

# 2 Kings 16 - Annals of Both Kingdoms: Ahaz's Evil Reign in Judah

II. The divided kingdom from the North-South division until the Assyrian invasion (1 Kings 12:1—2 Kings 17:41)

(30) Ahaz's reign in the South (16:1-20)

## 2 Kings 16

(30) Ahaz's reign in the South (16:1-20) (Cf. 2 Chr 28)

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**1** In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

- "...the seventeenth year of Pekah" - 735 BC; it was not until 732, however, that Ahaz began his 16-year reign, which continued to 715 BC

- "...Ahaz" - "He Has Grasped"

**2** Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David *had done*.

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**2** Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for sixteen years. He did not practice what the LORD considered to be right, as had his ancestor David.

**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.

- The reign of Ahaz's father Jotham was 16 years (2 Chr 27:1), 750-735BC, but Jotham did not die until 732 BC

- Apparently, then, in the four years from 735 to 732 neither Jotham nor Ahaz was credited with independent rule; they were co-regents.
- In another sense Ahaz's rule began in 744 BC. Therefore he may have been a vice-regent under his father Jotham from 744 to 735 BC.
- Ahaz did not follow David's example of godliness

3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and he even made his son pass through the fire, in accordance with the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel.

3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and even made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out from before the sons of Israel.

3 Instead, he behaved like the kings of Israel did by making his son pass through fire, the very same abomination that the heathen practiced, whom the LORD evicted from the land right in front of the Israelis.

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.

- He went so far as to sacrifice his son (obviously not Hezekiah, who succeeded him as king) as a burnt offering to an idol

— This heinous sin (Cf. 17:17) was a common practice of the Ammonites and the other native pagan Canaanite nations that Israel under Joshua had partially driven out of the land  
— These sacrificial rites took place near the confluence of the Hinnom and Kidron valleys at a place called Topheth. This place developed a reputation for wickedness, and then filth, because it became a constantly burning garbage heap. Jesus compared it to the place of eternal punishment (*Gehenna*; Cf. Matt 5:22,29-30; 10:28, et al)

4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

4 He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places and on the hills and under every green tree.

4 Furthermore, Ahaz sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on top of hills, and under every green tree.

4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

- Ahaz also promoted worship at the high places (Cf. comments on 1 Kings 22:43), on hilltops and under large trees

— These places of worship were so numerous that the writer said hyperbolically that they could be found under every spreading tree (Cf. 2 Kings 17:10)

**5** Then Rezin the king of Aram and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem for war; and they besieged Ahaz, but were not capable of fighting him.

**5** Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to *wage* war; and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him.

**5** Later, King Rezin of Aram and Remaliah's son Pekah, king of Israel, approached Jerusalem to attack it. They besieged Ahaz but could not conquer him.

**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 Aram restored Elath to Aram, and drove the Judeans away from Elath; and the Arameans came to Elath and have lived there to this day.

**6** At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, and cleared the Judeans out of Elath entirely; and the Arameans came to Elath and have lived there to this day.

**6** But at that time, King Rezin of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, completely removing the Judeans from Elath. Then the Arameans returned to Elath and have remained there to this day.

**6** At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drove the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

- Aram had captured the southern town of Elath from Judah (v6; Cf. 14:22)

— When Aram and Israel threatened to invade Judah, Ahaz did not seek Yahweh but rather Tiglath-Pileser for deliverance

**7** So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and save me from the hand of the king of Aram, and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me."

**7** So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son; come up and deliver me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me."

**7** So Ahaz sent envoys to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, to tell him, "I am your servant and son. Save me from the king of Aram and the king of Israel, who are attacking me."

**7** So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser 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.

- Rather than putting himself under Yahweh's direction, he appealed to the king of Assyria as his "servant" and his "son"

8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a gift to the king of Assyria.

8 Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent a present to the king of Assyria.

8 Then Ahaz took the silver and gold that was in the LORD's Temple and in the palace treasuries and sent them as a gift to the king of Assyria,

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.

- This reflects a failure to see his role under God and God's role over Israel. Instead of making sacrifices to Yahweh, he sent them to Tiglath-Pileser.

9 So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and led *the people of* it into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death.

9 So the king of Assyria listened to him; and the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and captured it, and carried *the people of* it away into exile to Kir, and put Rezin to death.

9 so the king of Assyria listened to Ahaz. He attacked Damascus, captured it, sent its people away into exile to Kir, and executed Rezin.

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.

- This diverted the Arameans from besieging Jerusalem; they had to return home to defend their own territory

— Damascus fell to Assyria, Rezin was executed, and many of the Arameans were deported to Kir, an area of Assyria, in keeping with the Assyrians' policy of relocating conquered peoples (Cf. 15:29; 17:23)

Ahaz's decision to appeal to Assyria for help was a foolish one (Cf. Is 7). Besides losing many of his people to Pekah in the siege (2 Chr 28:5-8), Ahaz encouraged further Assyrian advancement into Palestine. The chronicler also recorded successful invasions of Judah by the Edomites and the Philistines at that time (2 Chr 28:17-19). All these losses resulted ultimately from Ahaz's apostasy (2 Chr 28:19).

