to celebrate the Lord's bringing them across the Jordan River into the Promised Land. If it is something you and your family can see in your home, it will be a reminder every time you see it of the goodness and greatness of your God.

**2 Chronicles 16:9 "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."**

- the eyes (KJV): 2Ch 6:20 Job 34:21 Ps 34:15 113:6 Pr 5:21 15:3 Jer 16:17 32:19 Zec 4:10 Heb 4:13 1Pe 3:12
- to show himself (KJV): etc. or, strongly to hold with them, etc. whose heart. 2Ch 15:17 2Ki 20:3 Ps 37:37
- Herein (KJV): 1Sa 13:13 2Sa 12:7-12 1Ch 21:8 Job 34:18,19 Jer 5:21 Mt 5:22 Lu 12:20 1Co 15:36 Ga 3:1
- henceforth (KJV): 1Ki 15:32

#### **Related Passage:**

Proverbs 5:21 For the ways of a man are **before the eyes of the LORD**, And He watches all his paths.

Proverbs 15:3 **The eyes of the LORD are in every place** Watching the evil and the good.

Job 34:21 "For **His eyes are upon the ways of a man**, And **He sees all his steps**.

Job 34:22 "There is no darkness or deep shadow Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

Zechariah 4:10 "For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—**these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth.**"

## **THE "EAGLE EYES" OF THE LORD EVER LOOK FOR COMMITMENT**

**For the eyes of the LORD** see Ge 16:13 Dt 11:12 21:9 2Ch 6:20 Ps 33:18 34:15, 113:6, 139:2,3, Job 34:21,31:4, Je 16:17, 23:24, 32:19 Zec 4:10 Heb 4:13 1Pe 3:12 Ge 6:8) See [Omniscience](#)

**THOUGHT** - Does God's "eagle eye" see your heart as one that is fully committed to His cause, wholly devoted to Jesus as your Lord and Master? Here should be the goal of all of our lives as declared from the lips of our Lord " YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH **ALL YOUR HEART**, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.' (Mark 12:30+).

**Utley** - the "eyes" of the Lord is anthropomorphic imagery. The phrase "move to and fro" (BDB 1001, KB 1439, Polel ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) is an idiom used several times in the OT. (1) here, to denote YHWH actively seeking those who have sought Him with their whole heart (2) of those who seek YHWH, Dan. 12:4; Amos 8:12 (3) for YHWH seeking one godly person in Jerusalem so as to spare it from judgment, Jer. 5:1 (4) in connection to YHWH restoring the temple under Zerubbabel, Zech. 4:10. See topic [GOD DESCRIBED AS HUMAN](#)

**move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support** (Ps 37:37)

**those whose heart is completely His** see Job 1:1,8, Nu 14:24, cp 1Ki 8:61 11:4 15:3, 14 2Ki 20:3 1Ch 12:38 28:9 29:9,19 2Ch 15:17 16:9 19:9 25:2 Isa 38:3

So at one time Asa's heart was "completely His", but hearts are prone to drift. Hanani, by means of a vivid anthropomorphism, describes the eyes of the Lord, scrutinizing the entire earth in search of men who will rely on Him (v8) (contrast Mt 6:24, Ja 4:8).

**Utley** "whose heart is completely His" This is an idiom for complete faith, obedience, and devotion. It was first used in various phrases in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 4:29; 6:5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1,13,22; 19:9; 26:16; 30:2,6,10,16,20). It then was used in the historical books for occasions and actions of certain people. (1) Solomon – 1 Kgs. 8:23 (2) Josiah – 2 Kgs. 23:3 (3) soldiers of David – 1 Chr. 12:38 (4) David counsels Solomon – 1 Chr. 28:9 (5) the people as they brought an offering for David's plans for the temple – 1 Chr. 29:9 (6) YHWH's obedient servants – 2 Chr. 6:14 (7) used of those who repent – 2 Chr. 6:38

**David Guzik** - The Prophet Hanani's message was clear. God looks for ways to defend and show his strength on behalf of those who are committed to Him. Asa's fear that God could not be trusted with the defense of Israel was foolish and wrong; God wanted to

show His strength of behalf of His trusting people.

**You have acted foolishly in this.** See [SPECIAL TOPIC: FOOLISH PEOPLE](#).

**Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.**" - Divine discipline for his faithlessness. [Utley](#) notes that "This is the opposite of YHWH's promised "rests" for His obedient covenant partners (i.e., Exod. 33:14; Deut. 3:20; 12:10; 25:19; Josh. 1:13,15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1; 2 Sa 7:1,11; 1 Kgs. 5:4; 1 Chr. 22:9,18; 23:25; 2 Chr. 14:6,7; 15:15; 20:30)."

**Payne** - At one stroke Asa thereby sacrificed the results of his own piety (cf. on 2 Chronicles 15:18) and of God's blessing (2 Chronicles 14:13-14); he induced a pagan ruler to an act of perfidy (2 Chronicles 16:3); precipitated a pattern of Syrian intervention into the affairs of Israel that would have disastrous results throughout the succeeding century (cf. 2 Kings 10:32-33; 12:17-18); and in the most serious deviation of all, he departed from the Lord by placing his primary trust in 'the arm of flesh' (Jeremiah 17:5)." (BORROW [EXPOSITOR'S BIBLE COMMENTARY](#))

**J. A. Thompson:** The two periods of Asa's life are here contrasted. Early in his reign when he relied on the Lord, a great army (Cushites and Libyans) with many chariots and horsemen were delivered into his hand (14:9-15). Now in the latter period of his reign, despite appearances, he was a defeated man. He had done a foolish thing, and henceforth war would plague him (cf. 1 Sam 13:13). God knows what is happening in the hearts of all people. He supports those who are wholeheartedly committed to him, but he will not support those who carelessly reject his sovereignty and lean on another.

