

2 Kings 13b-16 – Chapter Study

INTRO

Here's our outline for 2 Kings.

- I. **AHAZIAH (ISRAEL) Chs. 1-2**
- II. **JEHORAM/JORAM (ISRAEL) Chs. 3:1-8:15**
- III. **JEHORAM/JORAM (JUDAH) Ch. 8:16-24**
- IV. **JEHU (ISRAEL) Chs. 9-10**
- V. **JEHOASH (JUDAH) Chs. 11-12**
- VI. **JEHOAHAZ (ISRAEL) Ch. 13:1-9**
- VII. **JEHOASH (ISRAEL) Ch. 13:10-25**

As you can see, compared to the earlier history of Israel & Judah, the pace has quickened and the reign of most monarchs has been shortened.

This is because in the northern Kingdom of Israel, not a single righteous king ruled.

Israel is rapidly losing its power and being slowly consumed by other kingdoms & emerging empires.

Judah to the south had a few good kings who managed to delay this decline.

They ended up lasting nearly 200 years longer before they eventually fell.

VII. **JEHOASH (ISRAEL) Ch. 13:10-25**

A. His Reign & Death 13:10-13

It was during this time that the great prophet Elisha died.

B. Death of Elisha 13:14-21

¹⁴ Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die.

Let's stop & ponder just that for a moment.

Elisha, this great man of unbelievable faith, got sick.

The illness that would result in the end of his earthly life came on him.

What—Did he have a lapse of faith?

Did he open some door of unbelief that allowed the enemy to afflict him?

In light of what follows, it's obvious a faltering in faith was not the cause of Elisha's illness.

It's cause was simply due to the fact that we all are destined to die one day.

Apart from the Rapture, every single person you know, is going to go the way of all flesh.

People spend so much time, effort & money on trying to stay as young looking as possible.

They diet, they exercise, they use cosmetics, and get surgery – all in an attempt to hang on to health & youth.

But as Gayle Erwin so humorously says, you bodybuilders who pile it high and up here, I know where it's going. In the end, ***gravity wins.***

What's said of Elisha here will happen to many of us.

We'll age, and our body will lose its resilience to injury & illness, and

eventually, we'll come down with something we can't defeat.
Even if we were to die of old age at 115, just go to sleep one night and never wake up, *age itself* would be the cause of our departing this world.
The *father* of the Faith Movement, Kenneth Hagin, said sickness was a sign of a lack of faith.

Yet in his last years he went to the doctor & hospital several times.
He died in Sept. 2003 from complications of a heart attack, after being in a coma for 5 days.

The 2 guys Hagin got most of his ideas from, EW Kenyon & John MacMillan, said sickness was the result of a lack of faith & a failure to understand one's spiritual authority – are both dead.

They too became sick with the illness of which they died.

Their spiritual grandchildren, guys like Ken Copeland & Benny Hinn, and Jerry Savelle, continue to spread their goofy ideas, but they too will one day become sick with the illness of which they will die.

So will you & so will I.

Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

As wicked as Joash was, there was no denying Elisha was a towering figure in Israel's history.

He was *worth an army all by himself* as time & again he'd proven.

That's what the phrase "the chariots of Israel and their horsemen" means.

Remember how he'd told the king of Israel what the Syrians were planning?

Israel was able to station its troops to ambush & rout the invaders time & again.

So the Syrian king sent his army to capture Elisha. But Elisha single handedly captured them.

There are some *important lessons* from the life of Elisha about the crucial link between faith in God & national security we'd be wise to learn from today.

If God is fighting *for* you, your military tactics & hardware aren't all that helpful.

And if He's fighting *against* you, they will do you *no good at all*.

¹⁵ And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows."

These were symbols & implements of war.

So he took himself a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶ Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." [= Ready it.]

So he put his hand *on it*, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

Joash understood Elisha was saying his power to wield the bow was *coming from the Lord*.

