

# 2 Chronicles 28 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES The Kingdom of Israel From Splendor to Disaster				
Splendor		Disaster		
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9		Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36		
Kingdom United		Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split	The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23
Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1- 7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1- 9:31		
Building of the Temple		Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years		~393 Years		

## TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES

1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

**SEE ALSO:**

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**[CLICK 2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**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 right in the sight of the LORD as David his father had done.**

- Ahaz (KJV): 2Ki 16:1,2-20 1Ch 3:13 Isa 1:1 7:1-12 Ho 1:1 Mic 1:1 Mt 1:9
- like David his father (KJV): 2Ch 17:3
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

**Parallel Passages in 2 Kings 16**

16:1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, became king.

2 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 his God, as his father David had done.

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.

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

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.

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.

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."

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 present to the king of Assyria.

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.

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.

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. [What was the significance of the altar King Ahaz built? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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

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

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.

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 libations; 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."

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

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.

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.

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

## INTRODUCTION:

**John Olley:** The dramatic developments affecting Judah that eventuated during Ahaz's sixteen-year reign (2Ch28) are for the Chronicler the result of Ahaz's unfaithfulness (2Ch 28:1–5, 19). An attack by the alliance of Syria and Israel brought some devastation to Judah (2Ch 28:5–8), and a weakened Judah was then attacked by Philistines and Edomites; Ahaz sought help from Assyria, which demanded tribute (2Ch 28:16–21). Ahaz's apostasy increased, even to shutting the doors of the temple (2Ch 28:22–27).

**August Konkell:** The reign of Ahaz was a disaster both politically and in regard to covenant faithfulness. The Chronicler essentially shares the views of the other prophets regarding Ahaz. Isaiah, through the names of children, had exhorted Ahaz to be faithful in the fear of the Lord. His warning was unequivocal: "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" (Isa 7:9b). Isaiah offered the king a sign, but it was refused as if it would be tempting God (2Ch 7:12). Ahaz had already made his own plans when confronted by Isaiah and his son; he would turn to the Assyrians for help against his enemies (2 Chron 28:16). But Ahaz could not escape God; the promise of the sign was that God would be with him (Immanuel). God was indeed with him. The Assyrians would flood through his land like the overflow of the Euphrates and then he would know that God was with him (Isa 8:7-8). The Chronicler speaks of Ahaz's losses to the Edomites and Philistines (2 Chron 28:17-18). The decimation of Judah had begun.

**Frederick Mabie:** In a rapid departure from his father Jotham (cf. 2Ch 27:6), Ahaz becomes one of the most ungodly kings in the history of Judah's monarchy (note 2Ch 28:19), thus underscoring how quickly one generation can abandon the values of the previous generation.

**J.A. Thompson:** King Ahaz (735-715 B.C.) probably is most familiar to Bible students as the faithless king to whom the prophet Isaiah delivered the prophecy of Immanuel in Isa 7:14. But the biblical historians, especially the Chronicler, furnish much more information about him. He was king at a critical time in Judah's history, which saw a corrupt Israel fall to a revived Assyrian Empire, thus ending the divided monarchy. Any hopes on the part of the faithful that Judah might learn from this event and return to the Lord were dashed by the reign of Ahaz, who patterned himself after everyone but his righteous predecessors.

**Mark Boda:** While in the book of Kings, Manasseh represents the lowest point in the history, in the book of Chronicles Ahaz plays this role (Smelik 1992:182-183; 1998: 164, 181). Hezekiah will soon appear on the scene and usher in a new ideal period of renewal for Judah, inviting faithful northerners to join him in worship at Jerusalem. But before Hezekiah arrives, it is Ahaz who creates the conditions of nothing short of "exile" as he first desecrates the land with inappropriate worship practices, sees a foreign emperor take control of his kingdom, then closes the Temple (cf. Dillard 1987:261; Mosis 1973:41-43, 186-188).

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

**John Olley:** The Chronicler's account of Ahaz's reign is the most negative of any king in the book. Unlike with other rulers, Ahaz's description is negative throughout, beginning with the admission that "he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord" and ending with the statement that he was "provoking to anger the Lord, the God of his fathers" (2 Chron. 28:1, 25); further, Ahaz is buried separately from the "tombs of the kings of Israel [i.e., Judah]" (2Ch 28:27; cf. 2Ch 21:20; 24:25). While other kings had been "unfaithful" (2Ch 12:2; 26:16, 18; 1 Chron. 10:13), Ahaz was "very unfaithful" and became "yet more faithless" (2 Chron. 28:19, 22).

**Spurgeon** - So that he died before he reached the prime of life; he was cut off by God in the very midst of his sin.

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### **Matthew Henry Notes: Chapter: 28**

This chapter is the history of the reign of Ahaz the son of Jotham; a bad reign it was, and which helped to augment the fierce anger of the Lord. We have here,

- I. His great wickedness (2Ch 28:1-4).
- II. The trouble he brought himself into by it (2Ch 28:5-8).
- III. The reproof which God sent by a prophet to the army of Israel for trampling upon their brethren of Judah, and the obedient ear they gave to that reproof (2Ch 28:9-15).
- IV. The many calamities that followed to Ahaz and his people (2Ch 28:16-21).
- V. The continuance of his idolatry notwithstanding (2Ch 28:22-25), and so his story ends (2Ch 28:26, 27).

2Ch 28:1-5

Never surely had a man greater opportunity of doing well than Ahaz had, finding things in a good posture, the kingdom rich and strong and religion established; and yet here we have him in these few verses,

#### **1. Wretchedly corrupted and debauched.**

He had had a good education given him and a good example set him: but parents cannot give grace to their children. All the instructions he had were lost upon him: He did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord (2Ch 28:1), nay, he did a great deal that was wrong, a wrong to God, to his own soul, and to his people; he walked in the way of the revolted Israelites and the devoted Canaanites, made molten images and worshipped them, contrary to the second commandment; nay, he made them for Baalim, contrary to the first commandment. he forsook the temple of the Lord and sacrificed and burnt incense on the hills, as if they would place him nearer heaven, and under every green tree, as if they would signify the protection and influence of heaven by their shade and dropping. To complete his wickedness, as one perfectly divested of all natural affection as well as religion and perfectly devoted to the service and interest of the great enemy of mankind, he burnt his children in the fire to Moloch (2Ch 28:3), not thinking it enough to dedicate them to that infernal fiend by causing them to pass through the fire. See what an absolute sway the prince of the power of the air bears among the children of disobedience.

**2. Wretchedly spoiled and made a prey of.** When he forsook God, and at a vast expense put himself under the protection of false gods, God, who of right was his God, delivered him into the hands of his enemies, 2Ch 28:5.

(1.) The Syrians insulted him and triumphed over him, beat him in the field and carried away a great many of his people into captivity.

(2.) The king of Israel, though an idolater too, was made a scourge to him, and smote him with a great slaughter. The people suffered by these judgments: their blood was shed, their country wasted, their families ruined; for when they had a good king, though they did corruptly (2Ch 27:2), yet then his goodness sheltered them; but now that they had a bad one all the defence had departed from them and an inundation of judgments broke in upon them. Those that knew not their happiness in the foregoing reign were taught to value it by the miseries of this reign.

**2 Chronicles 28:2 But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made molten images for the Baals.**

- For he walked (KJV): 2Ch 21:6 22:3,4 1Ki 16:31-33 2Ki 10:26-28
- molten images (KJV): Ex 34:17 Lev 19:4
- Baalim (KJV): Judges 2:11,13 Ho 2:13,17

**But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel; he also made molten images for the Baals.**

**Spurgeon** - God had driven out the Canaanites because of these abominations; therefore, for his own people to practice them, was peculiarly provoking to him. They had set up the worship of God under emblems, there were the calves of Bethel, the representation of strength: it was the worship of God by imagery, and Ahaz imitated it, and went even further in sin, —If we worship the true God under some symbol, the next step is to worship a false God.

**2 Chronicles 28:3 Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel.**

- burnt incense (KJV): or, offered sacrifice
- the valley (KJV): 2Ki 23:10 Jer 7:31,32 19:2-6,13
- burnt (KJV): 2Ch 33:6 Lev 18:21 2Ki 16:3 Ps 106:37,38 Jer 2:34 32:35 Eze 16:20,21 Mic 6:7
- after the abominations (KJV): 2Ch 33:2 De 12:31

**Moreover, he burned incense in the valley of Ben-hinnom and burned his sons in fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had driven out before the sons of Israel.**

**Frederick Mabie:** A key attraction to Baal-Hadad was his presumed dominion over storms (i.e., rain), while a key attraction point for Asherah was her presumed dominion over fertility – both of which were key areas of concern for ancient societies such as Judah and Israel. But acts of spiritual compromise can have unexpected waves of consequences, as seen in the subsequent events of this chapter. . . The Valley of Ben Hinnom was located south of the Temple Mount and came to symbolize grave apostasy (Jer 32:35). During the reforms of Josiah this area was purged of its ignominious usage (cf. 2Ki 23:4-14). Ultimately the area became a city dump used for refuse and even the bodies of criminals; it was marked by constant fires and dreadful sights and smells. In the light of this imagery, the Hebrew expression for this valley (approximately “Gehenna”) came to be used of hell itself (cf. Mt 10:28; Mk 9:43, 47).

**J.A. Thompson:** Even worse than imitating the apostasy of the Northern Kingdom, Ahaz is condemned for behaving as the cursed Canaanites, whose culture was so vile that God had ordered its elimination (Lev 18:28; 20:23; Deut 7:22-26; 12:2-4; 18:9- 14). Little wonder that Yahweh visited Ahaz with judgment in the form of an Aramean attack.

**Spurgeon** -The worship of Moloch was one of the most horrible that can be imagined. A brazen image was made terribly hot, and then children were thrust into its burning arms to be consumed; and this king went to such a length that he gave his own children to death in that cruel fashion in the place commonly called by the Jews Topheth, or, the place of spitting, since it was so loathsome to them to think of this false God.

**John Schultz:** Evidently, in the worship of Molech, babies and young children were thrown alive in the mouth of the idol in which a fire was burning. When Israel was on her way to Canaan, God warned them about the atrocious practices of the people of the land. We read: “Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the Lord.” And: “You must not worship the Lord your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the Lord hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.”

**Morris** - Whoever this man Hinnom may have been, his name eventually became attached to this valley of fire, where the fiery sacrifices of children to the "god" Molech were made. This practice was eventually halted by King Josiah (see notes on 2 Kings 16:3; 23:10).

**Believer's Study Bible** - The "Valley of the Son of Hinnom" is first mentioned in Scripture as the boundary between Judah and Benjamin (cf. Josh. 15:8; 18:16). In this valley was the site of Topheth, where parents offered their children as human sacrifices by making them pass through the fires dedicated to the idol Molech (cf. 2 Kin. 23:10) as a part of their idolatrous worship (v. 3; cf. 33:6). Jeremiah refers to this place as the "Valley of Slaughter" (Jer. 7:29-34; 19:2-6). King Josiah would later strive to end these idolatrous abominations by making the Valley of Hinnom into a dumping ground for refuse from the city of Jerusalem (cf. 2Ch 34:3-5; 2 Kin. 23:13, 14). Fires smoldered perpetually in the valley, and it became a place of desolation. In the N.T. the word Gehenna, the Greek transliteration of a Hebrew phrase meaning "the Valley of Hinnom" (cf. Josh. 15:8; Matt. 11:23, note), is used to describe the place of eternal separation from God and punishment for sin.

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**HINNOM, VALLEY OF [ISBE]** - hin'-om (ge hinnom, Josh 15:8; 18:16; "valley of the son of Hinnom" (ge bhen hinnom), Josh 15:8; 18:16; 2 Ch 28:3; 33:6; Jer 7:31 f; 19:2,6; 32:35; "valley of the children (sons) of Hinnom" (ge bhene hinnom), 2 Ki 23:10; or

simply "the valley," literally, the "hollow" or "ravine" (ha-gay'), 2 Ch 26:9; Neh 2:13,15; 3:13; Jer 31:40 and, perhaps also, Jer 2:23 (the above references are in the Hebrew text; there are some variations in the Septuagint): The meaning of "Hinnom" is unknown; the expressions ben Hinnom and bene Hinnom would suggest that it is a proper name; in Jer 7:32; 19:6 it is altered by the prophet to "valley of slaughter," and therefore some have thought the original name must have had a pleasing meaning.

### 1. Bible References and History:

It was near the walls of Jerusalem, "by the entry of the gate Harsith" (Jer 19:2); the Valley Gate opened into it (Neh 2:13; 3:13). The boundary between Judah and Benjamin ran along it (Josh 15:8; 18:16). It was the scene of idolatrous practices in the days of Ahaz (2 Ch 28:3) and of Manasseh, who "made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom" (2 Ch 33:6), but Josiah in the course of his reforms "defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children (margin "son") of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (2 Ki 23:10). It was on account of these evil practices that Jeremiah (7:32; 19:6) announced the change of name. Into this valley dead bodies were probably cast to be consumed by the dogs, as is done in the Wady er-Rababi today, and fires were here kept burning to consume the rubbish of the city. Such associations led to the Ge-Hinnom (New Testament "Gehenna") becoming the "type of Hell" (Milton, Paradise Lost, i, 405).

- See [GEHENNA](#).

### 2. Situation:

The Valley of Hinnom has been located by different writers in each of the three great valleys of Jerusalem. In favor of the eastern or Kidron valley we have the facts that Eusebius and Jerome (Onom) place "Gehennom" under the eastern wall of Jerusalem and the Moslem geographical writers, Muqaddasi and Nasir-i-khusran, call the Kidron valley Wady Jahamum. The Jewish writer Kimchi also identifies the Valley of Jehoshaphat (i.e. the Kidron) with Hinnom. These ideas are probably due to the identification of the eastern valley, on account of its propinquity to the Temple, as the scene of the last judgment--the "Valley of Jehoshaphat" of Joel 3:2--and the consequent transference there of the scene of the punishment of the wicked, Gehenna, after the ancient geographical position of the Valley of Hinnom, had long been lost. In selecting sacred sites, from the 4th Christian century onward, no critical topographical acumen has been displayed until quite modern times. There are three amply sufficient arguments against this view: (1) the Kidron valley is always called a nachal and not a gay' (see KIDRON); (2) the "Gate of the Gai" clearly did not lie to the East of the city; (3) En-rogel, which lay at the beginning of the Valley of Hinnom and to its East (Josh 15:8; 18:16) cannot be the "Virgin's fount," the ancient Gihon (2 Sam 17:17).

Several distinguished modern writers have sought to identify the Tyropeon Valley (el Wad) with Hinnom, but as the Tyropeon was incorporated within the city walls before the days of Manasseh (see JERUSALEM), it is practically impossible that it could have been the scene of the sacrifice of children--a ritual which must have occurred beyond the city's limits (2 Ki 23:10, etc.).

