

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Kings 16

We have been going chapter by chapter through this amazing historical book in God's Word that provides for us examples after examples of how the King of Israel and the King of Judah responded to His grace and mercy.

Both nations had turned their back on the Lord but because God is faithful and merciful and gracious, He continued to reach out to them – waiting for His people to repent and worship Him alone.

So in the north, Israel – they have continued in their apostasy. We have seen over and over again every single one of their kings did evil in the sight of the Lord – and because they failed to turn from their rebellion, God is going to judge them in chapter 17.

Judah – they had a handful of good kings – we saw two of them last week, Uzziah and Joatham. However, one of the things that we have seen with the kings of Judah is that they were still allowing the people to worship God that way they wanted.

The people continued to offer sacrifices and continued to burn incense on the high places instead of in the temple in Jerusalem as God had commanded.

So God began the process of correcting Judah as the end of chapter 15 –

[2Ki 15:37 NKJV] 37 In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah.

And this was done – to get them to turn from their rebellion.

In our study this morning, we will see how they respond to God's correction – will they humble themselves and repent of their ways or will they continue to harden their heart and continue in the path that their neighbors to the north walked in? We will see.

Let's pray...

[2Ki 16:1-20 NKJV] 1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 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].

So Ahaz becomes king of Judah.

And he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord.

He did not follow the examples of his father, Jotham – his grandfather, Uzziah or King David – remember, King David was standard by which all the kings of Judah were measured against.

Not because he was perfect but because of his zeal and faith unto the Lord. He was a man after God's own heart.

King Ahaz was probably the probably the wickedest king that Judah ever had.

3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel.

How wicked was Ahaz? His life mimicked the lives of the Kings of Israel.

Making his son pass through the fire is a reference to the worship of Molech.

The Ammonites had these hollow metal statues of Molech with his arms stretched out.

And they would put coal inside it and heat it up until it was red hot and put their babies and young children on its arms as a sacrifice to it.

That is what Ahaz did.

And there is a reason that it is mentioned here.

Turn with me to Leviticus 20

[Lev 20:1-5 NKJV] 1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: 'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives [any] of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. 3

'I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given [some] of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. 4 'And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives [some] of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, 5 'then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

This is why God commanded Joshua and the Children of Israel to bring judgment to the all of the ites that lived in the land – because Molech was one of the gods they worshipped.

And if God judged the Canaanites for worshipping Molech, because He is holy – He judged Judah for doing the same thing.

In fact next week when we see God's judgment upon Israel, we see that one of the reasons was that their worship of Molech.

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

Not only did Ahaz worship Molech – he worshipped anything and everything.

Ahaz was a religion connoisseur. He dabbled in everything.

The problem with this is – it goes against God's word.

(Ex 20:3 NKJV) "You shall have no other gods before Me.

(Jn 14:6 NKJV) Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

If we're looking to anything in addition to Jesus Christ, then we're not trusting in Jesus Christ.

5 Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to [make] war; and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome [him]. 6 At that time Rezin king of Syria captured Elath for Syria, and drove the men of Judah from Elath. Then the Edomites went to Elath, and dwell 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 save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me."

The king of Syria and the King of Israel for an alliance to come and try to overthrow King Ahaz.

They take some of the land – but were unsuccessful in overthrowing the king.

Now, notice Ahaz cries out to the king of Assyria for help instead of crying up to the King of Kings in heaven for help.

Truly Ahaz was no King David –

Listen to what David did -

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

Ahaz turned to the world to help him instead of turning to the Lord.

Now, I want you to write Isaiah 7 – and for homework I want you to read it.

Because in Isaiah 7, God sends Isaiah to Ahaz, and warns him that these two kings are coming against him, to overthrow him and put a puppet king in his place.

But God assures him that that they will be unsuccessful.

God gave Ahaz assurance of victory yet, he still chose to seek help from the world.

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 [it as] a present to the king of Assyria.

Who's silver and gold did Ahaz take. Did he take it from the king's treasury? No

He took it from God's house.

Again, he was already assured victory – and now, he is taking something that belonged to God and giving it to the world.

Church, everything that we have - belongs to God.

Our material things, our time, our gifts – they are all His.

So when we decide to take what's His and give it to the world, we do the same thing that King Ahaz is doing here.

9 So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried [its people] captive to Kir, and killed Rezin.

The king of Assyria welcomed the silver and gold and his forces go into Syria, kill their king and take the people captive – I had you make a note of that.