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**WHOLE HEART** (HEART ...WHOLLY DEVOTED TO): combination of whole & heart:

- [PLAY THIS SONG BY CRAIG SMITH - WHOLE HEART](#)
- [PLAY THIS SONG BY CRAIG SMITH - SINGLE HEART](#)
- 1 Ki 8:61 heart therefore be wholly devoted
- 1 Ki 11:4 heart was not wholly devoted
- 1 Ki 15:3 heart was not wholly devoted
- 1 Ki 15:14 heart of Asa was wholly devoted
- 2 Ki 20:3 with a whole heart,
- 1 Chr 12:38 (PERFECT HEART)
- 1 Chr 28:9 with a whole heart
- 1 Chr 29:19 (PERFECT HEART)
- 2 Chr 15:17 (heart was blameless)
- 2 Chr 16:9 heart is completely
- 2 Chr 19:9 wholeheartedly.
- 2 Chr 25:2 a whole heart.

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*What an exquisite thought is suggested by the allusion to the eyes of the Lord running to and fro throughout the whole earth*

**F B Meyer** - The emphasis is clearly on the word perfect. That was the point between Hanani the seer, and Asa the king. Asa's mistake and sin lay in his resorting to Benhadad, king of Syria, as an ally against Baasha. Evidently he did not perfectly trust the delivering power of God; and in this failure of his faith, he forfeited the all-sufficient help which would have more than availed. As the seer said very truly, simple trust in God had brought deliverance from the Ethiopians and Lubim, though they were a much huger host than Baasha's; and the same attitude in respect of Baasha would have secured a like result. God was only awaiting the appeal of Asa's faith, to show Himself strong. What a mistake to send to Syria!

Now, dear reader, this is very pertinent for your life and mine. We often complain that we are bereft of help, and send off for Benhadad. And all the while the eyes of the Lord are looking pitifully and longingly at us. Nothing would give Him greater pleasure than to show Himself strong on our behalf. This, however, He cannot do until renouncing all other confidants and helpers, our heart is perfect in the simplicity and frankness of its faith. What an exquisite thought is suggested by the allusion to the eyes of the Lord running to and fro throughout the whole earth. At a glance He takes in our position; not a sorrow, trial, or temptation visits us without exciting His notice and loving sympathy. In all the whole wide earth there is not one spot so lonely, one heart so darkened, as to escape those eyes. Oh for the perfect confidence which will allow Him to act! It is for lack of this that we remain unhelped, and spend our days in the midst of wars and tumults.

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[What God Sees](#)

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

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Chronicles 16:7–9

Early in the morning, I quietly pad past a family-room window overlooking a wilderness area behind our house. Often, I notice a hawk or owl perched in a tree, keeping watch over the area. One morning I was surprised to find a bald eagle boldly balanced on a high branch, surveying the terrain as if the entire expanse belonged to him. Likely he was watching for “breakfast.” His all-inclusive gaze seemed regal.

In 2 Chronicles 16, Hanani the seer (God’s prophet) informed a king that his actions were under a royal gaze. He told Asa, king of Judah, “You relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God” (v. 7). Then Hanani explained, “The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (v. 9). Because of Asa’s misplaced dependence, he would always be at war.

Reading these words, we might get the false sense that God watches our every move so He can pounce on us like a bird of prey. But Hanani’s words focus on the positive. His point is that our God continually watches and waits for us to call on Him when we’re in need.

Like my backyard bald eagle, how might God’s eyes be roaming our world—even now—looking to find faithfulness in you and me? How might He provide the hope and help we need? By: Elisa Morgan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Why is it vital for you to regularly look to God for direction and guidance? How does it encourage you to know that God awaits your calls for help?

O God, may You strengthen our hearts that we might be fully committed to You.

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### From God's Viewpoint

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. —2 Chronicles 16:9

[Astronaut Jack Lousma](#) described how earth looks from space. He wrote: "With the naked eye we could see freeways, airports, and cities . . . , white clouds and the snow on the mountains. We could see the green-and-brown patchwork of the farmers' fields and the beautifully painted deserts. . . . When we were over Chicago, we could see most of Hudson Bay . . . , Washington, DC, and Baltimore. We could see two-thirds of the way down the Mississippi River and out to Denver."

What intrigues me about this amazing out-of-this-world vantage point is its vast range yet intricate detail. It reminds me of God's perspective of His universe and of the inner world of each of His children. The Bible says that the "eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth" (2 Chronicles 16:9). Even more striking is the fact that He knows all about us—even our secret thoughts! (Psalm 139:1-4).

Two conclusions can be drawn from these verses. We can never drift outside the range of His loving care, and we can never hide from His holiness. This both reassures us and unsettles us, for it's a love that never lets us go, nor does it let us get away with any wrong. And there is no greater love than that. —Dennis De Haan

We cannot fully know God's greatness,  
Wisdom, power, and care;  
But it's enough to know that He  
In love hears every prayer.  
—Hess

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### A Lock Of Hair

The Lord . . . [shows] Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. —2 Chronicles 16:9

After his return from the moon, Neil Armstrong was often plagued by the media. Seeking greater privacy, he moved his family into a small town. But notoriety was a nuisance even there. Armstrong’s barber found out that people would pay good money to get a lock of his hair. So after giving the space hero several haircuts, he sold the clippings to a buyer for \$3,000! Armstrong was shocked at the barber’s opportunism.

The Scriptures tell of another story of disloyalty and a haircut. As a symbol of God’s calling of Samson as a Nazirite, he was never

to cut his hair (Judg. 13:5). When the Spirit of God came upon him, he was given super-human strength over his enemies (15:14). Wanting to overpower him, the Philistines hired Delilah, a woman who had a relationship with him, to find out the secret of that strength. He foolishly told her that his power would be gone if his hair were cut. She lulled him to sleep and had him shorn (2Ch 16:5,19).

Greed can drive us to be disloyal to others and to God, causing us to make sinful choices. Our desire should be to exhibit a heart that is fully committed to love the Lord and others. He shows “Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him” (2 Chron. 16:9). by Dennis Fisher (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

O Lord, may my heart be loyal to You  
In all that I say and all that I do;  
When a trusted person is not a true friend,  
I know that on You I can always depend.

—Hess

Loyalty is the test of true love.

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### **Not a Simple Story**

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.  
2 Chronicles 16:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Chronicles 16:7–14

Life seems straightforward in the laws of the Old Testament. Obey God and get blessed. Disobey Him and expect trouble. It's a satisfying theology. But is it that simple?

King Asa's story seems to fit the pattern. He led his people away from false gods and his kingdom thrived (2 Chron. 15:1–19). Then late in his reign, he depended on himself instead of God (2Ch 16:2–7) and the rest of his life was marked by war and illness (2Ch 16:12).