### 3. Wady er-Rababi:

The clearest geographical fact is found in Josh 15:8; 18:16, where we find that the boundary of Judah and Benjamin passed from En-rogel "by the valley of the son of Hinnom"; if the modern Bir Eyyub is En-rogel, as is certainly most probable, then the Wady er-Rababi, known traditionally as Hinnom, is correctly so called. It is possible that the name extended to the wide open land formed by the junction of the three valleys; indeed, some would place Tophet at this spot, but there is no need to extend the name beyond the actual gorge. The Wady er-Rababi commences in a shallow, open valley due West of the Jaffa Gate, in the center of which lies the Birket Mamilla; near the Jaffa Gate it turns South for about 1/3 of a mile, its course being dammed here to form a large pool, the Birket es Sultan. Below this it gradually curves to the East and rapidly descends between sides of bare rocky scarps, much steeper in ancient times. A little before the valley joins the wide Kidron valley lies the traditional site of [HAKELDAMA](#) (which see).

#### Masterman

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**TOPHET** - = Topheth, from Heb. toph "a drum," because the cries of children here sacrificed by the priests of Moloch were drowned by the noise of such an instrument; or from taph or toph, meaning "to burn," and hence a place of burning, the name of a particular part in the valley of Hinnom. "Fire being the most destructive of all elements, is chosen by the sacred writers to symbolize the agency by which God punishes or destroys the wicked. We are not to assume from prophetic figures that material fire is the precise agent to be used. It was not the agency employed in the destruction of Sennacherib, mentioned in Isa. 30:33...**Tophet properly begins where the Vale of Hinnom bends round to the east, having the cliffs of Zion on the north, and the Hill of Evil Counsel on the south.** It terminates at Beer 'Ayub, where it joins the Valley of Jehoshaphat. The cliffs on the southern side especially abound in ancient tombs. Here the dead carcasses of beasts and every offal and abomination were cast, and left to be either devoured by that worm that never died or consumed by that fire that was never quenched." Thus Tophet came to represent the place of punishment.



**QUESTION - [What is the significance of Topheth in the Bible?](#)** (a 'high place' in the valley of Hinnom outside Jerusalem)

**ANSWER** - The word *Topheth*, alternatively spelled *Tophet*, is thought by some to originate from the Aramaic word *taphya*, which meant “hearth, fireplace or roaster.” Others link it to the word *toph* (“drum”), leading to the idea that drums were used in the pagan worship rituals associated with Tophet. What is certain is that Topheth was not a cozy fireplace for Israelites to keep warm. Its first mention is in 2 Kings 23:10 when [King Josiah](#) “defiled Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, that no one might burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech” (ESV). Topheth was a place where the Israelites committed the despicable act of child sacrifice, a practice God strictly condemned (Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 12:31). King Josiah’s reforms included “defiling” Topheth, making it unusable as a gathering place.

Unfortunately, the Israelites had disregarded God’s command and sacrificed their children to the god [Molech](#) at Topheth in the Valley of Hinnom, at the south end of Jerusalem. Kings like Ahaz and Manasseh are examples of rulers who indulged in this abhorrent practice (2 Kings 16:3; 21:6). Prophets such as Jeremiah and Isaiah confronted the Israelites about their child sacrifice, suggesting that the practice continued even after the steps Josiah took to end such atrocities.

Jeremiah 7:31–32 records the prophet’s declaration, “They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire—something I did not command, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when people will no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room.”

The prophet Isaiah also had things to say about child sacrifice: “You who burn with lust among the oaks and under every green tree, who slaughter your children in the valleys, under the clefts of the rocks? Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot; to them you have poured out a drink offering, you have brought a grain offering. Shall I relent for these things?” (Isaiah 57:5–6). And in Isaiah 30:33, the prophet makes a metaphorical reference to Topheth in pronouncing judgment on the king of Assyria: “Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the king. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze.”

There is evidence of child sacrifice being practiced in many cultures around the world. Some cases were documented in Greco-Roman sources like Plutarch and [Tertullian](#), and archaeologists continue to uncover sites of ritualistic mass murder of children ([www.cbsnews.com/news/biggest-child-sacrifice-evidence-archaeologists-national-geographic-peru-chimu/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/biggest-child-sacrifice-evidence-archaeologists-national-geographic-peru-chimu/), accessed 8/9/23). But child sacrifice is not just an outrage of ancient times. The practice is still alive in places like Uganda ([www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15255357](http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-15255357), accessed 8/9/23) and India ([www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/05/india.theobserver](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/mar/05/india.theobserver), accessed 8/9/23). One can also see the connection between abortion and child sacrifice as many unborn babies around the world are killed daily.

Topheth symbolizes the extent of the Israelites’ rebellion, which ultimately led to their exile. God dealt with the Canaanites for engaging in similar practices (Leviticus 18:24–25), and He did not spare the Israelites. God must judge such a horrendous action as child sacrifice..

After Josiah’s reforms, Topheth became a landfill of sorts—a vile place of burning garbage, raw sewage, and the rotting flesh of the bodies of executed criminals. The Valley of Hinnom, also called [Gehenna](#), had a wicked reputation and was utterly unclean. It thus became an apt illustration of the horrors of hell. Jesus mentioned the fiery valley in His warning against divine judgment in Mark 9:47: “If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell [lit., *Gehenna*].”

Topheth reminds us of human depravity and the appropriateness of God’s justice. Praise the Lord for the beauty of the gospel, which saves us from Topheth. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 28:4 He sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills and under every green tree.**

- Lev 26:30 De 12:2,3 2Ki 16:4

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

**Spurgeon** - He could not do enough of it; so many trees, so many altars. There are some men who use every opportunity for sin, with a diligence which should bring the blush into the face of Christians, who are not as diligent in obeying as these men are in sinning. According to the command of God, there was to be but one altar, and that one was to be at Jerusalem; but these people multiplied their altars; there could not be a high place but they must have an idol shrine set up upon it.

**High Places - NOTE prevalence in Kings and Chronicles** -Lev. 26:30; Num. 22:41; Num. 33:52; Deut.

32:13; Deut. 33:29; Jdg. 5:18; 1 Sam. 9:12; 1 Sam. 9:13; 1 Sam. 9:14; 1 Sam. 9:19; 1 Sam. 9:25; 1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Sam. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:19; 2 Sam. 1:25; 2 Sam. 22:34; 1 Ki. 3:2; 1 Ki. 3:3; 1 Ki. 3:4; 1 Ki. 11:7; 1 Ki. 12:31; 1 Ki. 12:32; 1 Ki. 13:2; 1 Ki. 13:32; 1 Ki. 13:33; 1 Ki. 14:23; 1 Ki. 15:14; 1 Ki. 22:43; 2 Ki. 12:3; 2 Ki. 14:4; 2 Ki. 15:4; 2 Ki. 15:35; 2 Ki. 16:4; 2 Ki. 17:9; 2 Ki. 17:11; 2 Ki. 17:29; 2 Ki. 17:32; 2 Ki. 18:4; 2 Ki. 18:22; 2 Ki. 21:3; 2 Ki. 23:5; 2 Ki. 23:8; 2 Ki. 23:9; 2 Ki. 23:13; 2 Ki. 23:15; 2 Ki. 23:19; 2 Ki. 23:20; 1 Chr. 16:39; 1 Chr. 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:3; 2 Chr. 1:13; 2 Chr. 11:15; 2 Chr. 14:3; 2 Chr. 14:5; 2 Chr. 15:17; 2 Chr. 17:6; 2 Chr. 20:33; 2 Chr. 21:11; 2 Chr. 28:4; 2 Chr. 28:25; 2 Chr. 31:1; 2 Chr. 32:12; 2 Chr. 33:3; 2 Chr. 33:17; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 34:3; Ps. 18:33; Ps. 78:58; Prov. 9:14; Eccl. 12:5; Isa. 15:2; Isa. 16:12; Isa. 36:7; Jer. 7:31; Jer. 17:3; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 26:18; Jer. 32:35; Jer. 48:35; Ezek. 6:3; Ezek. 6:6; Ezek. 16:16; Ezek. 16:24; Ezek. 16:25; Ezek. 16:31; Ezek. 16:39; Ezek. 20:29; Hos. 10:8; Amos 4:13; Amos 7:9; Mic. 1:3; Mic. 1:5; Mic. 3:12; Hab. 3:19

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**High places** (01116) **bamah** Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - [NET Note](#) = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp [Isa 58:14](#)) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Chr 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and **Josiah** (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about **Josiah** 300 years earlier = [1Ki 13:2](#)) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son **Manasseh** rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them!

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high places** in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

One of the most incredible (and saddest) verses in the OT (in my opinion) is "Then Solomon built a **high place** for **Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon." (1Ki 11:7, cp 1Ki 3:3 = Solomon had "half a heart" for God!) This was too much for Jehovah and He declared that the 12 tribes would be split as a result of Solomon's sin! Sin is costly. You may think you are getting away with it, but you are not! You may think you are the wisest man in the world (like Solomon) but you are really the most foolish (as Solomon was)! There was one high place that was not idolatrous (at least not at the outset) - "Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness." (2Chr 1:3, cp 1Chr 16:39-40, 21:29).

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - 2 CHRONICLES 28:24—Did Ahaz encourage or oppose worship in the Jerusalem temple?**

**PROBLEM:** In 2 Kings 16:15, Ahaz encouraged the worship of the Lord in the temple. But, in 2 Chronicles 28 he is said to have "shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem" (v. 24).

**SOLUTION:** First of all, even in 2 Kings, during his earlier reign, Ahaz was said to be an evil king who "did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God" (16:2). He even "took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord ... and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria" (v. 8). During this period, he encouraged only a corrupt form of worship in the pilfered Jerusalem temple (v. 15).

Furthermore, the 2 Chronicles passages refers to a later, even more corrupt, part of his reign. During this period of apostasy, he shut up the house of the Lord completely and set up his own centers of worship



**2 Chronicles 28:5 Wherefore, the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Aram; and they defeated him and carried away from him a great number of captives and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who inflicted him with heavy casualties.**

- his God (KJV): 2Ch 36:5 Ex 20:2,3
- delivered him (KJV): 2Ch 24:24 33:11 36:17 Jud 2:14 2Ki 16:5,6 Isa 7:1,6

**Wherefore, the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Aram; and they defeated him and carried away from him a great number of captives and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who inflicted him with heavy casualties.**

**John Olley:** The Chronicler repeatedly shows how the chaos was the Lord's judgment on Ahaz's "faithlessness" (2 Chron. 28:5 ["therefore"], 2Ch 28:9, 19, 22–23, 25). Ahaz's rejection of worship of the Lord and his active embracing of other gods (a sign of desperation?) was characteristic of his entire reign.

**Spurgeon** - It did not look as if the captives would ever return; yet the prophet's son was named Shear-jashub, "The remnant shall return." Ahaz might have said to Isaiah, "Your child's name is a lie." We shall see.

**2 Chronicles 28:6 For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah 120,000 in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.**

- Pekah (KJV): 2Ki 15:27,37 Isa 7:4,5,9 9:21
- an hundred (KJV): 2Ch 13:17
- valiant men (KJV): Heb. sons of valour
- because (KJV): 2Ch 15:2 De 6:14,15 28:15,25 29:24-26 31:16,17 32:20 Jos 23:16 Jos 24:20 Isa 1:28 24:5,6 Jer 2:19 15:6

**For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah 120,000 in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.**

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**PEKAH [ISBE]** - pe'-ka (peqach, "opening" (of the eyes) (2 Ki 15:25-31); Phakee):

### 1. Accession:

Son of Remaliah, and 18th king of Israel. Pekah murdered his predecessor, Pekahiah, and seized the reins of power (2 Ki 15:25). His usurpation of the throne is said to have taken place in the 52nd year of Uzziah, and his reign to have lasted for 20 years (2 Ki 15:27). His accession, therefore, may be placed in 748 BC (other chronologies place it later, and make the reign last only a few years).

Pekah came to the throne with the resolution of assisting in forming a league to resist the westward advance of Assyria. The memory of defeat by Assyria at the battle of Karkar in 753, more than 100 years before, had never died out.

### 2. Attitude of Assyria:

Tiglath-pileser III was now ruler of Assyria, and in successive campaigns since 745 had proved himself a resistless conqueror. His lust for battle was not yet satisfied, and the turn of Philistia and Syria was about to come. In 735, a coalition, of which Pekah was a prominent member, was being formed to check his further advance. It comprised the princes of Comagene, Gebal, Hamath, Arvad, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Gaza, Samaria, Syria, and some minor potentates, the list being taken from a roll of the subject-princes who attended a court and paid tribute after the fall of Damascus. Ahaz likewise attended as a voluntary tributary to do homage to Tiglath-pileser (2 Ki 16:10).

### 3. Judah Recalcitrant:

While the plans of the allies were in course of formation, an obstacle was met with which proved insurmountable by the arts of diplomacy. This was the refusal of Ahaz, then on the throne of David, to join the confederacy. Arguments and threats having failed to move him, resort was had to force, and the troops of Samaria and Damascus moved on Jerusalem (2 Ki 16:5). Great alarm was felt at the news of their approach,

as seen in the 7th and 8th chapters of Isa. The allies had in view to dispossess Ahaz of his crown, and give it to one of their own number, a son of Tabeel. Isaiah himself was the mainstay of the opposition to their projects. The policy he advocated, by divine direction, was that of complete neutrality. This he urged with passionate earnestness, but with only partial success. Isaiah (probably) had kept back Ahaz from joining the coalition, but could not prevent him from sending an embassy, laden with gifts to Tiglath-pileser, to secure his intervention. On the news arriving that the Assyrian was on the march, a hasty retreat was made from Jerusalem, and the blow soon thereafter fell, where Isaiah had predicted, on Rezin and Pekah, and their kingdoms.

#### **4. Chronicles Ancillary to Kings:**

The severely concise manner in which the writer of Kings deals with the later sovereigns of the Northern Kingdom is, in the case of Pekah, supplemented in Chronicles by further facts as to this campaign of the allies. The Chronicler states that "a great multitude of captives" were taken to Damascus and many others to Samaria. These would be countrymen and women from the outlying districts of Judah, which were ravaged. Those taken to Samaria were, however, returned, unhurt, to Jericho by the advice of the prophet Oded (2 Ch 28:5-15).

