

**2Chronicles 28:1** ¶ Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father:

**2Chronicles 28:2** For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim.

**2Chronicles 28:3** Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

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

Ahaz became king of Judah at the age of 20, and he ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. Sadly, he chose not to follow in the footsteps of his father and his ancestor David and serve the LORD obediently. Instead, he chose to follow the idolatrous practices of the kings of Israel, making idols to Baal. He also burned incense in the Hinnom Valley, even offering his own children in sacrifice as did the heathen nations that had first inhabited the land before the LORD gave it to Israel. He offered sacrifices and burned incense in all the high places and under any green tree.

I researched to try and find out the significance of reference to sacrificing under a “green” tree, but could find nothing. Trees were associated with the worship of Ahserah and Astarte. The word “green” in Hebrew is a reference to being new and flourishing. Maybe this was intended to convey that Judah was adopting the worship of a false god in a new way that Ahaz hoped would flourish throughout the kingdom.

JFB adds this information concerning the Hinnom Valley: “The “Valley of Ben Hinnom” descended eastward below the southern edge of the city of Jerusalem; and it became noted as the scene of Judah’s most revolting pagan practices. It was later defiled by King Josiah and converted into a place of refuse for the city (2Ki 23:10); thus the perpetual fires of “Gehenna” became descriptive of hell itself.”

**2Chronicles 28:5** Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

**2Chronicles 28:6** ¶ For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, *which were* all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.

Because of his rebellion and idolatrous ways, the LORD “his God” delivered him in defeat to the king of Syria. Ahaz along with multitudes throughout history have rejected the LORD as “their” God. What they don’t realize is that the LORD is God of all whether they choose to accept Him as such or not.

The Syrians carried away a great multitude of captives to Damascus. Ahaz’s army fell in defeat to the king of Israel, Pekah, Son of Remaliah, suffering the loss

of 120,000 brave men in one day. The LORD brought this judgment upon Ahaz and his people because they had “forsaken the LORD God of their fathers.”

**2Chronicles 28:7** And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king’s son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah *that was next to the king.*

**2Chronicles 28:8** And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

Zichri, a mighty warrior of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king’s son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the palace and Elkanah, second in command to the king.

The army of Israel also took captive 200,000 women, sons and daughters along with a great amount of booty, bringing all to Samaria.

**2Chronicles 28:9** But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage *that reacheth up unto heaven.*

**2Chronicles 28:10** And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: *but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the LORD your God?*

**2Chronicles 28:11** Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is upon you.*

There was a true prophet of the LORD in Samaria named Oded who went out to meet the returning army. He explained that it was because “the LORD God of your fathers” was very angry with Judah that they were able to defeat them so easily. He continued (my paraphrase): God delivered them into your hands, but you have gone too far by killing them in such a rage. He is very angry with you. Now you plan to keep these prisoners as your slaves. Think, are you without sin before the LORD? Set these captives, your kinsmen, free. Don’t provoke the LORD even further.

**2Chronicles 28:12** Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war,

**2Chronicles 28:13** And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD *already*, ye intend to add *more* to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel.

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

**2Chronicles 28:15** And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them,

**and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria.**

Certain leaders of Ephraim quickly responded to the prophet's message—Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum and Amasa the son of Hadlai. They confronted the returning troops and told them they could not bring the captives into Samaria. They reiterated the truth declared by the prophet, admitting that they had already greatly offended the LORD by their sin and made Him very angry.

The returning soldiers listened to their leaders and left the captives and all the spoil they had taken in their care before the people that had gathered there. The leaders of Ephraim then took from the spoil to clothe the captives and provide them with shoes. They gave them food and drink and anointed them. (Several translations indicate that the anointing was a reference to treating their wounds.) They put all those that were weak on donkeys and took the whole group back to their own people in Jericho, the city of palm trees. The men of Ephraim then returned home to Samaria.

There is a lot more to this story recorded in chapters 7-8 of Isaiah. There we learn that Pekah and Rezin intended to conquer Judah and set a puppet king on the throne, the son of Tabeal. The LORD sent the prophet Isaiah to tell Ahaz that He would not allow that to happen. He even told Ahaz to ask for a sign as confirming evidence to Isaiah's message. Ahaz refused to ask for a sign, but the LORD chose to give the sign that foretold the birth of the Savior by a virgin. He then told the king that because of his refusal to trust the LORD, they would eventually be destroyed and conquered by the King of Assyria until he reached the very walls of Jerusalem.

**2Chronicles 28:16 ¶ At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him.**

**2Chronicles 28:17 For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.**

**2Chronicles 28:18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there.**

**2Chronicles 28:19 For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD.**

After these attacks, King Ahaz sent and asked for help from the king of Assyria. The attacks from Syria and Israel weren't the only attacks against Judah. They had been attacked by the Edomites who had also carried away captives. The Philistines also attacked and invaded the cities of the low country and southern Judah. They had captured Bethshemesh, Ajalon, Gederoth, Shocho and its surrounding villages, Timnah and its surrounding villages and Gimzo and its surrounding villages and had established residency in them.

The historian makes it clear that the LORD brought Judah so low because of the actions of King Ahaz. I think the phrase, "he made Judah naked," is a reference to stripping them of their spiritual covering before the LORD by leading them in the worship of false gods. Point is made that his sin was great before the LORD.

**2Chronicles 28:20 And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.**

**2Chronicles 28:21 For Ahaz took away a portion *out* of the house of the LORD, and *out* of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave *it* unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not.**

Tilgathpilneser, king of Assyria, responded to Ahaz's plea by coming and causing more trouble; he didn't really help him. Ahaz gathered up treasures from the temple, the palace and the homes of some of the top leaders in Judah to try and bribe the king, but it didn't work.

There is a bit of discrepancy with Kings at this point. That record indicates that the Assyrian king did go and conquer Damascus and kill Rezin, although he gave Ahaz no help against his other enemies in Judah proper.

*2 Kings 16:8-9 "And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin."*

**2Chronicles 28:22 And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this *is that* king Ahaz.**

**2Chronicles 28:23 For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, *therefore* will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel.**

Instead of turning from his sin in repentance to the LORD to seek His help, the king continued to compound his sins by sacrificing to the false gods of Damascus. He figured that if they had helped the Syrians defeat him, they might help him if he sacrificed to them. Instead, that proved to be his ruin as well as of all Israel.

**2Chronicles 28:24 And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem.**

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

In his zeal to please the false gods, Ahaz gathered all the vessels used in the temple and broke them. He then shut the doors of the temple to prevent further worship there. He built altars throughout Jerusalem and established high places to burn incense to false gods in several of the cities of Judah. He succeeded in

making the LORD God of “his fathers” very angry.

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

**2Chronicles 28:27** And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, *even* in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

Yet again the Chronicler closes his account of the king by noting that one could read more about him in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

Ahaz died and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but not in the graveyard of the kings. His son Hezekiah became the new king.