

2 Kings Chapter 16 Commentary

2Ki 16:1 ¶ "In the seventeenth year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah, Ahaz, the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree."

Ahaz (the same as the name Jehoahaz) and is king over Judah. He does evil in the sight of God. He is of the lineage of king David but did not reign as king David. Rather, he was purely an idolator from the start. Ahaz was so deviant that he offered his own son as a sacrifice to idols, which is direct disobedience to God, seen in **Le 18:21 "And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD."** Some say that this was only the passing of his son between two fires for sanctification to be a priest to Moloch, the god of the occupants of the land of promise before it was given to Israel, but we are told in a reference given for verse 1: **2Ch 28:1-8; 1 ¶ "Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father: 2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. 3 Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 4 He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree. 5 Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. 6 ¶ For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king. 8 And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria."** We see here that he burnt his children in the fire. Thus, we concluded that he offered them as sacrifices and burned them to ashes.

I am not exactly sure of the timeline, but Judah was given into the hands of the king of Assyria and Pekah king of Israel. Pekah slew 120,000 men in one day and took 2000,000 women, sons and daughters, and much spoil away captive. We are not told how many the king of Syria carried away captive nor how many he killed. I believe it is safe to say that God, in judicial judgement, decimated Judah.

Ahaz is said by history to have started out by having the images of Baalim scattered throughout Judah, and reviving the idolatry of the Valley of Hinnom, in the worship of Moloch. Now, we see king Ahaz taking the idols of the land of promise before Israel inherited it and using them as their own god. This reminds us of the scripture in **Lu 9:62 "And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."** God help us to never get so far from the Lord that we worship an idol, or sacrifice our children to an idol, or return to the way we lived before the new birth. Now preacher, we do not offer sacrifices to gods today. Really? What happens if you do not bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? You are offering up your children to the gods of this world, because you did not teach them the truth: that there is one God, one faith, one hope of the eternal resurrection of the body in Christ, one baptism, there is one door to the eternal kingdom of God. The door is Jesus Christ, and it is through the gift of the new birth and the finished work of Jesus Christ, that we are saved by God's sovereign grace.

5 ¶ "Then Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. 6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. 7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) king of Assyria, saying, I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me. 8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in

the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. 9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin."

Pekah, the king of Israel, gets Rezin, the king of Syria, to help him besiege Jerusalem and Judah. King Ahaz, king of Judah, swore his allegiance to Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) king of Assyria, and the allegiance of Judah to be a servant to him, not to God. Pekah failed in the attempt to take Jerusalem. Why? While Rezin, king of Syria was attacking Judah: Rezin and the Syrians were able to capture the city of Elath, from which they drove out the Israelites and occupied from that time forward. Before they could do more damage, for Rezin had to go home to try to save his own lands from the king of Assyria, which was the reason Pekah could not overcome Ahaz, king of Judah. Thus, they lost the war against Jerusalem because Ahaz hired the king of Assyria to help him against the attempted invasion. The king of Assyria went against Rezin, the king of Syria, and took Damascus which was the capital city.

Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, carried away captive the inhabitants of Damascus to Kir, and he slew Rezin, king of Syria. The king of Assyria's actions caused Rezin to break the deal with Pekah, to try and save his own land, and he was killed in the attempt.

It has been mentioned before, but I did not make the connection that Jonah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, were all contemporary with Isaiah. Isaiah lived a long time and was called to be a prophet of God early in life. We get some further insight into the history of this occasion from Isaiah in *Isa 7:1-9; 1 ¶ "And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim. And his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind. 3 Then said the LORD unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou, and Shearjashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field; 4 And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither be fainthearted for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, 6 Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal: 7 Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass. 8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people. 9 And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established."* From this text we understand that God is still protecting His promise to king David, even though Ahaz is not worshipping God. Here, God gave Ahaz the perfect opportunity to turn to God and be blessed, but we see that he did not make the right choice. Ahaz did not turn to or seek God for aide. He turned to the world for his salvation, and he tried to buy his way to victory. He did this by robbing the house of the Lord and the king's house of their financial funds. He did win this once, but only because of God's promise to king David.