¹⁷ And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for

The place Israel & Syria disputed lay eastward. Now – watch this next part →

you must strike the Syrians at Aphek till you have destroyed them.

In order to understand what comes next we need to see that Joash *understood* what Elijah was saying.

The arrow he shot eastward *symbolized his leading Israel to victory* over the Syrians at the city of Aphek.

But Elisha *told him* he was to **KEEP** striking them *until they were destroyed*.

18 Then he said, “Take the arrows”; so he took them. And he said to the king of Israel, “Strike the ground”; so he struck three times, and stopped.

The striking here wasn't Joash grabbing all the arrows and hitting them as a bundle on the ground

He was to 'strike' *as in shooting* the arrows into the ground.

So Joash notched, drew & shot 3 arrows, then stopped.

19 And the man of God was angry with him, and said, “You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed it! But now you will strike Syria only three times.”

Elisha's anger stemmed from Joash's *failure to follow through* on what he'd been told.

There was *no misunderstanding* on Joash's part.

He knew the bow & arrow *were prophetic* of his victory over the Syrians.

And he knew he was being commissioned *to keep at it* until the power of Syria was broken.

He had *more* arrows in his quiver than just the 4 he'd shot.

As he'd *begun* to shoot at Elisha's command, he ought to have *continued* till the arrows were gone or Elisha told him to cease.

Jehoash understood what shooting the first arrow symbolized; Elisha had explained it.

By letting the king shoot *more* Elisha was *inviting him to claim as many victories* as he had arrows.

But Jehoash thought God *could not* or *would not* do as much for him as Elisha said.

It's this *unbelief* that prompts Elisha's anger.

The king failed to trust God even though he knew what God had promised.

The prophet told him that had he shot more arrows, *God would have honored his faith* & given him the victories needed to accomplish Syria's complete destruction.

In spiritual warfare, our chief offensive weapon is prayer – where each request is like an arrow.

Let's not make Jehoash' mistake & give up after firing off just a few requests. Keep at it till the victory is secure or until God tells you to stop praying.

20 Then Elisha died, and they buried him. And the raiding bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year.

The author puts these 2 things together to show just how bad things now are for Israel with Elisha's departure.

The nation is so weak, they can't even stop the pitiful, demoralized Moabites from raiding.

21 So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band of raiders; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

Interesting story – But what’s the point?

Well, people don’t often come back to life. That’s a pretty sensational miracle. People had forgotten that Elisha had many years before *raised someone* from the dead.

So, when *this* guy revived, it reminded them of *Elisha’s unique role* as a mighty prophet of God.

Remembering his story, they remembered his *message* – “*Turn back to the Lord and serve Him only!*”

Throughout history, the Spirit has used *the story of previous revivals* to spark the fires of revival in a new generation. That’s what’s going on here.

God was graciously wooing wayward, desperate, hammered Israel back to Himself.

This man’s physical reviving was meant to remind them of Elisha’s message & move them to an even greater spiritual revival.

But they *didn’t respond* in the way intended.

So, was it a waste? Was it pointless for this man to spring back to life if his revival didn’t bring about the desired result? Not at all.

God knew the people would neglect what this miracle was meant to do.

But in His patience & long-suffering He did it anyway.

So that in the final judgment, not one of them could stand before Him and say, “We didn’t know. We didn’t see. It’s not fair to condemn us; You didn’t give us a chance.”

Things like this removed all such objections & excuses and showed the problem is never with God, or a lack of evidence.

It’s with the rebel heart of man who loves his sin.

I wonder how many miracles take place today that people chalk up to coincidence or whatever, not seeing them for the gracious invitation to come back to God they are.

C. Relations with Syria 13:22-25

22 And Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23 But the LORD was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.

We’re in the closing chapters of the northern kingdom’s story here

They will soon be trampled under by the Assyrian war machine.

But in the very midst of their well deserved judgment is a short season of relief.

And all because, apart from ANY MERIT ON THEIR PART, God is good & merciful & incredibly patient.