It's easy to look at that story and draw a simple conclusion. But when the prophet Hanani warned Asa, he said that God will “strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (16:9). Why do our hearts need strengthening? Because doing the right thing may require courage and perseverance.

Job got the starring role in a cosmic tragedy. His crime? “He [was] blameless and upright” (Job 1:8). Joseph, falsely accused of attempted rape, languished in prison for years—to serve God's good purposes (Gen. 39:19–41:1). And Jeremiah was beaten and put in stocks (Jer. 20:2). What was the prophet's offense? Telling the truth to rebellious people (Jer 26:15).

Life is not simple, and God's ways are not our ways. Making the right decision may come at a cost. But in God's eternal plan, His blessings arrive in due time. By: Tim Gustafson

Lord, thank You for the examples of courage and obedience in Your Word. Help us learn from their mistakes and from their wise choices, as we make our choice to serve You.

God helps those who depend on Him.

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### **To Show His Strength**

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro . . . , to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.  
—2 Chronicles 16:9

Although it's God's desire to reveal His power to us, we seldom give Him the chance.

We're like the accountant who was told by his boss to falsify company records. Afraid of being fired, he chose to comply—even though as a believer in Christ he knew he was lying and breaking the law. Worse than being out of a job, he ended up in jail. He missed the opportunity to trust God and give Him a chance to show His power.

I'm afraid we're not much different. We're like King Asa, a good king who foolishly chose to make a treaty with Ben-Hadad rather than trust God. Asa had reason to worry—Judah was at war with Israel. But Hanani the prophet told Asa, “Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped” (2 Chr. 16:7). As a result, the rest of Asa's reign was plagued by war (1 Ki. 15:16).

God continues to show Himself strong to those who remain loyal to Him. Whenever we rely on a crooked boss or a clever scheme or a pack of lies, we are headed for trouble. But if we stay true to God when we're under fire, we give Him the opportunity to show us His power. by David C. Egener (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

In God we trust, let others trust their rulers,  
We trust in God to save us from alarm;  
Like broken reeds, the works of man will fail us,  
Our God alone can keep us from all harm.  
—Smith

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## **BENEFICIAL POWER**

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro . . . , to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.  
—2 Chronicles 16:9

Boxing and strong-man competitions have a unique aspect to them. In the events, the athletes compete individually to demonstrate their superior strength. It's like arm wrestling—you do it to prove that you are the strongest person in the room.

One aspect of God's glory is His almighty power. But how does He show His strength? He doesn't do it by rearranging the galaxies before our very eyes, changing the colour of the sun at a whim or freezing a lightning bolt. Instead, in His love and compassion for needy people like ourselves, God has chosen to "show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chron. 16:9).

And this happens throughout Scripture. From the dividing of the Red Sea, to the provision of bread in the wilderness; from the miraculous virgin birth ultimately to the power of the resurrection—our Almighty God has chosen to demonstrate His strength to bless, preserve and protect His people.

Be assured that He delights in showing Himself strong in the challenges of our life. And when He proves His power on our behalf, let's remember to give Him the glory! Joe Stowell (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

ALL OF GOD'S PROMISES ARE BACKED BY HIS WISDOM, LOVE AND POWER.

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## **The Eye Of God**

The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. —2 Chronicles 16:9

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 16:7-14

The Hubble Space Telescope has taken photos of the Helix Nebula. Some astronomers describe it as "a trillion-mile-long tunnel of glowing gases." At its center is a dying star that has ejected dust and gas stretching toward its outer rim. Remarkable photos of it look like the blue iris of a human eye complete with eyelids. Because of this, some have called it the "Eye of God."

Although this nebula is not literally the eye of God, the Scriptures do talk about God's gaze on our lives. The prophet Hanani said, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chron. 16:9).

This proclamation of God's all-seeing eye was given in response to King Asa's reliance upon another ruler for military security. Asa seemed to have forgotten that it was the Lord God, not mere soldiers, who had given him past victories over his enemies (14:11-12). This spiritual disloyalty did not escape the notice of God, who seeks to pour out blessing on acts of obedience to Him.

Although we cannot see the eyes of God, we can be assured that He sees us. His desire is to show Himself strong to those who are loyal to Him with their whole heart. By: Dennis Fisher (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Precious promise God hath given  
To the weary passerby,  
On the way from earth to heaven,  
"I will guide thee with Mine eye."

—Niles

To know that God sees us brings both conviction and comfort.

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**Streams in the Desert** - GOD is looking for a man, or woman, whose heart will be always set on Him, and who will trust Him for all He desires to do. God is eager to work more mightily now than He ever has through any soul. The clock of the centuries points to the eleventh hour.

“The world is waiting yet to see what God can do through a consecrated soul.” Not the world alone, but God Himself is waiting for one, who will be more fully devoted to Him than any who have ever lived; who will be willing to be nothing that Christ may be all; who will grasp God’s own purposes; and taking His humility and His faith, His love and His power, will, without hindering, continue to let God do exploits.—C. H. P.

“There is no limit to what God can do with a man, providing he will not touch the glory.”

In an address given to ministers and workers after his ninetieth birthday, George Mueller spoke thus of himself: “I was converted in November, 1825, but I only came into the full surrender of the heart four years later, in July, 1829. The love of money was gone, the love of place was gone, the love of position was gone, the love of worldly pleasures and engagements was gone. God, God alone became my portion. I found my all in Him; I wanted nothing else. And by the grace of God this has remained, and has made me a happy man, an exceedingly happy man, and it led me to care only about the things of God. I ask affectionately, my beloved brethren, have you fully surrendered the heart to God, or is there this thing or that thing with which you are taken up irrespective of God? I read a little of the Scriptures before, but preferred other books; but since that time the revelation He has made of Himself has become unspeakably blessed to me, and I can say from my heart, God is an infinitely lovely Being. Oh, be not satisfied until in your own inmost soul you can say, God is an infinitely lovely Being!”—Selected.

I pray to God this day to make me an extraordinary Christian.—Whitefield.