The lesson for us: if we try to buy, or work out, our eternal salvation to be with Jesus in the eternal kingdom, we may start out thinking we are gaining ground, but in the end, we shall be judged by our own works and condemned to the eternal lake of fire, seen in *Re 20:12-15; 12 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."*

Another lesson: we must trust only in God for our help. We cannot go to the world, or take the world into the church, nor swear allegiance to the world of sin, and expect God's continued protection. Nor can we expect God to pour out His manifold blessing in our lives. If we turn to the world to aid the church, we can surely expect the judicial judgement of God in our lives, and the fall of the church body that turns to the world.

10 ¶ "And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig-lath pel-eh-ser) king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and

the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof. 11 And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so, Urijah the priest made it against king Ahaz came from Damascus. 12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon. 13 And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. 14 And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. 15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire by. 16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. 17 ¶ And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. 18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria. 19 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead."

As stated in our commentary above: this is the outcome of turning to the world and forsaking God as our protector. Obviously, Ahaz did not believe God, or he would not have given himself and Judah to be servant to Assyria. Now, we see why Ahaz ended like he did.

Ahaz goes to Damascus to visit king Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser,) for he was summoned to pay homage to the king to whom he sworn allegiance. He sees an altar while at Damascus. He is smitten by this altar and desires one for himself, and to honor his friend king Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser.) Ahaz sent a description of this altar to Urijah the priest and commands him to build him one. Urijah builds this altar before king Ahaz gets back to Judah. King Ahaz likes the altar, and he burns his own sacrifices on this ungodly altar. Now, not only does Ahaz turn from the Lord, but he also appoints himself as priest to offer sacrifices on this idolatrous altar. A reminder to us, when you fashion your own religion, you can do anything you want to do. Why? Because you have forsaken the true God in heaven and you are living in accordance with the will of the flesh, and in the pride of life.

We get better details of what happened in **2Ch 28:21-25; 21 "For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not. 22 And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this is that king Ahaz. 23 For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. 24 And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25 And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers."** From this we understand that king Ahaz did not put the altar in the house of the Lord. Historians tell us that this idolatrous altar was set up on the temple courtyard in front of the temple. Ahaz just took what he wanted out of the house of the Lord and shut it up so no one could worship there, very probably at the command of Tiglathpileser. He also took the brazen altar and set it up beside this new altar he built. He planned to inquire of his gods by the brazen altar of God, which will never work, for God is a jealous God and will not share his glory with any other god.

"turned he (Ahaz) from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria." Now we understand the implications of pledging your loyalty to worldly ways. When Ahaz sent to Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) king of Assyria for his assistance, Ahaz gave himself and Judah to be servants to Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) and Assyria. Now Ahaz is really not a king in official capacity, he is now a peon to Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) and must do his bidding. It is believed that Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) is testing Ahaz's loyalty, by having Ahaz to shut up the house of God, remove the wealth of it, and destroying many of the instruments made to worship God, as God had commanded Israel.

This is a great warning to us today and demonstrates what happens when we forget God, and God's people turn to the world, and invite them to come into their church organization. This has been the closing up of the New Testament Church in many places. Why? Because they have done as king Ahaz, and they have invited the world into their worship. Now they are slave to the world again and are not a separated people to God. What do you mean by closing up? When you turn from God to the world, which is against God's commandment, you are no longer a church that worships God. You are now a church that has turned to idolatry, and no longer do you serve God. Now you are no longer a church of God, for you have closed the doors to God and are serving self.

Urijah the priest did a bad thing in heeding the king's commandment and building this idolatrous altar for king Ahaz. As a priest of the Lord, he should have rebuked king Ahaz and cited him to the Word of God. He did not, and thus we see king Ahaz set up many altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city (not every city but many cities) of Judah. He also made high places to burn incense to these false gods. These actions of king Ahaz, who is not serving God, but serving Tiglathpileser (pronounced tig- lath pel-eh-ser) stirred the anger of the Lord.

Because of his terrible reign as king of Judah, when he dies, he is not buried in the tombs of the kings of Israel, as we see in **2Ch 28:27 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchers of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.**" We shall see the extent of God's anger with Judah and Israel in the following chapters.

May God help us to be faithful followers of our King, Jesus the Christ, in every action in our lives, we pray in the name of Jesus, the beloved Son of God, Amen!