This was one of the policies of the Assyrian Empire.

Whenever they conquered a nation, they would take the people away to a foreign land, mixing the nations up, and thus keeping rebellion down, since people were too busy learning to live in a new country.

At first glance, it appears that everything turned out ok right?

[2Ch 28:20-21 NKJV] 20 Also Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. 21 For Ahaz took part [of the treasures] from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave [it] to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

The King of Assyria was an opportunist.

He took the gold and silver.

However, the only reason that he attacked Syria was because he wanted to make his empire bigger.

Ahaz, thought that Syria being defeated was a good thing – however, All Ahaz got out of it was a little false relief.

He ended up with a huge tax burden from the Assyrians, they never restored any of his cities to him, and in the removal of Syria, there was now nothing standing in the way of Assyria coming down and wiping out the rest of Israel and Judah.

Syria had been that buffer between them and Assyria – that is gone now.

Ahaz was trusting in the flesh instead of trusting in the Lord.

It kind of looked as if it worked, kind of.

But in the end, it hurt him more than helped him.

10 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that [was] at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. 11 Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made [it] before King Ahaz came back from Damascus.

In 2 Chr 28:23, it says Ahaz was attracted to the worship he saw in Damascus because he thought it was their gods that had given the Syrians victory over Judah. Apparently, he must have forgotten that they had just been defeated by the Assyrians. However, that didn't stop him.

All he focused was on the experience – the pomp and ceremony that took place there in Damascus.

Impressed, he drew up plans for the pagan altar and sent them back to Jerusalem where one of the priests went to work making a copy.

In his mind, maybe a new altar would spice up the worship there in Jerusalem.

Unfortunately church, many churches today are doing the same thing –

In an effort to spice up worship and bringing in new people, they pattern their ministries to what the world propagates (they copy the heathen altars and bring them to the church) - they turn to entertainment instead of instruction and forsake the worship of God in Spirit and Truth.

Church, we must be careful -

To worship inconsistently with what is revealed to us in Scripture ultimately degenerates into idolatry.

And that is exactly what is happening here.

12 And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and the king approached the altar and made offerings on it. 13 So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar.

Here we have all the offerings & sacrifices that had before been offered to God on HIS altar – the only difference is that they are being offered upon an altar that God never called for.

Ahaz was going through the motions – it was empty religion.

14 He also brought the bronze altar which [was] before the LORD, from the front of the temple--from between the [new] altar and the house of the LORD--and put it on the north side of the [new] altar. 15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great [new] altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire [by]." 16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

King Ahaz pretty much goes to Urijah and says, “let’s keep “doing church,” but let’s decide what church is & how to do it by drawing our cue from what’s satisfying to the people & exciting to the people & what the world’s into.

It won’t really be church anymore, at least not what God means by it – but we’ll still call it church.

Notice that King Ahaz is the one doing his own sacrifices.

In our study last week, we saw King Uzziah get into trouble because he desired to burn incense in the temple and God struck him with leprosy.

Ahaz is able to do his own sacrifices because he created his own place of worship – his own altar – therefore he made up his own rules and disregarded God’s command that a king could not serve as priest.

Turn with me to Revelation 3

In Revelation 2 and 3, we find the seven letters to the seven churches.

Two of the churches were doing ok – but five of the churches had some serious problem.

Of those five churches, Jesus reserved His harshest words to two of them.

The church in Ephesus – they had lost their first love.

And the church of the Laodiceans – the lukewarm church.

[Rev 3:14-16 NKJV] 14 "And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, 'These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

The criticism against both churches – especially the church in Laodicea was that they were so in the world – they no longer resembled the church and were in danger of being cutoff – that is why Jesus said, I will vomit you out of my mouth.

They worshipped at the altars of this world instead of in spirit and truth.

They went through the motions – they kept doing church on their terms.

Just like King Ahaz.

17 And King Ahaz cut off the panels of the carts, and removed the lavers from them; and he took down the Sea from the bronze oxen that [were] under it, and put it on a pavement of stones. 18 Also he removed the Sabbath pavilion which they had built in the temple, and he removed the king's outer entrance from the house of the LORD, on account of the king of Assyria.

What Ahaz is doing here in verse 17 and 18 – he is capitulating to the King of Assyria.

He is decimating the worship of the One True God in the temple of the Lord.

We are told in 2 Chronicles that he shut down the worship at the temple and made for himself altars all around Jerusalem and he made high places to burn incense to other gods.

