

2Kings 16:1 ¶ In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.

2Kings 16:2 Twenty years old was Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father.

2Kings 16:3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel.

2Kings 16:4 And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

It was in the 17th year of Pekah, son of Remaliah, king of Israel, that Ahaz, son of Jotham, became king in Judah. He began his reign at age 20 and ruled for 16 years in Jerusalem. Ahaz was a wicked king that strayed far from the example of king David. He followed the practices of the kings of Israel. He even sacrificed his own son (I assume to Molech), following the practices of the heathen people in the worship of their false gods. He also sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places and many other places in honor of his false god.

Guzik provides this note on the worship to Molech: “Molech was worshipped by heating a metal statue representing the god until it was red hot, then placing a living infant on the outstretched hands of the statue, while beating drums drowned out the screams of the child until it burned to death.”

2Kings 16:5 ¶ Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*.

2Kings 16:6 At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day.

As noted in the previous chapter, Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, began their attacks on Judah during the reign of Jotham, father of Ahaz.

They eventually attacked Jerusalem in the days of Ahaz, with the intent of placing their own man on the throne according to the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 7:5–6 “Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying, Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and let us make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal....”

They did not succeed in conquering the city because the LORD had declared they would not.

Isaiah 7:7 “Thus saith the Lord GOD, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.”

During this time Rezin, king of Syria, recovered Elath for Syria and drove all the Jews out of it. The Syrians moved in and were still living there during the time this historical record was being written.

The Chronicler also notes that Pekah killed 120,000 men of Judah, took 200,000 men and women captive and carried away much spoil.

2 Chronicles 28:6–8 “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. 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. 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.”

Also according to the chronicler, the captives were allowed to return to their homeland due to the intervention of Oded, a prophet of God.

2 Chronicles 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:”

2Kings 16:7 So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, saying, *I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.*

2Kings 16:8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king’s house, and sent *it for a present to the king of Assyria.*

2Kings 16:9 And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.*

Ahaz sought the help of Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria. He declared himself the king’s servant and pleaded for his help in delivering Judah from his enemies, the kings of Syria and Israel. Ahaz sent a bribe with his request that consisted of silver and gold from the house of the LORD and from his personal treasures.

The king of Assyria accepted the bribe and successfully attacked Damascus, taking the people of the city as captives to Kir. He killed Rezin.

Most disturbing about this act of Ahaz is that it is done in spite of God’s assurance to him through the prophet Isaiah that he would not allow Rezin and Pekah to succeed against him as noted above

2Kings 16:10 ¶ And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.*

2Kings 16:11 And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made *it against king Ahaz*

came from Damascus.

King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser and saw an altar there that he wanted. He evidently had someone make a detailed drawing of the altar and send it to Urijah the priest. The priest then built an altar in accordance with the detailed drawing and had it ready upon the king's return from Damascus.

2Kings 16:12 And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.

2Kings 16:13 And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.

When Ahaz returned from Damascus, he went directly to the altar to make an offering—a burnt offering, meat offering, drink offering and peace offerings. The implication is that he was making the offerings required by the law but not on the accepted place or in the accepted manner as detailed in the law.

2Kings 16:14 And he brought also the brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

2Kings 16:15 And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to enquire *by*.

2Kings 16:16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded.

The NLT gives a clearer understanding of this section: *"Then King Ahaz removed the old bronze altar from the front of the LORD's Temple, which had stood between the entrance and the new altar, and placed it on the north side of the new altar. He said to Uriah the priest, 'Use the new altar for the morning sacrifices of burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and grain offering, and the offerings of the people, including their drink offerings. The blood from the burnt offerings and sacrifices should be sprinkled over the new altar. The old bronze altar will be only for my personal use.'"*

The priest did all that the king commanded.

How sad that the priest that was supposed to be serving the LORD actually chose to serve the king instead. It seems that this is a characteristic becoming more prevalent today. Our churches are choosing to follow the dictates of government-mandated morality rather than choosing to obey the dictates clearly stated in the word of God.

2Kings 16:17 ¶ And king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that

were under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones.

2Kings 16:18 And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

The NLT again is stated more clearly: *"Then the king removed the side panels and basins from the portable water carts. He also removed the Sea from the backs of the bronze oxen and placed it on the stone pavement. In deference to the king of Assyria, he also removed the canopy that had been constructed inside the palace for use on the Sabbath day, as well as the king's outer entrance to the Temple of the LORD."*

The NIV Commentary also notes: "According to 2Ch 28:24-25, he went so far as to mutilate the temple furniture and close the temple itself so that the services within the Holy Place were discontinued. "Worship services" would henceforth be held only in connection with the new altar or at one of the several altars erected throughout Jerusalem or at the high places dedicated to the various gods that were established throughout Judah by royal edict."

2 Chronicles 28:24–25 "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. 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."

2Kings 16:19 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?*

2Kings 16:20 And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

The historian concludes his record of the reign of Ahaz with a statement that more is written about him in the chronicles of the kings of Judah (chapter 28). As is evident from some of my commentary, there is also more written about him in the book of Isaiah (see my journal on Isaiah 7).

When Ahaz died, he was buried in the royal graveyard. His son Hezekiah became the next king.