



## Second Chronicles - Chapter Twenty Eight

### III 2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23 - The Kingdom of Judah Down to the Exile (continues)

#### Summary of Chapter Twenty Eight

The Chronicler's account of Ahaz's reign (735-715 BC) incorporates the introduction and conclusion from 2 Kings Chapter 16, and follows the same topics, but otherwise the details are different. The Chronicler amplifies the negative assessment of Ahaz in Second Kings, showing how his apostasy led Judah astray and brought it to ruin. The charge that Ahaz was faithless exceeds even that made against Saul in 1 Chronicles 10:13. Yet the dark picture of Judah's decline is mitigated somewhat by the action of its northern kinsmen, who show a measure of repentance and responsiveness to the prophetic word.

#### III.k 2 Chronicles 28:1-27 - Ahaz

Refer to the chapter summary above.

#### III.k.i 2 Chronicles 28:1-4 - Reign of Ahaz

Although each king had made mistakes, spiritual progress in Judah had been achieved under Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah and Jotham. All of that now changes as the new king, Ahaz, returns to the ways of the northern kings and worships the Baals, even offering his own sons as burnt sacrifices.

<sup>1</sup> Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign; he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his ancestor David had done, <sup>2</sup> but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made cast images for the Baals; <sup>3</sup> and he made offerings in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and made his sons pass through fire, according to the abominable practices of the nations

whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel.<sup>4</sup> He sacrificed and made offerings on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

### 2 Chronicles 28:1-4

He did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his ancestor David had done. This briefly describes the reign of perhaps the worst king of Judah. Whereas many previous kings fell short in some area or another, typically allowing sacrifice on the high places, of Ahaz it is simply said that he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord. With Jotham's son Ahaz, Judah returns to officially sanctioned idolatry as the high places become centres of Canaanite religion: <<*For they also built for themselves high places, pillars, and sacred poles on every high hill and under every green tree; there were also male temple prostitutes in the land. They committed all the abominations of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel*>> (1 Kings 14:23-24). This religion includes child sacrifice to the god Molech for Ahaz made his son pass through fire, in other words he **burned his son as an offering**; refer to 1 Kings 11:7 and 16:34.

Confirmation for the rule of Ahaz has come from the discovery of a bulla or clay seal with the inscription, 'Belonging to Ahaz [son of] Yehotam [Jotham], king of Judah.' Refer to the comment made on 2 Kings 18:1 for evidence of a similar bulla citing King Hezekiah.

As his ancestor David had done. Ahaz had plenty of good examples, both immediately in his father Jotham and historically in his ancestor David. Ahaz rejected these godly examples and walked in his own way - a way opposed to God.

But he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. This is not a commendation but a criticism of the highest order. Ahaz not only rejected the godly heritage of David, he embraced the ungodly ways of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel. The southern kingdom of Judah had a mixture of godly and ungodly kings; the northern kingdom of Judah had only ungodly kings, and Ahaz followed their pattern. This is the first instance where Judah imitates Israel's apostasy. Micah 7:2-7 is a good description of the depravity of the times of Ahaz and the reaction of the godly remnant to it.

He even made cast images for the Baals. Baal worship was especially associated with Ahab's dynasty; refer to 1 Kings 16:31. Baal worship had been prevalent during the time of Queen Athaliah, Ahaz's 3G grandmother.

He made offerings in the valley of the son of Hinnom. This was again witnessed in the time of Ahaz's grandson Manasseh: <<*He made his son pass through fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom, practised soothsaying and augury and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the*>>

*sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger*>> (2 Chronicles 33:6), and which God roundly condemned as the kingdom of Judah was in its death throes: *<<And they go on building the high place of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire – which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind*>> (Jeremiah 7:31). The Canaanite practice of child sacrifice is condemned in the strongest of terms in Scripture; refer to Leviticus 20:1-5.

The 'Valley of (the son of) 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 - 2 Kings 23:10 is quoted below; thus the perpetual fires of 'Gehenna' became descriptive of hell itself: *<<If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire*>> (Mark 9:43).

