

Ahaz Provokes the Lord to Anger**Lesson Scope:** [2 Chronicles chapters 27 and 28](#)

References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

Verse 1 of chapter 28 emphasizes the only positive notes recorded about King Ahaz. His lineage was impeccable as he was a son of David, a link in the godly line; he had a spiritual heritage with great opportunity. But instead of valuing that heritage, he followed a downward course initiated by his predecessors. His grandfather Uzziah was primarily godly, yet through self-confidence faced divine punishment. His father Jotham “did that which was right in the sight of the LORD” and “prepared his ways before the LORD his God” (27:2, 6), yet “he entered not into the temple of the LORD” (27:2) and seemingly accomplished little during his sixteen-year reign.

Both Isaiah (Isaiah 1:1) and Micah (Micah 1:1) laboured during Ahaz’s reign. Isaiah 7 records a personal encounter between prophet and king. During this dialogue, King Ahaz became the first person to hear about the virgin birth (Isaiah 7: 13-16).

How tragic is the record of Ahaz’s life! When granted opportunity, he spurned it; when faced with decision, he chose the wrong; and in distress he trespassed “yet the more against the LORD” (28:22). His worship was an abomination, and his wars ended in defeat.

Transgressing against the Lord brings men to ruin and provokes the Lord to wrath. Every sin-blinded person will face the just reward of his wickedness.

The deceptive nature of sin will draw an individual down a course he never intended to take when he set out. It is imperative that we stay close to God’s Word and His people so that we recognize the enticements of sin before we become entangled.

Rejection of Scriptural truth is a serious matter and can only lead in a downward direction. It will affect not only the life of an individual, but also has potential to injure others, including innocents as well.

The world may seem to have the answers to man's needs, but without Christ their "answers" will lead to disappointment and destruction. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Lesson Aim: To identify the deceptive and destructive nature of sin.

Theme Verse: [Colossians 3:25](#). But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Lesson Text

An Idolatrous King

[2 Chronicles 28:1-4](#) ^(KJV) 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: ² For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim. 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. ⁴ He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

A Captured People

[2 Chronicles 28:5-8](#) ^(KJV) 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. 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. 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. 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. [2 Chronicles 28:16-20](#) ^(KJV) At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him. ¹⁷ For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. ¹⁸ The Philistines also had in-

vaded 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. ¹⁹ For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD. ²⁰ And Tilgathpilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

A Ruined Nation

2 Chronicles 28:21-27^(KJV) 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. ²² And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this *is that* king Ahaz. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

Questions for Study

An Idolatrous King

1. What opportunities did King Ahaz reject in choosing a downward course?
2. In what ways do innocents suffer today when parents or leaders reject truth?
3. What false gods might we be tempted to sacrifice to today?

A Captured People

4. How did the sins of the king affect the entire nation?

5. How should we respond when we see those who are suffering due to sinful lifestyles?

A Ruined Nation

6. Why did Ahaz look to man for the answers to his problems?

7. How might we fail to look to God to answer our difficulties today?

Analysing the Passage

The reference to David (28: 1) is significant. Ahaz had a godly pattern to look to. However, he chose to pattern his life after the ungodly kings in Israel, and in so doing became one of the worst kings Judah had. Only his grandson Manasseh seemingly had a worse record.

The Hinnom Valley (28:3) lay on the south and west of Jerusalem. The practice of child sacrifice seems to have originated here with King Solomon (1 Kings 11:7). When King Josiah later purged Judah of idolatry, he so thoroughly destroyed the locale that the valley became a garbage heap for Jerusalem. From this, the term Gehenna for hell, originated.

Assyria was an ascendant power at this time. In a few years they would conquer the Northern Kingdom. Ahaz attempted an alliance in an effort to recoup his losses, yet the crippling tribute imposed by the Assyrian king caused more distress (28:20-21).

Brought . . . low (28:19) means “to bend the knee,” either in a positive sense of humility in worship, or negative as in being humiliated. The Lord used Israel and other nations to bring Judah to her knees in subjection.

Made . . . naked (28:19) implies that, through Ahaz’s leadership, they were stripped of political power and moral principle.

Second Kings 16: 17-18 records the spoiling of the temple mentioned in 28:21 as an attempt by the king to build an altar in the temple grounds for the Assyrian gods. The multitude of altars (28:24) stands in contrast to God’s establishment of one altar of burnt offering at the temple.

Principles and Applications

An Idolatrous King

1. Following apostate influences leads to the rejection of Scriptural principles as upheld by the godly of the past (28:1-2). First, Ahaz refused to walk in the ways of David in doing right in the sight of the Lord. Next, he followed the example of the Israelite kings, made idols,

and sacrificed to gods of the heathen. Failure to follow Scriptural principles as outlined in God's Word and practiced by godly men in the past will doom us to spiritual loss and abandonment of God's way.

2. Sin propels one on a relentlessly downhill course (28:3-4). Romans 1: 28-32 graphically describes the downhill course of those who reject God and banish truth from their lives. Even Ahab, who introduced Baal worship to Israel, could likely not have imagined the depths Judah would descend to. But that is how it works. A little side-stepping from truth, a little area of reservation in commitment to God, a little disobedience—and a course is set that is hard to reverse.