#### **5. Fall of Damascus; Northern and Eastern Palestine Overrun:**

The messengers sent from Jerusalem to Nineveh appear to have arrived when the army of Tiglath-pileser was already prepared to march. The movements of the Assyrians being expedited, they fell upon Damascus before the junction of the allies was accomplished. Rezin was defeated in a decisive battle, and took refuge in his capital, which was closely invested. Another part of the invading army descended on the upper districts of Syria and Samaria. Serious resistance to the veteran troops of the East could hardly be made, and city after city fell. A list of districts and cities that were overrun is given in 2 Ki 15:29. It comprises Gilead beyond Jordan--already partly depopulated (1 Ch 5:26); the tribal division of Naphtali, lying to the West of the lakes of Galilee and Merom, and all Galilee, as far South as the plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel. Cities particularly mentioned are Ijon (now `Ayun), Abel-beth-maacah (now `Abi), Janoah (now Yanun), Kedesh (now Kados) and Hazor (now Hadireh).

#### **6. Deportation of the Inhabitants:**

These places and territories were not merely attacked and plundered. Their inhabitants were removed, with indescribable loss and suffering, to certain districts in Assyria, given as Halah, Habor, Hara, and both sides of the river Gozan, an affluent of the Euphrates. The transplantation of these tribes to a home beyond the great river was a new experiment in political geography, devised with the object of welding the whole of Western Asia into a single empire. It was work of immense difficulty and must have taxed the resources of even so great an organizer as Tiglath-pileser. The soldiers who had conquered in the field were, of course, employed to escort the many thousands of prisoners to their new locations. About two-thirds of the Samaritan kingdom, comprising the districts of Samaria, the two Galilees, and the trans-Jordanic region, was thus denuded of its inhabitants.

#### **7. Death of Pekah:**

Left with but a third of his kingdom--humbled but still defiant--Pekah was necessarily unpopular with his subjects. In this extremity--the wave of invasion from the North having spent itself--the usual solution occurred, and a plot was formed by which the assassination of Pekah should be secured, and the assassin should take his place as a satrap of Assyria. A tool was found in the person of Hoshea, whom Tiglath-pileser claims to have appointed to the throne. The Biblical narrative does not do more than record the fact that "Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead" (2 Ki 15:30). The date given to this act is the 20th year of Jotham. As Jotham's reign lasted but 16 years, this number is evidently an error.

#### **8. References in Isaiah:**

For the first time, the historian makes no reference to the religious conduct of a king of Israel. The subject was beneath notice. The second section of Isaiah's prophecies (Isa 7:1 through 10:4) belongs to the reign of Ahaz and thus to the time of Pekah, both of whom are named in it. Pekah is named in Isa 7:1, and is often, in this and the next chapter, referred to as "the son of Remaliah." His loss of the territorial divisions of Zebulun and Naphtali is referred to in 9:1, and is followed by prophecy of their future glory as the earthly home of the Son of Man. The wording of Isa 9:14 shows that it was written before the fall of Samaria, and that of Isa 10:9-11 that

### **Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 28:6-15**

We have here,

**I. Treacherous Judah under the rebukes of God's providence, and they are very severe.** Never was such bloody work made among them since they were a kingdom, and by Israelites too. Ahaz walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and the king of Israel was the instrument God made use of for his punishment. It is just with God to make those our plagues whom we make our patterns or make ourselves partners with in sin. A war broke out between Judah and Israel, in which Judah was worsted. For,

**1. There was a great slaughter of men in the field of battle.** Vast numbers (120,000 men, and valiant men too at other times) were slain (2Ch 28:6) and some of the first rank, the king's son for one. He had sacrificed some of his sons to Moloch; justly therefore is this sacrificed to the divine vengeance. Here is another that was next the king, his friend, the prime-minister of state, or perhaps next him in the battle, so that the king himself had a narrow escape, 2Ch 28:7. The kingdom of Israel was not strong at this time, and yet strong enough to bring this great destruction upon Judah. But certainly so many men, great men, stout men, could not have been cut off in one day if they had not been strangely dispirited both by the consciousness of their own guilt and by the righteous hand of God upon them. Even valiant men were numbered as sheep for the slaughter, and became an easy prey to the enemy because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers, and he had therefore forsaken them.

**2. There was a great captivity of women and children,** 2Ch 28:8. When the army in the field was routed, the cities, and towns, and country villages, were all easily stripped, the inhabitants taken for slaves, and their wealth for a prey.

**II. Even victorious Israel under the rebuke of God's word for the bad principle they had gone upon in making war with Judah and the bad use they had made of their success, and the good effect of this rebuke.** Here is,

**1. The message which God sent them by a prophet, who went out to meet them** not to applaud their valour or congratulate them on their victory, though they returned laden with spoils and triumphs, but in God's name to tell them of their faults and warn them of the judgments of God.

**(1.) He told them how they came by this victory of which they were so proud.** It was not because God favoured them, or that they had merited it at his hand, but because he was wroth with Judah, and made them the rod of his indignation. Not for your righteousness, be it known to you, but for their wickedness (Deu. 9:5) they are broken off; therefore be not you high-minded, but fear lest God also spare not you, Ro 11:20, 21.

**(2.) He charged them with the abuse of the power God had given them over their brethren** Those understand not what victory is who think it gives them authority to do what they will, and that the longest sword is the clearest claim to lives and estates (Jusque datum sceleri-might is right); no, as it is impolitic not to use a victory, so it is impious to abuse it. The conquerors are here reprov'd,

**{1.} For the cruelty of the slaughter they had made in the field.** They had indeed shed the blood of war in war; we suppose that to be lawful, but it turned into sin to them, because they did it from a bad principle of enmity to their brethren and after a bad manner, with a barbarous fury, a rage reaching up to heaven, that is, that cried to God for vengeance against such bloody men, that delighted in military execution. Those that serve God's justice, if they do it with rage and a spirit of revenge, make themselves obnoxious to it, and forfeit the honour of acting for him; for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

**{2.} For the imperious treatment they gave their prisoners.** "You now purpose to keep them under, to use them or sell them as slaves, though they are your brethren and free-born Israelites." God takes notice of what men purpose, as well as of what they say and do.

**(3.) He reminded them of their own sins, by which they also were obnoxious to the wrath of God:** Are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? 2Ch 28:10. He appeals to their own consciences, and to the notorious evidence of the thing. "Though you are now made the instruments of correcting Judah for sin, yet do not think that you are therefore innocent yourselves; no, you also are guilty before God." This is intended as a check,

**{1.} To their triumph in their success.** "You are sinners, and it ill becomes sinners to be proud; you have carried the day now, but be not secure, the wheel may ere long return upon yourselves, for, if judgment begin thus with those that have the house of God among them, what shall be the end of such as worship the calves?"

**{2.} To their severity towards their brethren.** "You have now got them under, but you ought to show mercy to them, for you yourselves are undone if you do not find mercy with God. It ill becomes sinners to be cruel. You have transgressions enough to answer for already, and need not add this to the rest."

**(4.) He commanded them to release the prisoners, and to send them home again carefully** (2Ch 28:11); "for you having sinned, the fierce wrath of God is upon you, and there is no other way of escaping it than by showing mercy."

**2. The resolution of the princes thereupon not to detain the prisoners** They stood up against those that came from the war, though flushed with victory, and told them plainly that they should not bring their captives into Samaria, 2Ch 28:12, 13. They had sin enough already to answer for, and would have nothing done to add to their trespass. In this they discovered an obedient regard to the word of God by his prophet and a tender compassion towards their brethren, which was wrought in them by the tender mercy of God; for he regarded the affliction of this poor people, and hears their cry, and made them to be pitied of all those that carried them captive, Ps. 106:44, 46.

**3. The compliance of the soldiers with the resolutions of the princes in this matter, and the dismissal of the captives thereupon.**

**(1.) The armed men, though being armed they might be force have maintained their title to what they got by the sword, acquiesced, and left their captives and the spoil to the disposal of the princes** (2Ch 28:14), and herein they showed more truly heroic bravery than they did in taking them. It is a great honour for any man to yield to the authority of reason and religion against his interest.

**(2.) The princes very generously sent home the poor captives well accommodated,** 2Ch 28:15. Those that hope to find mercy with God must learn hence with what tenderness to carry themselves towards those that lie at their mercy. It is strange that these princes, who in this instance discovered such a deference to the word of God, and such an influence upon the people, had not so much grace as, in obedience to the calls of God by so many prophets, to root idolatry out of their kingdom, which, soon after this, was the ruin of it.

**2 Chronicles 28:7 And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son and Azrikam the ruler of the house and Elkanah the second to the king.**

- next to the king (KJV): Heb. the second to the king, Ge 41:43 43:12,15 Es 10:3

**And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son and Azrikam the ruler of the house and Elkanah the second to the king.**

Andrew Hill: Beyond the sheer totals, the devastating losses to Judah are compounded by the deaths of key officials, namely, "the king's son," the overseer of the palace, and the leader who is "second to the king" (2Ch 28:7). The expression "the king's son" may be a title for a high-ranking officer, or the person named Maaseiah may be one of the royal princes. The title "second to the king" occurs elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Esther 10:3, where context suggests it is the office held by the senior political adviser. In any case, the deaths of three members of Ahaz's "cabinet" would have had a crippling effect in the administration of political and military affairs in Judah.

**2 Chronicles 28:8 The sons of Israel carried away captive of their brethren 200,000 women, sons and daughters; and they took also a great deal of spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.**

- carried (KJV): De 28:25,41
- brethren (KJV): 2Ch 11:4 Ac 7:26 13:26

The sons of Israel carried away captive of their brethren 200,000 women, sons and daughters; and they took also a great deal of spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

**2 Chronicles 28:9** But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out to meet the army which came to Samaria and said to them, “Behold, because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand, and you have slain them in a rage which has even reached heaven.

- he went out (KJV): 2Ch 19:1,2 25:15,16 1Ki 20:13,22,42 2Ki 20:14,15
- Behold (KJV): To this beautiful speech nothing can be added by the best comment: it is simple, humane, pious, and overwhelmingly convincing; and it is no wonder that it produced the effect here described. That there was much humanity, as well as firmness, in the heads of the children of Ephraim, who joined with the prophet of Jehovah on this occasion, their subsequent conduct, as detailed in the fifteenth verse, sufficiently proves. They did not barely dismiss these most unfortunate captives, but they took that very spoil which their victorious army had taken, and with clothed, shod, fed, and anointed these distressed people, set the feeblest of them upon asses, and escorted them safely to Jericho! We can scarcely find a parallel to this in the universal history of the wars which savage man has carried on against his fellows from the foundation of the world. The compliance also of the whole army, in leaving both the captives and spoil to the disposal of the princes, was really wonderful, and perhaps unparalleled in history. Both the princes and army are worthy to be held up to the admiration and imitation of mankind.
- because the Lord God (KJV): 2Ch 28:5 Judges 3:8 Ps 69:26 Isa 10:5-7 47:6 Jer 15:17,18 Eze 25:12-17 Eze 26:2,3 Ob 1:10-16 Zec 1:15
- reacheth (KJV): Ge 4:10 11:4 Ezr 9:6 Rev 18:5

**But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out to meet the army which came to Samaria and said to them, “Behold, because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand, and you have slain them in a rage which has even reached heaven.**

**Ryrie** - 28:9-15 This section, not found in 2 Kings, relates how an otherwise unknown prophet, Oded, led a protest against the Northern Kingdom's retaining the prisoners of war from the Southern Kingdom because they were brothers. The result was that the prisoners were clothed, cared for, and returned to Jericho.

**Spurgeon** - It was very wonderful that these wild fellows should listen to this prophet with all those captives round about them. It was a brave act on the part of the prophet Oded to go out, and utter his protest.

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**ODED [ISBE]** A prophet of Samaria (2 Ch 28:9) who lived in the reigns of Pekah, king of the Northern Kingdom, and Ahaz, king of Judah. According to 2 Ch 28, Oded protested against the enslavement of the captives which Pekah had brought from Judah and Jerusalem on his return from the Syro-Ephraimitic attack on the Southern Kingdom (735 BC). In this protest he was joined by some of the chiefs of Ephraim, and the captives were well treated. After those who were naked (i.e. those who had scanty clothing; compare the meaning of the word "naked" in Mk 14:51) had been supplied with clothing from the spoil, and the bruised anointed with oil, the prisoners were escorted to Jericho.

The narrative of 2 Ch 28 as a whole does not agree with that of 2 Ki 15:37; 16:5 f, where the allied armies of Rezin of Damascus and Pekah besieged Jerusalem, but failed to capture it (compare Isa 7:1-17; 8:5-8a). As Curtis points out (Chronicles, 459, where he compares Ex 21:2 ff; Lev 25:29-43; Dt 15:12-18), wholesale enslavement of their fellow-countrymen was not allowed to the Hebrews, and this fact the passage illustrates. It seems to be a fulfillment in spirit of Isa 61:1-2, a portion which our Lord read in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk 4:16-20). David Francis Roberts

**2 Chronicles 28:10** “Now you are proposing to subjugate for yourselves the people of Judah and Jerusalem for male and female slaves. Surely, do you not have transgressions of your own against the LORD your God?”

- keep (KJV): Lev 25:39-46
- not with (KJV): Jer 25:29 Mt 7:2-4 Ro 12:20,21 1Pe 4:17,18
- the Lord (KJV): 2Ch 28:5

**Now you are proposing to subjugate for yourselves the people of Judah and Jerusalem for male and female slaves. Surely,**

## do you not have transgressions of your own against the LORD your God

J.A. Thompson: Any intention to make the people of Judah slaves was a breach of the law that forbade the enslaving of fellow Israelites (Lev 25:39-55). Short-term slavery of one Israelite to another was allowable, but ruling over one's brothers "ruthlessly" (Lev 25:43) was forbidden. Israel itself was only a hairsbreadth from judgment. Repentance toward God and magnanimity toward their brethren was called for. They had taken prisoners. These should be sent back. Repentance required some display of appropriate action.

Martin Selman: 3 Reasons given by the prophet to return the captives: 1) the Israelites had reacted with excessive rage (2Ch 28:9), 2) their plan to subject the Judean prisoners of war to the usual fate of slavery was unacceptable (2Ch 28:10a), and 3) they had "committed sins" (2Ch 28:10b)

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### C H Spurgeon - A home question ([sermon](#))

"But are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God?" 2 Chronicles 28:10

Tell him that his sins deserve the wrath of hell. Make him feel that it is an awful thing to fall into the hands of our God, for he is a consuming fire. Then throw him down on a bed of spikes, and make him sleep there if he can. Roll him on the spikes, and tell him that bad as he is, he is worse by nature than by practice. Make him feel that the leprosy lies deep within. Give him no rest. Treat him as cruelly as he could treat another. It would only be his deserts. But who is this that I am telling you to treat so? Yourself, my hearer, yourself. Be as severe as you can, but let the culprit be yourself. Put on the wig, and sit upon the judgment-seat. Read the king's commission. There is such a commission for you to be a judge. It says—Judge thyself—though it says judge not others. Put on, I say, your robes; sit up there Lord Chief Justice of the Isle of Man, and then bring up the culprit. Make him stand at the bar. Accuse him; plead against him; condemn him. Say: "Take him away, jailor." Find out the hardest punishment you can discover in the statute book, and believe that he deserves it all. Be as severe as ever you can on yourself, even to the putting on the black cap, and reading the sentence of death. When you have done this, you will be in a hopeful way for life, for he that condemns himself God absolves. He that stands self-convicted, may look to Christ hanging on the cross, and see himself hanging there, and see his sins for ever put away by the sacrifice of Jesus on the tree.

