

# SECOND CHRONICLES

## Chapter 28

### *Ahaz King of Judah*

Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD.<sup>2</sup> He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and also made cast idols for worshiping the Baals.<sup>3</sup> He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, following the detestable ways of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.<sup>4</sup> He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.<sup>5</sup> Therefore the LORD his God handed him over to the king of Aram. The Arameans defeated him and took many of his people as prisoners and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hands of the king of Israel, who inflicted heavy casualties on him.<sup>6</sup> In one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed a hundred and twenty thousand soldiers in Judah—because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers.<sup>7</sup> Zicri, an Ephraimite warrior, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the palace, and Elkanah, second to the king.<sup>8</sup> The Israelites took captive from their kinsmen two hundred thousand wives, sons and daughters. They also took a great deal of plunder, which they carried back to Samaria.<sup>9</sup> But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there, and he went out to meet the army when it returned to Samaria. He said to them, "Because the LORD, the God of your fathers, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reaches to heaven.<sup>10</sup> And now you intend to make the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem your slaves. But aren't you also guilty of sins against the LORD your God?"<sup>11</sup> Now listen to me! Send back your fellow countrymen you have taken as prisoners, for the LORD's fierce anger rests on you."<sup>12</sup> Then some of the leaders in Ephraim—Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai—confronted those who were arriving from the war.<sup>13</sup> "You must not bring those prisoners here," they said, "or we will be guilty before the LORD. Do you intend to add to our sin and guilt? For our guilt is already great, and his fierce anger rests on Israel."<sup>14</sup> So the soldiers gave up the prisoners and plunder in the presence of the officials and all the assembly.<sup>15</sup> The men designated by name took the prisoners, and from the plunder they clothed all who were naked. They provided them with clothes and sandals, food and drink, and healing balm. All those who were weak they put on donkeys. So they took them back to their fellow countrymen at Jericho, the City of Palms, and returned to Samaria.<sup>16</sup> At that time King Ahaz sent to the king<sup>a</sup> of Assyria for help.<sup>17</sup> The Edomites had again come and attacked

Judah and carried away prisoners, <sup>18</sup> while the Philistines had raided towns in the foothills and in the Negev of Judah. They captured and occupied Beth Shemesh, Aijalon and Gederoth, as well as Soco, Timnah and Gimzo, with their surrounding villages. <sup>19</sup> The LORD had humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel, <sup>b</sup> for he had promoted wickedness in Judah and had been most unfaithful to the LORD. <sup>20</sup> Tiglath-Pileser <sup>c</sup> king of Assyria came to him, but he gave him trouble instead of help. <sup>21</sup> Ahaz took some of the things from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace and from the princes and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him. <sup>22</sup> In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the LORD. <sup>23</sup> He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him; for he thought, “Since the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me.” But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel. <sup>24</sup> Ahaz gathered together the furnishings from the temple of God and took them away. <sup>d</sup> He shut the doors of the LORD’s temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. <sup>25</sup> In every town in Judah he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods and provoked the LORD, the God of his fathers, to anger. <sup>26</sup> The other events of his reign and all his ways, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. <sup>27</sup> Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but he was not placed in the tombs of the kings of Israel. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

**28:1–27** See 2Ki 16:1–20 and notes, though only the introduction and conclusion in the two accounts are strictly parallel. The reign of Ahaz is the only one for which the Chronicler does not mention a single redeeming feature. In his account the Chronicler appears to adopt explicit parallels from the speech of Abijah condemning the northern kingdom (ch. 13) in order to show that under Ahaz the southern kingdom had sunk to the same depths of apostasy. Judah’s religious fidelity, of which Abijah had boasted, was completely overthrown under Ahaz. (CSB)

The Chronicler presents the life of Ahaz with no positive comments. Ahaz’s reign is shown as a mirror image of Abijah’s in ch 13, with idolatry and defeat now belonging to Judah instead of Israel. The Chronicler supplements the account of Ahaz’s reign given in 2Ki 16 and Is 7 by adding details to the characterization of Ahaz (vv 1–4; see notes, 2Ki 16:3, 4) and giving a fuller description of the losses inflicted on Judah by Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel (vv 5–7). Ahaz was in dire straits, pressed from the north by Israel and Syria, from the south by the Edomites, and from the southwest by the Philistines. In desperation, he appealed to the Assyrians for help. However, the heavy tribute Ahaz had to pay Tiglath-pileser only added to Judah’s distress (vv 16–21). (TLSB)

