

2 Chronicles 28 – Thursday, March 9th, 2017

2 Chronicles 28 -- 1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done. 2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. 3 He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

- The chapter begins with an all too familiar account of yet another king who did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord.
- However, not only was he an evil king, he actually came from one of only nine good kings who did right in the sight of the Lord.
- Namely, Jotham, who as we saw last week was the only one of the good kings that didn't falter and sin against God in the end.

- Sadly, this evil king rejected the godly heritage of his righteous father, and chose instead to walk in the ways of Israel's kings.
- To me, this speaks to the paramount importance of the influences in our lives, such that, we're all prone to the bad examples.
- One commentator noted that Ahaz was the first instance where Judah had imitated the apostasy and wickedness of Israel.

Ronny Simon in his book *Give us a King* had this to say about Ahaz, "It's no wonder that Ahaz, a weak and defeated king, needed Assyria's help to keep his throne. The Bible notes his tendency toward worshipping the gods of the neighboring peoples, comparing his sins to those of the kings of Israel. In one verse 2 Chronicles 28:19, he is even called "king of Israel." Is this simply an error, or is it perhaps a disparagement of the king because of his beliefs?"

- I don't know if it's possible to overstate how evil it was for Ahaz to imitate what Israel had done by worshipping the god Moloch.
- Moloch was the pagan god that they offered child sacrifices to while beating drums in order to drown out the infants screams.
- Actually we get that saying, "fire in the belly," from Moloch because they placed the baby on the iron arms with the fire inside.

Leviticus 20:1-5 (NKJV) — 1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3 I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. 4 And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, 5 then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

5 Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought them to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter. 6 For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7 Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah who was second to the king. 8 And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

- 2 Kings provides us with more detail about this plan to dethrone Ahaz so as to set up a Syrian king and cut off David's lineage.
- But God!!! But God, in His sovereignty and according to His promise would not allow this satanic plot against Him to prevail.
- This because, God's promise to David, that the Savior of the world would come from his lineage, absolutely must come to pass.

Isaiah 7:1-18 (NKJV) — 1 Now it came to pass in the days of Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to make war against it, but could not prevail against it. 2 And it was told to the house of David, saying, "Syria's forces are deployed in Ephraim." So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind. 3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field, 4 and say to him: 'Take heed, and be quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, 6 "Let us go up against Judah and trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel"—7 thus says the Lord GOD: "It shall not stand, Nor shall it come to pass. 8 For the head of Syria is Damascus, And the head of Damascus is Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be broken, So that it will not be a people. 9 The head of Ephraim is Samaria, And the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If you will not believe, Surely you shall not be established." ' ' 10 Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." 12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" 13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

Of this one commentator noted, "God was his God, though not by covenant and grace, and special relation, which Ahaz had renounced, yet by his sovereign dominion over him; for God did not forfeit his right by Ahaz's denying of it."

9 But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: "Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven. 10 And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; but are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? 11 Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you." 12 Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, 13 and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives here, for we already have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel." 14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. 15 Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

- Here we're introduced to this rather bold prophet by the name of Oded, who the Lord sends to rebuke these leaders of Israel.
- Thankfully, they actually heed this prophetic warning and seek to right this wrong knowing that they had sinned against God.
- What's interesting to me is, had Oded not obeyed the Lord and refused to deliver this prophetic word, they wouldn't be saved.

Adam Clarke - "To this beautiful speech nothing can be added by the best comment; it is simple, humane, pious, and overwhelmingly convincing: no wonder it produced the effect mentioned here. That there was much of humanity in the heads of the children of Ephraim who joined with the prophet on this occasion, 2 Chronicles 28:15 sufficiently proves."

16 At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him. 17 For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. 18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederath, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there. 19 For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. 20 Also Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. 21 For Ahaz took part of the treasures from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave it to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

- I don't really know if it's possible to overstate how profound what we're told in verse nineteen concerning Ahaz's moral decline.
- This brings to bear a truth we've seen throughout our study of the kings, which is that of how serious this is in the sight of God.
- Namely, that of a leader encouraging moral decline, like Ahaz did in Judah, as they continue in their unfaithfulness to the Lord.

22 Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This is that King Ahaz. 23 For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel.

- If you're anything like me and I suspect that you are you're having a difficult time wrapping your mind around Ahaz's response.
- It's hard to imagine that instead of turning to the Lord in his distress, we're told Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord.
- I suppose it shouldn't be a surprise that Ahaz doesn't turn to the Lord in his distress given that his heart was now so hardened.

One commentator of Ahaz not calling upon the Lord wrote, "How different was his great ancestor David! 'In my distress,' he says, 'I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God'. Even his wicked grandson Manasseh sought the Lord his God 'when he was in affliction.' But Ahaz seemed determined to fill up the measure of his sins."

Psalms 18:6 (NKJV) — 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD, And cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, And my cry came before Him, even to His ears.

24 So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25 And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers. 26 Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27 So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

- The reign of King Ahaz goes down in Israel's history as being amongst the most wicked and evil if not the most wicked and evil.
- Were it not for the grace and mercy of God it's very unlikely that Judah would have survived this period during Ahaz's evil reign.
- I find it interesting that God would have in place His prophets Isaiah and Micah, for such a time as this, to deliver God's Word.

G. Campbell Morgan had this to say, "It would seem as though the light of truth were absolutely extinguished. It was not so, however, for it is likely that throughout the whole reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, Isaiah was uttering his message, and that during the reign of Ahaz Micah also was delivering the word of God."