**2 Chronicles 28:11 "Now therefore, listen to me and return the captives whom you captured from your brothers, for the burning anger of the LORD is against you."**

- deliver (KJV): Isa 58:6 Jer 34:14,15 Heb 13:1-3
- the fierce (KJV): Ezr 10:14 Mt 5:7 7:2 Jas 2:13

**Now therefore, listen to me and return the captives whom you captured from your brothers, for the burning anger of the LORD is against you."**

August Konkell: The response of the Israelites to the appeal of Obed the prophet is further evidence of the unity that God intends for his people. It is testimony to the firm belief of the Chronicler that this is one nation. The political realities that have come about must not give a false impression of that underlying reality. It is seen in the way the words of the prophet can subvert political and material ambitions with spiritual victory and community concord. In the darkest time of a virtual exile for Judah, there is at the same time the evidence of the light the darkness cannot overcome.

**2 Chronicles 28:12 Then some of the heads of the sons of Ephraim—Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai—arose against those who were coming from the battle,**

- the heads (KJV): 1Ch 28:1
- stood up (KJV): Jer 26:6

**Then some of the heads of the sons of Ephraim—Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai—arose against those who were coming from the battle**

**Andrew Hill:** Unlike King Ahaz and their Judean counterparts, the leadership of Israel responds to the word of God through the prophet Obed and repents of their actions (2Ch 28:12-13).



**2 Chronicles 28:13 and said to them, “You must not bring the captives in here, for you are proposing to bring upon us guilt against the LORD adding to our sins and our guilt; for our guilt is great so that His burning anger is against Israel.”**

- add more (KJV): Nu 32:14 Jos 22:17,18 Mt 23:32,35 Ro 2:5

**and said to them, “You must not bring the captives in here, for you are proposing to bring upon us guilt against the LORD adding to our sins and our guilt; for our guilt is great so that His burning anger is against Israel.”**

**2 Chronicles 28:14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the officers and all the assembly.**

**So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the officers and all the assembly.**

Iain Duguid: At a time when Israel was about to end as a nation due to her apostasy, experiencing the Lord’s “fierce wrath,” the Chronicler tells of the Ephraimites’ confession of “great guilt” and actions that demonstrated some repentance. The positive treatment of the captives is given in much detail; they could not have done more! Political reunion may not have been possible at that chaotic time (“they returned to Samaria”), but the compassionate righting of all the damage involved in taking captives is commended.

Martin Selman: The Chronicler’s message, which must have been clear to his contemporaries, is that God’s mercy was freely available even to captives. The story is in fact so striking that Jesus used it twice in his teaching. Anointing of the prisoners’ wounds, the mention of donkeys and of Jericho make this an important source of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), while the provision of food and clothing to brothers who are naked and hungry prisoners clearly lied behind Matthew 25:34-46. No-one’s situation is too hopeless for God to redeem, and he reserves the right to show mercy through the most unexpected people, even one’s traditional enemies (cf. Jon. 1-4; Acts 10:1–11:18).

**2 Chronicles 28:15 Then the men who were designated by name arose, took the captives, and they clothed all their naked ones from the spoil; and they gave them clothes and sandals, fed them and gave them drink, anointed them with oil, led all their feeble ones on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brothers; then they returned to Samaria.**

- expressed by name (KJV): 2Ch 28:12
- clothed (KJV): Job 31:15-23 Isa 58:7 Mt 25:35-45 Ac 9:39 1Ti 5:10 Jas 2:15,16 1Jn 3:17,18
- gave them (KJV): 2Ki 6:22 Pr 25:21,22 Lu 6:27 8:27,35 Ro 12:20,21
- carried (KJV): Ro 15:1
- the city (KJV): De 34:3 Judges 1:16

**Then the men who were designated by name arose, took the captives, and they clothed all their naked ones from the spoil; and they gave them clothes and sandals, fed them and gave them drink, anointed them with oil, led all their feeble ones on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brothers; then they returned to Samaria.**

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**F B Meyer - 2 Chronicles 28:15 They clothed all that were naked, and gave them to eat and drink.**

A great burst of generosity was here, for Israel had every reason to be incensed against Judah for the raid made on their territory. But, instead of pushing their advantage to the uttermost, they returned good for evil, and anticipated the words of the apostle, “If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.”

Have you in your life people who have done you injury, and against whom you entertain hard thoughts? You do not injure them in return, but you cannot pray for them. So far as you can, you avoid them; you make no attempt to overcome the evil that is in them. But to act thus is to come short of Christ’s standard. It is your duty, not merely to keep at a distance and give a wide berth, but by love to destroy the evil, to transform the enemy into a friend, and to create love and friendship where hostility and alienation had reigned. It is God’s way, and in this we are bidden to be perfect, as our Heavenly Father is perfect.

Will you try it? Will you begin by doing kind acts to those who have harmed you? Not because as yet you feel as you would, but

because it is right. Then as you dig the trench in right-doing, look up to God, and He will pour into your heart the warm gush of affection. If you sincerely will His will in this matter, and act as the Good Samaritan did to the Jew, and exercise faith, God will come to your aid whilst you clothe others and minister to them, you will find their hard heart melted, and yourselves clothed with the beautiful garments of salvation, and of a meek and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is of great price.

## 2 Chronicles 28:16 At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria for help.

- did king (KJV): 2Ki 16:5-7 Isa 7:1-9,17

**At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria for help**([azar](#); Lxx = [boetheo](#)) -

**Andrew Hill:** This dangerous diplomacy of playing one ancient superpower (i.e., Assyria) against another (i.e., Egypt) as an ally in petty border wars with neighboring nations was a ploy of the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II – a tactic soundly condemned by Hosea the prophet (Hos. 7:11).

**Spurgeon** - The king of Assyria was the greatest potentate in that region, and all the little kings were afraid of him, and therefore sent to him for help when they were in trouble. Ahaz made no appeal to God, for the assistance he required, but he turned to the arm of flesh.

**J.A. Thompson:** Ahaz was in dire straits. His predecessors who had been faithful to the Lord had seen God subdue such enemies many times. But Ahaz did not trust in the Lord (cf. Isa 7:10-16). With Philistines and Edomites in the south and the SyroEphraimite invasion in the north (2Ch 28:5-8), he faced a two-front war. The verb “**help**” is important to the Chronicler. God was ever available to “**help**” faithful kings (1 Chr 5:20; 2 Chr 14:11; 18:31; 25:8; 26:7, 15; 32:8). Such “**help**” ([azar](#)) was not available from other sources (vv. 21, 23). Ahaz had turned to human – indeed foreign – help instead of to the God of Israel.

**Spurgeon** -When men are determined to be unbelievers and disobedient, they will send anywhere for help but to the Lord. Israel and Syria were very little kingdoms; but Assyria was a great empire, the mighty nation of the period. Yet no help came to Ahaz from that quarter, for we read in the twentieth verse, “And Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.” The twenty-first verse tells us that Ahaz bribed the king of Assyria; “but he helped him not.” That is always the dirge at the end of all efforts to secure human instead of divine aid.

**Ryrie** - 2Ch 28:16-21 For more on the events of this time period, see note on 2 Kings 15:27-31. afflicted him (v. 20). By the tribute demanded.

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**Help** ([05826](#)) '[azar](#)' means to protect, aid, help, succor, support, give material or nonmaterial encouragement. **Azar** often refers to aid in the form of military assistance and in many instances refers to **help** from Jehovah as illustrated by the uses below. Webster says to **help** means to aid, to assist, to succour (see below), to lend strength or means towards effecting a purpose. To relieve; to cure, or to mitigate pain or disease. To remedy; to change for the better. The **Septuagint** translates '[azar](#)' most often with the word group that includes [boáo](#), [boetheo](#), [boethos](#), all conveying the general idea of running to the aid of one who cries out for help (e.g., see He 2:18+ which uses [boetheo](#)) which is similar to the English word **succour** (from Latin *succurrere* = to run up, run to help) means literally to run to and so to run to to support, to go to the aid of, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to succor a besieged city; to succor prisoners.

**The Theological Lexicon of the OT** notes that...Connotations can vary from “to support” (Ezra 10:15), “to help out” (Josh 1:14; cf. Ge 2:18), “to assist” (Ge 49:25) to “to stand with to deliver” (Da 10:13; cf. Lam 4:17) and “to come to aid” (2Sa 21:17; cf. Ps 60:13 = Ps 108:13). To this extent, the Hebrew terms coincide with the English terms “to help” and “help.” (Jenni, E., & Westermann, C. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (872). Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers)

**Azar - 76v with 22 uses in Chronicles** - Gen. 49:25; Deut. 32:38; Jos. 1:14; Jos. 10:4; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 10:33; 1 Sam. 7:12; 2 Sam. 8:5; 2 Sam. 18:3; 2 Sam. 21:17; **1 Ki. 1:7; 1 Ki. 20:16; 2 Ki. 14:26; 1 Chr. 5:20; 1 Chr. 12:1; 1 Chr. 12:17; 1 Chr. 12:18; 1 Chr. 12:19; 1 Chr. 12:21; 1 Chr. 12:22; 1 Chr. 15:26; 1 Chr. 18:5; 1 Chr. 22:17; 2 Chr. 14:11; 2 Chr. 18:31; 2 Chr. 19:2; 2 Chr. 20:23; 2 Chr. 25:8; 2 Chr. 26:7; 2 Chr. 26:13; 2 Chr. 26:15; 2 Chr. 28:16; 2 Chr. 28:23; 2 Chr. 32:3; 2 Chr. 32:8**; Ezr. 8:22; Ezr. 10:15; Job 9:13; Job 26:2; Job 29:12; Job 30:13; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 22:11; Ps. 28:7; Ps. 30:10; Ps. 37:40; Ps. 46:5; Ps. 54:4; Ps. 72:12; Ps. 79:9; Ps. 86:17; Ps. 107:12; Ps. 109:26; Ps. 118:7; Ps. 118:13; Ps. 119:86; Ps. 119:173; Ps. 119:175; Isa. 30:7; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 41:6; Isa. 41:10; Isa. 41:13; Isa. 41:14; Isa. 44:2; Isa. 49:8; Isa. 50:7; Isa. 50:9; Isa. 63:5; Jer. 47:4; Lam. 1:7; Ezek. 30:8; Dan. 10:13; Dan. 11:34; Dan. 11:45; Zech. 1:15

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## Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 28:16-27

Here is,

### I. The great distress which the kingdom of Ahaz was reduced to for his sin. In general,

**1. The Lord brought Judah low,** 2Ch 28:19. They had lately been very high in wealth and power; but God found means to bring them down, and make them as despicable as they had been formidable. Those that will not humble themselves under the word of God will justly be humbled by his judgments. Iniquity brings men low, Ps. 106:43.

**2. Ahaz made Judah naked.** As his sin debased them, so it exposed them. It made them naked to their shame; for it exposed them to contempt, as a man unclothed. It made them naked to their danger; for it exposed them to assaults, as a man unarmed, Ex. 32:25. Sin strips men. In particular, the Edomites, to be revenged for Amaziah's cruel treatment of them (2Ch 25:12), smote Judah, and carried off many captives, 2Ch 28:17. The Philistines also insulted them, took and kept possession of several cities and villages that lay near them (2Ch 28:18), and so they were revenged for the incursions which Uzziah had made upon them, 2Ch 26:6. And, to show that it was purely the sin of Ahaz that brought the Philistines upon his country, in the very year that he died the prophet Isaiah foretold the destruction of the Philistines by his son, Isa. 14:28, 29.

### II. The addition which Ahaz made both to the national distress and the national guilt.

**1. He added to the distress, by making court to strange kings, in hopes they would relieve him.** When the Edomites and Philistines were vexatious to him, he sent to the kings of Assyria to help him (2Ch 28:16); for he found his own kingdom weakened and made naked, and he could not put any confidence in God, and therefore was at a vast expense to get an interest in the king of Assyria. He pillaged the house of God, and the king's house, and squeezed the princes for money to hire these foreign forces into his service, 2Ch 28:21. Though he had conformed to the idolatry of the heathen nations, his neighbours, they did not value him for that, nor love him the better, nor did his compliance, by which he lost God, gain them, nor could he make any interest in them, but with his money. It is often found that wicked men themselves have no real affection for those that revolt to them, nor do they care to do them a kindness. A degenerate branch is looked upon, on all sides, as an abominable branch, Isa. 14:19. But what did Ahaz get by the king of Assyria? Why, he came to him, but he distressed him, and strengthened him not (2Ch 28:20), helped him not, 2Ch 28:21. The forces of the Assyrian quartered upon his country, and so impoverished and weakened it; they grew insolent and imperious, and created him a great deal of vexation, like a broken reed, which not only fails, but pierces the hand.

**2. He added to the guilt, by making court to strange gods, in hopes they would relieve him.** In his distress, instead of repenting of his idolatry, which he had reason enough to see the folly of, he trespassed yet more (2Ch 28:22), was more mad than ever upon his idols. A brand of infamy is here set upon him for it: This is that king Ahaz, that wretched man, who was the scandal of the house of David and the curse and plague of his generation. Note, Those are wicked and vile indeed that are made worse by their afflictions, instead of being made better by them, who in their distress trespass yet more, have their corruptions exasperated by that which should mollify them, and their hearts more fully set in them to do evil. Let us see what his trespass was.

**(1.) He abused the house of God;** for he cut in pieces the vessels of it, that the priests might not perform the service of the temple, or not as it should be performed, for want of vessels; and, at length, he shut up the doors, that the people might not attend it, 2Ch 28:24. This was worse than the worst of the kings before him had done.

**(2.) He confronted the altar of God,** for he made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem; so that, as the prophet speaks, they were like heaps in the furrows of the fields, Hos. 12:11. And in the cities of Judah, either by his power or by his purse, perhaps by both, he erected high places for the people to burn incense to what idols they pleased, as if on purpose to provoke the God of his fathers, 2Ch 28:25.