Ahaz made his sons pass through fire. This describes Ahaz's participation in the worship of Molech. The pagan god or, more accurately a demon, 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. In Leviticus 20:1-5, God pronounced the death sentence against all who worshipped Molech, saying: *<<I myself will set my face against them, and will cut them off from the people, because they have given of their offspring to Molech, defiling my sanctuary and profaning my holy name*>> (Leviticus 20:3). Sadly, even a man as great as Solomon at least sanctioned the worship of Molech and built a temple to this idol as recorded in 1 Kings 11:7. One of the great crimes of the northern tribes of Israel was their worship of Molech, leading to the Assyrian captivity: *<<They made their sons and their daughters pass through fire; they used divination and augury; and they sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger*>> (2 Kings 17:17). As already noted, King Manasseh of Judah gave his son to Molech: *<<He made his son pass through fire; he practised soothsaying and augury, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger*>> (2 Kings 21:6). Up to the days of King Josiah of Judah, Molech worship continued, because he destroyed a place of worship to that idol: *<<He defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of Ben-hinnom, so that no one would make a son or a daughter pass through fire as an offering to Molech*>> (2 Kings 23:10).

According to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel. The nations that occupied Canaan before the time of Joshua also practiced this terrible form of human and child sacrifice. God would bring judgement upon Judah for their continued practice of these sins. This is a reminder that the war against the Canaanites in the Book of Joshua - as terrible

and complete as it was - was not a racial war. God's judgement did not come upon the Canaanites through the armies of Israel because of their race, but because of their sin. If Israel insisted in walking in the same sins, God would bring similar judgement upon them.

### III.k.ii 2 Chronicles 28:5-7 - Aram and Israel Defeat Judah

Due to the king's apostasy and the people's inclination to follow him, great disaster befalls Judah with heavy defeats to both the Aramæans and Israel. The Chronicler spells out that the attacks by Aram and Israel were acts of divine judgement because Ahaz and the people had forsaken the Lord. Although the coalition failed to capture Jerusalem, they evidently overran the countryside around the city, and the captives taken to Damascus were a harbinger of the exile to come: <<*He took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia*>> (2 Chronicles 36:20).



Aram and Israel Attack Judah circa 740-732 BC

As the Assyrian Empire expanded westward, Aram and Israel sought to compel Judah and the other nearby states to form an anti-Assyrian alliance. Judah refused, leading Aram and Israel to attack Jerusalem. Aram also wrested Elath from Judah and gave it to the Edomites. The Edomites may have also raided Judah and taken captives at this time. The Philistines, who may have been part of the anti-Assyrian alliance, attacked Judah as well, capturing several cities in the Shephelah and the Negeb

<sup>5</sup> Therefore the Lord his God gave him into the hand of the king of Aram, who defeated him and took captive a great number of his people and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with great slaughter. <sup>6</sup> Pekah son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all of them valiant warriors, because they had abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors. <sup>7</sup> And Zichri, a mighty warrior of Ephraim, killed the king's son Maaseiah, Azrikam the commander of the palace, and Elkanah the next in authority to the king.

### 2 Chronicles 28:5-7

Therefore the Lord his God gave him into the hand of the king of Aram. He was also given into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with great slaughter. This is a reference to King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah of Israel. This was part of Pekah's anti-Assyria policy. He thought that with Judah defeated, Aram and Israel together could more effectively resist the resurgent power of the Assyrian Empire. The Isaiah Chapter 7 passage makes it clear that the goal of this attack was to dethrone Ahaz and set up an Aramæan king over Judah, a certain son of Tabeal: <<*Let us go up against Judah and cut off Jerusalem and conquer it for ourselves and make the son of Tabeal king in it*>> (Isaiah 7:6).

On the whole, Judah suffered terrible losses from this attack. King Ahaz lost one hundred and twenty thousand Judæan soldiers, including three named leaders: the king's son Maaseiah, Azrikam the commander of the palace, and Elkanah the next in authority to the king, and two hundred thousand civilian hostages in these battles with Israel and Aram. It was dark time for Judah, and it looked as if the dynasty of David would soon be extinguished, as so many dynasties in the northern kingdom of Israel had ended. On the numbers cited refer to the comment made on 1 Chronicles 12:23-37.

When this great number of captives were taken to Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, a strange and wonderful thing happened. A prophet named Oded rebuked the army managing the captives, and called on them to return them to Judah. These leaders in Israel responded, realising that they had already offended the Lord and risked offending him even further. So

they clothed and fed the captives, who had before this been treated terribly, and returned them to Judah; refer to vv.8-15 below.

The prophecy of Isaiah Chapter 7, including the announcement of the Immanuel sign, came from Isaiah to King Ahaz during this joint Israel-Aramæan invasion. As the following verses reveal, Ahaz refused to trust in the Lord and instead put his trust in the king of Assyria. Yet for the sake of David, God did not allow this disastrous attack on Judah to prevail. He would not allow this satanic plot against the Messianic dynasty of David to succeed. The kings of Israel and Aram thought of themselves as burning torches come to destroy Judah and the dynasty of David. God said they were just like burnt-out smoking sticks, who would not ultimately do much damage; refer to Isaiah 7:4.