He’d made a promise to Abraham to bless his descendants & though these

people are completely devoid of the faith Abraham had, just to prove His faithfulness, God opens the shuttered windows of heaven and sends down a beam of pure, bright light.

24 Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz recaptured from the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times Joash defeated him and recaptured the cities of Israel.

Just as promised.

There's an important lesson to be gleaned from Israel's recapture of these cities.

It's an encouragement to us to take possession of all that belongs to us *in*

Christ.

Elisha put his hand on the king's and told him, *thus empowered by the Spirit*, he could utterly destroy the enemy's power and remove him from the territory God had given to His people.

Elisha means "*God is salvation.*" Jesus/Joshua means "*Yahweh is salvation.*"

Elisha is a type of Christ here, who through His death & resurrection breaks the power of the enemy & fills us with the power of His Spirit.

He puts His hand on ours and makes us strong to do battle with the enemy who's camped out & squatting on parts of our lives that belong to God.

Our speech, our emotions, our desires, our sexuality, our finances, our relationships.

There's spiritual territory within each of us God wants us to *take back* from the enemy.

How far do we want to go & grow in Christ?

Do you like Joash only want to reclaim 3 cities, 3 areas of your life the devil has laid claim to, or do you want to enforce Jesus' victory in every place God has given you dominion of?

Philippians 3:12-16 ¹² Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. ¹³ Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing / do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴ I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.

VIII. AMAZIAH (JUDAH) 14:1-22

Now the scene shifts to the southern kingdom where the descendants of David still reign.

¹ In the ^{2nd} year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. ² He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His

mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. ³ And he did *what was right* in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he did everything as his father Joash had done.

Like father, like son.

Joash had begun his reign at the tender age of 7.

During his early years, the godly high priest Jehoiada influenced him for good.

But after Jehoiada's death, Joash grew arrogant.

His power corrupted him and he turned from the Lord.

When Jehoiada's son publicly rebuked the king, he executed him.

In revenge, his friends assassinated Joash while he was recovering from a wound.

Like his father, Amaziah got off to a good start.

He set out to establish justice in the land & obeyed the Word of God.

But after winning a major military victory against Edom, he became proud & began meddling in other's affairs.

This meddling drew him into things that were way to much for him and it led to his demise.

This is an error many of the successful make.

They think success in one area means they're qualified to engage in other things that are way outside their calling.

We ought to be content with our sphere of victory as God gives us the faith to prevail, as Paul says in Rom. 12:3.

For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

If we keep our eyes on the Lord, our victories will humble us and God will get the glory.

If we *forget* Him, our victories make us proud and lead to defeat.

Christian, beware the temptation to *meddle*.

Proverbs 16:18 - Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 26:17 - He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own *is like* one who takes a dog by the ears.

⁴ However the high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

Even during times of general spiritual well being in Judah, these high places where people went to worship God weren't dismantled, though *technically*, they were prohibited.

⁵ Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. ⁶ But the children of the murderers he did not execute, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which the LORD commanded, saying, "Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin."

Amaziah followed the Law of God regarding the execution of these assassins, though it was the common practice for rulers of this time to wipe out an assassins entire family.

7 He killed ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, and took Sela by war, and called its name Joktheel [the blessedness of God] to this day.

Sela is the stronghold of Edom known today as the rock fortress of Petra.

This was a might victory indeed if Judah was able to capture what was considered the impregnable Sela.

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, “Come, let us face one another in battle.”

See, here he is *meddling* – trying to *choose off* Israel. There’s no way God is going to honor this.

9 And Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, “The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son as wife’; and a wild beast that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. ¹⁰ You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Glory *in that*, and stay at home; for why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?”

In Jehoash’s story, he’s the cedar, Amaziah is the uppity thistle, & the army of Israel is the wild boar that will wipe Amaziah out.

Remember, Jehoash has just recently had his own victories against the Syrians so he’s confident in his ability to stave off any attempt by Judah to push the border northward.

