

Hezekiah the Great 1



Why "the Great"?



Talk 1 – the Great Reformer



Talk 2 – the Great Leader

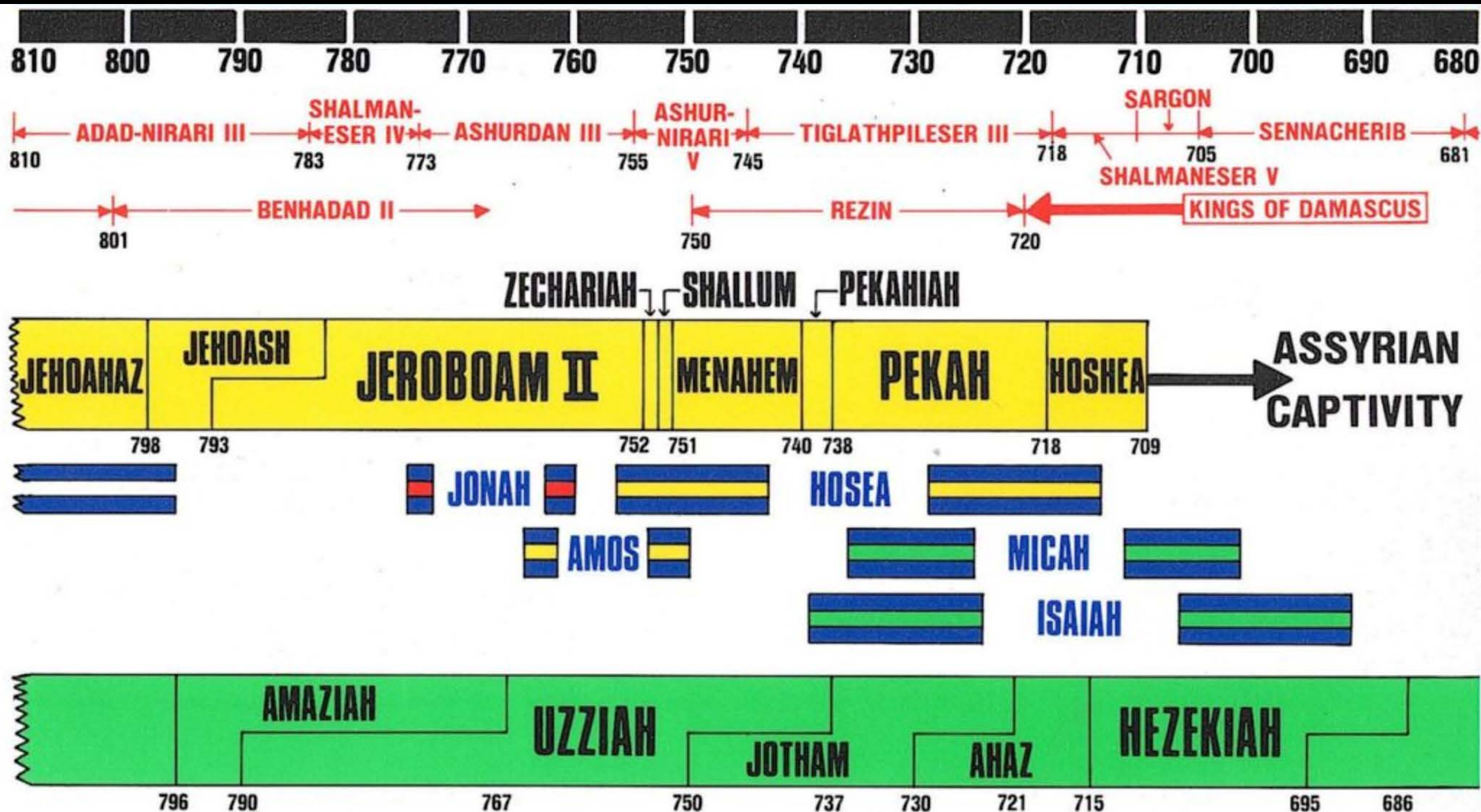


Talk 3 – the Great Repenter

Hezekiah's Background

Hezekiah – King of Judah

- ▶ **Hebrew** = “Strengthened of Yah”
- ▶ **First mentioned** - 2 Kings 16:20 **Last mentioned** - Zeph. 1:1
- ▶ **Length of reign** - 29 years from 714-686 BC
- ▶ **Age of ascension** - 25 **Age at death** - 54
- ▶ **Father** - Ahaz - “Possessor” from root: to seize, to grasp
- ▶ **Mother** - Abijah - “Yah his father”
- ▶ **Contemporary king in Israel** - Hoshea 731-723 BC



The State of Judah under Ahaz*

*Named **Jehoahaz** II by his godly father = Yahweh has grasped
Never called that in Scripture – always just **Ahaz** = grasped



From these I received tribute ...
Sanipu of Ammon, Salamanu of
Moab, ... Mitinti of
Ashkelon, **Jehoahaz of Judah**,
Kaush-malaku of Edom, ... Hanno of
Gaza ... including **gold, silver**, iron,
fine cloth and many garments made
from wool that was dyed in purple ...
as well as all kinds of lavish gifts from
many nations and from the kings that
rule over them.

Discovered in the ancient Assyrian palace of Nimrud, the Tiglath-Pileser III Summary Inscription Seven lists numerous conquests and building operations. The 24 x 19 cm clay tablet, dating to circa 729 BC contains the first known extra-biblical proof of Ahaz, king of Judah.

<https://watchjerusalem.co.il/639-king-ahazs-tribute-proof-from-an-assyrian-inscription>

1. Fearful

- ▶ King of Assyria: Tiglath-Pileser III – threatened whole region
- ▶ Syria and Israel – formed a defensive alliance – tried to get Ahaz to join
- ▶ Ahaz had four choices:
 1. Continue to foster friendship with Assyria
 2. Change his policy and join the Israel-Syria alliance
 3. Forge a military alliance with Egypt
 4. Throw himself on God for assistance