A Captured People

3. Multitudes experience loss and ruin when leaders forsake the Lord (28:5-8). Many in the kingdom lost their lives or freedom as a result of the king's ungodly decisions. Today God still holds leaders—in the home, in the church, in the institutions of the church—accountable for their influence. Faithful leadership provides stability and spiritual safety for all who are influenced thereby.

4. Those who forsake the Lord seek help and security from the ungodly (28:16). We might be tempted to turn to worldly institutions for answers. Insurance policies or security systems may look desirable to protect a large investment. Psychology-tainted counsellors might be sought out for advice in marriage relationships, child training, or emotional struggles. The Christian will look to God's Word for all the challenges in life and will seek advice from other faithful Christians.

5. The law of sowing and reaping inevitably brings the persistent sinner low (28:14). Whether sin is practiced by an individual, a church group, or a nation, God will judge according to their works. We cannot expect God's blessing to rest where His Word and way is persistently disregarded. In His mercy He will allow hardship as an opportunity for the sinner to reconsider his ways and as a warning to others.

A Ruined Nation

6. The world fails to deliver what it seems to promise (28:20-21). The world's securities are no match for the Almighty. Its security can guarantee nothing, its pleasures end in bitterness, its counsels are defeated, and its wisdom is rendered foolishness by God's Word. True peace and rest is only found in obedience to God's will and way.

7. Those who ignore God and His chastening harden themselves to their utter ruin (28:22-23). Pharaoh hardened his heart when faced with God, to the ruin of his land, his nation, and finally his life. God in mercy will chasten people to bring about repentance, but if an individual consciously rejects that, it will bring about spiritual loss and destruction. Only genuine repentance and a changed life will avert divine justice.
8. Those who pursue a life of sin place themselves under God's wrath (28:25). Hebrews 10:29-31 speaks of the peril of rejecting Christ. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). If man pursues sin, he will face God's wrath in eternal judgment.

Important Teachings

1. Following apostate influences leads to the rejection of Scriptural principles as upheld by the godly of the past (28:1-2).
2. Sin propels one on a relentlessly downhill course (28:3-4).
3. Multitudes experience loss and ruin when leaders forsake the Lord (28:5-8).
4. Those who forsake the Lord seek help and security from the ungodly (28:16).
5. The law of sowing and reaping inevitably brings the persistent sinner low (28:14).
6. The world fails to deliver what it seems to promise (28:20-21).
7. Those who ignore God and His chastening harden themselves to their utter ruin (28:22-23).
8. Those who pursue a life of sin place themselves under God's wrath (28:25).
9. Those who forsake the Lord become the bitter enemies of true worship and godliness (28:24).

Answers to Questions

1. What opportunities did King Ahaz reject in choosing a downward course?
He had a godly heritage to look to for example. There were faithful prophets to seek advice from. His father and grandfather had served the Lord. After defeat by Israel, God allowed the captives to return in an act of mercy and warning

2. In what ways do innocents suffer today when parents or leaders reject truth?

They lose the opportunity to experience a godly example close to them. Children may be neglected by parents who seek other pleasures. Due to lack of spiritual direction, their souls may be lost.

3. What false gods might we be tempted to sacrifice to today?

We might look to insurance companies to protect our earthly possessions. Worldly counsel might be sought for advice on marriage, child training, mental health, or money management. We might look to technology or worldly business management ideas for the answer to our financial needs.

4. How did the sins of the king affect the entire nation?

One hundred twenty thousand men that had forsaken God were slain in battle. Two hundred thousand women and children were taken captive, along with much spoil. The tribute required by the Assyrians proved burdensome to the people. The spiritual and moral character of the nation was ruined.

5. How should we respond when we see those who are suffering due to sinful lifestyles?

As we have opportunity, we need to show we care about them and offer help that does not endorse their lifestyle. We need to point them to the Lord, who alone has the answers for their needs. We need to be honest with them about what the Bible says about sin.

6. Why did Ahaz look to man for the answers to his problems?

Satan wants men to believe his Ways will bring alleviation of distress. Ahaz turned to his agents due to sinful delusions. Pride and hardness of heart kept him from turning to God in repentance and looking to Him for help in times of trouble.

7. How might we fail to look to God to answer our difficulties today?

We might trust in our own ability to work hard and provide our own material needs. We might trust in doctors for the answer to a health challenge instead of asking God about it. We might trust in our education or abilities to resolve a difficult situation. We might fail to heed the help or advice of godly brethren.

Summarizing the Lesson

We are blessed today with a godly heritage and plentiful examples of God's faithfulness to us. Yet enticements and temptations to sin abound all around us in the world. We need to emulate Moses' faith: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" Hebrews 11:25-26).

Research Guide

1. Study Hebrews 11. This passage documents those who endured hardship to gain eternal reward.
2. Study Jude. This passage warns against following error promoted by the unfaithful, and offers encouragement for the steadfast