

CHAPTER 16

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 16

Baasha coming up against Judah, and building Ramah, Asa made a league with the king of Syria, and hired him to make a diversion in his favour, and cause Baasha to leave off building, which succeeded, (^{<410>}2 Chronicles 16:1-6), for which he was reprov'd by a prophet of the Lord, with whom he was so angry for it as to put him in prison, and oppress others, (^{<410>}2 Chronicles 16:7,10), and the chapter is closed with an account of his disease and conduct under it, and of his death and burial, (^{<410>}2 Chronicles 16:11-14).

Ver. 1. *In the thirty and sixth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah,* etc.] How this is to be reconciled with the reign of Baasha, which was but twenty four years, and was begun in the third of Asa, and therefore must have been dead nearly ten years before this year of Asa's reign, (see Gill on "^{<415>}1 Kings 15:17") where, and in the following verses, are the same things related as here, to the end of the sixth verse; the explanation of which the reader is referred to.

Ver. 7. *And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah,* etc.] Being sent by the Lord to reprove him:

and said unto him, because thou hast relied on the king of Syria; on the covenant he made with him, on the promises the Syrian king made to him upon receiving his money, and so trusted to an arm of flesh, and even an Heathen king:

and not relied on the Lord thy God; his promises, power, and providence, which he had reason to believe would have been engaged on his behalf, had he placed his confidence in him as he ought to have done: the Targum is,

“and not relied on the Word of the Lord thy God:”

therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand; which otherwise would have fallen into it, had he left him to continue in league with the king of Israel, and not solicited him to break it; for then he would

have come with him against Asa, and the Lord would have delivered him to him.

Ver. 8. *Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen?* etc.] They were no less than 1,000,000 men, and three hundred chariots, (^{<1449>}2 Chronicles 14:9), the Lubim were the Libyans, a people near Egypt, that dwelt in Africa; according to an Arabic writer ^{f61}, they were the Nubians:

yet, because thou didst rely on the Lord, he delivered them into thine hand; and with equal ease could and would have delivered the Syrian army unto him, had he as then trusted in the Lord.

Ver. 9. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth,* etc.] The eyes of his omniscience are everywhere, and the eyes of his mercy and goodness, of his care and providence, are here and there, and in every place throughout the whole world at once, (see ^{<3040>}Zechariah 4:10),

to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him; or, as in the margin, “strongly to hold” with such, to be on their side, take their part, strengthen them, support and supply them, and to protect and defend them who are sincere and upright in heart; whose graces are sincere and unfeigned, though not complete, nor they free from sin, and who, with the heart, sincerely believe in God, in which Asa at this time failed, though otherwise his heart is said to be perfect, (^{<1150>}1 Kings 15:4), it was so in the general bent of it, and especially with respect to the worship of God, though there was something lacking in his faith at this time, as there often is in the best of men:

herein thou hast done foolishly; to trust in man, and not in the Lord, to part with his money, and lose the opportunity of having the whole Syrian army fall into his hands:

therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars; which, though we read not of, was doubtless his case; some interpret it of his posterity.

Ver. 10. *Then Asa was wroth with the seer,* etc.] For this faithful reproof of him, which was another instance of his sin and folly:

and put him in a prison house; in a very strait place, in which he could not turn himself, what we call “little ease”; some say it was the stocks, others a pillory he put him into:

for he was in a rage with him because of this thing; his passion rose very high, and to which he gave way, and was his infirmity:

and Asa oppressed some of the people the same time; by fines and imprisonments, such as perhaps expressed their disapprobation of his league with the king of Syria, and of his ill usage of the prophet.

Ver. 11. *And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last*, etc.] (See Gill on “^{f61}1 Kings 15:23”).

Ver. 12. *And Asa in the thirty ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet*, etc.] This was about two years before his death, and his disease is generally thought to be the gout in his feet, and a just retaliation for putting the prophet’s feet into the stocks:

until his disease was exceeding great; it increased upon him, and became very severe and intolerable, and the fits were frequent, as well as the pain sharper; though the sense of the Hebrew ^{f62} phrase may be, that his disease got upwards, into a superior part of his body, head, or stomach, which, when the gout does, it is dangerous. A very learned physician ^{f63} is of opinion, that not the gout, but what he calls an “aematous” swelling of the feet, is meant, which insensibly gets up into the bowels, and is successively attended with greater inconveniences; a tension of the abdomen, difficulty of breathing, very troublesome to the patient, and issues in a dropsy, and death itself:

yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord; his seeking to physicians for help in his disease, perhaps, would not have been observed to his reproach, had he also sought unto the Lord, whom he ought to have sought in the first place; and when he applied to the physicians, he should have implored the blessing of God on their prescriptions; but he so much forgot himself as to forget the Lord: this is the first time we read of physicians among the Jews, and some think these were Heathens, and a sort of enchanters: the Jews entertained a very ill opinion of physicians; the best of them, they say ^{f64}, deserve hell, and they advise ^{f65} men not to live in a city where the chief man is a physician; but the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus gives a great encomium of them, and exhorts to honour and esteem them,

“1 Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses which ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him. 2 For of the most High cometh healing, and he shall receive honour of the king. 3 The skill of the physician shall lift up his head: and in the

sight of great men he shall be in admiration. 4 The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth; and he that is wise will not abhor them. 5 Was not the water made sweet with wood, that the virtue thereof might be known? 6 And he hath given men skill, that he might be honoured in his marvellous works. 7 With such doth he heal [men], and taketh away their pains. 8 Of such doth the apothecary make a confection; and of his works there is no end; and from him is peace over all the earth,” (Sirach 38)

Julian ^{f66} the emperor greatly honoured them, and observes, that it is justly said by the philosophers, that the art of medicine fell from heaven.

Ver. 13. *And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the forty first year of his reign.*] (see ^{<1150>}1 Kings 15:10,24).

Ver. 14. *And they buried him in his own sepulchres which he had made for himself in the city of David,* etc.] Where was the burying place of the kings of Judah; here Asa had ordered a vault to be made for himself and his family, and therefore called sepulchres, because of the several cells therein to put separate bodies in:

and laid him in the bed; not only laid him out, as we express it, but laid him on a bed of state, where he lay in great pomp; or the funeral bed, which, with other nations ^{f67}, used to be strowed with sweet smelling flowers and herbs, as follows:

which was filled with sweet odours, and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries art; or rather confectioner or druggist; for it is a question whether there were then any such we call apothecaries; this bed was strowed with spices, myrrh, aloes, cassia, cinnamon, etc. and which perhaps might be made up into a liquid, which was sprinkled over the bed and shroud in which he lay:

and they made a very great burning for him; not that they made a great fire, and burned his body; for burning was not used with the Jews; but they burnt spices and other things in great quantity, in honour of him: (See Gill on ^{<2815>}Jeremiah 34:5”), and this custom continued to the times of Herod, at whose funeral there were five hundred of his domestics and freed men bearing spices ^{f68}.