Tiglath-Pileser III – British Museum

LAND OF ASHUR

ASSYRIA



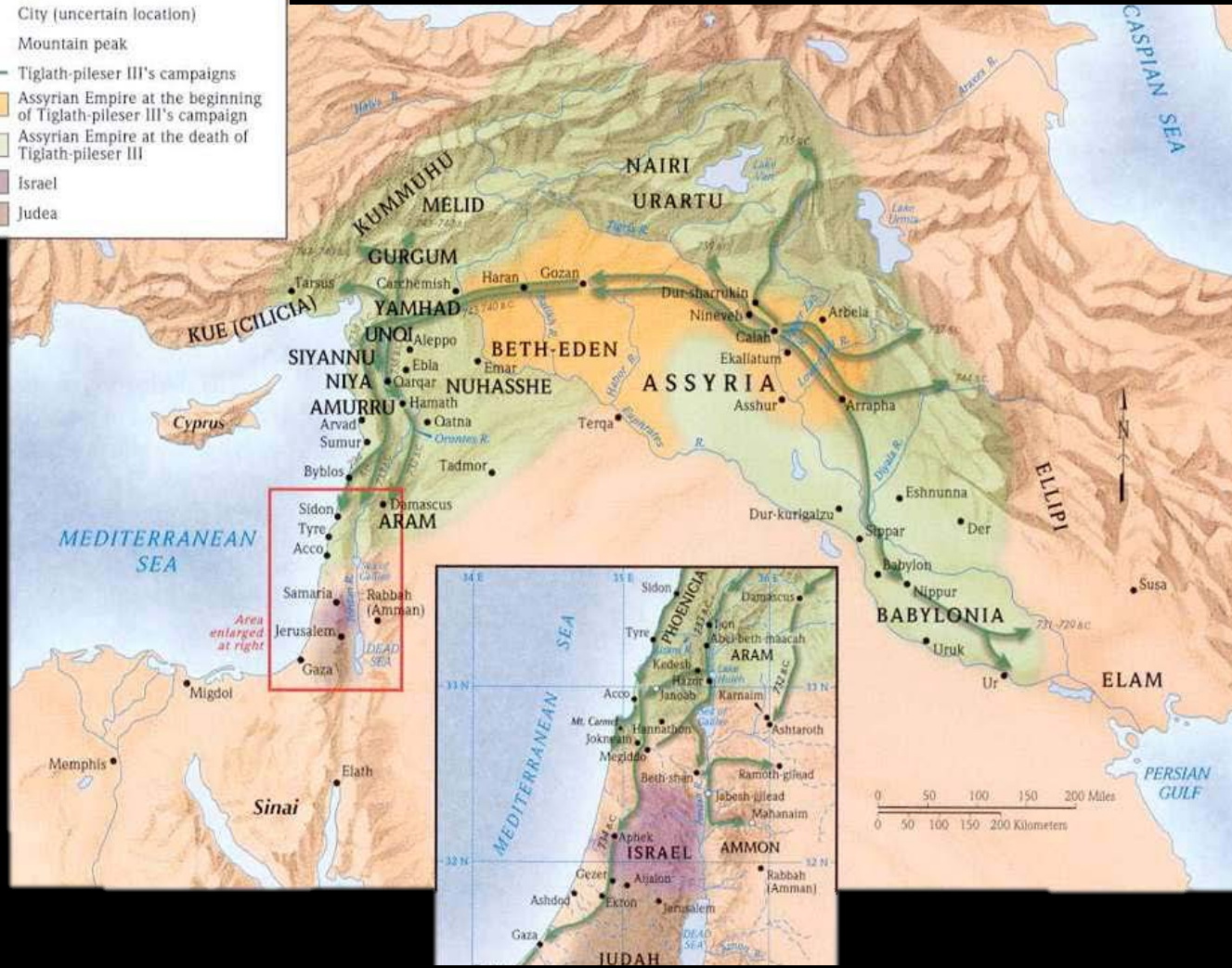




THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE UNDER TIGLATH-PILESER III

2 KGS. 15:17-20

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- ▲ Mountain peak
- ← Tiglath-pileser III's campaigns
- Orange box: Assyrian Empire at the beginning of Tiglath-pileser III's campaign
- Light green box: Assyrian Empire at the death of Tiglath-pileser III
- Purple box: Israel
- Brown box: Judea



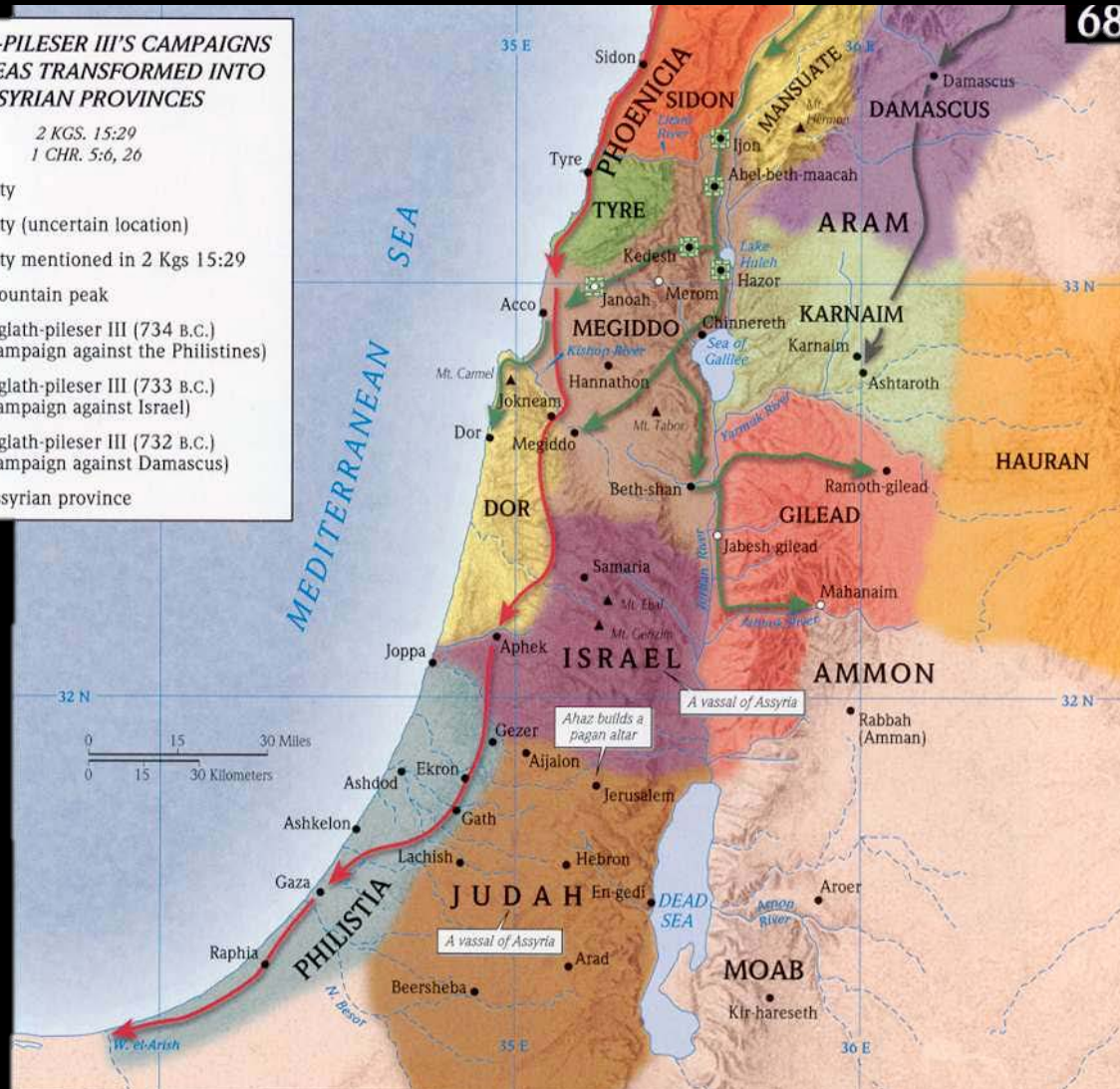
**TIGLATH-PILESER III'S CAMPAIGNS
AND AREAS TRANSFORMED INTO
ASSYRIAN PROVINCES**