**(3.) He cast off God himself;** for he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus (2Ch 28:23), not because he loved them, for he thought they smote him; but because he feared them, thinking that they helped his enemies, and that, if he could bring them into his interest, they would help him. Foolish man! It was his own God that smote him and strengthened the Syrians against him, not the gods of Damascus; had he sacrificed to him, and to him only, he would have helped him. But no marvel that men's affections and devotions are misplaced when they mistake the author of their trouble and their help. And what comes of it? The gods of Syria befriend Ahaz no more than the kings of Assyria did; they were the ruin of him and of

all Israel. This sin provoked God to bring judgments upon them, to cut him off in the midst of his days, when he was but thirty-six years old; and it debauched the people so that the reformation of the next reign could not prevail to cure them of their inclination to idolatry, but they retained that root of bitterness till the captivity in Babylon plucked it up.

The chapter concludes with the conclusion of the reign of Ahaz, 2Ch 28:26, 27. For aught that appears, he died impenitent, and therefore died inglorious; for he was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings. Justly was he thought unworthy to be laid among them who was so unlike them-to be buried with kings who had used his kingly power for the destruction of the church and not for its protection or edification.

## 2 Chronicles 28:17 For again the Edomites had come and attacked Judah and carried away captives.

- the Edomites (KJV): 2Ch 25:11,12 Lev 26:18 Ob 1:10,13,14
- captives (KJV): Heb. a captivity

### For again the Edomites had come and attacked Judah and carried away captives

**Frederick Mabie:** In addition to the pressure on Judah from Aram and Israel to the north (2Ch 28: 5-8), Ahaz also faces pressure in the south as the Edomites launch offensives into Judah (2Ch 28:17). In addition, the Philistines seize several key Judean cities in the Shephelah, including Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Soco, and Timnah (2Ch 28:18). Note that most of these cities were located on the major passes (roads) leading into the central hill country.

**Spurgeon** -The Edomites had been under subjection to Judah; but now that God had left her, Judah could not hold her position.

## 2 Chronicles 28:18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the Negev of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages, and they settled there.

- Philistines (KJV): Eze 16:27,57
- Bethshemesh (KJV): Jos 15:10 1Sa 6:9
- Ajalon (KJV): 2Ch 11:10, Aijalon
- Gederoth (KJV): Jos 15:41
- Shocho (KJV): Jos 15:48, Socoh
- Timnah (KJV): Jud 14:1, Timnath

The **Philistines** also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the Negev of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, and Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages, and they settled there

**Spurgeon** - A people that one might have thought had become extinct, so weak were they that we scarcely hear of them; yet "the Philistines also" —

**Raymond Dillard:** The inciting incident in Ahaz's seeking the help of Tiglath-pileser III was the attack of the Syro-Ephraimite coalition according to 2 Kgs 16:7; here instead it is attacks from the Edomites and Philistines. These two nations were natural allies against Judah and could have been seeking to forge overland trading routes free of Judean influence linking the strategic gulf trade through Elath with the coastal highway to the west; Uzziah had extended Judean control into the region (2Ch 28:7-8). Pressure from the North (2Ch 28:5) would have encouraged opportunism on Judah's southern and western flanks. The attacks from Edom may have been incited by the Arameans to further the interests of the coalition against Judah or the Aram of 2 Kgs 16:6 may have derived from misreading Edom. The cities captured by the Philistines (with the exception of Gimzo) were all along the Ayyalon, Sorek, and Elah valleys in the buffer zone of the Shephelah between the two nations or in the Negev (Arad).

## 2 Chronicles 28:19 For the LORD humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had brought about a lack of restraint in Judah and was very unfaithful to the LORD.

- the Lord (KJV): De 28:43 1Sa 2:7 Job 40:12 Ps 106:41-43 Pr 29:23

- because of Ahaz (KJV): Ho 5:11 Mic 6:16
- Israel (KJV): 2Ch 21:2
- made Judah (KJV): Ge 3:7,11 Ex 32:25 Rev 3:17,18 16:15

**For the LORD humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had brought about a lack of restraint in Judah and was very unfaithful to the LORD**

**Unfaithful** (treachery) ([04604](#)) **maal** from the verb **maal** = to act unfaithfully or treacherously, to violate a legal obligation) is a masculine noun which refers to an unfaithful (not adhering to vows, allegiance, or duty) act, a violation of allegiance (the fidelity owed by a subject to his or her Sovereign God) or of faith and confidence. Most uses of maal reflect violations are against Jehovah (exception = [Job 21:34](#)). The **NAS** translates **maal** as falsehood (1), treachery (2), trespass (1), trespass\* (1), unfaithful (3), unfaithful act (4), unfaithful deeds (1), unfaithfully (6), unfaithfulness (6), very unfaithful (1). **Treachery** is that which is untrue to what should command one's fidelity or allegiance (in this case fidelity to God alone). Furthermore, **treachery** implies a readiness to betray trust or confidence. Webster's 1828 edition adds "The man who betrays his country in any manner, violates his allegiance, and is guilty of **treachery**. This is treason. The man who violates his faith pledged to his friend, or betrays a trust in which a promise of fidelity is implied, is guilty of **treachery**. The disclosure of a secret committed to one in confidence, is **treachery**. This is perfidy."

Maal - 26v - Lev. 5:15; Lev. 6:2; Num. 5:6; Num. 5:12; Num. 5:27; Num. 31:16; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 22:16; Jos. 22:20; Jos. 22:22; Jos. 22:31; 1 Chr. 9:1; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 28:19; 2 Chr. 29:19; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 36:14; Ezr. 9:2; Ezr. 9:4; Ezr. 10:6; Job 21:34; Ezek. 15:8; Ezek. 17:20; Ezek. 18:24; Ezek. 39:26; Dan. 9:7

**2 Chronicles 28:20 So Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.**

- Tilgath pilneser (KJV): 2Ki 15:29 16:7-10, Tiglath-pileser, 1Ch 5:26 Ho 5:13
- distressed him (KJV): 2Ki 17:5 Isa 7:20 30:3,16 Jer 2:37



Tiglath-Pileser III as depicted on a [stele](#) from the walls of his royal palace

**So Tilgath-pilneser (pileser) king of Assyria came against him and afflicted him instead of strengthening him.** How vain it is to seek relief apart from God!

**TIGLATH-PILESER [ISBE]** - ([SEE ALSO WIKIPEDIA](#)) tig-lath-pi-le-zer tighlath pil'eser, as the name is read in 2 Kings, tilleghath pilnecer, in 2 Chronicles; Septuagint Algathphellasar; Assyrian, Tukulti-abal-i-sarra): King of Assyria in the days of Menahem, Pekahiah, and Pekah, kings of Israel, and of Uzziah, Jotham and Ahaz, kings of Judah. The king of Assyria, whom the historian of 2 Kings knows as exacting tribute from Menahem, is Pul (2 Ki 15:19 f). In the days of Pekah who had usurped the throne of Menahem's son and successor, Pekahiah, the king of Assyria is known as Tiglath-pileser, who invaded Naphtali and carried the inhabitants captive to Assyria (2 Ki 15:29). This invasion is described by the Chronicler (1 Ch 5:25 f) rather differently, to the effect that "the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river of Gozan, unto this day." Still later we find Pekah forming a coalition with Rezin, king of Damascus, into which they tried to force Ahaz, even going the length of besieging him in Jerusalem (2 Ki 16:5). The siege was unsuccessful. Ahaz called in the aid of Tiglath-pileser, sacrificing his independence to get rid of the invaders (2 Ki 16:7,8). He offered the Assyrian the silver and gold that were found in the house of the Lord and in the royal treasury; and Tiglath-pileser, in return, invaded the territories of Damascus and Israel in the rear, compelling the allied forces to withdraw from Judah, while he captured Damascus, and carried the people away to Kir and slew Rezin (2 Ki 16:9). It was on the occasion of his visit to Damascus to do homage to his suzerain Tiglath-pileser, that Ahaz fancied the idolatrous altar, a pattern of which he sent to Urijah, the priest, that he might erect an altar to take the

place of the brazen altar which was before the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem. It is a significant comment which is made by the Chronicler (2 Ch 28:21) upon the abject submission of Ahaz to the Assyrian king: "It helped him not."

From the inscriptions we learn particulars which afford striking corroboration of the Biblical narrative and clear up some of the difficulties involved. It is now practically certain that Pul, who is mentioned as taking tribute from Menahem, is identical with Tiglath-pileser (Schrader, COT, I, 230, 231). In all probability Pul, or Pulu, was a usurper, who as king of Assyria assumed the name of one of his predecessors, Tiglath-pileser I, and reigned as Tiglath-pileser III. This king of Assyria, who reigned, as we learn from his annals, from 745 BC to 727 BC, was one of the greatest of Assyrian monarchs. See ASSYRIA. From the fact that no fewer than five Hebrew kings are mentioned in his annals, the greatest interest attaches to his history as it has come down to us. These kings are Uzziah or Azariah, and Jehoahaz, that is Ahaz, of Judah; and Menahem, Pekah and Hushes of Israel. Along with them are mentioned their contemporaries Rezin of Damascus, Hiram of Tyre, and two queens of Arabia otherwise unknown, Zabibi and Samsi. When he died in 727 BC, he was succeeded by Shalmaneser IV, who had occasion to suspect the loyalty of his vassal Hoshea, king of Israel, and besieged him in Samaria.

LITERATURE. Schrader, COT, I, 229-57; McCurdy, HPM, sections 279-341.

T. Nicol

**2 Chronicles 28:21 Although Ahaz took a portion out of the house of the LORD and out of the palace of the king and of the princes, and gave it to the king of Assyria, it did not help him.**

- took away (KJV): 2Ch 12:9 2Ki 18:15,16 Pr 20:25

**Although Ahaz took a portion out of the house of the LORD and out of the palace of the king and of the princes, and gave it to the king of Assyria, it did not help him**

**Morris** - It is significant that many of the events recorded in the reign of Ahaz have been confirmed in archaeological inscriptions, including the tribute he was forced to pay to Tiglath-Pilezer, king of Assyria.

**Spurgeon** -A black mark is put against his name, to show how greatly guilty he was. Those who rebel against divine checks, and will not be held in by the providence of God, are to be written down in capital letters as great sinners. They sin with emphasis who sin against the chastising rod.

**2 Chronicles 28:22 Now in the time of his distress this same King Ahaz became yet more unfaithful to the LORD.**

- in the (KJV): 2Ch 33:12 Ps 50:15 Isa 1:5 Eze 21:13 Ho 5:15 Rev 16:9-11
- this is (KJV): Es 7:6 Ps 52:7

### **AHAZ'S STUBBORN REACTION TO DIVINELY SENT DISTRESSES!**

**Paul Apple** sees this as a major theme in the reign of Ahaz - DESPERATION DRIVES THE WICKED TO TRUST IN FALSE SOURCES OF POWER AND DELIVERANCE

**Now in the time of his distress (tsarar) this same King Ahaz became yet more unfaithful (maal) to the LORD. Distress (tsarar) is translated in the Septuagint with thlibo** which means press, rub together; compress, make narrow and figuratively to afflict, oppress, or cause trouble to. This was the Lord's hand of discipline, but Ahaz either could no longer even recognize that this was from the Lord or simply refused to accept it!

Instead of repenting, Ahaz doubled down on his unfaithfulness. This is what you call stiffening your neck and hardening your heart even more, not a good response to the omnipotent God. Ahaz did not read the divine "tea leaves" like Manasseh did after suffering the distress of being taken in hooks to Babylon (2Ch 33:11+)! In marked contrast to Ahaz the chronicler records "When he (MANASSEH) was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." (2Ch 33:12).

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, are you experiencing a time of distress because of unconfessed, unrepentant sin? And by the way, most of us have experienced those times, from time to time (I certainly have in 38 years of



walking with Jesus!). If you are in distress, do not seek worldly methods to get out of the distress, but SEEK HIM Who has allowed (or sometimes sent) the distress! Cry out! Run to Him! Seek Him! As an earthly father, I can say that when my 4 children have sought me in humility and repentance, my heart has melted every time!

**Frederick Mabie:** This is one of the saddest verses in all of Chronicles. As noted above (2Ch 28:9, 19), the judgment of God via the incursions of the surrounding nations is a direct result of the unfaithfulness of Ahaz (and Judah) to obey and trust the Lord fully.

**While such covenantal consequences are intended to drive God's people back to him in repentance** Ahaz instead becomes "even more unfaithful" and pursues greater levels of wickedness by raiding the temple and palace treasuries, worshiping additional deities associated with the Arameans, and looting the temple for the furnishings of his many high places (cf. 2Ch 28:21-25). By so doing Ahaz spurns the forgiving nature of the God, who abounds in mercy and forgiveness when his people seek him in humility and contrition.

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**Distress** (06887) **tsarar** means to be narrow, to be cramped, to be straitened, to be constricted, to hem or be hemmed in. Tsarar may refer to anything which is confining and in the context of Isa 8:16 it means to bind up, to tie or wrap up so as to safeguard from tampering (cf binding up in Pr 26:8, Ex 12:34, Joshua 9:4). This action refers most likely to the scribes binding the document into a sealed scroll for safekeeping. In Hos 13:12, tsarar figuratively depicts the record of Israel's sins being written down and permanently bound in a sealed scroll for safekeeping, thus assuring the that their sin would be retained. Figuratively tsarar means to oppress or harass and thus to be hostile or be an adversary or enemy, the best known use being Ps 23:5 "in the presence of my enemies (tsarar)." (Ex 23:22; Nu 10:9; 25:17-18 Esther 3:10; 8:1; 9:10, 24; Ps 6:7; 7:4, 6; 8:2; 10:5; 23:5; 31:11; 42:10; 69:19; 74:4, 23; 129:1-2; 143:12; Isa 11:13; Amos 5:12).

**Unfaithful** (verb) (be or act unfaithful) (04603) **maal** means to act unfaithfully, to trespass, to violate one's duty, to break faith, to commit a violation, to act. The idea is of a conscious act of treachery or unfaithfulness against the Lord. NET Note - The word maal refers to some kind of overstepping of the boundary between that which is common (i.e., available for common use by common people) and that which is holy (i.e., to be used only for holy purposes because it has been consecrated to the LORD).

