

The Eyes of the Lord

2 Chronicles 16:1-13

"In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha [Bay-uh-shuh] 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. 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, "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."

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. 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.

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." Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

Note that the acts of Asa, first and last, are indeed written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign.

King Asa was the king of Judah. He was the great-grandson of King Solomon and the great-great grandson of King David. In the times of the kings of Israel, Israel was initially one nation under God and under one king, King Saul. The people of Israel had cried for a king in the time that God had reigned and ruled over the nation through an appointed judge, and Samuel the Prophet was the judge in that time when the people started asking for a king. Samuel presented the request to God and God told Samuel that the people weren't rejecting him but they were rejecting God Himself. Even though the people were

warned by Samuel that they shouldn't be asking for a king since it wouldn't be in their best interests (by rejecting God, the King of Kings, and wanting a man instead to be their king) they persisted in crying for a king. So God gave them Saul. Saul turned out to be a wicked king who ended up chasing David all over the place trying to kill him. In the end King Saul was killed in battle along with his son Jonathon, who was David's best and trusted friend. David then was appointed as King of Judah. Ishbosheth, Saul's son was then appointed king of Israel while David was king of Judah. Ishbosheth didn't last long, as he was murdered by a couple of the captains of the troops. When King David heard of it he had the two murderers put to death for killing the king of Israel. It was then that Judah and Israel were then ruled by one king, King David. David had always respected and honored King Saul even when Saul was trying to kill him. King David also respected and honored Ishbosheth for being God's anointed even though he was not following the Lord God either. Then when King David died of old age his son Solomon became king over all of Israel. King Solomon started out honoring God in his reign over all of Israel and became the wisest man who ever lived yet in due time he had acquired 700 wives and 300 concubines that led to not only his support of idol worship but his practice of it as well. This led to God having Ahijah the prophet telling Jeroboam that he would have 10 of the twelve tribes of Israel to reign over. Judah and Benjamin would still remain with the house of David, as God had made a covenant with David, which when Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king.

While the sin of King David by taking Bathsheeba, a married woman, and having her husband Uriah killed and King David's son King Solomon having being swayed into idol worship by his many wives and concubines which divided the kingdom of Israel, King Rehoboam became what was the first truly evil king of Judah. While ALL of Israel's kings were evil Judah had periods of good kings and bad kings. This period of time with King Rehoboam lasted through his reign and then with his son Abijah's reign. King Rehoboam was the son of the wisest man on earth, King Solomon, who had two encounters with the Lord as it says in 1 Kings 11:9-10 "So the Lord became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the Lord God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the Lord had commanded." King Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, was asked if he would lessen the burdens of the people that Solomon had put on them but instead of taking the advice of the elders that said in 1 Kings 12:7, "If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever," he chose to reign in wickedness for his own glory and not God's. Sadly, even though Rehoboam's grandfather was King David, said by God to be a man after God's own heart, and his father was King Solomon who was said to be the wisest

man ever, King Rehoboam was said in 2 Chronicles 12:14 that, "he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord."

Abijah (or Abijam) his son did not do any better. It is said in 1 Kings 15:3 that Abijam, "walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David." At one point in a battle Abijam had stated, "But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken Him." So what happened? He started out trusting in God. So what does all of this background stuff about the kings that were before King Asa have to do with our passage of Scripture that we've read in 2 Chronicles 16:1-13? Each man or woman, every day must decide on their own, regardless of where you came from, whether from evil or bad circumstances or from good and godly circumstances. Each and every day those kings had to decide whether they'd continue to follow and seek the Lord, and every day we are faced with the same exact choice. Will we continue to follow the Lord even if it appears as though evil is chasing us around the country like it was with King David when Saul sought to kill him, or when times are good and we seem to have good things coming our way, will we continue to seek the Lord and His way? Even the kings of Judah and Israel with the special anointing of God had to decide themselves each and every day whether they would seek the Lord and follow Him.

This brings us to our passage of Scripture today with King Asa. There are two recorded accounts of the kings of Judah, in the books of Kings (1 & 2) and in 2 Chronicles. In 1 Kings 15:11-14 it says of King Asa, "Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did his father David. And he banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made...Asa's heart was loyal to the Lord all his days." Yet in our story, which was toward the end of Asa's reign, Asa relied upon the help of the king of Syria when Israel was coming against Judah instead of relying upon the Lord. Israel had built Ramah against Judah which was basically a fortress or wall that kept Judah from trading with others and bring in supplies. It was a common tactic to keep a city holed up so that they would starve to death eventually or surrender. King Asa was able to send a bribe to the King of Syria to help them against Israel. Instead of seeking the Lord, Asa sought help from another known enemy by way of a bribe. Also, at the end of our story, Asa became diseased in his feet and instead of seeking God's help, he only looked to the physicians. He evidently ended up dying from that disease. Even though he was counted as faithful to the Lord overall, he still had that lapse at the end of his life where instead of seeking the Lord, he sought after help from others, including his enemy.

We can learn from these examples of the kings of Judah and Israel. Each and every day we are tested with whether we will continue to follow God and seek His Righteousness, His protection, His help, His

Way, or we can just look for the easy way out and just go with the flow of the world and just find that way that just gets us by. This isn't about just our salvation. If we believe on the Lord Jesus, that He did die for our sins, and we do believe that He was raised from the dead on the third day, conquering death, then we will be saved. If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in our heart that God raised Him from the dead so that we can be saved, then we will be saved and have eternal life with Him and His Word says that He will remain faithful even when we are faithless.

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.

Throughout Scripture we find that God desires to show that He indeed is the Lord God Almighty to us and through us. God calls us to abide in Him to trust in Him. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." Trust Him, for He is the Creator of all things, He loves you and wants to show You that His Way is the only and best Way. The Apostle John says in 1 John 1:3, "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." God truly wants us to have a relationship with Him and His Son Jesus who is the Christ. Then John says, "And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."

We are to love God, keep looking to Jesus in prayer, which is just talking to Him, and reading His Word, that is the Holy Bible, and love others as He loves them, to be in fellowship with one another but to not join forces with evil as did King Asa, not to seek to build our own kingdom on earth as King Solomon found that it all leads to nothingness, and seek God and His glory to bear fruit for His glory by allowing Him to work in us His Righteousness, to allow Him to work in us to will and to do according to His purpose. Please keep the faith and keep following Jesus and you can't go wrong. Evil won't leave us until we reach the other side in His eternal kingdom, but it will be a whole lot better following **Him** into His glory. Along the way in our life, God offers Salvation through Jesus, and healing, and comfort, and deliverance from evil. His Word says you have not because you ask not. Ask Him, for all things are possible with God! And then while you wait on Him, don't give up seeking Him, following Him, trusting in Him. You may have to wait a moment or you may have to wait a while, but know for certain that God loves you, enough to die on a cross for you, that while you were yet a sinner Christ died for you and that as His Word declares, "**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.**"