

2 Chronicles 16:1–9

- ¹ In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.
- ² Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying,
- ³ "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."
- ⁴ So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali.
- ⁵ Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work.
- ⁶ Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.
- ⁷ And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him:
"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 from your hand.
- ⁸ Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand.
- ⁹ For 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. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

God shows Himself Strong 2 Chronicles 16:7-9

INTRO:

Usually, I try to focus our attention upon one of God's great promises to help us anchor our new year properly. This passage may not be a promise so much as a reality about how God regulates our lives. Our text for today is a truth taken from the mouth of

a prophet to a king in the Old Testament. Yet, it reflects how our LORD works with those who are His.

We find here God's purpose in our lives. It is seen against the backdrop of Asa's entire life. ***“And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: ‘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 from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. For 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. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.’”*** 2 Chronicles 16:7-9

I. Who King Asa Was (2 Chronicles 14-15)

II. What Asa Did (2 Chronicles 16:1-6)

III. What God Said (2 Chronicles 16:7-9)

I. Who King Asa Was (2 Chronicles 14-15)

A. Our adventure begins with an overview of Asa's life. Asa started out very well. He was the son of Abiah, who was a Godly king. No doubt Asa had witnessed as a boy how the LORD God dwelt with his father and all Judah because Abijah faithfully served the LORD.

B. Not only did Asa have a Godly father, he also followed God in the early part of his life and reign as king. We know how the Ethiopians came against Asa with an army over three times as big as his army. Asa cried out to the Lord in faith and God performed a miracle and routed the Ethiopians before him.

C. After this Asa carried out many spiritual reforms in his kingdom to please the LORD his God. That is where 2 Chronicles 15 ends. However, Asa who began so well finished -poorly.

II. What Asa Did (2 Chronicles 16:1-6)

A. Baasha, King of Israel came down and fortified a city just to the north of Jerusalem. He like Jeroboam before him worried about all those who came to Jerusalem to serve the true and living God. This was an act of war.

B. How would Asa respond? We do not know all of Asa's options. We do know of two of the main ones.

1. Asa could have remembered what the LORD God had done for him in the past. How he had no human hope for victory, yet he threw himself upon the living God and the LORD delivered him from the problem.

2. He could choose a solution that did not depend upon God. He could decide to do wrong and bribe Ben-hadad, the idolatrous king of Syria, to break its treaty and attack Israel. This involved stealing from God to get enough to persuade the Syrian king. The advantage of this plan was, although there still was uncertainty about whether Ben-Hadad would be persuaded, he could imagine the results instead of having to trust God without a guarantee.

C. Asa chose option number two. It meant doing wrong, but Asa thought the ends justified the means. There is a principle here we need to talk about. So many in the Bible start out well and finish poorly precisely because, although it is easy to trust God in our youth, when we get older it is hard to trust God. It is not that God has become less trustworthy, it is more that we have more on our shoulders and we have decided that somehow we can do it better ourselves.

III. What God Said (2 Chronicles 16:7-9)

2 Chronicles 16:7-9 *“And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: ‘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 from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. For 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. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars.’”*

A. At last we come to our text. Asa came home glowing in triumph over his diplomatic triumph over Baasha, King of Israel. Suddenly, he is confronted by a prophet from the LORD. Hanani’s message is most disturbing.

B. First, the LORD confronted Asa’s faithlessness.

v.7 *“You have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God.”*

Asa’s lack of trust made this choice a sin.

C. Second, Asa and all Judah lost out on a great victory that made Asa’s diplomatic coup tiny in comparison.

vs.7-8 *“Therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand.”*

The army of Judah’s greatest enemy, Syria, would have been destroyed. Syria would be Judah’s enemy for decades. All of that pain, death, and destruction could have been avoided if Asa had trusted God.

D. Third, here is the great promise/principle Asa should have recognized and one that applies to all of us.

v.9 *“For 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.”*

Why does God do what He does in our lives? Why does God, from time to time, test us with trials which stretch our faith muscles? Here is the answer. God allows some tests to come into our lives in order that He can glorify Himself by showing Himself strong on our behalf.

1. What does it mean to have our hearts perfect toward Him? We know it cannot mean that we are without sin. That is an impossibility. It is that we choose to trust God even when we do not understand what the Lord is doing. Remember David’s resolve.

Psalms 56:3 (Amplified Bible) *“What time I am afraid, I will have confidence in and put my trust and reliance in You.”*

2. We need to make it a point to remember what God has done for us in the past so we are helped to trust Him in the future. God did this for Asa,

v.8 *“Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand.”*

We should make it a point each day to remember what God has done for us.

3. One more time I want to rehearse the Lord’s great promise to us,

Romans 8:28 *“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”*