¹¹ But Amaziah would not heed. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went out; so he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. ¹² And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. ¹³ Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh; and he went to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate— 400 cubits. ¹⁴ And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. ¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did—his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ¹⁶ So Jehoash rested with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then Jeroboam his son reigned in his place. ¹⁷ Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are they not written in the book of the*

chronicles of the kings of Judah? ¹⁹ And they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there.

It was considered a great wrong to lead the a nation into an unprovoked war as Amaziah had.

If he'd won it, it would have been a different story but that he lost and Judah's defeat was so humiliating meant his days were numbered.

²⁰ Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David. ²¹ And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was 16 years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. ²² He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

It was really a smart move to rebuild Elath for Judah.

Elath was the port Solomon had built at the north end of the Sea of Aqaba where Israel's navy was housed.

After the humiliating loss to Israel, Judah needed something to boost her spirit & rebuilding Elath was the perfect project.

It was located far away from others who might try to stop the work, and it held the promise of a future navy that would once again sail to the ends of the world.

Besides, It's located in a beautiful place. The modern city of Eilat that's Israel's premier resort destination.

IX. JEROBOAM II (ISRAEL) 14:23-29

²³ In the 15th year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and reigned 41 years. ²⁴ And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. ²⁵ He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah [Dead Sea], according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hopher.

Only a few verses are given to Jeroboam II though he was one of Israel's most important kings.

The Jonah mentioned here is the same as prophet mentioned in the book that bears his name.

Historians believe after his trip to Nineveh, he returned to Israel and told Jeroboam that since the Assyrians were preoccupied with their spiritual revival, now was the time to return Israel's borders to their previous extent under the reigns of David & Solomon, which surprisingly, Jeroboam was able to accomplish.

²⁶ For the LORD saw *that* the affliction of Israel was very bitter; and whether bond or free, there was no helper for Israel. ²⁷ And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under

heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. ²⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did—his might, how he made war, and how he recaptured for Israel, from Damascus and Hamath, *what had belonged to Judah—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* ²⁹ So Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

X. AZARIAH / UZZIAH (JUDAH) 15:1-7

¹ In the 27th year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. ² He was 16 years old when he became king, and he reigned 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. ³ And he did *what was right* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, ⁴ except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. ⁵ Then the LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper until the day of his death; so he dwelt in an isolated house. And Jotham the king's son was over the *royal house, judging the people of the land.*

Now, we're not going to look into this tonight because the story is told in much greater detail in Chronicles so we'll wait till then.

It's a fascinating story with some great lessons for us, but we'll wait till then.

You see, when we cover 1 & 2 Chronicles, which we'll do soon, we're going to go thru it a bit differently since we've already gone through most of it in our study here in Kings.

We'll just summarize the text and slow down to cover those stories & details that are missing here.

We'll also then set the history of Israel within the wider context of world history, seeing how what was happening in Israel & Judah was a part of the larger picture.

⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* ⁷ So Azariah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Azariah was known by his more common name – *Uzziah*.

XI ZECHARIAH (ISRAEL) 15:8-12

⁸ In the 38th year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria 6 months. ⁹ And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. ¹⁰ Then Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck and killed him in front of the people; and he reigned in his place. ¹¹ Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they *are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.* ¹² This was the word of

the LORD which He spoke to Jehu, saying, “Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the 4th generation.” And so it was.

XII. SHALLUM (ISRAEL) 15:13-16

¹³ Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the 39th year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. ¹⁴ For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him; and he reigned in his place.

We've seen this kind of thing a couple times now.

The king is assassinated by some inner-palace conspiracy, then the chief commander of the military, knowing he has the backing of the army, offs the assassin and sets himself up as the new ruler.

¹⁵ Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he led, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. ¹⁶ Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphseh, all who were there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked *it*. All the women there who were with child he ripped open.