**28:1** *Ahaz*. One of the worst of the Davidic kings. (TLSB)

*sixteen years.* 732–715 B.C., not including the co-regency with Jotham (735–732). (CSB)

**28:2** *made cast idols.* Cf. 13:8. (CSB)

Indicates a special measure of devotion and recalls the golden calves made by Jeroboam I of Israel (11:15; 13:8). Baal was often depicted on upright stones. (TLSB)

**28:3** *Valley of Ben Hinnom.* Cf. 33:6. Josiah put an end to the pagan practices observed there (2Ki 23:10). (CSB)

*sacrificed his sons.* See Lev 20:1–5; Jer 7:31–32. 2Ki 16:3 has the singular “son.” Some have regarded the plural as a deliberate inflation on the part of the Chronicler to heighten the wickedness of Ahaz. However, some manuscripts of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) also have a plural in 2Ki 16:3, suggesting that the Chronicler may have faithfully copied the text before him. (CSB)

Pagan practice condemned in Lv 20:1–5 (cf Jer 7:31–32 and Manasseh’s renewal of the practice in 2Ch 33:6). Luth: “This is why it is often stated in the histories of this people that the Children of Israel cried out to the Lord and yet were not heard and liberated. For they wanted to appease God with sacrifices and the slaying of victims, yes, even of their children and their own bodies, which they cut up with knives and lancets until they were covered with blood. Or they lived a very hard life in some other way. But they were idolaters and served God with false acts of worship. Therefore they were not heard... But by all this God is irritated rather than appeased or prevailed upon to give help” (AE 8:275). (TLSB)

**28:5** Cf. 13:16–17. *God handed him over.* According to the Chronicler’s view on immediate retribution, defeat in war is one of the results of disobedience. (CSB)

*also given into the hands of the king of Israel.* 2Ki 16:5–6 and Isa 7 make it clear that Rezin (king of Aram) and Pekah acted together against Judah. The Chronicler has chosen either to treat them separately or to report on two different episodes of the Aram-Israel coalition. (CSB)

*defeated him.* As a result of his religious corruption, war came upon Ahaz from Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel. The outcome is the reverse of the victory the Lord had given to faithful Abijah (13:16–17). (TLSB)

**28:6** *Pekah.* Reigned over the northern kingdom 752–732 B.C. (see 2Ki 15:27–31). (CSB)

*had forsaken the LORD.* The same charge Abijah made against the northern kingdom (13:11). (CSB)

Key concept in Chronicles that brings condemnation and defeat (cf 7:19, 22; 12:5; 15:2; 21:8–10; 24:17–22; 29:6; 34:25). Precisely the sin of the north that Abijah speaks of in 13:9–11. (TLSB)

**28:9–15** The kindness of the northern captors to their captives from Judah, especially as recorded in vv. 14–15, may be the background for Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37). Oded’s attitude to the north is shown by his willingness to call them “fellow countrymen” (v. 11). In this case, too, the record of ch. 13 has been reversed: The northern tribes are more righteous than the south. (CSB)

Prophecy of Oded. The Chronicler, living in the postexilic period, may have included this history as an appeal for reunification with his contemporaries of the northern tribes. Note the conciliatory tone of Oded’s speech (“the LORD, the God of your fathers”; “your relatives”) and the north’s repentance. (TLSB)

**28:9** *Oded*. An otherwise unknown prophet, although a man by that name is mentioned in 15:1, 8. Elisha also urged the release of prisoners of war (2Ki 6:20–23). (TLSB)

*killed them in a rage*. Specific Judeans are mentioned in v 7. (TLSB)

**28:13** *guilt*. Because of the enslavement of the Judeans. (TLSB)

**28:15** *clothed ... provided ... anointed*. The Ephraimites show exceptional kindness to the prisoners and return them to Judean territory. (TLSB)

**28:16** *help*. Ahaz sought a foreign alliance, which the Chronicler views as sinful. (TLSB)

**28:17–19** Judah’s defeat at the hands of the Edomites and Philistines precipitates the attempt to gain Assyria’s help (v 16). (TLSB)

**28:17–18** *Edomites ... attacked Judah ... Philistines had raided*. Foreign alliances (v. 16) led to further defeats for Ahaz. (CSB)

