

Sermon: Oculi Dei (The Eyes of God)

Text: 2 Chronicles 16

Introduction:

Last week, we examined the prayer of King Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20 when he was threatened by a 3-nation coalition that was bearing down on Jerusalem—leaving the nation of Judah essentially defenseless against this massive army. We saw how Jehoshaphat called the entire nation to gather on the steps of the Temple in order to pray for the Lord's protection.

This week—we're going back one generation to Jehoshaphat's father, King Asa. As we have seen in 2 Chronicles 14 & 15, Asa was a very good king, who was fully devoted to the Lord for the first 35 years of his reign—and was a tower of strength throughout most of his reign. He defeated Zerah the Ethiopian and called his nation to a solemn assembly to renew their commitment to Yahweh. As a result, the Southern Kingdom of Judah rested in peace for many years.

But then its rival kingdom Israel raised its belligerent head led by its King Baasha. We sadly see here in 2 Chronicles 16 that something happens in King Asa's heart that causes him to turn to places and people other than God for his help.

Examination:

- **Read 2 Chronicles 16:1-14**
 - Who came against Judah to build Ramah? When did this hostility begin? (see 2 Chronicles 10:19)
 - What did Asa take out of the temple, to give to the king of Syria? (v. 2)
 - When you think of Syria today, what do you think of? Are there good relations between Syria and Israel?
 - Why was he to give him the things of the temple? (v. 3)
 - What was the history of this alliance that caused Asa to want this treaty?
 - Who was king of Syria – and what did he do on the behalf of Asa?
 - What did Baasha, king of Israel, immediately do? Why?
 - What did King Asa do with the building materials, that Baasha left in Ramah?
 - What were Geba and Mizpah?
 - What was the name of the seer (another word for prophet) that came to Asa? Is this the first time that God sent prophets to speak wisdom to the kings of Judah?
 - What message did he bring Asa from God?
 - What victory did God remind Asa of? (v. 8)
 - Who is God constantly watching to help? What does this tell you about “the eyes of God”? (v. 9) How does verse 9 have deep and significant implications for your own life?
 - What punishment would come to Asa for this mistake?

- What did Asa do with the seer? (v. 10) Why did he do the same thing to some of the people?
- How does this response compare with the way King Asa reacted and behaved during the first 35 years of his reign (see chapters 14 & 15)? How is it even POSSIBLE for someone to change this drastically?
- Where are more of the acts of Asa written? Do we have access to this book?
- What disease did Asa have in his 39th year as king?
- Who did he seek for help? Is it bad for us to turn to doctors for help? What mistake did King Asa make? What can we learn from his mistake?
- When did Asa die, and what was he buried in?

Application:

There is a lot we can ponder and learn from this short chapter about the end of King Asa's life. Remember—he had been a REALLY GOOD KING for 35 years! He sought to honor God. And yet. And yet! This is how he thinks and responds in his “golden years.” He stopped trusting the Lord. He looked for help from places and people that he had no business in seeking out. He obviously even stopped praying—looking ONLY to the physicians for help. Take some time to really think through how this might happen, and what you need to do in your own life to keep it from happening to you! Take to heart the truth in verse 9—“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him.” What does God see when He looks at you?