

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS**

**LESSON 9B**

**THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS**

**CHAPTER 16**

**INTRODUCTION**

Trusting in the arm of the flesh is a common approach to solving life's problems and overcoming difficulties. It seems easier and help seems to come more immediately. The more we are "man-connected", the more we tend to approach man for help. This "instant help" syndrome is pandemic in our modern age of hand phone and internet. Help could be obtained globally and with much ease and at relatively little cost.

To pray to God and wait upon Him to intervene seems to "too long". We are also an impatient lot as the "instant" lifestyle has moulded our psyche to expect almost everything to be immediately available. Hence, when things come too easily and too quickly, their value is not appreciated and; it is with the greatest of ease and speed, that we tend to discard these "things" so readily available to us.

Such a society has spawned generations of Christians who have knowingly or unknowingly applied this style to their spiritual lives as well. Jesus Christ is like an appendix in their

lives who is appealed to only when all else fails. "Loving Christ with all our heart, our souls, our strength, our might" is glaringly absent. Yet we still call ourselves Christians! There could be this misconception that practically all Christians think in this "new" way and therefore it can be considered as the acceptable and godly way!

King Ahaz, a king of Judah, was an individual of such thought even though he did not live in our anthropocentric society. His country was facing death and destruction from his northern neighbours, Israel and the Syrians. According to the king's way of thinking, this dire circumstance could be very easily resolved from a military stand point, that is, to look for a more powerful nation than Syria and Israel for help. King Ahaz did just that. That nation was the new, up and coming nation called Assyria. Even more appealing to King Ahaz was the fact that the Assyrians were very strategically positioned, being located to the immediate north of Syria. They could easily come down from the north of Syria to help Judah.

That was exactly what happened. What followed was the sad behaviour and conduct of a spiritual King who had completely lost his spirituality. He was as carnal as any ungodly king could be.

**OUTLINE**

1. Ahaz reigned in Judah (vv.1-4);
2. Help sought from the Assyrians of the North and Not from God (vv.5-9);

3. Ahaz's Copy of the Pagan gods for worship (vv.10-16); and;
4. Ahaz's Acts of Mutilation (vv.17-20).

### COMMENTARY

#### Ahaz Reigned in Judah – 16:1-4

King Ahaz, the son of Jotham began his reign in Judah in the year when King Pekah of Israel was in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of his reign (732-715 B.C.). His mother's name is not mentioned at all. He was a bad king. He did **not** do that which was right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David, his forefather did. One short statement from God summarised the entire life and reign of a king! How much shorter would that be for the life of a Christian! It did not matter whether the king did what was right in the eyes of man or his people but what truly counted was whether he did what was right in the sight of God.

King Ahaz walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He was an idolater. He himself offered sacrifices and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills and even under every green tree. One of the most abominable things he did was to offer his son as a sacrifice to the pagan god, Baal or Molech (2 Chronicles 26:3). This practice of sacrificing his son is prohibited by the Mosaic Law.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Leviticus 18:21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

Deuteronomy 18:10 There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth

This was a gross transgression of the Law of God. Every firstborn Jewish son was to be redeemed by a sacrifice and he belonged to the LORD. In this act, Ahaz was not only a consummate idolater but also a compromiser of the faith, failing in the duties that God had commanded him to carry out as the King of His nation.

His idolatrous lifestyle was complete for he sacrificed to his idols everywhere! 2 Kings 16:4: "*And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.*" Idol worship became his way of life. The act of human sacrifices to a man like Ahaz was just merely part of the whole set-up of idolatrous worship. Perhaps, he as sincere in believing that he was pleasing God in what he did.

#### Help from the North and not from God – 16:5-9

In the early period of Ahaz's reign, the King of Israel and the King of Syria went to war against Judah. [NOTE: Barnes, "Rezin and Pekah, who had already begun their attacks upon Judaea in the reign of Jotham 2Kings 15:37, regarded the ascension of a boy-king, only 16 years of age, as especially favorable to their projects, and proceeded without loss of time to carry them out. The earlier scenes of the war, omitted by the writer of Kings, are given at some length in 2 Ch 28:5-15."] They besieged Ahaz in Jerusalem but they could not overcome him. In the meantime,

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divination, *or* an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch.

instead of crying to the LORD for deliverance, Ahaz sought military aid from the more powerful nation of Assyria. Assyria was the new rising super power in that region. He sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser III, the King of Assyria for help. His message was that of a “boot-licker”. He called himself a “servant” and a “son” of Tiglath-Pileser III.

He pleaded with Tiglath-Pileser III to come and save him from the invasion of Syria and Israel. Ahaz also took the treasures of the Temple and his palace and gave them to Tiglath-Pileser III as payment for help rendered. The King of Assyria hearkened to his plea for help and he moved his troops against Syria. He took the Syrian capital city, Damascus. He slew King Rezin, and took the Syrians captive to Kir. Ahaz was delivered but Tiglath-Pileser III did not fully support him. Judah was brought low because of Ahaz.