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### [Ham and Eggs](#)

The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.  
2 Chronicles 16:9

Today’s Scripture: 2 Chronicles 16:1–9

In the fable of the chicken and the pig, the two animals discuss opening a restaurant together. As they plan their menu, the chicken suggests they serve ham and eggs. The pig swiftly objects saying, “No thanks. I’d be committed, but you would only be involved.”

Although the pig didn’t care to put himself on the platter, his understanding of commitment is instructive to me as I learn to better follow God with my whole heart.

To protect his kingdom, Asa, king of Judah, sought to break up a treaty between the kings of Israel and Aram. To accomplish this, he sent personal treasure along with “silver and gold out of the treasuries of the Lord’s temple” to secure favor with Ben-Hadad, the king of Aram (2 Chron. 16:2). Ben-Hadad agreed and their joint forces repelled Israel.

But God’s prophet Hanani called Asa foolish for relying on human help instead of God who had delivered other enemies into their hands. Hanani asserted, “The eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him” (v. 9).

As we face our own battles and challenges, let’s remember that God is our best ally. He strengthens us when we’re willing to “serve up” a whole-hearted commitment to Him. By: Kirsten Holmberg (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord, I want to rely on You more fully. Sometimes I see only what is around me. Please help me to look up and to trust You more.

When we are abandoned to God, He works through us all the time.

Oswald Chambers

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### **C H Spurgeon - [A lesson from the life of king Asa \(full sermon\)](#)**

‘Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.’ 2 Chronicles 16:9

I may be speaking as God’s mouth to some of you who are now entering upon a testing time, a trouble in the family, a trial in

business, or a difficulty in reference to a contemplated marriage, and you are asking, 'What course shall I take?' You know what a man of the world would do, and it has been suggested to you that such a course is the right one for you to follow. My dear brother, remember that you are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world; mind you act accordingly. If you are a worldly man and do as worldly men do, then I must leave you, for 'them that are without God judgeth'. But if you are a man of God and an heir of heaven, I beseech you, do not follow custom, or do a wrong thing because others would do it, or do a little evil for the sake of a great good, but in your confidence possess your soul, and abide faithful to conscience and to the eternal law of rectitude. Let others do as they please, but as for you, set the Lord always before you, and let integrity and uprightness preserve you. Ask the Lord to help you. Is it not written that he 'will with the temptation also make a way to escape'? 'Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.' Do not put forth your hand to iniquity. You may, in order to help yourself, do in five minutes what you cannot undo in fifty years, and you may bring upon yourself a lifelong series of trials by one single unbelieving action. Beware of relying on Egypt and sending for help to Assyria, for these will distress you, but not help you. Cry, 'Lord, Increase our faith.' That is what you greatly need in the trying hour.

FOR MEDITATION: (Our Own Hymn Book no.668 v.1—Mary Bowly, 1847)

'Lord, through the desert drear and wide  
Our erring footsteps need a guide;  
Keep us, oh keep us near Thy side.  
Let us not fall. Let us not fall.'

## 2 Chronicles 16:10 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.

- wroth (KJV): 2Ch 25:16 26:19 2Sa 12:13 24:10-14 Ps 141:5 Pr 9:7-9
- put him (KJV): 2Ch 18:26 Jer 20:2 29:26 Mt 14:3,4 Lu 3:20 Ac 16:23,24
- oppressed (KJV): Heb. crushed, Job 20:19 \*marg: Isa 51:23 Jer 51:34 La 3:34
- the same time (KJV): 2Sa 11:4 12:31

**Then** - This time sensitive word should always get your attention for it show progression in a narrative and at times shows sequence if a prophecy.

**Asa was angry with the seer** - Why is Asa really angry? What does a prophet speak? The prophet speaks for God, so in effect Asa is showing his contempt for God's word! Amazing hubris! But when you are deceived by sin, by definition you don't even know you are deceived!

**and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this** - Oh, that horrible internal "demon" of pride! If Asa cannot stop the prophet's voice, he will put him in prison!

**Utley** It is always dangerous to speak to power (ED: GOD'S PROPHET!) But for Asa, who started so well (cf. 2 Chr. 14:2,17), like so many of the Israelite kings, his reign ended poorly. This is the first recorded royal action against YHWH's spokesman. Other persecution of prophets followed. (1) Micaiah, son of Imla – 2 Chr. 18:4-27 (2) Zechariah, son of Jehoiada – 2 Chr. 24:20-22 (3) characteristics of the covenant people – Matt. 5:12 (4) John the Baptist by Herod – Mark 6:14-29. Surprisingly, Kings omits the account. Usually most of the negative things about the kings of Judah are in Kings but omitted in Chronicles. This is just the reverse!

**And Asa oppressed (ratsats) some of the people at the same time**- While the text does not say for certain, it is possible that it was those who supported Hanani as a true prophet. The Septuagint uses **lumaino** a strong verb to translate **oppressed (ratsats)**, this verb meaning to cause harm to, injure, damage, spoil, ruin, destroy. Asa had turned his back on Yahweh and now begins lashing out at men. God had given Asa over to the lusts of his flesh, in this case an evil desire to inflict punishment on others, a righteous prophet and likely righteous Hebrews who reacted to Asa's foolish decision to trust gold, not God.

Asa's heart was right in that he consistently loved God. Nevertheless, like David, his obedience lapsed. He trusted in a foreign alliance and later in physicians more than in Yahweh. This resulted in his defeat and death. "Asa, then, has done a complete volte-face [about-face, change of policy] from his earlier faithfulness. It is as if we meet two altogether different Asas. He appeared first in the strength of God-reliance, now in the weakness of selfreliance." [McConville] Rather than confessing his guilt, Asa became angry and oppressed his own kingdom. It may have looked for a while as if Asa was the Son of David who would perfectly trust and obey God. Unfortunately he did not remain faithful.

**ESV Study Bible (BORROW)** - Asa's response is the first act of persecution of a prophet by a king recorded in the OT (see 18:26; 24:21; 25:16; 36:16). Put him in the stocks calls to mind the persecution of Jeremiah (Jer. 20:2).