Maal - 36v - act(1), acted(2), acted treacherously(2), acting(1), acting treacherously(1), acting unfaithfully(1), acts(2), became...unfaithful(1), been(1), been unfaithful(5), broke faith(1), committed(6), committing unfaithfulness(1), err(1), perpetrated(1), unfaithful(3), unfaithfulness they committed(1), violated(1). Gen. 32:7; Exod. 12:34; Deut. 28:52; Jos. 9:4; Jdg. 2:15; Jdg. 10:9; Jdg. 11:7; 1 Sam. 25:29; 1 Sam. 28:15; 1 Sam. 30:6; 2 Sam. 1:26; 2 Sam. 13:2; 2 Sam. 20:3; 1 Ki. 8:37; 1 Chr. 21:13; 2 Chr. 6:28; 2 Chr. 28:20; 2 Chr. 28:22; 2 Chr. 33:12; Neh. 9:27; Job 18:7; Job 20:22; Job 26:8; Ps. 31:9; Ps. 69:17; Prov. 4:12; Prov. 26:8; Prov. 30:4; Isa. 8:16; Isa. 28:20; Isa. 49:19; Jer. 10:18; Lam. 1:20; Hos. 4:19; Hos. 13:12; Zeph. 1:17

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### G Campbell Morgan - -2 Chr 28.22

The reign of Ahaz was a period of terrible and rapid degeneracy in Judah. With appalling fearlessness the king restored all the evils of idolatry, even including the ghastly offering of children as sacrifices to Moloch. In all probability his own son was a victim. As difficulties gathered around him, he turned to the king of Assyria for aid, attempting to procure help from him by giving him treasure out of the house of God. The utter evil of the man is seen in the fact that calamities did not produce the effect in him which they had so often done in the case of his predecessors, that of bringing him to the abandonment of his sin. He was a man evil by deliberate choice, persistent in evil in spite of calamity, blasphemously rebellious notwithstanding the direct warnings of Isaiah. Moreover, as we know from the Book of Isaiah, he openly and deliberately rejected any sign from God. It is certainly a solemn and searching story, revealing, as it does, how possible it is to yield the life so completely to evil, that prosperity only ministers to its degeneration, and adversity only hardens the will in wickedness

**2 Chronicles 28:23 For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, and said, "Because the gods of the kings of Aram helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they became the downfall of him and all Israel.**

- For he sacrificed (KJV): This passage, says Mr. Hallet, greatly surprised me; for the sacred historian is here represented as saying, "The gods of Damascus had smitten Ahaz." But it is impossible to suppose that an inspired author should say this; for the Scripture every where represents the heathen idols as nothing and vanity, and as incapable of doing either good or hurt. All difficulty is avoided if we follow the old Hebrew copies, from which the Greek translation was made: "And king Ahaz said, I will seek to the gods of Damascus which have smitten me." 2Ch 25:14 2Ki 16:12,13
- Damascus (KJV): Heb. Darmesek
- Because the gods (KJV): Hab 1:11

- sacrifice to them (KJV): Jer 10:5 44:15-18
- But they were (KJV): Isa 1:28 Jer 44:20-28 Ho 13:9

## IDOLATRY MAKES A PERSON A FOOL!

**For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, and said, “Because the gods of the kings of Aram helped ([azar](#)) - them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help ([azar](#)) me.”** - Ahaz could not even think clearly, because he was so deceived by the deception of idolatry. One has to wonder if by now God has given Ahaz over to his fallen flesh like in Romans 1:28+ where Paul writes “just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer (LIKE AHAZ), God gave them over ([paradidomi](#)) to a depraved ([adokimos](#)) mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

**But** (strategic term of contrast) **they became the downfall of him and all Israel.**

**J.A. Thompson:** A list of his apostasies is given. He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus whom he regarded as his conquerors, obviously blind to the truth that it was the Lord who was responsible for his defeat. It was a case of extreme apostasy, for it involved repudiation of the religious regulations the Lord gave Israel through Moses and David, although Ahaz probably worshiped the Lord along with the gods of Aram. Certainly Ahaz seems to have turned in all directions for help – the Assyrians, the gods of the kings of Aram – everywhere except to the Lord, the God of Israel, the source of the “help” he needed. These others served only to ruin Ahaz and all Israel.

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**C H Spurgeon ([Sermon on 2 Chr 28:23 - RUINS](#))** - I HAVE a little to say about the condition of Judah under Ahaz, before I come to personal dealing with souls from this text. God had given to his people a very simple mode of worship. He was the invisible and only living God, and they were to worship him in spirit and in truth; there was to be one altar, and that was to be at Jerusalem; but all the rest of the world was given up to idolatry, and the Israelites were not a very spiritual people, so by-and-by they wanted something to see, some image, some symbol. When the ten tribes broke off from Judah, they set up images of a bull to represent the strength of Deity. Those who kept to the worship of the invisible Jehovah, without emblems, ridiculed these symbols, and called the bulls, in contempt, calves; but the calf-worship became very strong throughout Israel, and there were many in Judah who were attracted to it. It was the worship of God, but it was the worship of God in a wrong way: for there was a very express commandment which forbade it: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” There are many still who worship idols and images; but they say, “No, we do not worship them; we worship God through them.” Just so, but that is as much forbidden in the second commandment as the worship of other gods is forbidden in the first; they are both violations of the Divine law. When the people of Judah had gone so far as to worship God through images, they went still farther, and bowed down to Baal and Ashtaroth, the sun, and even flies, for Baal-zebub, the god of flies, became one of the objects of adoration. Associated with this idolatry was everything that was sinful; I should not dare to tell you what horrible and loathsome abominations were witnessed in connection with the worship of these gods.

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**Spurgeon - Sermon Notes - 2 Chron. 28:23—“But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.”**

Narrate the actual circumstances. Ahaz turned away from Jehovah to serve the gods of Damascus, because Syria enjoyed prosperity. “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.”

The consequent introduction of false deities and defilement of the worship of God became the ruin of Ahaz and his kingdom. We fear lest this should be the ruin of England; for the idols of the Papists and the doctrines of Rome are again being set up in our land. Though no country prospers in which these prevail, yet besotted minds are labouring to restore the gods of the Vatican. This subject deserves many faithful sermons.

At this time we shall turn the text to more general use.

**I. THE MAN RUINING HIMSELF. Ahaz is the type of many self-destroyers. “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.” Hos. 13:9.**

He would be his own master. This ruined the prodigal, and will ruin millions more.

He was high-handed in sin. “He walked in the way of the kings of Israel”: 2 Kings 16:3, 4. This is a race to ruin.

He lavished treasure upon it. He spent much but gained little. Profligacy and many other wrong ways are expensive and ruinous.

He defied chastisement. “In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord”: 2 Chron. 28:22. This defiance of

correction leads to sure ruin.

He was exceedingly clever, and carried favour with the great. He made a copy of a classic altar, and sent it home. More men perish through being too clever than by being simple.

He was a man of taste. He admired the antique, and the æsthetic in religion.

He had officials to back him. "Urijah, the priest, built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus": 2 Kings 16:11. Bad ministers are terrible destroyers.

He imitated prosperous sinners. The king of Assyria became his type. This is ruinous conduct.

He abandoned all worship of God. "He shut up the doors of the house of the Lord" (verse 24). This is the climax of rebellion, and the seal of ruin.

But he did not prosper; the false gods were the ruin of him.

## II. THE MAN IN RUINS. We leave Ahaz to think of some around us.

The man becomes eaten up with secret vice. A rotting ruin haunted by bats and owls, and foul creatures of the night.

The man of drinking habits, not fit for society, a brute, a fiend.

The man of evil company and foul speech: likely to be soon in prison, or an outcast.

The man of unbelieving notions and blasphemous conversation, lost to God, to goodness, and moral sense.

All around us we see such spiritual ruins.

Turned from holy uses to be mouldering wastes.

The man is ruined in—

Peace, character, usefulness, prospects. Worst of all, he is himself a ruin, and will be so for ever.

A ruin suggests many reflections.

What it was! What it might have been!

What it is! What it will be!

Meditations among ruins may be useful to those who are inclined to repeat the experiment of Ahaz.

## III. OTHERS RUINED WITH HIM. "They were the ruin of him, and of all Israel."

Designedly. Some men by example create drunkards, by teaching make infidels, by seduction ruin virtue, by their very presence destroy all that is good in their associates.

Incidentally; even without intent they spread the contagion of sin. Their irreligion ruins the young, their conduct influences the unsettled, their language inflames the wicked.

Sin will ruin you if persisted in.

Your downfall will drag down others.

Will you not endeavour to escape from ruin?

Jesus is the Restorer of the wastes.

## RELICS

There is an Australian missile called the boomerang, which is thrown so as to describe singular curves, and to return at last to the hand of the thrower. Sin is a kind of boomerang, which goes off into space curiously, but turns again upon its author, and with tenfold force strikes the guilty soul that launched it.

We might illustrate the evil of sin by the following comparison:—"Suppose I were going along a street, and were to dash my hand through a large pane of glass, what harm would I receive?" "You would be punished for breaking the glass." "Would that be all the harm I should receive?" "Your hand would be cut by the glass." "Yes; and so it is with sin. If you break God's laws, you shall be punished for breaking them; and your soul is hurt by the very act of breaking them."—J. Inglis.

I have heard that a shepherd once stood and watched an eagle soar out from a cliff. The bird flew far up into the air, and presently became unsteady, and reeled in its flight. First one wing dropped, and then the other; presently, with accelerated speed, the poor bird fell rapidly to the ground. The shepherd was curious to know the secret of its fall. He went and picked it up. He saw that when the eagle lighted last on a cliff, a little serpent had fastened itself upon him; and as the serpent gnawed in farther and farther, the eagle in its agony reeled in the air. When the serpent touched its heart, the eagle fell. Have you never seen a man or woman in the church, or in society, rising and rising; the man becoming more and more influential, apparently strong, widely known, asserting power far and near; but, by and by, growing unsteady, uncertain, reeling, as it were, in uncertainty and inconsistency, and at last falling to the earth, and lying there in hopeless disgrace, a spectacle for angels to weep over, and scoffers and devils to jeer at? You do not know the secret of the fall, but the omniscient eye of God saw it. That neglect of prayer, that secret dishonesty in business, that stealthy indulgence in the intoxicating cup, that licentiousness and profligacy unseen of men, that secret tampering with unbelief and error, was the serpent at the heart that brought the eagle down.—T. Cuyler.

Sages of old contended that no sin was ever committed whose consequences rested on the head of the sinner alone; that no man could do ill and his fellows not suffer. They illustrated it thus:—"A vessel, sailing from Joppa, carried a passenger, who, beneath his

berth, cut a hole through the ship's side. When the men of the watch expostulated with him, saying, 'What doest thou, O miserable man?' the offender calmly replied, 'What matters it to you? The hole I have made lies under my own berth.' " This ancient parable is worthy of the utmost consideration. No man perishes alone in his iniquity; no man can guess the full consequences of his transgression.

**2 Chronicles 28:24 Moreover, when Ahaz gathered together the utensils of the house of God, he cut the utensils of the house of God in pieces; and he closed the doors of the house of the LORD and made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem.**

- cut in pieces (KJV): 2Ki 16:17,18 25:13-17
- shut up (KJV): 2Ch 29:3,7
- he made (KJV): 2Ch 33:3-5 Jer 2:28 Ho 12:11 Ac 17:16,23

**Moreover, when Ahaz gathered together the utensils of the house of God, he cut the utensils of the house of God in pieces; and he closed the doors of the house of the LORD and made altars for himself in every corner of Jerusalem.**

**Ryrie** - For details of Ahaz's attempt to displace the worship of Yahweh, see the notes on 2 Kings 16:10-11, 17-18.

**Spurgeon** -He set up little shrines, so that every passer-by might worship which idol he pleased, and each man might present a little incense; thus the whole city was filled with idolatry.

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#### **James Smith - HEZEKIAH; or, FEATURES OF A REVIVAL 2 CHRONICLES 28; 29**

“Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things Thee to see;  
And what I do in anything,  
To do it as for Thee!  
All may of Thee partake,  
Nothing can be so mean,  
Which with this tincture (for Thy sake)  
Will not grow bright and clean.”

—Herbert.

Lamennais says, “Faith demands action, not tears; it demands of us the power of sacrifice—sole origin of our salvation; it seeks Christians capable of saying, ‘We will die for this;’ above all, Christians capable of saying, ‘We will live for this.’ ” The man who can truthfully say, “To me to live is Christ,” is revealing Christianity in its sublimest form. Ritual and dogma may have their place, but if the individual life does not manifest itself in bringing glory to God and eternal blessing into the lives of sinful men, they are clouds without water. Hezekiah's revival work was the outcome of his own faith in the Living God—the faith which worketh by love. We shall try and find some helpful lessons here. We observe some—

#### I. Evidences that a Revival was Needed.

1. HOLY THINGS ARE CUT IN PIECES. “Ahaz ... cut in pieces the vessels of the House of God” (chap. 28:24). These sacred things which had been so useful in the House and service of God became the objects of the wrath and hatred of those who despised Him, whose instruments they were. All those who are seeking to cast discredit upon the books of the Bible are, in their own way, attempting to “cut in pieces the vessels of the House of God.” These sixty-six books, which compose the Bible, are so many vessels needed in the House of God for the work of the ministry. Every servant of God is also a vessel in His House, and the ungodly still try, with the sharp tongue of scorn and calumny, to cut their testimony in pieces.

2. THE WAY OF ACCESS IS CLOSED. “He shut up the doors of the House of the Lord” (v. 24). It is surely a sign that a revival is needed when men seek to block the way of others from worshipping God. Ahaz denied Jehovah, then sought to shut others out from the acknowledging of Him as God. There are doors in the temple of every man's heart that may be closed to his own loss and destruction. The door of communion with God may be shut by our love of, and delight in, the things which He hates. Our own unfitness is as a self-closed door. The door of Divine love and light may be closed by our own pride and prejudice. The door of faith and prayer is shut up by the unbelief of our own hearts.

3. THE LIGHT OF TESTIMONY IS QUENCHED. “They put out the lamps” (chap. 29:7). The lamps of God, aflame with the holy oil, became unbearable to those who loved the darkness of falsehood rather than the light of truth. The Christian's testimony for God is

as a flame kindled and sustained by the oil of the Holy Spirit. When this is “put out,” it is an insult to God and a grieving of that Spirit, whose character and mission is to make us as a flame of fire. It was a sad experience the foolish virgins had when their lamps went out. It is even the work of the world, the flesh, and the devil to put out the lamp of truth, and to quench the light of testimony, that the darkness of death and desertion may settle down in the House (Church) of God.

4. THE OFFERING OF INCENSE IS GIVEN UP. “They have not burned incense” (v. 7). When the lamp of testimony has been put out, the offering up of the incense of prayer and adoration will speedily cease. These two are vitally connected—they live or die together. Testimony for God will be but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals where the sweet incense of believing prayer is awaiting.

5. THERE IS A GENERAL DEPARTING FROM THE WORSHIP OF GOD. “Our fathers have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs” (v. 6). There is great need for a revival when the multitude turn their backs upon the House of God. Of course we do not wonder at many turning away their faces from God’s House when the doors are shut up and the lamps out. Polished stones, carved wood, and all sorts of material finery have no attractions for a soul hungering for the Bread of Life. But there are many who turn their backs upon God’s provision because they prefer the broken cisterns of their own hewing. To turn the back on God is to turn the face to destruction.