When the city of Tiphseh refused to honor Menahem as their new sovereign, he brutally attacked & employed a practice used by the Syrians & Ammonites to create terror; any pregnant women were put to the sword in this horrific manner.

His goal was to terrify any other cities that were thinking about defying him and forcing their submission.

XIII. MENAHIM (ISRAEL) 15:17-22

¹⁷ In the 39th year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, *and reigned* 10 years in Samaria. ¹⁸ And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. ¹⁹ Pul king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. ²⁰ And Menahem exacted the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man 50 shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land. ²¹ Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are they not* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? ²² So Menahem rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

It was during this time that the Assyrians began to flex their empire muscles. Menahem knew Israel was too weak to stand in their way & decided the only course was to buy them off.

He thought that by culling the bribe from the wealthy it would actually secure his grip on the throne because the rich would be weakened and would

present less of a threat to him.
Though the Assyrians left Israel alone at this point, Pul, also known as Tiglath-Pileser, would be back.

XIV. PEKAHIAH (ISRAEL) 15:23-26

²³ In the 50th year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned 2 years. ²⁴ And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. ²⁵ Then Pekah the son of Remaliah, an officer of his, conspired against him and killed him in Samaria, in the citadel of the king's house, along with Argob and Arieah; and with him were 50 men of Gilead. He killed him and reigned in his place. ²⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

XV. PEKAH (ISRAEL) 15:27-31

²⁷ In the 52nd year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned 20 years. ²⁸ And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. ²⁹ In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria.

This is the beginning of the end for Israel.

Tiglath-Pileser was the ruler who led most of Assyria's early conquests of the Middle East.

Though Menahem had paid tribute to TP earlier, he didn't feel any sense of loyalty to Pekah because he was a *usurper*.

Pekah formed an alliance with Rezin, the king of Damascus & together they attacked Judah.

The king of Judah appealed to TP to come to his aide by attacking the Syrians & Israel from the north, which is what this campaign was.

³⁰ Then Hoshea the son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed him; so he reigned in his place in the 20th year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. ³¹ Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

XVI. JOTHAM (JUDAH) 15:32-38

³² In the 2nd year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. ³³ He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 16 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴ And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD; he did according to all that

his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD.

Jotham was a good & relatively powerful king.

He knew Judah's strength came from her devotion to the Lord, not her military might.

So he did what he could to facilitate the worship of God by rebuilding an important gate to the temple that had been destroyed when Israel defeated Judah years before.

³⁶ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? ³⁷ In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. ³⁸ So Jotham rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

Though Jotham was a good king, the seeds of apostasy sown by the bad example of Israel had begun to take root in Judah.

God allowed the distress of foreign threats & oppression so that it would awaken the people to their need to return to Him with their whole hearts.

It's great to have a godly ruler but if the people don't follow his lead, they're destined for judgment.

But there's another reason why Judah began to experience trouble at this time.

Though Jotham was the main king, he followed a tradition that had been in place for some time now in Judah of sharing power with his son.

As a king aged and the prince matured, it had become routine to turn some of the rule over to the emerging king so he could ease into the job of rule.

While it worked well with many of the kings, it didn't work out so well with this son – Ahaz; because he was a moral & spiritual wretch.

And it also explains why trying to keep the timeline straight for the kings is so difficult.

Their overlapping reigns make for some difficult interpreting of the text.

XVII. AHAZ (JUDAH) 16

A. A Wicked King 16:1-4

¹ In the 17th year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. ² Ahaz was 20 years old when he became king, and he reigned 16 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*. 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. ⁴ And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

Not only did Ahaz adopt the practice of worshipping the golden calf as they did up north, he resurrected the ancient demonic practices of the Canaanites who

sacrificed their children to the gods.

Maybe he thought a return to the ancient ways of the natives of the land would somehow appease the angry spirits who were now allowing such trouble & turmoil to come on the nation.