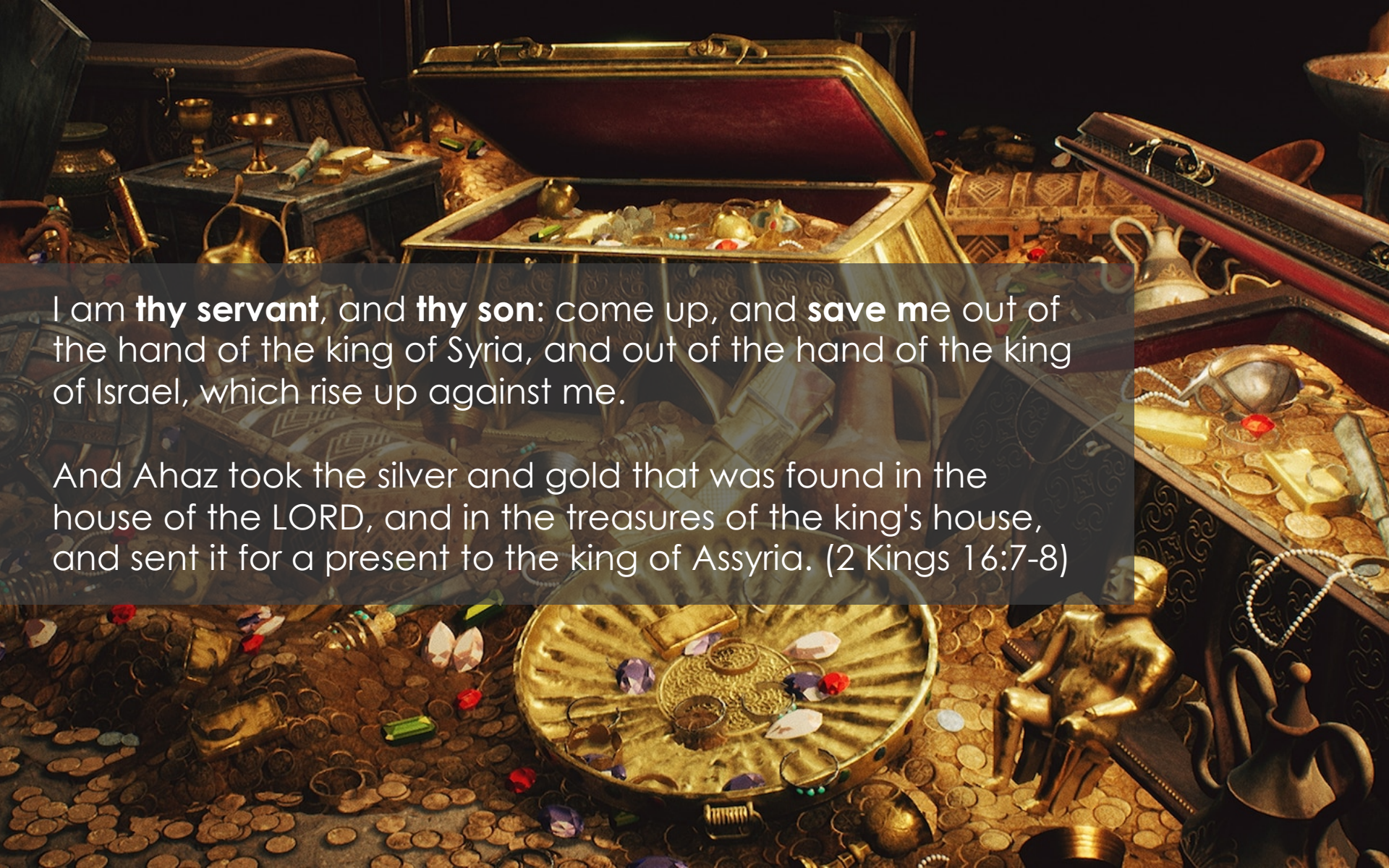
2 KGS. 15:29

1 CHR. 5:6, 26

- City
- City (uncertain location)
- City mentioned in 2 Kgs 15:29
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Tiglath-pileser III (734 B.C.)
(campaign against the Philistines)
- Tiglath-pileser III (733 B.C.)
(campaign against Israel)
- Tiglath-pileser III (732 B.C.)
(campaign against Damascus)