**10** Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and he saw the altar which was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship.

**10** Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw the altar which was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the pattern of the altar and its model, according to all its workmanship.

**10** King Ahaz traveled to Damascus and met with King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, where he observed the altar at Damascus. So King Ahaz sent a set of construction patterns of this

altar to Uriah the priest.

**10** And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser 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.

- Ahaz traveled to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser III

— There he saw an altar (a large one, v15) which was Aramean or, more likely, Assyrian

— Ahaz sent Uriah the high priest in Jerusalem a sketch of this altar with instructions to have one built just like it. The apostasy of the priesthood at that time can be seen in Uriah's speedy acquiescence.

11 So Urijah the priest built an altar; according to everything that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, in that way Urijah the priest made *it*, before the coming of King Ahaz from Damascus.

11 So Urijah the priest built an altar; according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, thus Urijah the priest made *it*, before the coming of King Ahaz from Damascus.

11 Uriah the priest built an altar, following the plans that King Ahaz had sent him from Damascus and finishing the altar before King Ahaz returned from Damascus.

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 came from Damascus, the king saw the altar; then the king approached the altar and went up to it,

12 When the king came from Damascus, the king saw the altar; then the king approached the altar and went up to it,

12 When the king returned from Damascus, as soon as he saw the altar, he approached it and offered sacrifices on it.

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 burned his burnt offering and his meal offering, and poured out his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar.

13 and burned his burnt offering and his meal offering, and poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar.

13 He presented a burnt offering, a meat offering, poured out a drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of a peace offering on his altar.

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.

- As Judah's king-priest, he led the nation in worshipping at an altar different from what Yahweh had specified (Ex 27:1-8)

14 And the bronze altar, which *was* before the LORD, he brought from the front of the house, from between *his* altar and the house of the LORD, and he put it on the north side of *his* altar.

14 The bronze altar, which *was* before the LORD, he brought from the front of the house, from between *his* altar and the house of the LORD, and he put it on the north side of *his* altar.

14 Then he took the bronze altar that stood in the LORD's presence from in front of the Temple, moved it to the north side of his 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.

- When Ahaz returned home he had the Lord's bronze altar of burnt offering moved aside to give a prominent place to the new altar

— This removed the altar that God had established from the place God said it should occupy in the temple courtyard (Cf. Ex 40:6,29)

15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening meal offering, the king's burnt offering and his meal offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their meal offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. But the bronze altar shall be for me, for making inquiries."

15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering and the evening meal offering and the king's burnt offering and his meal offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land and their meal offering and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. But the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire *by*."

15 and issued these orders to Uriah the priest:

"Burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and grain offering, the whole burnt offering, the grain offering, and the drink offering on behalf of all the people of the land on the large altar. And sprinkle all the blood from the burnt offering and from the sacrifice. But I will use the bronze altar to ask God questions."

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.  
- Ahaz did not completely discard the worship that God had prescribed, but he changed it according to his liking, thus claiming God's authority

16 So Urijah the priest acted in accordance with everything that King Ahaz commanded.

16 So Urijah the priest did according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

16 So Uria the priest did precisely what King Ahaz ordered.

16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

17 Then King Ahaz cut off the borders of the stands, and removed the wash basin from them; he also took down the Sea from the bronze oxen which were under it and put it on a pavement of stone.

17 Then King Ahaz cut off the borders of the stands, and removed the laver from them; he also took down the sea from the bronze oxen which were under it and put it on a pavement of stone.

17 Later, King Ahaz ordered the side panels removed from the bases, along with the washing bowls that had stood on top of the bases. He also removed the large bowl that was called the Sea from on top of the bronze bulls that supported it, and put it on a stone base.

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 covered way for the Sabbath which they had built in the house, and the outer entry of the king, he removed *from* the house of the LORD because of the king of Assyria.

18 The covered way for the sabbath which they had built in the house, and the outer entry of the king, he removed from the house of the LORD because of the king of Assyria.

18 Then Ahaz removed the covered walkway for use on the Sabbath that they had built in the Temple. Because of the king of Assyria, he also removed the outside entrance from the LORD's Temple that had been built exclusively for the king.

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.

- The high priest unfortunately cooperated with the king. Ahaz likewise changed the other temple furnishings to please the Assyrian king.

19 Now *as for* 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?

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?

19 Now the rest of Ahaz's activities are recorded in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, are they not?

**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 So Ahaz lay down with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

20 So Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David; and his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

20 Later, Ahaz died, as did his ancestors, and was buried alongside his ancestors in the City of David. His son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

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.

- The godly people in Judah gave Ahaz a respectable burial, but they did not honor him by burying him in the royal tombs with the good Judean kings (2 Chr 28:27)

— Ahaz reduced Judah to a new low politically and spiritually. The forces that influenced him were his culture and the people around him, rather than God's Word.