

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 16

Asa's Last Years

In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah. ² Asa then took the silver and gold out of the treasuries of the LORD's temple and of his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. ³ "Let there be a treaty between me and you," he said, "as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me." ⁴ Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. They conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim ^a and all the store cities of Naphtali. ⁵ When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and abandoned his work. ⁶ Then King Asa brought all the men of Judah, and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using. With them he built up Geba and Mizpah. ⁷ At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. ⁸ Were not the Cushites ^b and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen ^c? Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand. ⁹ 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." ¹⁰ Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people. ¹¹ The events of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. ¹² In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians. ¹³ Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his fathers. ¹⁴ They buried him in the tomb that he had cut out for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bier covered with spices and various blended perfumes, and they made a huge fire in his honor.

Ch 16 The Chronicler makes a major addition at vv 7–10. He divides Asa's reign into good (14:1–15:19) and evil (ch 16). Both periods brought their appropriate rewards or punishments. (TLSB)

16:1–6 To prevent Baasha from building at Ramah and blockading Judah at that point (v 1), Asa bought an alliance with Ben-hadad of Syria (vv 2–4). The alliance accomplished

its goal: Baasha stopped building Ramah (v 5), and Asa removed the timbers to build Geba and Mizpah (v 6). (TL SB)

16:1 *thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha*. According to Kings, Baasha ruled for 24 years and was succeeded by Elah in the 26th year of Asa (1Ki 15:33; 16:8). Obviously Baasha could not have been alive in the 36th year of Asa, where this passage places him—he had been dead for a decade. In order to solve this difficulty, some suggest that the Chronicler here and in 15:19 is dating from the schism in Israel rather than from the year number of Asa's reign: Since Rehoboam had reigned 17 years and Abijah 3, 20 years are deducted with the result that the 35th and 36th years of Asa are in fact the 15th and 16th years of his reign. This would make Baasha's attack come as a possible response to the defections from the northern kingdom (15:9). While this solution may be possible, it has not met with general acceptance. The action described here is not dated in 1Ki 15:17. Perhaps the dates here and in 15:19 are the result of a copyist's error (possibly for an original 25th and 26th). (CSB)

According to 1Ki 15:33, Baasha ruled 24 years, beginning in the third year of Asa. Hence, in Asa's 36th regnal year, the northern king had been dead for nearly 10 years. Apparently a copyist's error has distorted the text. A proposed transposition of two letters (which the Hbr could use to represent numbers) yields a reading of 16 years, which accords with 1Ki 15:33. (TL SB)

16:2–9 Hiring foreign troops brought Asa into a foreign alliance, which showed lack of trust in the Lord. Other examples of condemned foreign alliances are found in the reigns of Jehoshaphat (20:35–37), Ahaziah (22:1–9) and Ahaz (28:16–21). By hiring Ben-Hadad to the north, Asa opened a two-front war for Baasha and forced his withdrawal. (CSB)

16:2 *Asa took ... from the treasures*. Temple treasury seems to have served the kings of Judah; a number of them used it to pay tribute (cf 2Ki 12:18; 16:8; 18:15). Although the treasury supported the work of the priests, it may have doubled as a royal bank. (TL SB)

16:7–10 Prophecy of Hanani, unique to 2Ch, explains both the continuous wars of Asa and ultimately his death. Is 7 and its condemnation of Ahaz is a likely parallel: Both kings respond to a threat from the north (2Ch 16:1; Is 7:1–2). Both obtain alliances with a third power (2Ch 16:2–4; 2Ki 16:7–9). Both fail to rely on the Lord (2Ch 16:7; Is 7:9b). Both face worse disasters in the future (2Ch 16:9b; Is 7:17–25). (TL SB)

16:7 *Hanani*. Known only through association with Jehu, the son of Hanani, who prophesied against Baasha (1Ki 16:1) and Jehoshaphat (19:2). Jehu is cited by the Chronicler as a source for the account of Jehoshaphat's reign (20:34). (TL SB)

relied ... rely. Cf Is 10:20. (TL SB)

16:8 *Ethiopians ... Libyans*. Asa's failure to trust in the Lord is compared to his battle with Zerah in ch 14. Difference is that in the earlier battle, Asa relied on the Lord. In this second war, he relied instead on the king of Syria. (TL SB)

16:9 *foolishly*. No distinction is made between the secular and the religious. For Judah, and for its king in particular, the religious and secular arenas are inseparable (unlike the situation in the NT; see pp 1565–66). Thus the secular consequence of the religious problem is spelled out by the prophet. (TLSB)

16:10 *prison*. Incredible that a man so zealous for the Lord (ch 15) should be the first king of Judah to persecute God’s messenger (cf 1Co 10:12). The cruelty is similar to Ahab’s treatment of Micaiah (18:26; 1Ki 22:26–27) and Jeremiah’s treatment at the hands of Pashhur the priest (Jer 20:2). (TLSB)

16:12 *disease in his feet*. For other examples of disease as punishment for sin see 21:16–20; 26:16–23; Ac 12:23. Cf. 2Ki 15:5. (CSB)

Exact nature of disease cannot be determined with certainty, but the fact that it affected the feet may be related to his putting Hanani in stocks and thus directly correlated to Hanani’s suffering. Cf 26:19–21. (TLSB)

physicians. Term used of netherworld deities, it may refer to mediums, as in the case of the medium at En-dor (1Sm 28). If these physicians actually were such deities, the unfaithfulness of Asa is even more pronounced. (TLSB)

16:14 *fire*. Lit, “a great burning,” not of the corpse but of the spices (cf Jer 34:5). His grandson Jehoram was not given such an honorable burial (21:19). (TLSB)

Ch 16 Asa stumbles in his faith, but rather than repent, he foolishly lashes out at the Lord’s prophet. You, too, will stumble. In every challenge, daily rely on the Lord by calling on Him in prayer and by requesting His forgiveness. Because of His righteousness, He will declare you blameless for the sake of His Son. • O Lord, give me Your strong support, for I rely on You alone. Amen. (TLSB)