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**Oppressed** (crushed)(07533) [ratsats](#) literally means to crush (as a skull - Jdg 9:53), but most of the uses are figurative of crushing in the sense of oppression (Dt 28:33, Jdg 10:8), as in the exercising of authority or power in a burdensome, cruel, or unjust manner. Of King Asa oppressing his own people (2 Chr 16:10) Refers to nation of Egypt as a crushed reed (2 Ki 18:21, Isa 36:6). The verb ratsats conveys the basic meaning "to crush," "to oppress" or "to break into pieces." Used literally, this verb illustrates the breaking of a golden bowl and well wheel (Ecc. 12:6).

Ratsats is translated in the Septuagint in Jdg 10:8 with the Greek verb thlao which means to break a seal (which in this case is not a natural, purposeful act, but one greatly to be regretted, since the seal appears as a means of protection, whose destruction is followed by dire consequences) Hs 8, 6, 3. It means to crush, to bruise (of persons) 2 Sa 22,39; to break (down) (of things) 2 Ki18,21; to oppress as in Jgs 10,8.

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## 2 Chronicles 16:11 Now, the acts of Asa from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

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- the acts of Asa (KJV): 2Ch 9:29 12:15 20:34 26:22
- Judah (KJV): 2Ch 25:26 27:7 32:32 34:18 35:27 1Ki 15:23

### Related Passages:

2Ch 12:15 Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, according to genealogical enrollment? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.

2Ch 13:22; Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways and his words are written in the treatise of the prophet Iddo.

1 Kings 14:19 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

### Now, the acts of Asa from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

**Ron Daniel** - 16:11-14 He Did Not Seek The Lord, But The Physicians. Three years later, King Asa came to his end. He never turned back to the Lord, but continued to trust in man. This is evident when we read,

2Chr. 16:12 ...Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.

Understand, this is not a slam against doctors. The Apostle Paul called Luke,

Col. 4:14 ...the beloved physician...

And Jesus acknowledged people's need for doctors when He said,

Mark 2:17 ..."It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick..."

However, when a believer trusts in the doctors instead of the Lord, they are in danger. "No thanks, God. My doc's got this one covered." And it seems the more severe the disease, the less people trust prayer. But here, we see the opposite being presented as the truth: "His disease was severe, but he STILL didn't seek God." Saints, who are we trusting in? The other day, someone was telling me about the latest miracle product, the hottest, newest cure-all. They said, "I've gotten so bold, I'm telling everyone about this stuff!" It's amazing to me how most Christians can't be bold enough to say to a sick friend,

James 5:14-15 Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick...

And yet, those same Christians have no problem evangelizing the latest herb or technique! This has a very spiritual application for us as well. When you're diseased in the feet, it means that you can't walk well. Our Christian walk is vital for our lives. If your walk is going poorly, who are you going to put your trust in? The latest book? The latest wind of doctrine? Or are you going to seek the Lord? The more severe the disease, the more clearly you need to seek Him.

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**2 Chronicles 16:12 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.**

- diseased (KJV): Mt 7:2 Lu 6:37,38 Rev 3:19
- in his disease (KJV): 2Ch 16:9 28:22 1Ch 10:14 Jer 17:5
- physicians (KJV): Ge 50:2 Job 13:4 Jer 8:22 Mt 9:12 Mk 2:17 5:26 Col 4:14

## SECOND BAD SEEKING

**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** - Severe disease in his feet could have been gangrene, which is common with diabetics and for which the orthopedic surgeon has to perform an amputation lest it spread to the rest of the leg and then the body and ultimately cause death. This miserable way of dying could indeed have been Asa's tragic fate! For a second time in this chapter when adversity struck Asa, he turned away from Yahweh and sought men's wisdom. The chronicler is not condemning physicians (of which this writer is one), but just Asa's faith failure, his failure to lean on Yahweh.

**THOUGHT** - There is a lesson here. When we begin to backslide and turn away from God, it becomes easier to turn away from Him the next time we experience adversity. And be assured that there will be a NEXT TIME of adversity, because the long arm of the Lord will discipline us in an attempt to bring us back to our senses (Hebrews 12:5-10+). It did not work out well with Asa. Will it work out well for you (ME)? Remember the final "fruit" of divine discipline is "the peaceful fruit of righteousness." (Hebrews 12:11+) Asa was reaping the rotten fruit of unrighteousness! (cf Gal 6:7-8+). The following could have been "Asa's song"...

Sin will take you further than you ever wanted to stray!  
Cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay!  
Keep you longer than you ever thought you would stay!

It is amazing that Asa is the same man who had "commanded Judah to **seek the LORD God of their fathers**" (2Ch 14:4, cf 2Ch 14:7). And in 2Ch 15:12 under Asa's leadership "They entered into the covenant to **seek the LORD God of their fathers** with all their heart and soul." If Asa had been reading the Law of the LORD as he had been instructed in Dt 17:18-19, he would have run across a passage that would have aided him in his present illness, for in Ex 15:26+ Yahweh declares "I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, **the LORD, am your healer.**" See the study of this great Name of Yahweh - [Jehovah Rapha: \(Jehovah Rophe\) The LORD our Healer](#). As an aside Asa seems to have forgotten the healing of the land promised in 2Ch 7:14+.

**NIV Study Bible (BORROW)** - For other examples of disease as punishment for sin see 2Ch 21:16-20; 26:16-23; Ac 12:23. Cf. 2Ki 15:5. Contrast King Hezekiah (Isa 38); cf. Jer 17:5-8; Jas 5:14-16.

**Spurgeon** - It is not wrong to send for physicians, it is quite right; but it is very wrong to send for physicians in place of crying to God, thus putting the human agency before the divine; besides, it is very probable that these physicians were only heathenish conjurers, necromancers, and pretenders to magical arts, and could not be consulted without implicating the patient in their evil practices.

**Believer's Study Bible** According to the most likely reconstruction of the chronology of the kings of Judah and Israel, Asa reigned from 911 to 870 B.C. In his thirty-ninth year (873 B.C.), when he contracted a foot disease, he appointed his son Jehoshaphat as coregent with him, the first of several coregencies in Judah (cf. 2 Ki 1:17). Jehoshaphat's 25-year rule is counted from this point (cf. 1 Ki 22:41-42).