II. Evidences that a Revival had Come. There was—

1. A PERSONAL CONSECRATION. “Hezekiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord” (chap. 29:2). He began by getting himself put right in the eyes of the Lord. It is one thing to pray for a revival, it is quite another to yield ourselves definitely to God, that His will and work may be done in us and by us. A coming shower of blessing is sure to be heralded by drops falling on some individual soul. Seek to be that soul by personal consecration.

2. THE OPENING OF CLOSED DOORS. “He opened the doors of the House of the Lord” (v. 3). Every avenue of the soul that has been closed through indifference and unbelief will be immediately thrown open, and the light of God’s truth will have free access to the heart, which should be the House of the Lord. “Clear the darkened windows, and let the blessed sunshine in.” All revival comes from the PRESENCE of the Lord, who waits outside the closed door, saying, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear, and open, I will come in.”

3. A CASTING OUT OF THE UNCLEAN. “Sanctify yourselves, and sanctify the house ... and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place” (v. 5). “And the priests went into the inner part, and brought out all the uncleanness” (v. 16). It is an unmistakable evidence that the power of God’s Spirit is moving mightily when His servants take to the work of cleansing the inner part. Out of the heart are the issues of life. If God the Spirit is to dwell in us, the inner sanctuary of the life must be purged of all that is unbecoming in His presence. The common Levites had no power to deal with those abominations that were in the inner parts of the temple, the priests had to go in and bring them out to the court, before the Levites could remove them (v. 16). There are evils and hindrances to the work and worship of God that can be seen and dealt with only by those who have had the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Others, like the Levites, may see the sinfulness of certain things, when they have been pointed out, and put them away. “Cleanse Thou me from secret faults” (Psa. 19:12).

4. REALISATION OF THEIR TRUE POSITION BEFORE GOD. “The Lord hath chosen you to stand before Him, to minister unto Him, and that ye should be His ministers, and burn incense” (v. 11, R.V.). A revolution is certain when God’s people realise their true relationship to Him as chosen ones.

(1) They are chosen by the Lord—called by His grace.

(2) They are chosen to stand before Him—to wait before Him, and to receive His Word.

(3) Chosen to minister unto Him—to do all in His Name and for His glory. “Ye are not your own.”

(4) Chosen to be His ministers—to carry His Word and will to others.

(5) Chosen to burn incense—to offer unto God the sweet incense of intercessory prayer. Ye know your calling, brethren; are ye walking worthy of it?

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#) - 2 CHRONICLES 28:24—Did Ahaz encourage or oppose worship in the Jerusalem temple?**

**PROBLEM:** In 2 Kings 16:15, Ahaz encouraged the worship of the Lord in the temple. But, in 2 Chronicles 28 he is said to have “shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem” (v. 24).

**SOLUTION:** First of all, even in 2 Kings, during his earlier reign, Ahaz was said to be an evil king who “did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God” (16:2). He even “took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord ... and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria” (v. 8). During this period, he encouraged only a corrupt form of worship in the pilfered Jerusalem temple (v. 15).

Furthermore, the 2 Chronicles passages refers to a later, even more corrupt, part of his reign. During this period of apostasy, he shut up the house of the Lord completely and set up his own centers of worship.

**2 Chronicles 28:25 In every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked the LORD, the God of his fathers, to anger.**

- burn (KJV): or, offer, 2Ch 28:3 \*marg:

**In every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked the LORD, the God of his fathers, to anger.**

Iain Duguid: Ahaz's attitude to the worship of the Lord became even more antagonistic. He not only wantonly destroyed some of the temple items but also ended temple worship (cf. 2 Chron. 29:7). Instead of worshiping the Lord according to the Mosaic law in one temple, Ahaz multiplied worship of "other gods," the extent highlighted by repetition of "every" for both "corner of Jerusalem" and "city of Judah" (cf. Jer. 2:28). Here is the first instance in Chronicles of the Lord's being "provoked to anger" (Hb. form of ka'as), to be used later of Manasseh (2 Chron. 33:6) and the people (2Ch 34:25), another example of a foretaste of the Babylonian exile due to persistent failure to be faithful in worshiping the Lord alone.

**2 Chronicles 28:26 Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.**

- the rest (KJV): 2Ch 20:34 27:7-9 2Ki 16:19,20

**Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, behold, they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.**

**2 Chronicles 28:27 So Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, for they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel; and Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.**

- they brought (KJV): 2Ch 21:20 26:23 33:20 1Sa 2:30 Pr 10:7
- the kings of Israel (KJV): Or, "the kings of Judah;" the name Israel being sometimes applied by the writer of this book, in a general way, to Judah. The Hebrews were accustomed to honour the memory of those kings who had reigned well, by depositing their remains in the royal cemetery. On the contrary, those who died under the disapprobation of the people, as a mark of posthumous disgrace, were denied interment with their predecessors, and were buried in some other place in Jerusalem. So it was with Ahaz, who, though brought into the city, was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. It was doubtless with a design to make a suitable impression on the minds of their kings while living, that such distinctions were observed. They might thus restrain them from evil, or excite them to good, according as they were fearful of being execrated, or desirous of being honoured, when dead.

**So Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem, for they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel; and Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.**

**Raymond Dillard:** He is the third king about whom the author reports the loss of this honor at death (Jehoram, 21:20; Joash, 24:25; Uzziah, 26:23; cf. 33:20).

**Morris** - Hezekiah his son. Ahaz sacrificed his sons to Molech (2 Chronicles 28:3), and one son was slain in battle (2 Chronicles 28:7), but God preserved his one godly son, and the Davidic line was kept intact.

**Spurgeon** - There was a holy and reverent feeling amongst the remnant of God's people that a man who had lived as Ahaz had done should not lie with the good kings of Israel.

**PAUL APPLE - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:** Page 599

- 1) To whom do you turn for help in times of crisis?



- 2) How do you respond to divine discipline when God is in the process of humbling you?
- 3) What are some false sources of power and deliverance that people turn to today instead of seeking help from the Lord?
- 4) How does apostasy escalate and end up causing such collateral damage?

#### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**Eugene Merrill:** Historical Background Since the early 9th century, Assyria had becoming increasingly powerful and more and more inclined to look to the west for its riches and its ready access to the Mediterranean Sea. Assyria's first significant contact with western principalities, including Israel under Ahab, was in 853 BC and by King Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC — the Battle of Qarqar). No territories were acquired but large bribes and booty were extracted. A series of weaker monarchs followed, with only occasional references to their engagement with the west, particularly with Israel and Judah. Then came the next great figure in Neo-Assyrian history, namely, Tiglath Pileser III (745-727 BC). His tenure is elaborately documented by numerous texts that are of particular relevance to the Bible. The first reference to him is by the secondary name Pulu of the Dynasty of Shashi. It is of interest to note that he is known by name (Hebrew: "Pul") in both 2 Kings 15:19 and 1 Chronicles 5:26, and he is also called Tiglath Pilneser (2 Chron 28:20). The issue here is primarily neither historical nor textual confusion but the inherent problem in linguistics of transliteration (accounting for the different spellings and variants of the name of this Assyrian King). Tiglath Pileser's first recorded foray against the west is attested to on a building inscription from early in his reign in which he speaks of receiving tribute from Jehoahaz of Judah. Years later, Tiglath Pileser recounts that he rendered Rezon of Damascus and Menahem of Samaria tributary states in addition to Hiram of Tyre. A date critical for both Damascus and Samaria is 732 BC, the year that Tiglath-Pileser defeated both capitals, slew Rezon, and placed on King Menahem of Israel a heavy tribute. A short time later, the Assyrian returned and established the man Hoshea (732-722 BC) as king of Israel in place of Pekah (752-732) who had been assassinated by his own inner circles. While Assyria was exercising its might, intrigue amongst the smaller states of the littoral was in full bloom. This is hinted at by the Chronicler who explains why TiglathPileser was involved in the affairs of the west to begin with. Though the Assyrian's own texts say nothing about his motives in westward expansion, the Chronicler indicates that King Ahaz had pleaded with him to come to deliver him from the vicious attacks of the Edomites and the Philistines (2 Chron 28:16-18). However, the Chronicler is completely silent about the Aram-Israel alliance that may be the primary reason for Ahaz's frantic appeals for help in the first place. Another amazing witness to these same times is the prophet Isaiah who devotes considerable attention to the matter (Isaiah 7:1-9). Isaiah's public ministry commenced in the year that King Uzziah died (Isa 6:1; about 740 BC). Five years later, then, he spoke to his own historical situation. He summoned King Ahaz to a vantage point where he could look to the north, toward the enemy nations, and predicted that the plot against Ahaz and Judah could NOT stand if only Ahaz would trust in Yahweh. This leads to the far more transcendent promise that even if Ahaz could NOT believe, Yahweh would give him a sign about a hitherto barren young woman who would conceive, bear a son, and call his name Immanuel (Isa 7:14). Christian theology identifies this son as Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary (Matt 1:23). To return to the 2 Chronicles 28 text, the narrator, having spoken of the loss of Eloth (the southernmost city of Israel on the northern tip of the Red Sea) to the Edomites, lists the places in the foothills and Negev (desert) seized by the Philistines: Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco, Timnah, and Gizmo. These were all border posts guarding the Judean hill country and the capital from Philistine forces so their loss to the Philistines would in fact be disastrous

**Raymond Dillard:** H. Williamson (343–49; IBC, 114–18) has shown how the Chronicler has reworked his account of Ahaz from that found in 2 Kgs 16 in order to effect an almost complete reversal of the relationship of North and South as found in 2 Chr 13.

(a) Like Jeroboam at the time of the schism, Ahaz too makes molten images for worship (2Ch 28:2). He also worships the gods of Damascus (2Ch 28:10–16, 23), reflecting the charge of Abijah that Israel was worshipping the golden calves and "them that are no gods" (2Ch 13:8–9).

(b) Ahaz shut the doors of the temple (28:24), put out the lamps and stopped the offerings of incense and sacrifices (2Ch 29:7), and neglected the shewbread (2Ch 29:18). These additions to the Chronicler's account amount to the negation of Abijah's boast of orthodoxy before Jeroboam (2Ch 13:11). These changes show that apostasy in the South had reached the same depths as that in the North at the time of the schism.

(c) At the time of the schism, the righteous left the North to join Judah (2Ch 11:13–17), but during the reign of Ahaz, righteousness was found in the North (2Ch 28:9–15). Whereas at the time of the schism, Judah was obedient to the word of a prophet regarding attacking the sister kingdom (2Ch 11:1–4), here it is Israel that heeds the admonition of a prophet (2Ch 28:9).

(d) The military fortunes of the two kingdoms are also reversed. Contrast the fortunes of Jeroboam ("God delivered them into their hand, and Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter," 2Ch 13:16–17) with those of Ahaz ("he was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel who smote him with a great slaughter," 2Ch 28:5). At the time of Abijah it was Israel that was subjugated (2Ch 13:18), whereas at the time of Ahaz, it

was Judah (2Ch 28:19). Ahaz is the only king of Judah for whom the Chronicler does not mention at least some redeeming feature; Ahaz is the antithesis of Abijah and the shadow of Jeroboam.

**August Konkell:** The example of Ahaz may be uncomfortably close to the practice of faith by affluent Christians. There is a tendency to trust ourselves, our resources, and to be most concerned about whatever is immediate. Modern and postmodern Christians manifest deistic tendencies. It is hard to conceive of God as active and present in maintaining life in his world. Everything can be understood as cause and effect; it can all be brought under human control. It is not a disbelief in God, but rather a belief that does not affirm the presence of God in our daily affairs. There is a tendency to cultural conformity without consideration of the ways in which this may be a sin against God. The greatest dangers are perceived to be tangible ones, observed forces that may threaten our well-being. There is no sense that the greatest danger may be less tangible, an implicit faith in ourselves for the needs of life rather than a genuine knowledge that life is a divine gift. Exclusive trust in God is very difficult in times of power and affluence. God has given the means of life to use and trust, but they must all be recognized for what they are: gifts from God. In a modern or postmodern society, there is a tendency to feel entitled, to believe that government and investments bring security. These are the sorts of compromises of which Ahaz was guilty. It is always a good practice to give thanks for every meal. Life and everything that sustains it must continually be acknowledged as divine gifts. Failure to make this confession readily leads to the unfaithfulness of which Ahaz was guilty.

**Martin Selman:** The Chronicler's history reaches another low point with the reign of Ahaz. -

To start with, Ahaz did not do what was right before God (2Ch 28:1), in contrast to his immediate predecessor Jotham (2Ch 27:2). -

Secondly, the totally negative assessment of Ahaz puts him on a par with the rulers of Ahab's house (2 Chr. 21-23) and with the kings whose reigns led directly to the exile (2 Chr. 36; cf. also 2 Chr. 33:21-25). -

Thirdly, Chronicles has made Kings' descriptions of Ahaz' failings much more explicit. Additional interpretative comments explain that Judah was being punished because he had forsaken God (2Ch 28:6) and because Ahaz had been most unfaithful (2Ch 28:19), in sharp contrast with the merciful attitudes shown by the inhabitants of Israel (2Ch 28:12-15). . .

Ahaz's real failure, however, was to seek human rather than divine help. One of the Chronicler's principles is that "God has the power to help or to overthrow" (2 Ch. 25:8; cf. 2Ch 32:8), and that he helps those who put their trust in him (cf. 1 Ch. 5:20; 14; 10; 18:31). Ahaz' turning to Assyria was therefore a sign of his unbelief (cf. Is. 7:9-12). Ahaz also "behaved without restraint" (v. 19, NRSV) and was most unfaithful. The former expression really means to favor license rather than true liberty, while the latter is a typical term in Chronicles for failing to give God his due. Therefore God humbled Judah as had Israel under Jeroboam (2 Ch. 13:18), but with even more disastrous results.

Geoffrey Kirkland: A Drama of Depraved Disasters — Politically, Nationally & Religiously! We can observe the absolute tragedy of Ahaz's reign under 4 words...

1. Corruption (2Ch 28:1-4) -- Key word = Depravity
2. Conquest (2Ch 28:5-15) -- Key word = Discipline
3. Compromise (2Ch 28:16-21) -- Key word = Disfunction
4. Condemnation (2Ch 28:22-27) -- Key word = Downfall

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**Steven Cole - sermon - [Forsaking Sin or God? \(2 Chronicles 28\)](#)**

A fourteenth century duke named Raynald III, in what is now Belgium, had a violent quarrel with his younger brother, Edward, who then led a successful revolt against him. Edward captured Raynald, but didn't kill him. Instead, he built a room in the castle around his brother and promised him that he could regain his title and property as soon as he was able to leave the room.

This wouldn't have been difficult for the average person, since the room had several windows and a door of near-normal size, and none was locked or barred. The problem was Raynald's size: he was grossly overweight. To regain his freedom, he had to lose weight. But Edward knew his older brother, and each day he sent a variety of delicious foods. Instead of dieting his way out of prison by resisting those tempting foods, Raynald grew fatter. When Duke Edward was accused of cruelty, his reply was, "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills."