**28:17** *Edomites*. They were in a position to even the score with their former Judean overlords because Rezin had retaken Elath, where the Edomites lived (2Ki 16:6). (TLSB)

**28:18** *Philistines*. Ahaz lost control of the cities that his grandfather had taken from the Philistines (26:6–7), who proceeded to invade the Shephelah (cf 26:10) and the Negeb, the southland of Judah. (TLSB)

*Shephelah ... Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Soco ... Timnah ... Gimzo*. Western Judah. (TLSB)

**28:19** *The LORD had humbled Judah because of Ahaz*. The same formula used to describe the defeat of the northern tribes in 13:18, though under Ahaz it is Judah that is subdued. (CSB)

*unfaithful to the LORD.* Judah's alliance with Assyria brought corruption and decline. (TLSB)

**28:20–21** Ahaz had called on Assyria for help (v 16), but foreign alliances are treacherous. Judah is thus reduced to a vassal of a foreign oppressor because they allied themselves with the kingdoms of the world rather than with the Lord, the God of their fathers. (TLSB)

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**28:20** *Tiglath-Pileser.* King of Assyria 745–727 B.C. (CSB)

*trouble instead of help.* Appears on the surface to contradict the statement in 2Ki 16:9 that Tiglath-Pileser III responded to Ahaz's request by attacking and capturing Damascus, exiling its population and killing Rezin. The Chronicler assumes the reader's familiarity with the other account and knows of the temporary respite for Judah gained by Assyrian intervention against Damascus and the northern kingdom of Israel. But he focuses on the long-range results, in which Judah herself was reduced to vassalage to Assyria. (CSB)

**28:5–21** When Syria and Israel overrun Judah and lead away numerous prisoners, the Lord shames the Israelites for mistreating their southern prisoners. Mistreating one's relatives, as the Israelites did, is doubly shameful. God calls us to treat our extended family with respect and care to lead them to repentance and life. Thankfully, the Lord treats us mercifully by forgiving our sins and reconciling us to the family of God. • Grant our families peace and unity, O Lord, that we may extend Your kindness to all. Amen. (TLSB)

**28:22–25** Unlike prior kings, Ahaz does not come to repentance but grows more apostate. The gods of Damascus become the object of his worship, a story more fully told in 2Ki 16:10–18. The temple desecration under Ahaz is more fully described in the context of Hezekiah's reformation (29:7, 18–19). (tlsb)

**28:22–23** The Chronicler presumes the reader's familiarity with Ahaz's trip to Damascus and his copying of the altar and practices there (2Ki 16:10–16). (CSB)

**28:23** *gods of Damascus.* Such as the chief Syrian god, Hadad, or Nibhaz and Tartak (2Ki 17:31). (TLSB)

**28:24–25** Additional details on Ahaz's alterations are found in 2Ki 16:17–18. The Chronicler also adds details in his description of Hezekiah's reforming activities to correct some of the abuses under Ahaz: Not only had the doors been shut, but also the lamps were put out and offerings were not made at the sanctuary (29:7);

the altar and utensils were desecrated, and the table for the consecrated bread was neglected (29:18–19). It is precisely these accoutrements of proper temple service about which Abijah had boasted when he proclaimed the faithfulness of Judah in contrast to that of the northern kingdom (13:11). Now these orthodox furnishings are lacking under Ahaz and make the southern kingdom just like the north. (CSB)

**28:24** *vessels*. Ahaz mutilated some of them; others he discarded (29:19). (TLSB)

*shut up the doors*. Official service to the Lord was ended. (TLSB)

**28:25** *high places*. Ahaz favored the sites that had rivaled the temple. (TLSB)

**28:26** *Book of the Kings*. 1 and 2Ki. (TLSB)

**28:27** *not placed in the tombs of the kings*. The third king whose wickedness resulted in the loss of this honor at death. The others were Jehoram (21:20) and Joash (24:25). Uzziah's sin and leprosy brought the same result, though it is not reported in exactly the same terms (26:23). Cf. also Manasseh (33:20). (CSB)

Leaders of Judah showed their disrespect for Ahaz by excluding him from the tombs of the kings (cf 21:20; 24:25; 26:23; 33:20). (TLSB)

*kings of Israel*. Tombs dated from the era of the united monarchy. (TLSB)