Through Isaiah's message to Ahaz, he assured the wicked king, who did not really listen, here should be a remnant left to return to the land; and the virgin should bear a son, so there should not fail to be a king upon the throne of David. The dynasty could never be destroyed, for of Immanuel's kingdom there shall be no end: *<<As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed>>* (Daniel 7:13-14).

### III.k.iii [2 Chronicles 28:8-15 - Intervention of Oded](#)

Following their defeat of Judah, the Israelites took two hundred thousand Judahites to be their slaves but as they approached Samaria a true prophet Oded challenged them saying that the Lord was displeased that they had killed so many of their kin and taken others captive. Other Israelite leaders had also expressed their concern over what had happened and so the captives were clothed, fed and returned to their own land.

<sup>8</sup> The people of Israel took captive two hundred thousand of their kin, women, sons, and daughters; they also took much booty from them and brought the booty to Samaria. <sup>9</sup> But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded; he went out to meet the army that came to Samaria, and said to them, 'Because the Lord, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand, but you have killed them in a rage that has reached up to heaven. <sup>10</sup> Now you intend to subjugate the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, as your slaves. But what have you except sins against the Lord your God? <sup>11</sup> Now hear me, and send back the captives whom you have taken from your kindred, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you.'

<sup>12</sup> Moreover, certain chiefs of the Ephraimites, Azariah son of Johanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai, stood up against those who were coming from the war, <sup>13</sup> and said to them, ‘You shall not bring the captives in here, for you propose to bring on us guilt against the Lord in addition to our present sins and guilt. For our guilt is already great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.’ <sup>14</sup> So the warriors left the captives and the booty before the officials and all the assembly. <sup>15</sup> Then those who were mentioned by name got up and took the captives, and with the booty they clothed all that were naked among them; they clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them; and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kindred at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

### 2 Chronicles 28:8-15

But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded. This brave prophet went with the two hundred thousand captives taken from the conquered southern kingdom to the northern kingdom of Israel, to call the leaders of Israel to conscience for this crime against their fellow tribes.

Just as Aram has done, Israel removes its captives with the intention of enslaving them. The intervention by Oded indicates that the northern tribes still belong to ‘the Israel of God,’ even though they are <<*in rebellion against the house of David*>> (2 Chronicles 10:19). The northern and southern tribes are relatives, literally ‘brothers’, and both divisions of the people have aroused God to anger by their unfaithfulness. The way back for both sides lies through repentance, which the leaders of Ephraim demonstrate in their response to Oded’s words. Their admission of guilt (v.13) refers primarily to the charges of rebellion made by Abijah in 2 Chronicles 13:4-12.

You shall not bring the captives in here, for you propose to bring on us guilt against the Lord in addition to our present sins and guilt. Remarkably, the leaders of Israel responded to the message from Oded and recognised their own sin and guilt. They cared for the captives from the spoil of battle and sent them back to Judah.

Adam Clarke comments, “To this beautiful speech nothing can be added by the best comment; it is simple, humane, pious, and overwhelmingly convincing: no wonder it produced the effect mentioned here. That there was much of humanity in the heads of the children of Ephraim who joined with the prophet on this occasion, 2 Chronicles 28:15 sufficiently proves.”

### III.k.iv 2 Chronicles 28:16-21 - Assyria Refuses to Help Judah

Because of the apostasy of Ahaz the Lord had turned both Edom and Philistia against Judah. King Ahaz tried to buy the services of Assyria to protect his kingdom but they too oppressed Judah because of the sin of Ahaz.

Ahaz's appeal here to Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria for help against the Edomites and Philistines encroaching on Judah's southern borders misfired; refer also to 2 Kings 16:6-7a. Although Judah received relief from its enemies, including the Syro-Ephraimite coalition: <<***The king of Assyria listened to him; the king of Assyria marched up against Damascus, and took it, carrying its people captive to Kir; then he killed Rezin***>> (2 Kings 16:9), it would end up as vassal to Assyria for 30 years: <<***The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah – the king of Assyria***>> (Isaiah 7:17), and: <<***Because this people has refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently, and melt in fear before Rezin and the son of Remaliah; therefore, the Lord is bringing up against it the mighty flood waters of the River, the king of Assyria and all his glory; it will rise above all its channels and overflow all its banks; it will sweep on into Judah as a flood, and, pouring over, it will reach up to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Immanuel***>> (Isaiah 8:6-8). Ahaz's mistake was in seeking help from the ungodly, rather than from the Lord God.

