

2Chronicles 16:1 ¶ In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

In the 36th year of Asa's reign in Judah, Baasha, king of Israel, invaded Judah and built up Ramah, a town of Ephraim that bordered the land of Benjamin just a few miles north of Jerusalem. He strengthened it to provide a barrier to those who might want to go from Israel into Judah or leave Judah to come into Israel for any reason.

2Chronicles 16:2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

2Chronicles 16:3 *There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.*

Instead of seeking the LORD's help, the king took silver and gold out of the temple treasury and the palace and sent it to Damascus to Behadad, king of Syria. He reminded the king that a treaty existed between them that had been established by their fathers. He declared the silver and gold to be a payment for breaking his treaty with Baasha and making him quit bothering Asa.

2Chronicles 16:4 And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali.

2Chronicles 16:5 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard *it*, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

2Chronicles 16:6 Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.

Benhadad responded positively to Asa's request and sent his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon (on the border of Lebanon), Dan, Abelmaim and all the store cities of Naphtali. When Baasha heard about these attacks, he stopped all the work he was doing in Ramah and evidently left the city to go and defend his land. Asa and his troops then went to Ramah and carried away the building stones and timber that Baasha had been using. He used the materials to build up the cities of Geba and Mizpah that were also on the border between Judah and Israel.

The NIV Commentary adds this note: "...Ijon thus lay on a natural route south into Israel. Eight miles farther south, on the headwaters of the Jordan, was 'Abel Maim'; and four miles east of it lay 'Dan.' The Arameans, indeed, took 'all the store cities of Naphtali'—specified in 1 Kings as 'all Kinnereth,' meaning the plains on the northwest side of Galilee."

2Chronicles 16:7 ¶ And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not

relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

2Chronicles 16:8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

2Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them* whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.

2Chronicles 16:10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for *he was* in a rage with him because of this *thing*. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people the same time.

We meet yet another prophet that God uses to speak to Asa. Hanani is also the father of the prophet Jehu that God used to foretell the death of Baasha.

Hanani was sent to Asa with a message that he had displeased the LORD. He pointed out that he had chosen to rely on the king of Syria instead of on the LORD “thy God.” He reminded Asa how the LORD had given him the victory over the huge host of the Ethiopians and Lubims even though they were greatly outnumbered.

Hanani then reminded Asa of a very important truth—a truth just as important to the believer today. The LORD is always active and looking diligently throughout the world to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect toward Him, those who are in fellowship and at peace with Him because they trust in Him. Peace and trust go hand in hand as declared by the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 26:3 “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”

The prophet boldly told the king that he had acted foolishly, and he had been deprived of a great victory over Syria as well (because of the treaty between Benhadad and Baasha). He also told him that the rest of his reign would be plagued by war.

King Asa got angry at the prophet and put him in prison. He then proceeded to take out his anger on some of the people as well.

We learned in the previous chapter that Asa’s heart before the LORD was perfect, in fellowship with Him throughout his reign. Asa, however, was still human; he messed up. It had been 20 years since he had defeated the Ethiopians, and he must have gotten lax in maintaining a strong spiritual relationship with the LORD. His example serves as a warning to every believer. It’s easy to fall into thinking on a worldly level and taking the LORD’s blessings for granted. I think the reason Asa got so angry was because of pride—he didn’t want to admit he had done wrong, even though he knew he had. He took his anger out on the messenger because of his message and then proceeded to victimize other

innocents as well.

2Chronicles 16:11 And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

2Chronicles 16:12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease *was* exceeding *great*: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.

2Chronicles 16:13 And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

2Chronicles 16:14 And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds *of spices* prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him.

As the Chronicler closes his account on the life of Asa, he notes that more is written about him in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

During the 39th year of his reign, he got a very bad disease of the feet. Again, he chose to put his trust in the doctors before seeking the LORD's deliverance. How sad to see the reign of such an overall good king of Judah end on such a low note.

Verse 12 really stood out to me at one point in my scripture reading. It has been my guide throughout my life—much of which has been without insurance because of the expense. I always seek the LORD's help first; then, if I get desperate, I go to the doctor.

We are told that Asa died during the 41st year of his reign. He was buried in the grave he had made for himself in the city of David. They surrounded his dead body with fragrant odors and spices made by those who prepared and sold medicines. It is noted that they made a very great burning for him. The translations indicate that this was a great bonfire in his honor.