

Lesson II.

AHAZ, THE FAITHLESS KING

July 8, 1917

FOREWORD—Ahaz became king of Judah from B.C. 735 to 720. His two northern neighbors, Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, tried to compel him to join them in an alliance against the Assyrians, and were so enraged at his refusal that they planned to drive him from his throne. Isaiah (see Isa. ch. 7) tried to encourage the faint-hearted Ahaz, but the king had more faith in political measures than in the prophet's word. He therefore sent a message of complete submission to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, asking him, at the same time (v. 16), for help against Israel and Syria. (See 2 Kgs., ch. 16.)

GOLDEN TEXT—Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him.—Hebrews 11 : 6 (Rev. Ver.).

*Memorize John 15 : 3, 4.

THE LESSON PASSAGE—2 Chronicles 28 : 1-5, 20-27. Study 2 Chronicles, ch. 28.

1 A'has was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jor'u'salem : ¹ but he did not that which was right in the ² sight of the Lord, like Da'vid his father :

2 ³ For he walked in the ways of the kings of Is'rael, and made also molten images for ⁴ Ba'alim.

3 Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hin'nom, and burnt his children in the fire, ⁵ after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord ⁶ had cast out before the children of Is'ra-el.

4 ⁷ He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syr'ia : and they smote him, and carried away ⁸ a great multitude of ⁹ them captives, and brought them to Damas'cus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Is'rael, who smote him with a great slaughter.

20 And Til'gath-pile'ser king of Assy'ia came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

21 For A'has took away a portion out of the house of the Lord, and out of the house of the king, and of the

Revised Version—and he ; ¹ eyes ; ² but he ; ³ the ; ⁴ according to ; ⁵ Om'it had ; ⁶ And he sacrificed and ; ⁷ of his a ; ⁸ Om'it them ; ⁹ it ; ¹⁰ same king Ahas ; ¹¹ Om'it of ; ¹² for they.

princes, and gave it unto the king of Assy'ia : but ¹⁰ he helped him not.

22 And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord : this ¹¹ is that king A'has.

23 For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damas'cus, which smote him : and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syr'ia help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Is'rael.

24 And A'has 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 Jeru'salem.

25 And in every several city of Ju'dah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord ¹² God of his fathers.

26 Now the rest of his acts and ¹³ of all his ways, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of the kings of Ju'dah and Is'rael.

27 And A'has slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jeru'salem : ¹⁴ but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Is'rael : and Hezek'iah his son reigned in his stead.

† HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M.—Ahaz, the faithless king, 2 Chron. 28 : 1-3.

T.—Ahaz, the faithless king, 2 Chron. 28 : 9-15.

W.—Ahaz, the faithless king, 2 Chron. 28 : 16-27.

S.—The hope of Israel, Isa. 10 : 20-27.

Th.—Seeking help of men, 2 Kgs. 16 : 5-9.

F.—Degrading worship, 2 Kgs. 16 : 10-18.

S.—The punishment of disobedience, Jer. 44 : 15-23.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

I. IDOLATRY BEGUN.—1, 2. **Ahaz.** See Foreword. The name means "the Grasper." He was the son of Jotham, a good king, who was zealous for the temple and the strength of his cities, loyal to Jehovah and successful in war. (See ch. 27.) Did not.. right ; in spite of his father's good example. He may, like Ahaziah (ch. 22 : 3-4), have had an idolatrous mother. In the sight of the Lord ; from whom nothing can be hid. David his father ; his great and good ancestor. Walked in the ways ; followed the practices. Kings of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) ; who led their people in idolatry. Molten images ; idols of cast metals. Baalim ; plural of Baal, meaning "lord," a name given to various heathen gods.

3, 4. **Burnt incense** ; a combination of fragrant spices (see Ex. 30 : 34), burnt as a symbol of prayer. Valley of .. Hinnom ; the narrow ravine on the west and south of Jerusalem, where perpetual fires are said to have been kept burning to destroy the rubbish of the city. Hence Ge-hinnom or Gehenna became a name for the place of everlasting punishment. Burnt his children, etc. In the Valley of Hinnom stood a

frightful brazen image of the heathen god Molech, with arms sloping downwards over a cistern filled with fuel. Children offered in sacrifice to this god were probably first killed and then placed on the brazen arms to roll down into the flames, where they were consumed amidst the strains of music. He sacrificed ;



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† Courtesy of I. B. R. Association, Mr. S. C. Bailey, Hon. Secretary, 58 Old Bailey, London, England.