**Iain Duguid**: Asa's failure to seek God in his disease does not necessarily negate the value of physicians in general but rather judges his reliance on them alone and his failure to see that God ultimately is the source of all healing. A comparison can be seen in the earlier recounting of military defensive preparedness within an overall life of seeking and relying on God (2 Chronicles 14). Elsewhere, Scripture includes both frequent references to God as the one who "heals" (Gen. 20:17; Ex. 15:26; Deut. 32:39; Pss. 6:2; 30:2; etc.) and positive instances of help from physicians (e.g., Isa. 38:21; Jer. 8:22; Col. 4:14). Further, illness may have a spiritual cause (1 Cor. 11:30), and, increasingly, modern medicine is becoming aware of spiritual factors in health and healing. The account of Asa points to the God who calls for people to "seek" and "rely on" him in all of life

**Jamieson**: The physicians that Asa sought (v. 12) were most probably Egyptian physicians, who were anciently in high repute at foreign courts, and who pretended to expel diseases by charms, incantations, and mystic arts. Asa's fault consisted in his trusting to such physicians, while he neglected to supplicate the aid and blessing of God.

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## Norman Geisler - 2 CHRONICLES 16:12—Does this text teach that king Asa's death resulted from seeking physicians rather than the Lord?

**MISINTERPRETATION:** According to [Christian Science](#), this passage teaches that King Asa's death was a consequence of his seeking the aid of physicians, rather than from the Lord (Eddy, 245). From this they infer that we too should refrain from drugs and medical assistance, even in time of serious illness.

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** Such an inference is not necessary in this context, and it is contrary to other passages of Scripture. Several considerations make this apparent.

The verse does not say it is wrong to seek the aid of a physician but to do this instead of seeking the Lord. God wants to be put first (cf. Matt. 6:33; Col. 1:18). As Jeremiah put it, "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD" (Jer. 17:5).

Both the Old and New Testaments recommend the use of medicine. Isaiah the prophet was commanded to "prepare a poultice of figs" for a boil. This poultice was applied to the boil, and he recovered (2 Kings 20:7). And Paul told Timothy, "Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses" (1 Tim. 5:23 NIV).

Finally, the fact that the apostle Paul was afflicted with an infirmity (Gal. 4:13; cf. 2 Cor. 12:7) may be the reason he often traveled with Dr. Luke (see Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:11). Nowhere does the Bible condemn going to a physician or taking medicine. Even Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" (Matt. 9:12 NIV). The Bible simply insists that we should seek God first to determine whether the sickness is sent by him. ([When Cultists Ask](#))

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## John Kitto - Physicians—I Kings 15:23; II Chronicles 16:12

Asa was in his latter days afflicted with "a disease in his feet," which is generally supposed to have been the gout. Here, again, the king incurs some blame for having resorted to "the physicians instead of relying upon God." We cannot suppose that he was blameworthy for taking proper means for his recovery, but he was for relying upon them instead of upon the Lord's blessing upon the means they employed. It was therefore a new manifestation of that lapse of faith, to which he had unhappily become too prone. Much had been given to him—even large capacities of faith—and much more therefore was required from him than from men less favored. It may have been something even worse. It is even probable that the "physicians" may have been foreigners and idolaters, whose practice consisted much in superstitious arts and idolatrous rites, instead of the priests, or rather Levites, in whose hands the medical practice of the Jews chiefly rested. In this case his offence was the same in kind as that of the king of Israel (Jehoram) in the next generation, who sent to Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, respecting the disease with which he was afflicted, and who incurred thereby a dreadful rebuke for not having rather consulted the God of Israel. This shows, that since diseases were considered the immediate act of God, so was also the cure; and it was usual to ascertain his will through the priests or prophets. It was also sought to propitiate Him by vows, by prayers, and by sacrifices. Under the same views as to the cause of the disease, the heathen resorted to their gods, and sought to will their favor or to pacify them by various strange, superstitious, and often brutal rites. In any case, certainly, under such a state of things, to apply to a foreign physician was but an indirect mode of application to the god he served.

We will take this opportunity of stating a few particulars respecting the state of medicine among the ancient Hebrews.

There have been some curious speculations among them as to the medical knowledge of Adam—founded on the idea that the knowledge of all creatures, implied in his bestowal of appropriate names upon them, must have comprised a knowledge of their medicinal properties and uses. The mere conjecture shows the extent to which animal substances were applied in the materia medica of the Hebrews. In this age, where more potent medicinal agents have been found, it is hard to conceive the extent to which the parts of animals were used, not only by the ancients, but, until a comparatively recent date, by the moderns. Indeed, most of the practices as to applications of animal simples, which, where found in use among our peasantry, are cited, under such headings as "Folk-Lore," as rural superstitions, are often little other than remnants of ancient and legitimate medical practice.

The point is curious; and in proof of it we might quote largely from a work bearing the date of 1664, which sets forth the medical uses of most animals, citing ancient and medical authorities for most of the statements—including Jewish medical writers.<sup>545</sup> We wish our space allowed quotation from this book; but can only give a sample or two. The first article is "Ape,"—in which, among other things, we are told "an ape eaten by a lion, cureth his diseases"—a fact we most potently believe, having often noted a lion to seem greatly refreshed after demolishing an ape. Under "Asse" we are told, among other delectable matter, that "a little of the water being drunke, of which the cow or asse hath drunke, doth effectually help the headach." "The dryed brain of an asse, being drunke daily in water and honey, helpeth the epilepsie in 30 daies."—"The heart of a black male asse, being eaten with bread, helpeth the falling sicknesse."—"The gall doth asswage the signes of abscesses."—"The flesh helpeth against the paine of the back-bone and hipps.

The marrow anointed cureth the gout, and easeth the paine. The ashes of the hoofes burned help the falling sickness. The dung mixed with the yolk of an egge, and applied to the forehead, stoppeth the fluxe of blood, and, with a bull's gall, curlerth the haire." Of the mouse it is said,—“The flesh causeth oblivion. A mouse dissected and applied draweth out reeds, darts, and other things that stick in the flesh. Being eaten by children, when rosted, they dry up their spittle. The water in which they have been boiled helpeth against the quinsey. The ashes, with honey, used ten dayes, clear the eyes. The head, worne in a cloth, helpeth the headache and epilepsy. The liver, rosted in the new of the moon, trieth the epilepsie. The brain, being steeped in wine and applied to the forehead, helpeth the headach. The gall, with vinegar, dropped into the eare, bringeth out live creatures in the eare. The dung, given in any liquour, helpeth the colick,” and is further stated to be good, as are other of its parts and products, for a variety of other uses, which must have rendered this little creature formerly of much more estimation in public opinion than it now bears.