Even though the Christian Faith, when held & practiced as the Word of God says, has brought immeasurable blessing to Earth, there's been a resurgence in paganism over the last half century, and especially in just the last 20 years. Covens and cults devoted to Wicca and other spiritualist beliefs have sprung up all over.

Adherents are renewing the ancient practices, thinking that if they could just get back to their primal roots and get more in touch with the forces of the earth and the spirits that rule a given place, then they can return the planet to its balance.

Some of the most hardcore environmentalists are turning back to paganism.

It's all foolish, Ahazistic nonsense.

B. The Alliance With Assyria 16:5-9

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.

Though Jerusalem was able to stave off the attack, Judah's losses were immense; 120,000 soldiers & 200,000 civilian hostages were taken back to Samaria.

It was during this time that Isaiah the prophet gave many of his most important prophecies.

He made it clear that both Ahaz's wickedness and Israel's & Syria's attempts to conquer Judah were satanic in origin.

The devil was doing his best both from within & without to destroy David's royal line so that the promise of the Messiah would be thwarted.

Isaiah made it clear that even though things seemed to be going all the devil's way, God would have the Last Word. Nothing could hinder His promise. NOTHING!

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." 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.

What's so sad is to read Isaiah 7 and realize that God offered Ahaz a way out of all his distress if he would just turn to Him and ask.

But Ahaz wasn't interested in God's help; he thought it would be a bigger boon to his power & prestige to secure the help of the Assyrians, even though the cost was astronomical.

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.

And it was at this time that the events of 15:29 took place.

C. Ahaz Errs 16:10-18

¹⁰ Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria,

It was unusual for the kings of Judah to leave their lands.

But Ahaz had to do this because it was an act of submission to TP.

Just making the trip would be an indication of his honoring the Assyrian domination of Judah.

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.

2 Chr 28:23 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.

By worshipping them himself, he hoped to curry their favor. They contributed to his ruin.

Because the worship of Yahweh in the temple at Jerusalem had been neglected, there was little of the glorious & appealing in it.

Oh, but when Ahaz arrived in Damascus and saw the pomp & ceremony with which the Syrians worshipped their gods & how TP added their seemingly powerful Assyrian deities to the mix he got all starry eyed.

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.

Maybe a *new altar* would spice up the worship there in Jerusalem.

Many churches are doing this today.

They've forsaken the worship of God in Spirit & Truth but put their trust in the tools & techniques of worldly entertainment.

They think programs & technology will bring them success.

There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof, is the way of death.

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.

In other words – all the offerings & sacrifices that had before been offered to God on HIS altar.

They were going through the motions – but on an altar God never called for.

This was extravagant, complex, but ultimately **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.”

Meaning he would use it for divination by reading the entrails of slaughtered animals – an abominable use for God’s holy altar.

Here’s how I read this – let’s keep “*doing church*,” but let’s decide *what church is & how to do it* by drawing our cue from what’s satisfying & exciting & 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 that.

In Revelation 2 & 3 we read letters Jesus sent to 7 churches.

Only 2 of them were doing well, the other 5 were having serious problems, and 2 of those, Ephesus & Laodicea, were in danger of not even BEING a church anymore.

Actually, the last – Laodicea > A church which represents the age in which we live right now – wasn’t a church.

She called herself one, but Jesus didn’t go there anymore.

The church of Laodicea was so far gone into the world, Jesus’ only appeal was to individuals IN IT to open up to Him.

What Jesus said to the so-called church of Laodicea fits perfectly with the modern, Western church.

The spirit of Ahaz rules far too many churches today.

And people are worshipping at the altars of this world instead of in spirit & truth.

16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded. 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.

He did all this to pay off TP.

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.

The Assyrians would send regular officials to Jerusalem to check on things and get an official report.

Ahaz didn’t want them to see any wealth or evidence of anything that might question his loyalty.

D. Ahaz Dies 16:19-20

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.

And that is like a much needed breath of fresh air.

Hezekiah was a really good king who's going to undo a lot of the corruption his father placed in Jerusalem.