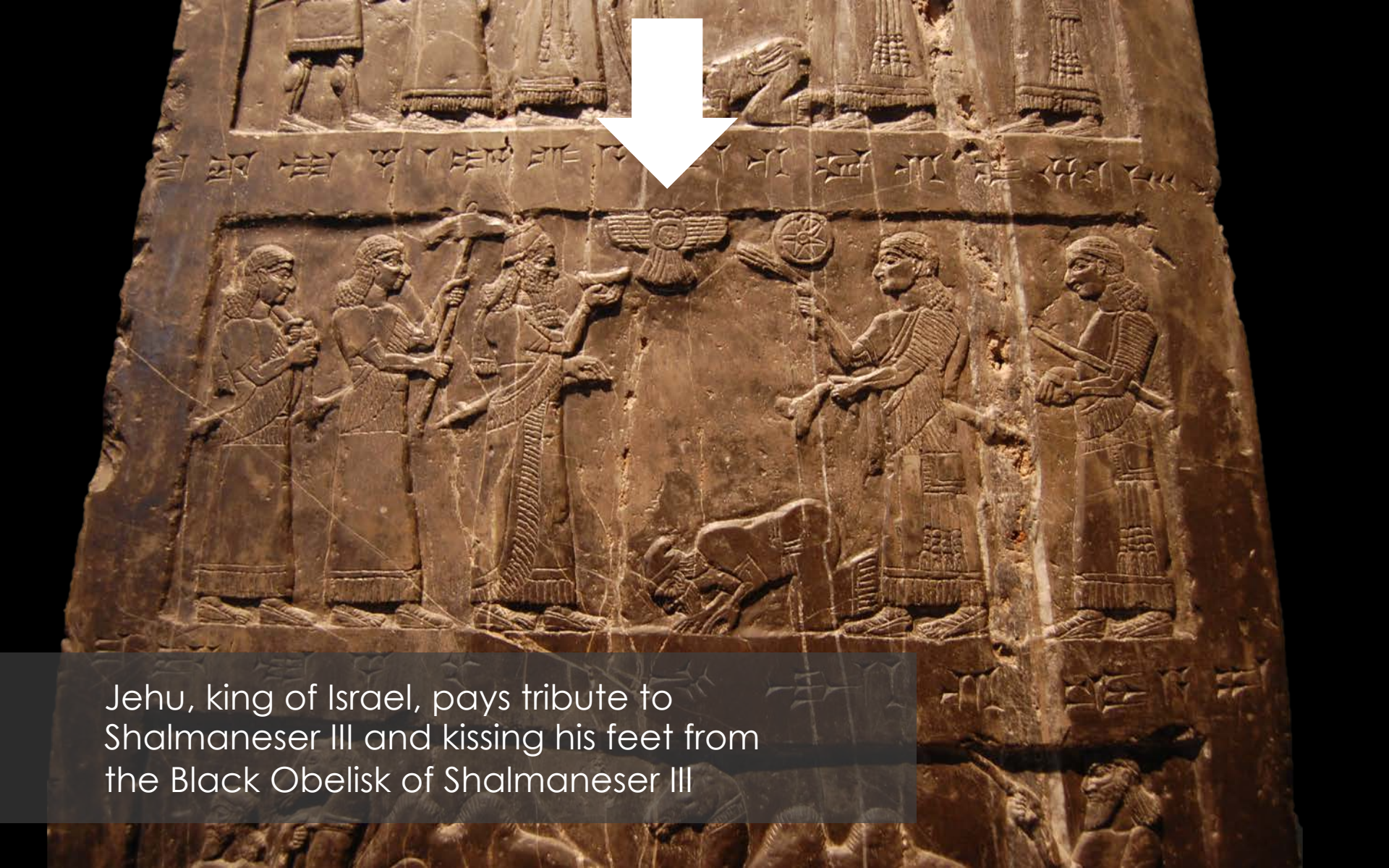
TYRE Assyrian province





I am **thy servant**, and **thy son**: come up, and **save me** out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me.

And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent it for a present to the king of Assyria. (2 Kings 16:7-8)



Jehu, king of Israel, pays tribute to Shalmaneser III and kissing his feet from the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III



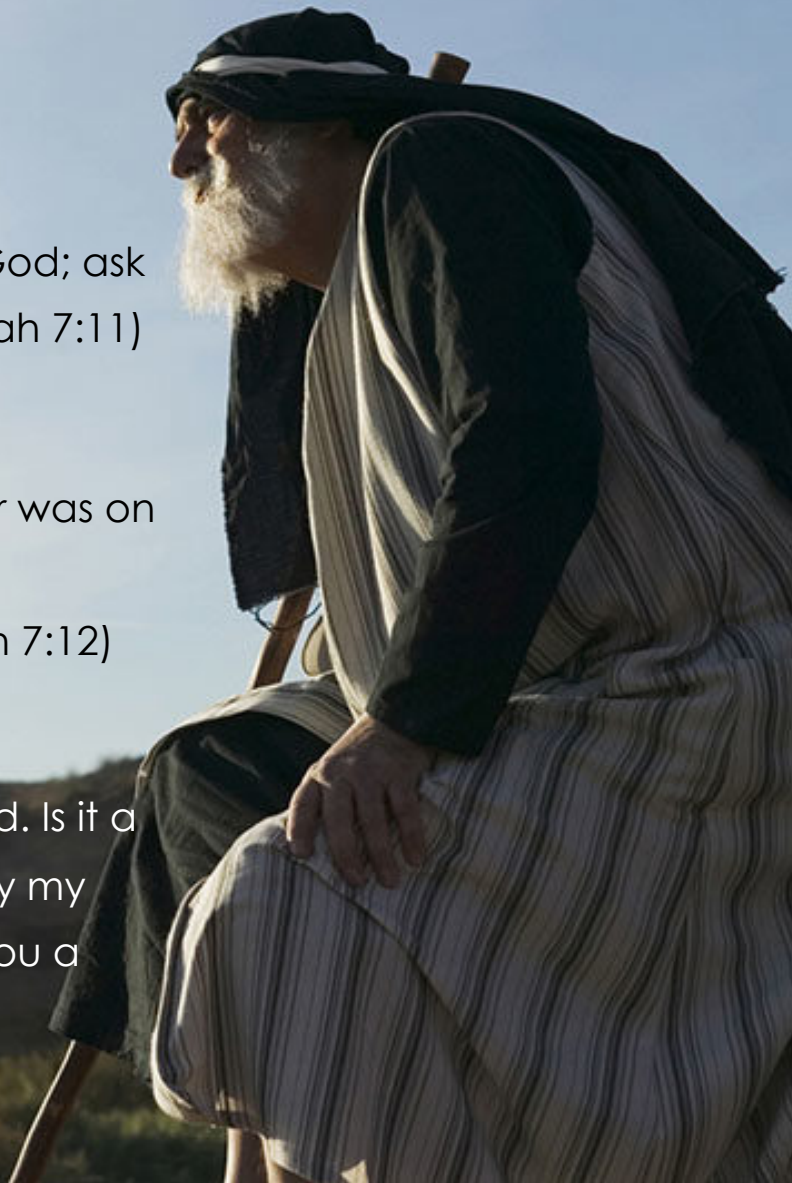
Fear from the North

- ▶ Israel was threatening to invade at any moment.
- ▶ “Aram [Syria] has allied itself with Ephraim” (Isaiah 7:2, NIV).
- ▶ Syrian king Rezin's army had moved south.
- ▶ Panic throughout Judah:
“The heart of Ahaz was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest are moved with the wind” (Isaiah 7:2).



