

Ahaz' Bad Luck?

Franklin Church of Christ
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PM Assembly

Introduction:

In **II Chronicles 28:22**, we learn that King Ahaz turned from Jehovah. It was his sad response to his life's turn of events. To some, his decision may be understandable. Let's examine his life and see what we can learn about our own lives.

Discussion:

- I. Listen to Ahaz' bad luck.
 - A. Ahaz became king when he was 20 (**II Chronicles 28:1**). His father, Jotham left him a strengthened Judah (**II Chronicles 27**). But Ahaz was not as fortunate. Instead of success in battle, He was often defeated and weakened. Notice the string of hard breaks Ahaz had.
 - B. In **II Chronicles 28:5**, Ahaz was defeated by the Arameans and many of his subjects taken captive. In **28:5-6**, Israel defeated him, slaying 120,000 in one day. **28:7** reveals that Ahaz lost his son, the ruler of his household and his right hand man. Because the Edomites and the Philistines had attacked, taking captives and territory (**28:17-18**), Ahaz turned to Assyria for help. Instead of helping, the Assyrians also attacked and oppressed Ahaz (**vss. 16, 20**).
 - C. Poor Ahaz. One bad break after another. And when he asked for help, they kicked him while he was down. Where was God in all of this? Why hadn't Jehovah done anything to help? Have you ever felt like this? If so, perhaps you will not be surprised by Ahaz' response to Jehovah.
- II. Ahaz' response to Jehovah.
 - A. In **II Chronicles 28:22** we read, "Now in the time of his distress this same King Ahaz became ... unfaithful to the Lord." Notice what Ahaz did.
 - B. In **28:23**, Ahaz reasoned that Aram had it better than he did, so maybe he should sacrifice to their gods. In **28:24**, he closed the temple and destroyed its utensils. In **28:25**, Ahaz made high places to burn incense to other gods. His turning from God and disobedience were complete. If Jehovah had abandoned him, then he would abandon Jehovah. And why not? Serving Jehovah hadn't helped. Why not try something else?
 - C. However, thus far you haven't really heard the entire story.
- III. How did Ahaz get where he was?
 - A. If Ahaz had come to you seeking sympathy or counsel, this is how he would have probably told his story. But the Bible actually gives the bigger picture.
 - B. Ahaz' run of bad luck, wasn't bad luck at all. Rather, it was the natural consequence of Ahaz' own choices. We skipped **II Chronicles 28:1-5**. From the beginning of his reign, Ahaz walked in idolatry. He made molten images for the Baals. He burned incense to foreign gods. He even sacrificed his own children. **Vss. 6 and 19** point out that Ahaz' defeats by Aram, Israel, Edom and the Philistines were all judgments. Of course, we should already have recognized that Assyria would be of no help. Ahaz should not have turned to Assyria but to Jehovah.
 - C. Now, we see **vs. 22** in its greater context. And this time we will add two words that I purposely left out earlier. "Now in the time of his distress this same King Ahaz became yet more unfaithful to the Lord." Ahaz' problems had come because of unfaithfulness. When he should have repented, he turned further from God. We do not see hard luck but choices and consequences.
- IV. Lessons we must learn from Ahaz' life.
 - A. Rarely is our "hard luck" simply hard luck. Most of the time it is our own choice.
 1. I am amazed at our ability to view our lives through rose-colored glasses. Even when we are forced to admit mistakes, we see ourselves as victims. Our mistakes weren't really our fault. We made them because of our parents, spouse, boss or circumstances. We rarely make the connection that "I am where I am today, because of the choices I made yesterday."
 2. Ahaz was in a bad way. But it wasn't bad luck. It was his own choice. Yet, he didn't make the connection. So, he blamed God and turned further from Him in his anger.
 3. If you are in a bad situation, quit blaming others. Determine what choices led you to where you are. Don't explain those choices away. Don't justify them. Simply recognize them.

- B. Quit making the same choices that got you into your mess.
1. Ahaz was in his bad situation because he chose to follow after other gods. When he hit bottom, he didn't determine to change. Instead, he continued making the same bad choices.
 2. It is not enough simply to know what choices led you into your bad situation. You have to stop making those choices. We have all heard the story of the patient who came into the doctor and said, "Doctor, it hurts when I do this." The doctor replies, "Well, then stop doing that." We laugh, but there is some real truth to this statement.
 3. You have to learn to make different choices. This is difficult at times because many of our past choices have become habits. But we must work to develop different habits.
- C. God is not obligated to make everything better for us simply because we are Christians.
1. It almost seems that some Christians believe God is obligated to make everything alright in our lives no matter what choices we make. Ahaz must have felt similarly. Why else would he have expressed his anger as he did in **vss. 22-25**? He was king of Jehovah's people. Jehovah must be obligated to do for him what He had done for his father.
 2. It does not work that way. First of all, God has never promised us that life would be a bed of roses even when we are completely following His will. Secondly, God has given us a manual for living happy, content lives. It is the Bible (**II Timothy 3:16-17**). This book contains advice for living successfully as a Christian, family member, employee, citizen, etc.
 3. Yet, too often, we do not follow the commandments of God in these areas of our lives. We end up in a mess. We try to wave the "magic prayer wand". When God doesn't fix the problem overnight, we get upset, as if God were to blame. God has provided the "fix" to our problems. We need to read it and follow it. And with every problem, we need to remember that we did not get into our problems over night and we will not get out of them overnight. But, if we follow God's will, He does promise to provide for us. We can trust that promise. But, we have to submit to His will and live by it. In the end, we learn that too many times, we get mad at God and turn further from Him, when we really should draw closer to Him.
- D. No matter what is happening, do not turn away from God.
1. No doubt, Ahaz had a miserable life, even as king. However, he brought all his "hard luck" onto himself. But consider for a moment, what if he hadn't? What if he had really been that one in a thousand who had done everything right, but things just didn't go his way? What was he trying to do? Was he trying to hurt God? Beat God? What? All Ahaz accomplished was insuring that not only would his life be miserable, his eternity would be unbearable.
 2. I see people today with miserable lives. I am not always the judge, but I imagine I have even seen that one in a thousand case of true hard luck. In that case, what is the point of getting mad at God and turning away from Him? If you quit attending the assemblies, God still exists. If you quit obeying His word, He will still judge you according to it. We could probably spend several sermons discussing the ins and outs of this issue. But for this sermon, let's just be pragmatic. God holds your soul in His hands. Even if you think you have a case against God and don't like the way He has treated you, do you really want to go to hell? What do you think you can accomplish by turning away from Him? Think for a moment how silly it is to put into words the way we sometimes act, "Well, if God is going to treat me this way, I'll show Him. I just won't obey Him." It is kind of silly when you put it that way isn't it?
 3. Job is by far our best example for this point. Despite what errors Job may have made in being angry with God, his statement in **Job 19:25** is striking. "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth." Job thought God had done him wrong. But he understood that God was still the Judge and Redeemer. He refused to turn away. No matter what is happening, Jehovah is still God, the Judge and Redeemer. Do not turn away from Him. If you do, you will have all eternity in agony wishing you had simply obeyed God for the few years of your life, even if it was a miserable life.

Conclusion:

These things were written for our learning (**Romans 15:4**). Let us learn from Ahaz. Of course, it is easy to see the truth in Ahaz situation because we are objective onlookers from the outside. When you look at your own life and the times you get mad at God or begin to lose faith in God, work to be honest. Instead of turning from God, draw nearer to Him. He will provide (**Matthew 6:33**).