But, of course, his brother was a prisoner--of his own appetite. He stayed in that room for ten years and wasn't released until Edward died in battle. By then his health was so ruined that he died within a year (adapted from *Leadership* [Spring, 1984], p. 44).

There is in every human heart a perverse and powerful attraction for that which you know cognitively will destroy you. It is the appeal of sin. Like bugs drawn toward a light that will kill them, fallen sinners are drawn toward the evil that will enslave and ultimately ruin them. I wish I could report that the longer you follow the Lord, the less appeal sin has, but I cannot. It is a battle that requires constant vigilance. It's a winnable war, but we never (in this life) become immune to sin.

Thus life consists of a series of choices. To put it plainly:

*Either we forsake God to go after sin or we forsake sin to go after God.*

King Ahaz forsook the Lord for sin. He did so in spite of many advantages. His grandfather was King Uzziah who, although he later became proud and was struck with leprosy, was yet a mighty king who sought the Lord. Ahaz's father was King Jotham, a godly man who further strengthened the kingdom (see 2 Chronicles 27:6). Furthermore Ahaz was a descendant of King David, and thus he came under the blessings of the covenant God had enacted between David and his progeny. And if that were not enough, Ahaz lived during the ministry of the prophet Isaiah, who encouraged Ahaz to trust in the Lord. But he forsook the Lord. Let's look at his life to learn what it means to forsake God to go after sin. The chapter also reveals (from an unexpected source) what it means to forsake sin to go after God.

## **Forsaking God To Go After Sin:**

### **1. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN BEGINS BY ADDING WORLDLY IDEAS TO GOD'S WORD (2Ch 28:2-4).**

Ahaz didn't begin his reign by closing the doors of the Temple and replacing the worship of God with the worship of idols. Eventually it came to that (2Ch 28:24). But he didn't start there. He started by adding idol worship to the worship of the Lord. The parallel account in 2 Kings 16 tells of how Ahaz went up to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser who had defeated the Syrians and the northern kingdom of Israel on Ahaz's behalf. There he saw a magnificent altar which he liked so much that he sent back the plans for it to his priest so that it was waiting for him when he returned from Damascus. Ahaz offered on this pagan altar the sacrifices prescribed in the Law of Moses. As for the bronze altar prescribed by Moses, he moved it aside and kept it to inquire by (2 Kings 16:15), but he offered all his sacrifices on the pagan altar of his preference. In other words, he was blending pagan ideas with what is prescribed in the Bible.

Forsaking the Lord often begins by replacing a few things in the Bible that you don't like with a few worldly ideas that you prefer. Let's face it: There are some hard truths in the Bible that confront our culture and our sinful, selfish preferences. The Bible says that wives are to be subject to their husbands and workers at home (Titus 2:5), but we don't like that; we prefer the egalitarian model. The Bible says that our marriage commitment is to be for life and that we are to work through our problems by learning to deny self and love as Jesus loved. But that's too hard, so we bail out! But we begin forsaking the Lord when we replace the clear directives of His Word with the best of worldly wisdom or custom.

### **2. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN MEANS DOING WHAT I THINK WILL BE GOOD FOR ME, EVEN IF IT'S HARMFUL TO OTHERS (2Ch 28:3).**

Ahaz burned some of his sons in the fire as an offering to the god Molech. In some cases this involved slaughtering the child and offering him up as a burnt sacrifice; at other times it meant passing the child through the fire without killing him. At the heart of that sort of abomination was self, because the parent was seeking to placate the gods so that it would go well with him. Never mind that it wasn't going too well with the child! The main thing is *my* well being, even if it means my child's pain or death. But it was detestable in God's sight (Jer. 32:35).

Did you know that 95-97 percent of the abortions in our land are performed strictly for convenience? It would inconvenience the lifestyle of the mother or couple to take on the responsibility of caring for a child, so instead they slaughter that little life that is no different than you or I, except that it's younger than we are.

I realize that there are difficult situations and that because of the irresponsibility of many young men, the burden often falls on the woman. I am not insensitive to the hardship nor excusing the man. But I'm saying, if you do what you think is best for you to the disregard, or even death, of others, you're simply doing what these pagans did in offering their children to idols in the hopes of having a happier, easier life. You're forsaking God for self.

Did you know that one of our candidates for U.S. senator in next month's election is a former president of Planned Parenthood of Northern Arizona? I don't care if you're a member of his political party or if you prefer his views on the economy. To vote for such a man when his opponent is a strong advocate of protecting human life in the womb is to sin against God. Do your homework and vote for pro-life candidates!

Thus forsaking God to go after sin begins by adding worldly ideas to the Word of God. It means doing what you think will be good for you, even if it's harmful to others.

### **3. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN MEANS TURNING TO THE WORLD FOR HELP (2Ch 28:16, 22-23).**

When people turn away from God, He graciously sends trials so that, hopefully, the sinner will turn to God for help. Every trial is designed by God to teach us the futility of trusting in ourselves or in the world's wisdom, so that we are driven to trust in God alone. Yet today, millions of Christians are turning to the pagan ideas of psychology for help with their trials. Several who have left this church because of my teaching on this subject have said to me, "If it's helping me with my problems and I feel better because of it, then what's wrong with it?"

What if I told you that I was feeling angry and depressed, and I went to a witch doctor. He listened sympathetically to my problems and then he mixed up a magic potion and asked me to drink it. After that, he slaughtered a chicken, dipped his finger in the blood, dabbed it on my forehead, and uttered an incomprehensible curse on everyone who had hurt me and invoked the blessings of the gods on my behalf. As he did all this, I felt my anger disappear and my depression lift. I've felt better ever since. What would you say?

The issue is never, *does it help*, but rather, *is it biblical?* Ahaz sacrificed to the gods of Aram because they helped them and he hoped that they would help him, too (2Ch 28:23). We are specifically warned in Scripture against accepting the counsel of the ungodly and the wisdom of the world (Ps. 1:1; Col. 2:8). We are repeatedly told to take all our problems to God and to trust in Him alone, not in our own strength or understanding (Ps. 33:6-22; Prov. 3:5-6). When you've got problems, you've only got two options-- seek help from the Lord and His Word (including biblical counselors) or seek help from the world. Ahaz sought help for his problems from the world. But before you turn to the world for help, you need to realize three things:

#### **A. THE WORLD ALWAYS EXACTS A HIGH PRICE FOR ITS HELP (2Ch 28:21).**

Sure, Tiglath-Pileser would take care of Ahaz's enemies--for a price! Ahaz had to strip the temple, strip his palace, and extract money from his princes. It was expensive and it wasn't covered by his insurance! His wives and his princes probably complained about the stainless steel bathroom fixtures that replaced the gold, but a man has to do what he has to do when he needs help in this world!

Whenever you turn to the world for help, the world makes sure it gets its payment, and it's always expensive. Whether you go to a counselor who charges you \$100 an hour; or turn to drinking or drugs to blot out your troubles; or try to earn a lot of money so you can live the "good life" apart from God; the world gets its fee.

The irony is, it doesn't cost you anything to get down on your knees and open God's Word of truth and seek Him. It might cost you a cup of coffee to get together with a mature brother or sister in Christ and ask their counsel. Ahaz could have called Isaiah and asked for God's wisdom through him and he wouldn't have had to strip the temple and his palace or rob his princes.

#### **B. THE WORLD NEVER DELIVERS WHAT IT PROMISES (2Ch 28:20, 21, 23).**

Tiglath-Pileser promised his help, but after he polished off Ahaz's enemies he moved on to afflict Ahaz. In the end the help Ahaz sought proved to be his downfall. In spite of all the money he spent, he didn't get the help he needed.

The world's help is like that. At first it seems to offer what you want, but in the end it never delivers what it promises, because it doesn't direct you to the Lord. I've seen girls enter into a relationship with a nice, but unbelieving, young man. It seems as if he will bring her the happiness she seeks. But she pays a terrible price in the long run, because she disobeyed God's Word about being unequally yoked.

#### **C. THE WORLD COMES IN AS A FRIEND BUT TAKES OVER AS MASTER.**

At first Tiglath-Pileser was Ahaz's friend. He knocked off Syria and subdued Israel. But then he exacted tribute from Ahaz and in the end Ahaz was a weak vassal on a leash held tightly by the Assyrian monarch.

That's how the world works. You invite it to come in as a friend, but it's a domineering house guest! Soon it shoves your things to the corner and takes over. A man dabbles in pornography; after all, he's got needs that aren't being met! Soon he is enslaved to lust. A housewife starts having an afternoon drink to calm her nerves; soon it becomes a morning, afternoon, and before bed drink. She is enslaved to alcohol. A young person smokes a little dope or crack cocaine because it makes him feel so good. Soon he is enslaved to an expensive and destructive habit. The world always exacts a high price. It never delivers what it promises. It comes in as a

friend but takes over as master.

Forsaking God for sin begins by adding worldly ideas to God's Word; it means doing what I think will be good for me, even if it's harmful to others; it means turning to the world for help, which is no help at all.

#### **4. FORSAKING GOD TO GO AFTER SIN MEANS INCURRING HIS DISCIPLINE (2Ch 8:5, 19).**

If a person has an outward profession of faith, but is not truly converted (as with Ahaz), then God sends trials to bring him to repentance and faith in Christ. If the person truly knows Christ, then God disciplines him as a son, that he may share God's holiness (Heb. 12:4-11).

But in either case, we need to understand that trials do not come to us by bad luck or chance. A sovereign, loving God uses everything from minor irritations to major catastrophes to pry us loose from self-reliance, self-love, and sin and to drive us to trust in Him and to love Him and others for His glory.

In a recent *Focus on the Family* magazine Dr. Dobson said that AIDS is not God's judgment, because it affects innocent children and others, such as recipients of blood transfusions. But he's failing to understand that when God's judgment falls on a nation, it hits the so-called "innocent" (no one is without sin) as well as flagrant sinners. In Ahaz's day, the whole nation suffered because of Ahaz's sin. In our day, AIDS is God's means of judgment, but also of His mercy. The AIDS plague should make us all see the great sin of our land, not only in homosexuality, but also in many other ways. It also should make us realize that the wages of sin is death, but that if sinners will repent and turn to God, they will receive the gift of God which is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23).

Even if we have not deliberately sinned, we need to recognize every trial as God's gracious means of shaping us into the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29; Heb. 12:4-11). Health problems, family problems, financial troubles, car troubles, and every other kind of trial is an opportunity to grow in Christ by submitting to His loving hand and seeking Him more fervently in thankful prayer. Even Jesus, who was without sin, learned obedience through the things He suffered (Heb. 5:8). If you have forsaken God for sin, then view your trials as His gracious means of bringing you into the place of wholeness He wants to give.

Thankfully, there is an alternative to forsaking God to go after sin. Ahaz never did it, but some others in this chapter did:

### **Forsaking Sin To Go After God:**

The warriors from the Northern Kingdom who defeated Judah in battle brought back 200,000 women and children as slaves (28:8). The Northern Kingdom had not had even one godly king since the division of the land almost 200 years before. Yet God did not leave Himself without a witness in the north. In this case the prophet Oded confronted these men. Ironically, the ungodly Northern Kingdom (whose capital was Samaria) forsook their sin and obeyed God, while the southern kingdom did not. This story was no doubt behind Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan.

Oded's job was a bit like an M.P. single-handedly facing a barroom full of drunken sailors. These guys were high on the smell of victory. But he goes out and tells them to send their captives home. His words and their response reveal three aspects of true repentance:

#### **1. REPENTANCE MEANS LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD (2Ch 28:9-11).**

The only way we know right from wrong is the Bible. God's Word reveals His righteous moral standards. These men heard God's Word through Oded. Ahaz had heard God's Word through Isaiah. We have it in written form. The Bible, and *only* the Bible, is our standard for right and wrong. Repentance involves listening to God's Word.

#### **2. REPENTANCE MEANS ACKNOWLEDGING OUR OWN SIN, NOT COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OTHERS (2Ch 28:10).**

"Do you not have transgressions of your own against the Lord your God?" These warriors from the north had just been used to execute God's judgment on their sinful brothers in the south. They could have been pretty cocky about themselves compared with their brothers. But the prophet calls them to face their own sin. Repentance always means acknowledging your own sin, not comparing yourself with others who may be more sinful.

#### **3. REPENTANCE MEANS TURNING FROM SIN AND DOING WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE LORD'S SIGHT (2Ch 28:14-15).**

Lip service isn't enough. God requires us to perform "deeds appropriate to repentance" (Acts 26:20). A lot of people supposedly receive Christ, but there is no repentance. They don't turn from their sin and begin to obey the Lord. Repentance means that we begin to obey God, and when we do sin, we come back to Him again for cleansing and restoration. Christians are not sinless, but we should sin less as we grow in our walk with God.

## Conclusion

A Native American tells a legend he heard as a boy. Many years ago, Indian braves would go away in solitude to prepare for manhood. One saw a rugged peak and thought, "I will test myself against that mountain." He put on his buffalo-hide shirt, threw his blanket over his shoulders and set off to conquer the challenging summit.

When he reached the top, he felt like he was standing on the rim of the world. His heart swelled with pride at his success. Then he heard a rustle at his feet. Looking down, he saw a snake. Before he could move, the snake spoke. "I am about to die," said the snake. "It's too cold for me up here, and there is no food. Put me under your shirt and take me down to the valley."

"No," said the youth. "I know your kind. You're a rattlesnake. If I pick you up, you'll bite and kill me." "Not so," said the snake. "I'll treat you differently. If you do this for me, I'll not harm you."

The youth resisted for a while, but this was a persuasive snake. At last the youth tucked it under his shirt and carried it down to the valley. There he laid it down. But suddenly the snake coiled, rattled, and struck, biting him on the leg.

The startled youth cried out, "But, you promised--!" "You knew what I was when you picked me up," said the snake as it slithered away. (Adapted from *Reader's Digest* [6/89], p. 131.)

The next time you're tempted to embrace sin into your life, and it looks attractive and harmless, remember the words of that snake: "You knew what I was when you picked me up." If you forsake God to go after sin, as Ahaz did, you will only get stung. If you forsake sin to go after God, though it's often difficult, you will be ultimately blessed. Are you forsaking God to go after sin, or are you forsaking sin to go after God?

## Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the areas where the modern church is adding worldly ideas to the Word of God?
2. What's wrong with this argument: We seek the world's help in medicine; why not in psychology?
3. Some say that they've tried seeking God through the Bible, prayer, etc., but it didn't help. What would you say to them?
4. Can a person believe in Christ unto salvation without repenting of known sin? Cite biblical references for your position.

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