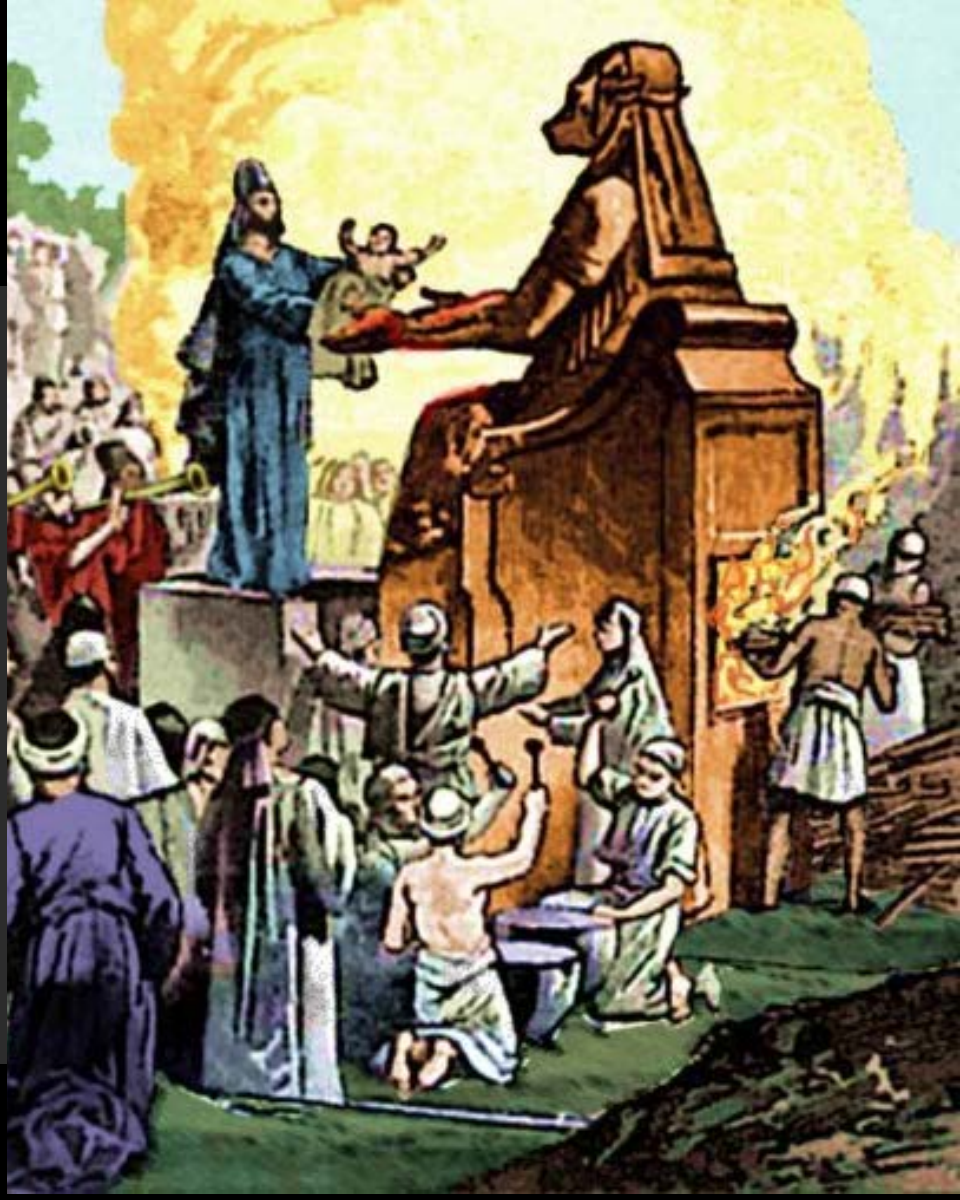
2. Faithless

- ▶ **Isaiah to Ahaz:** “Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above” (Isaiah 7:11)
- ▶ **Ahaz’s response:** his “investment” to Tiglath-Pileser was on its way...
“I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD” (Isaiah 7:12)
- ▶ **Isaiah’s response:** “Hear ye now, O house of David. Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign (a sign of the Messiah!).” (Isaiah 7:13-14)



3. Foolish

- ▶ Ahaz's gods were Moloch and Ba'al.
- ▶ Abijah was not the first wife of Ahaz.
- ▶ Hezekiah not his first son.
- ▶ Ahaz had "burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his sons in the fire (to Moloch), after the abominations of the heathen" (2 Chronicles 28:3; cf. Micah 6:7)



Ba'al = a title meaning
lord or owner

God of fertility, weather,
rain, wind, lightning,
seasons, war and sailors.

