

record. **That is something to ponder.**

b. **Ahaz' death was merciful to Judah**

- 1) This was certainly true. Ahaz had led the people of Judah down a wicked path.
- 2) Though his death did not end all the wickedness in Judah, it did stop the royal promotion of wickedness for a time.
- 3) We have experienced this in our own lifetimes when ungodly national leaders are replaced with honourable leaders. Solomon wrote, (Proverbs 29:2) "*When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.*" Here again we see the **mercy of God!**

The fourth act of God's mercy that ought to encourage us is that ...

4. **God preserved Hezekiah Ahaz' son (v.27)**

a. **Hezekiah could have become like his father**

- 1) It is natural for children to follow the footsteps of their parents.
- 2) Children are more likely to follow our bad traits than our good traits.
- 3) Hezekiah could have easily adopted the God-hating wicked practices of his father Ahaz.

b. **Instead, Hezekiah was a godly king**

- 1) It is of the **mercies of God** that Hezekiah did not become wicked as his father.
- 2) God mercifully got a hold on his tender heart.
- 3) Perhaps you grew up in an unbeliever's home. How is it that you now know the Lord as your Saviour? God **mercifully** allowed you to hear the Gospel. He worked in your heart and you trusted Him. **Thank God for His mercy!**

Conclusion: (Psalms 136:1) "*O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*" It is an encouragement that even in the life of wicked Ahaz we find God's mercy. Except for God's mercy, we would all be on our way to an eternal hell. (Psalms 86:5) "*For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*" Take time this evening to thank God for his mercy toward you.

Song: At Calvary **477**

God is So Merciful!

28 June 2020 PM - 2Chronicles 28 - Kings20 - Scott Childs

Introduction: God had Solomon write, "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*" (Proverbs 22:6) Parenting is no easy task. Good king Jotham failed at this task. The mother of his son Ahaz is not named. Perhaps she was an ungodly wife. Whatever the reason, we read in **2 Kings 16** and in **2 Chronicles 28** that when Ahaz ascended the throne at age 20, he became **one of the vilest kings ever to reign in Judah**. Scripture says, he did **not** do right in God's sight, he walked in the ways of Israel's kings and made images of Baal. He burned his own children as sacrifices to pagan gods. He sacrificed in high places as the heathen did. He hired heathen kings to help him in battle. He build an altar like one he saw in Assyria to replace God's altar. He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus. (2 Chronicles 28:24) "*And Ahaz 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 Jerusalem.*" By his evil deeds, He provoked the LORD God of his fathers.

Studying the reign of Ahaz is depressing except for one thing. We see in it that **God is So Merciful!**

Transition: As I studied the life of Ahaz, I noted four acts of **God's mercy** that ought to encourage our hearts in the LORD.

The first act of God's mercy that ought to encourage us is that ...

1. **God sent Prophets to counsel Ahaz**

a. **In dark days, God's prophets gave light**

- 1) Truly, those were dark days in both Israel and in Judah. Israel was sinking in sin and fast approaching national captivity into Assyria. Judah was yet 140 years away from Babylonian captivity, yet they too were becoming more ungodly all the time.
- 2) In the first verse of **Isaiah**, God tells us that he ministered in the days of Ahaz.
- 3) The first verse of both **Hosea** and **Micah**, God tells us that they too ministered during the days of Ahaz.

b. **God mercifully sent Isaiah to counsel Ahaz**

- 1) Because of his wickedness, *the LORD his God* delivered

him into the hand of Syria (2Ch 28:5). Ahaz had renounced God, yet by God's sovereign dominion over him, the LORD is still called *his God*. **God's mercy is amazing!** As punishment, God caused Syria and Israel to prepare to attack Judah (Is 7:1). Ahaz and the men of Judah were so afraid that they shook like trees in the wind (Is 7:2). *Have you ever been that scared? I have. It is a terrible uncontrollable feeling.*

- 2) God sent Isaiah to encourage Ahaz (Is 7:3-4). Why would God do that after all the evil Ahaz had done? It certainly was not because Ahaz deserved it. It was simply because **God is so merciful**.
- 3) There are times in our lives when God spares us from danger, harm, sickness, loss, or even death. When he does, it is not because we are worthy but because **God is so merciful**. (Psalms 145:8) "*The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.*"

The second act of God's mercy that ought to encourage us is that ...

2. God had the prophet Oded rebuke Israel

a. Judah suffered great losses in the battle

- 1) Though Syria and Israel failed to conquer Jerusalem, Judah suffered great losses.
 - a) One hundred twenty thousand valiant soldiers of Judah died in the battle *because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers* (v.6).
 - b) The king's son, the governor of his house, and his right hand man were all killed (v.7).
 - c) Two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters were taken captive during the battle (v.8).
 - d) Much spoil was taken from Judah (v.8).
- 2) The slaves and spoil were taken up to Samaria.

b. Prophet Oded rebuked Israel for taking spoil

- 1) He boldly spoke of the terrible battle (Read v.9).
- 2) He condemned them for planning to make their captives slaves when they too had sinned against the Lord (v.10).
- 3) He warned that if they did not return the captives that God's great wrath would come down upon them (v.11).

- 4) In this, we see **God's mercy** in a twofold way.
 - a) God was being merciful to the captives of Judah who had sinned against Him.
 - b) God was being merciful to Israel in giving them a chance to return the captives and avoid God's wrath upon themselves.
- 5) In the ultimate act of **mercy**, God sent His Son, Jesus to deliver us from the slavery to sin and to set us free. (2 Corinthians 5:21) "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" God also **mercifully** uses preachers today to warn us of the danger of straying away from the Lord and of consequences of sin. When your preacher urges you to live a separated godly life, that is a merciful gift from the Lord.

The third act of God's mercy that ought to encourage us is that ...

3. God ended Ahaz' life when he was only 36

a. This was merciful to Ahaz

- 1) All humans are sinners deserving the judgment of God. It is our human nature to justify ourselves by comparing our record with that of someone more evil. To this self-righteous reasoning Jesus replied, (Luke 13:3) "*I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*"
- 2) At the same time, it is true that **not** every unbeliever is as wicked as the next. Some are kind little old ladies who though religious have not trusted Christ for salvation, while others are serial killers. All unbelievers will go to hell, but will they all receive the same degree of eternal damnation? In His parable in Luke 12, Jesus said, "*But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*" (Luke 12:48). This suggests that God may justly vary the severity of hell.
- 3) If that is the case, then God was being merciful to Ahaz by shortening his wicked life. He could have lived much longer and added many more sins to his already wicked