Why? To show his loyalty to the King of Assyria.

I had you make a note that he removed the king's outer entrance.

This was the Upper gate that had just been built by his father – King Jotham.

He cut off the link between the palace and the temple – and in doing so; it became an illustration of his relationship with God.

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 rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

The chapter ends with grace.

Hezekiah, Ahaz' son becomes king of Judah

Although Hezekiah came from an ungodly father, he would be a godly king.

As we will see in two weeks, he would do as much to restore the House of the Lord as his father did to destroy it.

And thus, God's work would continue in spite of the wickedness of man.

I want to finish with this –

In Isaiah 7

After prophetic word had come to Ahaz about Israel and Syria not being able to conquer Judah – after assuring his victory.

God gives Ahaz a challenge -

If you will not believe, surely you shall not be established:

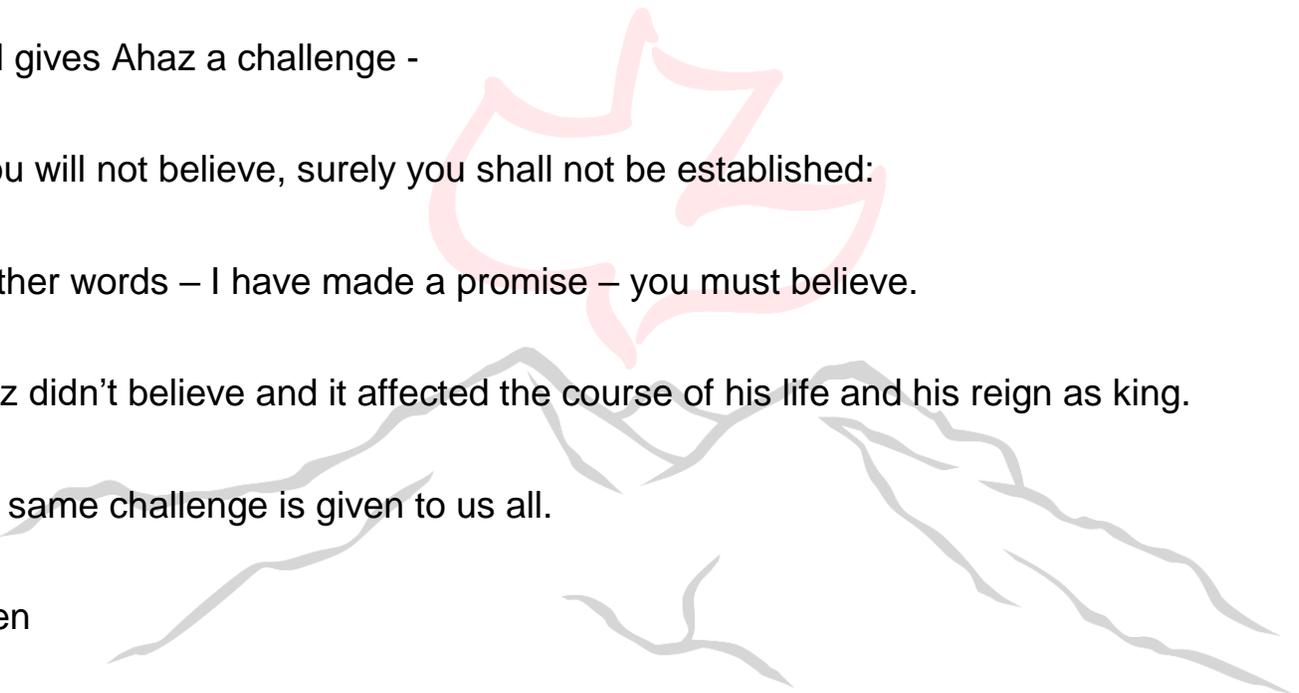
In other words – I have made a promise – you must believe.

Ahaz didn't believe and it affected the course of his life and his reign as king.

The same challenge is given to us all.

Amen

Let's pray...



CALVARY
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To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

After God had given the challenge to Ahaz, He invites Ahaz to test Him.

Ask for a sign big or small and it shall be provided for you.

God wanted for Ahaz to not have any excuse to trust Him.

And Ahaz refuses –

And because Ahaz refused – God gave Ahaz the greatest sign - Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (God with us)

Church, God has promised us deliverance through His Son.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 'May the LORD bless you and protect you. 25 May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you. 26 May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