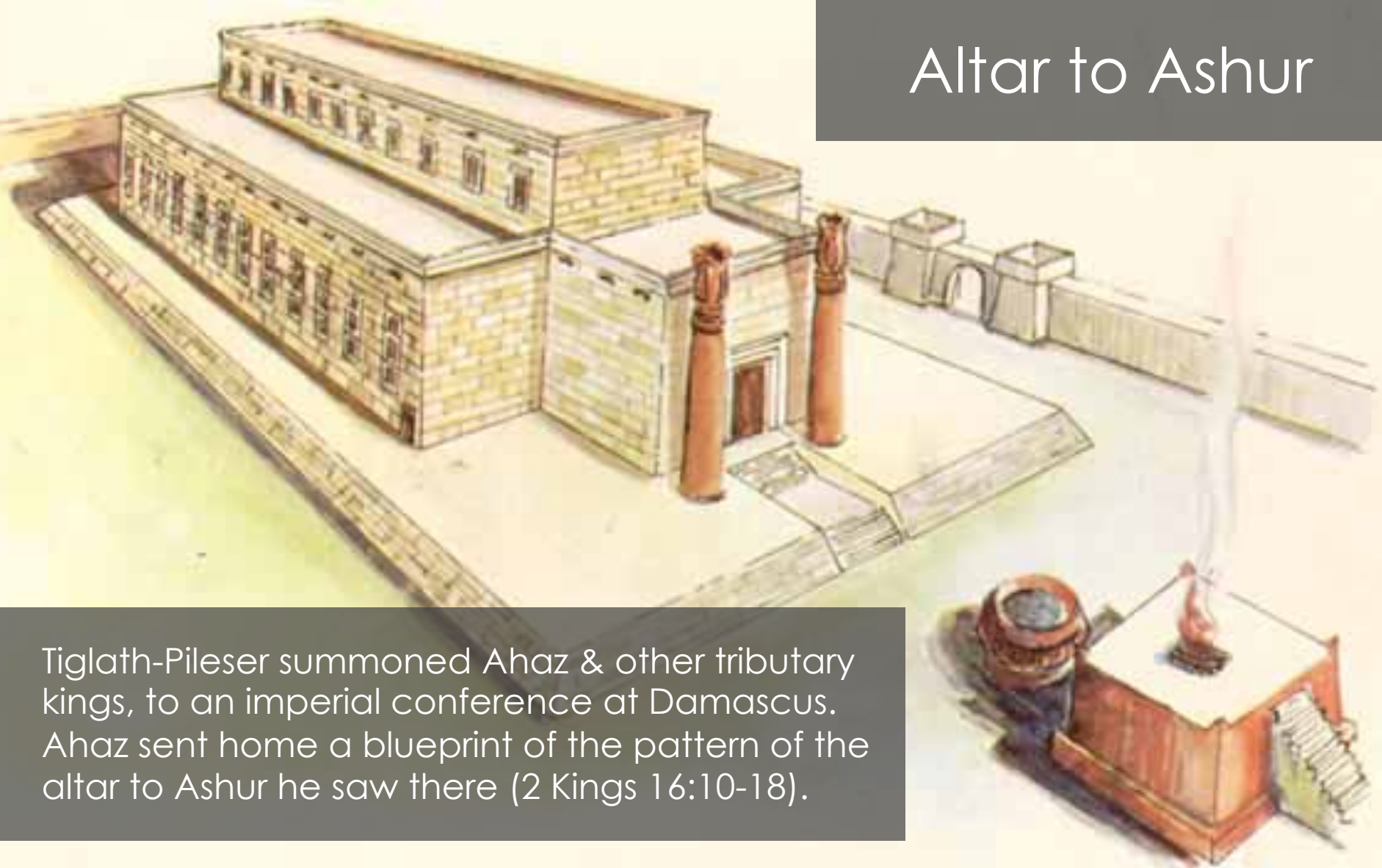


Ba'al stele – Musée du Louvre

Worship of Ba'al



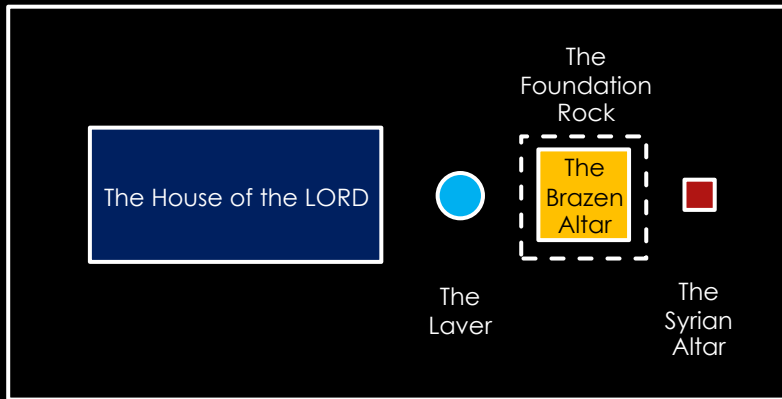
Altar to Ashur



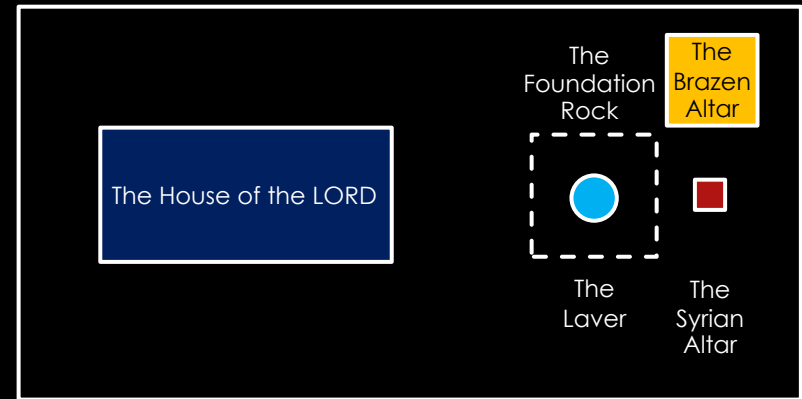
Tiglath-Pileser summoned Ahaz & other tributary kings, to an imperial conference at Damascus. Ahaz sent home a blueprint of the pattern of the altar to Ashur he saw there (2 Kings 16:10-18).

The reconfigured Temple

Solomon's Temple



Ahaz's Alterations



*note: even though called a Syrian Altar it was **Assyrian** – since Syria was a vassal state of Assyria and the god worshipped was Ashur. Ahaz **saw** it in Damascus Syria.





An Assyrian cavalry garrison in the Temple precinct



- ▶ Tiglath-Pileser insisted that part of the temple be used for this purpose (2 Chronicles 28:21; 2 Kings 16:8,18).
- ▶ A policy unique to Tiglath-Pileser, out of all the Assyrian kings.

Hostages from leading families

2 Chronicles 29:9



Hezekiah's Birth

Immanuel



- ▶ Mother Abijah: the granddaughter of the high-priest, married to Ahaz: “Behold, the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
- ▶ “With us is God!” - two distinct parties – those with Ahaz who leaned on Assyria and those with Isaiah who put trust in the God of Israel.
- ▶ Born in Bethlehem – tradition to go to the birthplace of King David
- ▶ The right spiritual education – “Butter and honey shall he eat unto his knowing to refuse the evil and to choose the good” (Isaiah 7:15).

Abijah called him her little Immanuel (for she believed the promise).

Ahaz couldn't bear Isaiah's words: watered down the name: Hezekiah, "the strong support of Yahweh".