The first mention of physicians in Scripture is in the time of Joseph, and with reference to Egypt, which may be regarded as the western cradle of this and many other ancient sciences and arts. These physicians were those who embalmed Jacob; and were, therefore, rather embalmers than physicians, whose profession is to cure the living, not to embalm the dead. Nevertheless, we know from other sources that the Egyptians had early made great progress in the study of medicine, and acquired high reputation; so that the aid of Egyptian physicians was much sought for even in foreign lands. Indeed, it is far from unlikely that the physicians whose skill Asa so unwisely relied on were of Egypt. It was believed that they had a knowledge of materia medica more extensive than any other men by whom medical science was cultivated, and that in this their great strength lay. Indeed, there is clear enough allusion to this in one of the prophets, who exclaims, “O, virgin daughter of Egypt, in vain shalt thou use many medicines, for thou shalt not be cured.” Jeremiah 46:11.

No one can doubt that the Hebrews must have brought some considerable portion of this knowledge of medicine with them from Egypt. The proof of the knowledge actually possessed is strikingly manifested in the indication of the characters by which the priest was to recognize the leprosy, as well as of the sanitary measures to be taken, and the means of cure to be adopted. All this may be seen in Leviticus 13; and it suffices to observe, that modern physicians,<sup>546</sup> who have given attention to the subject, have only found occasion to attest the exact accuracy of these indications. The knowledge thus possessed by, and required from the priests, sufficiently indicates that medicine was in all essential respects a sacred pursuit, and was, as such, in the hands of the Levitical priesthood, whose learned leisure and dispersion through the country, as well as their superior education, rendered them in these remote ages the best and fittest depositaries of medical science. Indeed, nothing is more certain than the essential identity among all ancient nations of the professions—religion, law, and medicine, which the progress of civilization has separated into three. Indeed, in our own country even, the profession of the law still bears the outward and visible marks of its ancient connection with religion; and the time is not distant when every parish priest was expected to possess some knowledge of medicine.

Among the Hebrews, leprosy, and all other diseases, were deemed to be the immediate effect of the omnipotence of God. They were sent for punishment or fatherly correction to those who had offended Him or incurred His rebuke; and they were cured when they had appeased Him by their contrition and their prayers, or when the object of their chastening had been accomplished. This true theory of disease and cure among the Hebrews will, in its application, throw much light upon all the passages which more or less bear upon the subject.

As we shall, in the Illustrations of the New Testament, have to take up the further developments of a subject which is most conspicuously produced in that portion of Divine revelation, we here limit our view, as much as possible, to the state of the matter before Christ. For the elucidation of this, there is a most remarkable passage in the Apocrypha, which has been much overlooked in the consideration of the question. It is in Ecclesiasticus; and as the apocryphal books are not now generally accessible, we give it entire below.<sup>547</sup>

It appears to us that this passage very exactly defines the position of the physician. It allows him honor, and gives due weight to his skill and the real use of the means he employs, but admirably refers all to God. The skill of the physician is His; the medicaments are His; and the cure is His. Even the skill of the physician is proportioned to the faculty he possesses of rendering God honor, by his knowledge and employment of the healing properties which he has imparted to various productions of the earth. In the last clause there is, however, something which would be regarded as a sarcasm on the profession if it were met with in a modern writing:—“He that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hands of the physician!”

## **2 Chronicles 16:13 So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign.**

- slept (KJV): 1Ki 15:24

**So Asa slept with his fathers, having died in the forty-first year of his reign**- He reigned 912-871. For 36 years Yahweh reigned over Asa, but for 5 years Asa reigned over Asa!

**Iain Duguid**:: Here have been recounted, in quick succession, three examples of Asa's not "relying on" or "seeking" the Lord, which led to judgment: (1) seeking aid from Ben-hadad, resulting in failure to defeat Ben-hadad and in continuing "wars" instead; (2) anger at the prophet's message, leading to disease; and (3) failure "even in his disease [to] seek the Lord," leading to death. The ending, however, is positive, as the Chronicler adds details of burial rites that give him "honor." In fact, he is the only king for whom such memorial "fire" and spices are specifically mentioned (generic mention in 21:19 and Jer. 34:5). It seems that Asa's experience of God's grace had diminished but not been destroyed.

**2 Chronicles 16:14** 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.

- his own sepulchres (KJV): 2Ch 35:24 Isa 22:16 Joh 19:41,42
- made (KJV): Heb. digged
- sweet odours (KJV): Ge 50:2 Mk 16:1 Joh 19:39,40
- the apothecaries' art (KJV): Ex 30:25-37 Ec 10:1
- a very great (KJV): 2Ch 21:19 Jer 34:5

#### Related Passage:

Jeremiah 34:5 'You will die in peace; and as spices were burned for your fathers, the former kings who were before you, so they will burn spices for you; and they will lament for you, "Alas, lord!"' For I have spoken the word," declares the LORD.

**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** See [SPECIAL TOPIC: BURIAL SPICES](#).

**And they made a very great fire for him** - This is not a reference to cremation! [Bob Utley](#) observes that "There is no parallel in 1 Kgs. 15:23-24. This appears to be some kind of memorial (cf. 2 Chr. 21:19; Jer. 34:5) and not [CREMATION](#). The use of "spices" strongly implies a burial. In 2Ch 21:9 [Jehoram](#) was not honored by fire because of his dishonorable reign as king.

#### Related Resources:

- Discussion of Death and Funeral Rites - BORROW [Ancient Israel by Roland de Vaux](#)
- [What does the Bible say about cremation? Should Christians be cremated? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Raymond Dillard**: The fire accompanying his burial was not cremation, but rather a memorial and honorific rite customarily attending the death of kings (21:19; Jer 34:5).

**G Campbell Morgan** - "It is the record of a faulty life, but one in which the deepest thing, that of desire, was right; and so it is the record of a life, the influence of which was a blessing rather than a curse. It is a revealing story."

