

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Kings: The Kings Of Israel And Judah From Solomon To The Babylonian Captivity

III. The Latter Era Of The Divided Kingdom, 2 Kings 2:1-27:41

Z. Ahaz: A Lesson On Ungodly Syncretism

(2 Kings 16:1-20)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Though Marxism counters God's Exodus 20:17 command by promoting the covetousness of what the "haves" possess, and though Marxism counters God's Exodus 20:15 command by promoting the forced seizure of what the "haves" own, key leaders today pressure us to mix our government and our faith with Marxism, forming a syncretism:

(1) In our government, Marxist elected officials in one of our main political parties are running for president!
(2) In evangelicalism, (a) "David Platt," the primary Bible teacher of Back to the Bible radio broadcast, is "co-author of . . . Defending Liberation Theology in which he acclaims the idea of blending Marxism and Christianity." (Brannon Howse, Marxianity, 2018, p. 20) (b) Evangelical pastor "Matt Chandler" has "signed onto the Evangelical Immigration Roundtable," a group that supports "globalism, Marxism, and Muslims" and is being "funded, according to numerous sources, by globalist George Soros," *Ibid.*, p. 125, 163. (c) "Al Mohler," president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, promotes Marxist "white privilege" and "Black Lives Matter" groups and has publicly honored Russell Moore who "signed on to the Evangelical Immigration Roundtable," *Ibid.*, p. 136, 163. (d) "Dr. Ligon Duncan, chancellor and CEO of Reformed Theological Seminary" has endorsed the "ministry" of "Marxist Tim Keller who says we should build churches for unbelievers and redistribute wealth," *Ibid.*, p. 101-102. (e) Evangelical pastor "Thabiti Anyabwile" and (f) popular evangelical speaker and writer "John Piper" endorse "the cultural Marxism of white privilege and Black Lives Matter" groups, *Ibid.*, p. 169-176.

In addition, (g) "John Mac Arthur steps onto the platform for the biennial conference, Together for the Gospel, along with" these same men, along with "David Platt, Matt Chandler, Al Mohler, Ligon Duncan, Thabiti Anyabwile and John Piper," and he has done so "every time . . . for years. At the very least, his presence gives them theological cover. Worse, it implies his endorsement," *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Need: *So we ask, "How do we overcome the pressures we face to heed ungodly syncretism?!"*

- I. Ahaz not only practiced idolatry, but he developed his own kind of ungodly syncretism, 2 Kings 16:1-18:**
- A. Ahaz did not do what was right in God's view like his ancestor king David did, 2 Kings 16:1-2.
 - B. Rather, Ahaz went further than any of his predecessors in sin, practicing idolatry and forming his own kind of ungodly syncretism, and how he came to perform all this evil is explained in 2 Kings 16:3-18:
 - 1. 2 Kings 16:3a claims Ahaz "walked in the way of the kings of *Israel*," meaning he practiced **syncretism like the Northern Kingdom's** kings who mixed the worship of God with golden calves, 1 Kings 12:25-30.
 - 2. Ahaz did not worship Israel's golden calves, but he did develop his **own kind of syncretism** (as follows):
 - a. Ahaz began to practice idolatrous child sacrifice, so God brought Aramea's and Israel's kings to invade Judah in fulfillment of Deuteronomy 28:15, 25 of the Mosaic Covenant, 2 Kings 16:3b-5a.
 - b. Instead of seeking God's help for relief from this coalition's invasion, Ahaz hired Assyria's Tiglath-Pileser III to fight the coalition. Ahaz used the silver and gold in God's temple and his palace for payment, so Assyria attacked and defeated Damascus, Aramea's capitol, taking its people captive, 2 Kings 16:5b-9.
 - c. When Ahaz then traveled north to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser III, he saw a pagan altar there and sent Urijah the high priest of the Lord's temple a model of the altar and its pattern that Urijah might build one like it in Jerusalem for Ahaz's use upon his return home from Damascus, 2 Kings 16:10.
 - d. High priest Urijah was so eager to build the altar, he constructed it while Ahaz was still away so that when he returned and saw it, Ahaz liked it so much, he offered all his sacrifices on it, 2 Kings 16:11-13.
 - e. Going further into sin, Ahaz moved God's regular bronze altar to the north and put the pagan altar from Damascus in its place, and he told the high priest Urijah to use the pagan altar for the regular sacrifices but to keep the bronze altar of the Lord available for Ahaz to use for religious divination, 2 Kings 16:14-15.
 - f. Urijah the high priest of the Lord's temple obeyed this directive from king Ahaz, 2 Kings 16:16.
 - g. Going even further into sin, Ahaz removed other temple furnishings to lessen the area's beauty lest he offend Assyria's pagan king with whom he was in league, 2 Kings 16:17-18; B. K. C., O. T., p. 569.
- II. Ahaz's apostasy and ungodly syncretism was the climax of several sinful acts by other leaders in Judah:**
- A. Ahaz's apostasy and syncretism was the culmination of a series of ungodly steps by former Judaeans kings:

1. Ahaz's grandfather Uzziah had become proud due to God's blessings in his reign, 2 Chronicles 26:1-16a.
 2. That pride led Uzziah to adopt the pagan practice of trying to seize the priest's role that he might become the supreme ruler of the land (Keil & Delitzsch, Com. on the O. T.; cited in studylight.org; 2 Chron. 26:16).
 3. Yet, burning incense on the altar of incense like a descendant of Aaron was a capital offense for Uzziah, so when he was confronted by godly priests, God struck him with leprosy until his death, 2 Chron. 26:16b-21.
 4. We learned in our last message that Uzziah's son king Jotham reacted to God's punishment of his father by wrongfully avoiding the temple complex altogether (2 Chronicles 27:1-2a; Deuteronomy 16:16-17), what led to spiritual laxity in Jotham's subjects and likely also in his own sons, 2 Chronicles 27:2b.
 5. This laxity affected Jotham's son Ahaz, so when he became king, he turned entirely away from the Lord and went further into religious corruption, replacing God's altar with a pagan one in ungodly syncretism!
 6. Thus, a series of ungodly steps by former kings helped influence Ahaz to go ever deeper into ungodliness.
- B. Ahaz's apostasy and syncretism was also the culmination of unholy compromise by the high priest of his era:
1. When Ahaz's grandfather Uzziah had tried to usurp the priests' Biblical role, high priest Azariah and 80 brave priests withstood him, so God honored their stand, striking Uzziah with leprosy, 2 Chron. 26:16-21.
 2. Yet, when Ahaz told Urijah the high priest in his era to replace God's altar with a pagan one, instead of refusing him like Azariah did Uzziah, Urijah helped Ahaz, condoning his syncretism, 2 Kings 16:10-16.

Lesson: *Ahaz's apostasy and syncretism of replacing God's altar with a pagan one and detracting from the temple area's original décor was the culmination of a series of ungodly steps by other leaders.*

Application: *To overcome ungodly syncretism, may we (1) trust in Christ for salvation, John 3:16. (2) Then, may we rely on the Holy Spirit by faith (a) for a humble, teachable attitude (Galatians 5:16-23) unlike Uzziah and Jotham and also (b) to stay upright in our beliefs unlike Ahaz, 2 Timothy 1:13-14. (3) May we heed 2 Timothy 3:13-17 on overcoming ungodly deception and syncretism by CONTINUING in (a) what God previously let us be taught (v. 13-14a), in (b) what God previously let us become convinced was true (v. 13, 14b), in (c) what credible teachers have previously taught us (v. 13, 14c) and ULTIMATELY to (d) what written Scripture teaches, v. 13, 14d.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

There is every evidence that Satan is behind the effort to promote the syncretism of our government and our faith with Marxist ideology: "In 1946, Julian Huxley, the first executive director of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued a report" claiming his "task" was "to help the emergence of a single world culture," for "two opposing philosophies of life confront each other. You may categorize" them "as . . . individualism versus collectivism, or as capitalism versus communism, or as Christianity versus Marxism. Can these opposites be reconciled . . . in a higher synthesis? I believe . . . it must happen." (Ibid., Howse, p. 20, citing Julian Huxley, UNESCO: Its Purpose and its Philosophy; <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0006/000681/068197eo.pdf>)

In view of this statement by Huxley and what we now see, Scripture encourages and guides us (as follows):

(1) To counter concern over the syncretism of the government or even of evangelical entities with Marxism, we recall that (a) Scripture predicted such an apostasy, such a departure from the truth, would come, 2 Timothy 4:3-5. (b) Yet, Jesus promised to build His **true** Church so even the gates of Hades would not overcome it, Matthew 16:18. (c) In addition, 1 John 4:4 claims the Holy Spirit Who is in us is greater than Satan who is in the world. (d) We thus must rely on the Holy Spirit to retain our doctrinal uprightness over Satanic corruption as 2 Timothy 1:13-14 directs.

(2) In contrast to Marxism that promotes coveting and stealing, (a) Hebrews 13:5-6 calls us to be content with what we have and to trust God to meet our material needs. In addition, (b) 2 Thessalonians 3:10 and 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12 teach us to work with our own hands to meet our own material needs versus relying on others for them.

(3) To overcome the growing deception we face, 2 Timothy 3:13-17 calls us to stay with the beliefs and practices (a) God already let us learn (v. 14a) (b) and become convinced were true (v. 14b), (c) beliefs and practices we learned from credible teachers (v. 14c) and **ultimately** (d) to stay with the beliefs and practices taught by written Scripture (v. 15). (e) We must also realize that all written Scripture is God-inspired (v. 16a) and is (f) profitable for all matters of faith and practice, equipping us for every good work until Christ returns (v. 17 with 2 Timothy 4:1).

[As we learned in our last sermon in this series, the historic dispensational, premillennial, pretribulational view of Scripture as promoted by Jesus Christ in Revelation 3:14 and taught in our Church for over 50 years that **also directly opposes Marxism** is among those beliefs we are to continue to hold.]

May we trust in Christ for salvation. To offset ungodly syncretism, may we rely on the Holy Spirit for humility, teachability and uprightness, obeying written Scripture for our edification and guidance.