"Unto us (Immanuel!) a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God-like Warrior, the Father of our age, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:6,7)



Isaiah's seal's imprint

The end of Ahaz

“...he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But **they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel**” – 2 Chron. 28:23

- ▶ Became **more** evil as he aged
- ▶ Superstitious – all kinds of idolatry
- ▶ Morale at a low ebb – people & army
- ▶ Enemies of Judah capitalised – plundered the area

- ▶ Ahaz was : **Fearful, Faithless, Foolish**
- ▶ State of nation: **Degenerate, Depressed, Decrepit**

And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but **they brought him not** into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

Hezekiah's Great Reforms

The qualities of Hezekiah that made reform possible

“There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of **wisdom** and **understanding**, the spirit of **counsel** and **might**, the spirit of **knowledge** and of the **fear of the LORD**; and shall make him of **quick understanding** in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears; but with **righteousness shall he judge the poor**, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he **shall smite the oppressor** (*aritz*, not *eretz*) with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And **righteousness** shall be the girdle of his loins, and **faithfulness** the girdle of his reins ... the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” (Isaiah 11:1-9)

Steps to reform

2 Kings 18:1-8

2 Chronicles 29-31

1. Opening the Temple
2. Removing the Assyrians from the Temple precinct
3. Reforming the priests and Levites
4. Cleansing the Temple
5. Reforming the rulers and officials
6. Re-dedication to God with sacrifices
7. Keeping the Passover and invitation to all Israel
8. Pushing back the Philistines in the rest of Judah
9. Rooting out idolatry in the land
10. Destroying the brazen serpent

Opening the Temple

2 Chronicles 29:3

He [Hezekiah] in the **first** year of his reign, in the **first** month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them.



Isaiah 22:22
...he shall open,
and none shall shut

Removing the Assyrians from the Temple precinct

Implied



Assyrian cavalry



Sargon II



Merodach-Baladan King of Babylon

Reforming the priests and Levites

2 Chronicles 29

Priests were drunks (Isaiah 28:7), gave no instruction in the Law of God, and offered sacrifices only on the pagan altar which Ahaz had installed.

“My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to minister unto him, and that ye should be his ministers, and burn incense.”

The authority? “the commandment of the king **in the words of the LORD**” (2 Chronicles 29:15)

All true reformation begins within, and only turns to externalities and formalities later.



Cleansing the Temple

2 Chronicles 28 & 29

Went into **the inner part of the house** of Yahweh, to cleanse it, and brought out all the uncleanness that they “found **in** the temple of the LORD” (2 Chronicles 28:21; 2 Kings 16:18).

Destroyed in the Kidron valley

Time given to get it ready: just two weeks

Missed the deadline

Hezekiah's response was positive when he received the report that “All the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified” (2 Chron 29:19)



Reforming the rulers and officials

2 Chronicles 29:20

No time wasted.

High officials of his court and rulers
summoned.

Next day: solemn procession to Temple
to renew their covenant with God.



Re-dedication to God with sacrifices

2 Chronicles 29:31

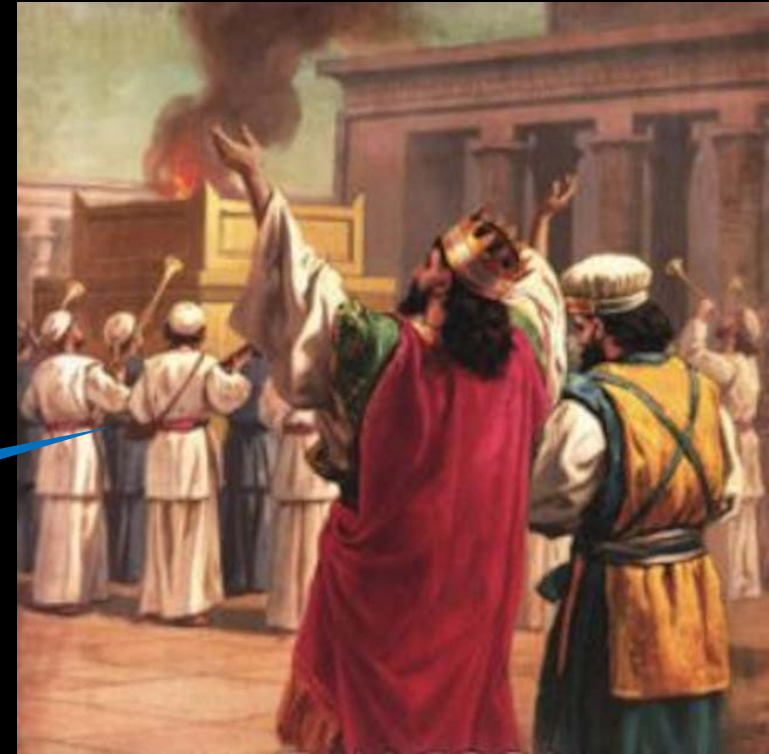
Next: re-join the people to their God.

Sin offerings for the **whole** nation (incl. Israel).

“Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings” (2 Chron 29:31).

Overwhelming response: Levites had to assist - normally only the priests.

“And as many as were of a **willing heart** brought burnt offerings” (29:31)



Keeping the Passover & invitation to all Israel



2 Chronicles 30

Passover deadline missed – “little Passover” (Numbers 9:10) an alternative.

Letter to all in Judah and the Israelites (not carried away): “turn again unto the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”.

Judah and the other tribes were “of one heart” and “an exceeding great congregation”.

Passover kept – vast number of lambs.

And feast of unleavened bread.

At the end of the 7 days – extended by a week.

And the **LORD**
hearkened to
Hezekiah,
and healed
the people.

Then the priests
the Levites arose
and blessed the
people: and **their
voice was heard**,
and their prayer
came up to his
holy dwelling
place, even unto
heaven.

Pushing back the Philistines in the rest of Judah

“He smote the Philistines, even to Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.” (2 Kings 18:8)

Consolidated the Southern Kingdom.

Displaced the Philistines.

Control of Southern trade routes into Egypt.



Rooting out idolatry in the land

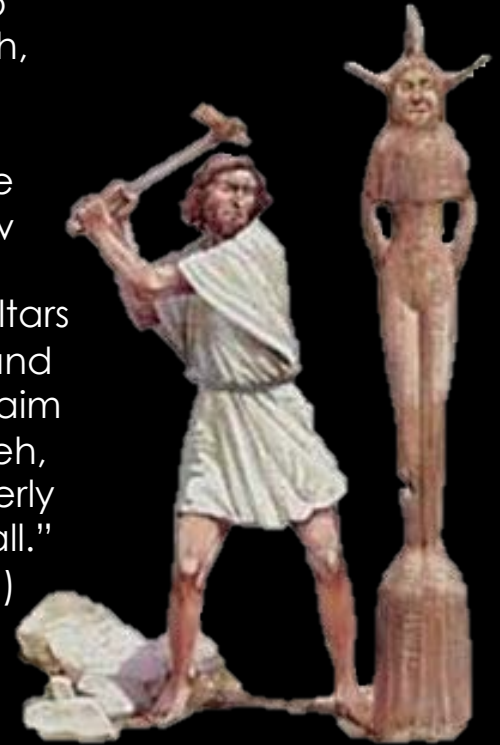
2 Kings 18:4; 2 Chronicles 31:1

The people “arose and took away the altars which were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense they took away, and cast them into the brook Kidron” (2 Chronicles 30:14).