<sup>16</sup> At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. <sup>17</sup> For the Edomites had again invaded and defeated Judah, and carried away captives. <sup>18</sup> And the Philistines had made raids on the cities in the Shephelah and the Negeb of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they settled there. <sup>19</sup> For the Lord brought Judah low because of King Ahaz of Israel, for he had behaved without restraint in Judah and had been faithless to the Lord. <sup>20</sup> So King Tilgath-pilneser of Assyria came against him, and oppressed him instead of strengthening him. <sup>21</sup> For Ahaz plundered the house of the Lord and the houses of the king and of the officials, and gave tribute to the king of Assyria; but it did not help him.

### 2 Chronicles 28:16-21

At that time King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help. Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-pileser III of Assyria. Before Ahaz did this, Isaiah offered him a sign for assurance of God's help in the struggle against the combined armies of Israel and Aram; refer to Isaiah 7:1-12. This was a fair offer to a foul sinner, but Ahaz

refused under the excuse of not wanting to test God, when instead he really wanted to trust in the king of Assyria.

For the Lord brought Judah low because of King Ahaz of Israel. This was both because of the personal ungodliness of Ahaz and because of the poor example he was to others - he had encouraged moral decline in Judah.

An example of his personal decline was his appeal to the Assyrian king, to whom he said: *<<I am your servant and your son. Come up, and rescue me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me>>* (2 Kings 16:7). Ahaz surrendered to one enemy in order to defeat another. He refused to trust in the God of Israel and instead submitted himself and his kingdom to an enemy of Israel. The address 'I am your servant and your son' clearly places Ahaz as the petitioning vassal and shows he was trusting in Assyria rather than in the Lord, against the advice of Isaiah; refer to Exodus 23:22 and Isaiah 7:10-16.

King Ahaz had been faithless to the Lord. It is hard to see how the Chronicler could have been more explicit in his condemnation of this apostate king. He uses the Hebrew expression *ma'ol ma'al*, meaning faithless or very unfaithful.

Ahaz plundered the house of the Lord and the houses of the king and of the officials, and gave tribute to the king of Assyria. Essentially, Ahaz made Judah a subject kingdom to Assyria. Ahaz now took his orders from the Assyrian king, sacrificing the independence of the kingdom of Judah. The difference between Ahaz and his great ancestor David is so stark: *<<In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears>>* (Psalm 18:6). Even his wicked grandson Manasseh sought the Lord his God when he was in affliction. However, Ahaz seemed determined to fill up the measure of his sins. Yet, the Chronicler also notes that it did not help him. King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria did not support Judah or turn away from them but determined to come and oppress them.

### III.k.v 2 Chronicles 28:22-27 - Apostasy and Death of Ahaz

Ahaz thought that Aram was strong because their gods were strong and so he worshipped them, even closing down the temple. Ahaz was faithless all his life and when he died he was not buried with the other Davidic kings.

Judah reaches its lowest point before the exile through Ahaz's desecration of the temple and his suppression of worship according to the Law of Moses in favour of pagan practices. The blasphemous worship of false gods is now officially promoted by a Davidic king. Although this will be reversed somewhat by the reforming kings Hezekiah (2 Chronicles Chapters 29-32) and Josiah (2 Chronicles Chapters 34-35), Judah is set on a course that will culminate in destruction and exile.

<sup>22</sup> In the time of his distress he became yet more faithless to the Lord – this same King Ahaz. <sup>23</sup> 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 so that they may help me.’ But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel. <sup>24</sup> Ahaz gathered together the utensils of the house of God, and cut in pieces the utensils of the house of God. He shut up the doors of the house of the Lord and made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. <sup>25</sup> In every city of Judah he made high places to make offerings to other gods, provoking to anger the Lord, the God of his ancestors. <sup>26</sup> Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. <sup>27</sup> Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah succeeded him.

### 2 Chronicles 28:22-27

In the time of his distress he became yet more faithless to the Lord. Times of trial and distress do not necessarily drive people closer to God. Sometimes people allow such distresses to drive them away from God. Ahaz was notable among that type, so much so that the Chronicler noted, this same King Ahaz.

Charles Spurgeon comments, “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.”