**Frederick Mabie**: A funeral pyre would be a statement of respect and honor for the deceased and was typically only available for those of high stature (cf. Jer 34:4-5). The withholding of honor is clearly connected to the absence of a funerary pyre for Jehoram (cf. 2Ch 21:19). Such fires were accompanied by spices and ointments as noted here and could also be seen as an aspect of purification of the dead, as reflected in the death customs of Egypt and Assyria. The notation that Asa had "cut out for himself" a tomb is unique in terms of regnal death notices in Chronicles.

**Paul Apple - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS**: 1) What caused such a dramatic reversal in Asa's reign? 2) What are some of the lessons about leadership from these three chapters? 3) How do we go about daily seeking the Lord? 4) When we turn for help to physicians, how can we make sure that we are still relying ultimately on the Lord?

#### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Andrew Hill**: The Chronicles are all about the relevance of earlier Israelite history for the writer's generation. That relevance is demonstrated by the example of God's people of a bygone era and includes especially the relevance of obedience to God's Word, the relevance of prayer to the God of heaven, and the relevance of proper worship at Yahweh's temple. For the Chronicler, the applicability of earlier Israelite history for postexilic Judah includes the currency of the prophetic voice for the spiritual and moral well-being of God's people, despite the fact that the voice of God's prophets and prophetesses has not been heard for perhaps a century or more by the time the Chronicler retells the story of Israel's kingship. Second Chronicles 14:2 – 16:14, summarizing the

reign of Asa, points toward the contemporary significance of the larger literary unit (10:1 – 21:3) by underscoring the perpetual relevance of seeking help from the Lord (20:4).

**Mark Boda:** To explain these negative elements, the Chronicler expanded his account and introduced a carefully articulated chronological framework. This framework, which validates the Chronicler's retribution, describes a land at peace for the first decade (14:1), a covenant renewal in the 15th year (15:10-12), and no war until the 35th year (15:19). Only in chapter 16 does the Chronicler finally introduce the negative elements in Asa's reign, a turn precipitated by the conflict with Baasha, which began in Asa's 36th year. As Dillard (1987:123) concludes, "The Chronicler has reshaped the account he found in Kings by elaborating and reinforcing the divine favor enjoyed by an obedient king and by making explicit the nature of the transgressions that led to his disease and death."

**Phil Winfield:** What can we learn about proper leadership?

- A good leader has a good sense of right and wrong.
- A good leader inspires people by example to do right.
- A good leader does not waste times of peace and prosperity. He prepares to protect his people.
- A good leader knows that he alone cannot lead the nation in war or peace times.
- A good leader stays vigilant about the rise of evil among his people
- A good leader does not make exceptions for family.
- A good leader doesn't become proud and self-confident.
- A good leader doesn't attack the bearer of bad news.
- A good leader doesn't forget where they came from.
- A good leader finishes well.

**August Konkell:** The Chronicler inserts a number of chronological notes into his account of Asa. They are designed to divide his reign into periods that show the consequences of his decisions (cf. 2 Chron 14:1; 15:10; 16:1, 12, 13). The Chronicler discounts the earlier battles with the north as having no consequence for the renewal of 15:8–19, though he makes mention of the cities taken from Ephraim (v. 8). The first years of Asa's reign were characterized by divine favor enjoyed by an obedient king. . . . Asa is the first example of efforts to bring about an extensive reform for worship at the temple in Jerusalem, efforts that extended into the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh (2 Chron 15:8-9). Many in Israel became loyal to Asa. Just a few verses later, his engagement in war with Baasha is reported (15:19 – 16:1). This passage, parallel to 1 Kings 16:17, comes like a bolt from the blue (Rainey 1997: 45). There is no obvious rationale for Baasha to fortify the border to control traffic to Judah. However, Baasha's fortification of Ramah makes a lot of sense alongside the Chronicler's information about the impact of Asa's reform activities in the north. Baasha had usurped the throne in the north, and to secure it he systematically exterminated the remaining members of the house of Jeroboam (1 Kings 15:27-29). This would have created considerable unrest in the Northern Kingdom, which gave Asa opportunity to extend his reforms into that area. Further, military conflict with the Philistines who were centered at Gibbethon when Baasha came to power (1 Kings 15:27), apparently continued: that territory seems to have remained unsettled until the end of Baasha's reign. Asa's victory over Zerah in Philistine territory and his successes in his border war with Baasha surely earned him a lot of respect with many in the north.

**Martin Selman:** Two themes provide the framework for Asa's reign. - The first is "relying" on God, indicated by the occurrence of the Hebrew verb *sa'an* five times in chapters 13-16 but nowhere else in Chronicles. Both Abijah and Asa offer examples for others to imitate (13:18; 14:11; 16:8), though unfortunately Asa did not end as he began (16:7). - The second theme, that of seeking God, is central to Asa's reign (the verb "to seek" occurs nine times). King and people both live out the principle of 15:2 (14:4, 7; 15:4), committing themselves to God by a covenant (15:12, 15). Again, however, Asa falls away from his previous good practice (16:12), potentially putting himself under the curse of his own covenant (15:13). A variety of other themes also bind the reign of Asa together. One of the most persistent is war and peace (or rest). Where humankind seems bent on making war (14:9-10; 15:5-6; 16:1, 4) God gives deliverance and peace (14:1, 5-7, 12-15; 15:15, 19) to those who put their trust in him, though he may send war as a punishment to those who look elsewhere for help (16:9). A related theme is that of strengthening the kingdom, both through fortifications (14:6-7; 16:6) and through inner strength (15:7-8; 16:9). Trust in God is also expressed through faithfulness to Yahwism, especially in a concern for the temple (15:8, 18) and an intolerance of the paraphernalia of Canaanite religion (14:2-5; 15:8, 16-18). A key feature is respect for the authority of the prophetic word. Two prophecies are prominent, one to which Asa responds with enthusiasm (15:1-8) and one which causes him great anger (16:7-10). The centerpiece of Asa's faithfulness, however, is undoubtedly the covenant made at a special assembly (15:10-15). This highpoint of Judah's national life so far is entered into by the whole people with heart and soul, and was accompanied by much sacrificial worship and rejoicing. There is, though, a reverse side to this in a covenant or treaty made between Asa and Ben-Hadad of Syria (16:2-3), whose unhappy consequences (16:7-12) replaced the blessings of the first covenant.

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