Incense altars for spiritualism. (cf Isaiah 43:23; 66:3) “When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living **should they seek unto the dead?**” (Isaiah 8:19).

Asherah = “the way to happiness”
phallic symbol of the sex-orientated cults

“They went out to the cities of Judah, and broke the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all.” (2 Chronicles 31:1)



Destroying the brazen serpent

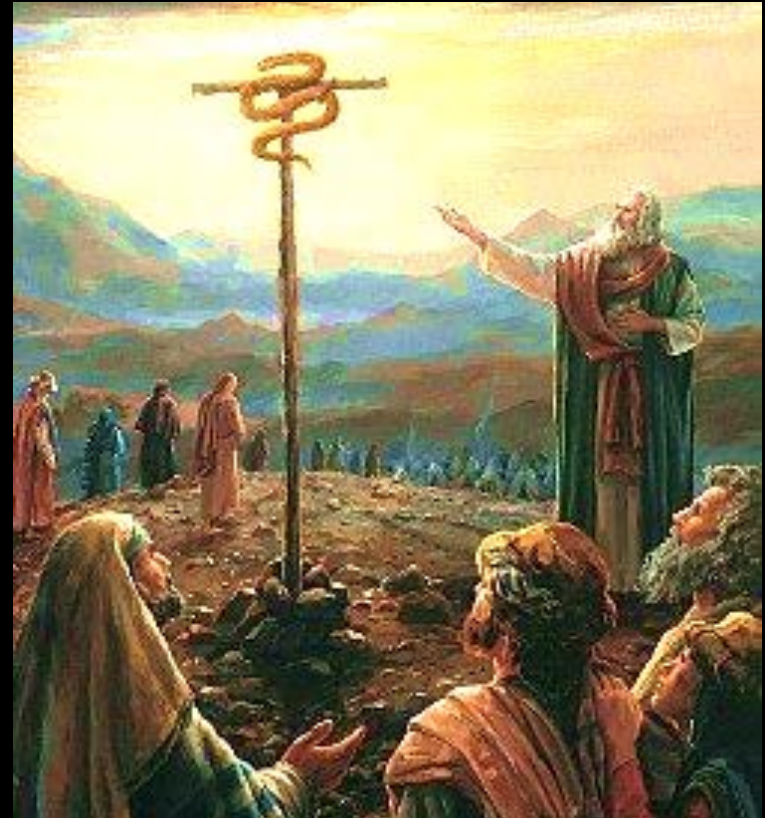
2 Kings 18:4

Brass serpent of Moses (Numbers 21)
probably brought to Jerusalem by Ahaz.

Worshipped as a god of healing.


Publicly smashed to pieces.

Hezekiah called it: "Nehushtan"
= brass beast/thing, possibly the 2nd serpent.



The triumph of the spirit over the letter of the law

- ▶ Cleansing the Temple – priests soiled garments, went into the Holiest
- ▶ Levites helped the priests with sacrifices
- ▶ Passover delayed by a month
- ▶ People who came were not all ceremonially clean
- ▶ Hezekiah, not HP, acted as intercessor for the people
- ▶ Passover was extended by a week



2 Chron 31:20-21
...**he did it with
all his heart**, and
prospered

“the LORD was with Hezekiah
(‘Immanuel’ again!), and he
prospered whithersoever he went”

Harmony of the records of Hezekiah

	2 Chron.	2 Kings	Isaiah
Began to reign at 25	29:1-2	18:1-3	
Commands to cleanse the Temple	29:5-11		
Levites cleanse themselves first	29:12-15		
Temple cleansed in 16 days	29:16-19		
Seven-fold sacrifices offered	29:20-30		
People make personal offerings	29:31-36		
Hezekiah invites all Israel to Passover	30:1-12		
The land cleansed of idolatry	31:1	18:4	
Establishes course of Priesthood	31:2-4		
People bring tithes	31:5-10		
Officers to dispose of tithes	31:11-19		
Yahweh well pleased with Hezekiah	31:20-21	18:5-6	
He rebels against Assyria		18:7	
He attacks Philistia		18:8	14:28-32
4th year Shalmaneser besieged Samaria		18:9	
6th year Sargon takes Samaria		18:10-12	
Assyria threatens Judah			10:27-34
She sweeps south to Ashdod & Philistia			20:1
Judah suggests turning to Egypt			20:2-6,30

	2 Chron.	2 Kings	Isaiah
Isaiah rebukes them for lack of faith Some rested in their own strength			22:1-7 22:8-14
Also a self-righteous Shebna class Also a faithful Eliakim class			22:15-19 22:20-25
46 cities of Judah fall to Sennacherib		18:13	36:1
Hezekiah agrees to pay tribute He strips gold from the Temple		18:14 18:15-16	
He prepares to defend Jerusalem	32:1		
He strengthens the defences of the city	32:2-8		
Sennacherib sends Rabshakeh	32:9	18:17-18	36:2
Rabshakeh's blasphemous speech, Hezekiah approaches Yahweh	32:10-16	18:19-25 19:1	36:3-22 37:1
He sends messengers to Isaiah Yahweh's comforting reply Rabshakeh returns to Lachish		19:2-5 19:6-7	37:2-5 37:6-7
Rumour concerning Tirhakah		19:8	37:8
Second message to Hezekiah	32:17-19	19:9 19:10-13	37:9 37:10-13
Hezekiah prays for deliverance Isaiah's comforting reply	32:20	19:14-19 19:20-34	37:14-20 37:21-35
Hezekiah stricken with illness	32:24	20:1	38:1
He prays to be healed	32:24	20:2-3	38:2-3
15-year extension of life granted	32:24	20:4-11	38:4-8
Hezekiah's recovery & psalm of praise Sennacherib and his army destroyed	32:21-23	19:35-37	38:9-22 37:36-38
Merodach-Baladan's embassy	32:25-31	20:12-18 20:19	39:1-7 39:8
Peace and truth in his days			



Talk 1 – the Great Reformer



Talk 2 – the Great Leader



Talk 3 – the Great Repenter