### **Copy of the Pagan God for Worship – 16:10-16**

Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser III. In Damascus, he saw an altar of the pagan gods of Syria. King Ahaz then sent to Urijah, the priest in Jerusalem, a picture or drawing of the idol and commanded that he makes an exact replica of the altar in Jerusalem. Urijah the priest built the altar according to all the specifications expeditiously. When Ahaz returned from Damascus, he saw the altar which Urijah had built. Immediately, he offered sacrifices which included burnt offerings, meat offering, drink offering and peace

offering at the altar. It is noted that sin offering was omitted. Burnt offering was for the atonement of sin which Ahaz thought he had already received from God as he had been delivered by the Assyrians. The meat and drink offerings were for thanksgiving and should be offered AFTER the peace offerings and not before. The sequence of offerings was incorrect.

Furthermore, he removed the brazen altar of the Temple which was on the eastern side to the northern side of the pagan altar. In other words, the pagan altar was placed next to the Temple or in its precinct. Then Ahaz commanded Urijah, the priest, to offer the daily morning and evening sacrifices and burnt offerings on “the great altar”. But the Brazen Altar was reserved for his personal use to enquire of the LORD. (16:15). Urijah obediently did all that Ahaz told him to do.

It is shocking that the priests who were in charge of the entire sacrificial system would condone and pander to Ahaz’s idolatrous practices and not rebuke him for his grievous sins. When leaders (political and spiritual) fail God, they fail the people and the whole nation suffers. The spiritual bankruptcy of Judah is revealed by this act of both the king and the priest.

### **Acts of Mutilation – 16:17-20**

King Ahaz then removed the bases of the Laver, which stood before the Temple, and took down the vessels that held water on the brazen oxen and placed them on the pavement of stones. And his covered

pavilion—“the covert for the Sabbath he had built”—and his special entrance to the Temple were also removed. No reason was given for all these actions. Maybe he wanted to hide these things from the King of Assyria if he should pay a visit to Jerusalem.

Urijah’s agreement to all the instructions of King Ahaz is abominable and blasphemous. He had no excuse for he had an earlier example to follow. Azariah the priest and eighty other priests stood up against King Uzziah, until the LORD punished the king with leprosy. But Urijah did everything that Ahaz told him to do. King Ahaz could not do all these things unless Urijah co-operated with him. Urijah and his priests compromised, disobeyed the Law of Moses and gave in to the king. King Ahaz died and as buried in the tombs of his forefathers. His son, Hezekiah, reigned in his place.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

Ahaz saw the pagan altar in Damascus. He was impressed with it. He had the priest to make one exactly like it, and to place it in the Temple grounds. The priest, Urijah, and the other priests behaved no better. In fact, they behaved worse than the king because as teachers of God’s Word, they should know better what the biblical ways of the LORD were.

Today many churches are behaving in the same way as Urijah. They are attracted by worldly successes and ways, thinking that these “things” (such as big buildings

and funds) are good for the church. They believe that such things can attract many people and boost attendance to perhaps, tenfold. The way to do it is to make the worship services more exciting and entertaining. Going to church is no longer for worship but for entertainment.

We must guard against this unscriptural and sinful tendency. The biblical worship of God is laid out in Holy Scriptures. It is not measured by the size of the church building or the bank account or the congregation. Once we know the truth, we must not compromise it. We must stand firm.. God will honour His children who dare to stand up to what is right for that gives Him the glory and the honour.

A.W. Tozer wrote of the churches today: “Aside from a few of the grosser sins, the sins of the unregenerate world are now approved by a shocking number of professedly ‘born-again’ Christians, and copied eagerly. Young Christians take as their models the rankest kind of worldlings and try to be as much like them as possible. Religious leaders have adopted the techniques of the advertisers: boasting, baiting, and shameless exaggeration are now carried on as a normal procedure in church work. The moral climate is not that of the New Testament but that of Hollywood and Broadway” (Keys to the Deeper Life, page 22). AMEN

## DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Daily Readings

**MONDAY:** 2 Kings 16:1-9; Psalm 146:3-5; Jeremiah 17:5-6.

**TUESDAY:** 2 Kings 16:10-20; Galatians 5:9.

**WEDNESDAY:** 2 Kings 16:1-20.

**THURSDAY:** 2 Kings 16:1-20.

**FRIDAY:** 2 Kings 16:1-20.

### Discussion Questions

1. Which is easier to do: what is right in the eyes of man or of God? Which is more commonly done today by Christians? What about you?

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2. Is it absolutely wrong to offer a human sacrifice or is it only wrong to offer a human sacrifice to idols?

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3. Is sincerity a good basis and evidence for deciding between truth and error?

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4. Is it right to pay someone for service rendered like what King Ahaz did when he paid for the service of the King of Assyria?

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5. How did Urijah and his priests fail the LORD? Why did they compromise the way they did?

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6. Has Calvary Pandan BPC gone the way of King Ahaz? Give reasons for your answer? If no, will CPBPC ever go that way and how to prevent it from heading in that direction?

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