For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus. In 2 Kings 16:10-11 it is recorded that Ahaz actually travelled to Damascus to visit King Tiglath-pileser III. It was unusual for the kings of Judah to make official visits to other kingdoms; they generally stayed within the borders of the Promised Land or their occupied lands in Transjordan. Yet this was much more than a diplomatic visit - this was an official act of submission from Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria. Having travelled to Damascus to meet his new overlord, Ahaz was so impressed by this Aramæan altar to the god Hadad that he had a copy of it installed in the temple in Jerusalem. Ahaz has strayed far from true faith in the Lord, and his religion is fully fledged syncretism with the pagan religions of the other nations. Using the plans sent from Ahaz, the chief priest Uriah imitated the pagan altar at Damascus and had it ready by the time Ahaz returned from the Aramæan capital. Ahaz did this both to please his new lord Tiglath-Pileser, and to incorporate the latest trends in altar design into the national worship of Judah. No wonder the Chronicler is incredulous at the actions of this evil king of Judah.

Ahaz wildly experimented, trying to inject the religion of Judah with new life. He seemed to be drawn to the most lurid elements in the pagan religions around him. Like the Athenians who *<<would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new>>* (Acts 17:21b), Ahaz was addicted to the lure of the sensational. The ways of the world should not be brought into the Christian church just because everyone else is doing it and it seems fun or successful in some way.

Ahaz gathered together the utensils of the house of God, and cut in pieces the utensils of the house of God. He shut up the doors of the house of the Lord and made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. All that seems clear is that his actions are motivated by a desire not to offend the king of Assyria. In doing these things, Ahaz desecrates the furnishings of the temple of the Lord. Obedience to the Lord is gone, the Lord's blessing and protection are gone, and now the beauty of the Lord's temple is gradually being removed. Refer to 1 Kings 7:23-36 for details of these temple items. Ahaz's appropriation of these sacred items does not seem to be for the purpose of sending a further gift to Tiglath-pileser but rather for de-emphasising their importance in the worship services to the Lord. Perhaps he planned to reuse them in some other decorative way. At any rate, death overtook him before his attention could be turned to them. They survived or were repaired for they are mentioned among the several items that were carried away in the later Babylonian despoiling of Jerusalem; refer to Jeremiah 25:13-14, 27:19-20 and 52:17-23.

Ahaz could not bring in his pagan, corrupt innovations without also removing what had stood before at the temple. This was an ungodly exchange, taking away the good and putting in the bad. Collectively, all these things served to discourage the worship of the true God at the temple in which he had placed his great name. All this took place at the temple Solomon built unto the Lord. The mere location did not make it true worship. Sometimes idols are worshipped at a house that was once dedicated to the true God.

In every city of Judah he made high places to make offerings to other gods, provoking to anger the Lord. During these changes, Ahaz shut down the operation of the temple and established small pagan altars all around Judah. It would seem as though the light of truth were absolutely extinguished. It was not so, however, for it is likely that throughout the whole reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, Isaiah was uttering his message and that during the reign of Ahaz Micah also was delivering the Word of God. The Lord will always make himself known, as Paul and Barnabas would later demonstrate in Lystra: *<<In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good – giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy>>* (Acts 14:16-17).

Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last. Thus the reign of perhaps the worst king of Judah ended. Micah - who prophesied during the reign of Ahaz - describes the man who works to successfully do evil with both hands: <<*Their hands are skilled to do evil; the official and the judge ask for a bribe, and the powerful dictate what they desire; thus they pervert justice*>> (Micah 7:3). The idea is that the man pursues evil with all his effort, with both hands. He may very well have had King Ahaz in mind.

Yet in many ways, Ahaz is a warning to the current generation. He could be considered a church leader from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in many ways:

- Based on his admiration of the altar of Damascus, it could be said that Ahaz was a man with an artistic sense of style.
- He was in love with innovation and new things, and did not hesitate to bring these innovations into worship.
- At the same time, he seemed to be a nice man. He did not have the persecuting spirit of his grandson Manasseh who persecuted the prophets and people of God: <<*Moreover, Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides the sin that he caused Judah to sin so that they did what was evil in the sight of the Lord*>> (2 Kings 21:16).
- Ahaz had the advantage of many great prophets and messengers such as Isaiah and Micah.
- Ahaz had the blessing of a great deliverance of God, when God spared Jerusalem and Judah from total defeat when the armies of Israel and Aram came against them.
- Ahaz had the influence of a godly father and a godly heritage from the line of David.

The key was that Ahaz had no relationship with God. He was interested in spiritual things, and would even make great spiritual sacrifices, such as sacrificing his own sons to Molech. Yet he destroyed the link that his father Jotham made between the palace and the temple, and this was an illustration of his destroyed relationship with God. For Ahaz, it was not enough to have a spiritual interest and all the aforementioned advantages.

The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel was a separate record from Kings and Chronicles to which the authors had access that recorded everything of significance that occurred during the reign of the kings.

But they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Ahaz is denied burial in the royal tombs as a mark of God's judgement on his wickedness.