

2 Chron 24-25 - Staying the Course

Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight! We're continuing our study in 2 Chronicles, so would you please turn to 2 Chronicles chapter 24?

If you remember from where we left off last week, Jehoida the priest has organized a Godly coup. The evil and wicked queen Athalia has now been killed, and the only remaining son of David has taken the throne. The only remaining male from David's household is a 7 year old boy named Joash, and he's now the king.

As chapter 24 unfolds, we'll see that Joash's life proves once again the principles that the book of Chronicles stresses: God was faithful to His promise to provide rulers over His people from David's descendants. But each king's success depended on their submission to God's authority. We're about to see young Joash start out well but doesn't finish strong.

We're going to study chapters 24 and 25 and the title of tonight's message is Staying the Course

Let's pray

1-2

1 Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. This turns out to be a sad summary of Joash's life. Joash followed God only as long as he followed the priest Jehoiada. In a few minutes we'll see that after

Jehoiada the priest dies, Joash turns to idols and walks away from the Lord.

Tragically we've likely all seen this play out too haven't we. Sometimes a Christian will walk in the Spirit as long as they're in the shadow of a man. Of course, a godly influence is good, but at some point, it needs to become a personal resolve to follow Christ.

Every person needs to learn to stand on their own and have that personal walk with the Lord.

3 And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters. Now it's funny, I have many commentaries-and access to several dozen online. But all of them glossed over verse 3 here. So, let's just state the obvious. Jehoiada was a godly priest, but he sinned here by getting 2 wives for Joash. Perhaps he was paranoid and trying to help God along by having more options for the lineage of David?

4 Now it happened after this that Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. When Jehoash took the throne, it had been 135 years since Solomon built the Temple. It was due a facelift. So, in verse 5 he sets out to make needed repairs. Construction is always costly, so he does some budgetary management.

5 Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to

repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly.”

However the Levites did not do it quickly. For some reason, we don't know why, the Levites didn't share the same passion as King Joash for fixing up the temple.

6 So the king called Jehoiada the chief priest, and said to him, “Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD and of the assembly of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?” " BTW, In Exodus 35 when Moses built the Tabernacle, he took a freewill offering from among the people. This eventually evolved into a temple tax. In Nehemiah's day it was 1/3 shekel.

7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals. This tells us why the temple was in such bad shape and needed repair. It wasn't just normal wear and tear usage; Athaliah and her sons previously launched a deliberate campaign against the temple and the worship of the true God.

8 Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD. Joash commissioned the construction of an offering box – and situated it by the exit – the place we've located our offering box. It gave the people an opportunity to give.

9-10

9 And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God had imposed on Israel in the wilderness. 10 Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put them into the chest until all had given. The people wanted to give. They appreciated the opportunity to give back to God and evidently no one wanted to be left out.

Now we know that God can cause money and materials to just appear by a miracle. Yet God chooses to almost always fund His work through the willing gifts of His people.

My personal belief is God works this way because we need to be giving people and not be so enthralled with the things of this world.

2 Corinthians 9:7 So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

Talk about money

11 So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. There was a diligence in the accounting of the funds. We have controls here at CCC...

12-13

12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also those who worked in iron and bronze to restore the house of the LORD. 13 So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it. They wisely hired the right kind of workers and paid them directly, so that money wouldn't be lost or wasted on administration.

14 When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; they made from it articles for the house of the LORD, articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada. The people were so generous, and the administration used the money wisely, so there was a surplus that was used to supply new articles for the house of the LORD.

15 But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died. This was an exceptionally long life in those days.

16-17

16 And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. The

advice Joash received was both evil and wicked, and Joash listened to this advice.

Joash was a thermometer – he read the surrounding temperature and conformed himself to it. But it's wisely been said that as Christians we should be thermostats and set the temperature of the room.

Verses 18-19 tells us the outcome of Joash's compromise

18 Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. 19 Yet He (God) sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen. God was faithful to warn them, over and over, but they failed to respond.

And now, a shocking scene unfolds in verse 20-21

20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.'" 21 So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. Look at how far Joash fell – he executes the son of the man who saved his own life.

22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he

died, he said, “The LORD look on it, and repay!” The prophet’s dying prayer is to ask God for justice on his murderer.

23-24

23 So it happened in the spring of the year that the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. 24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. Judah had Syria outnumbered, but no matter how mighty you are you can’t fight with God and win.

25 And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons[fn] of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died. And they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings. What a sad way to die... They leave Joash to bleed to death. Then other people finish him off violently. The priest Jehoiada was such a man of integrity everyone respected him. So much so that when Joash killed Jehoiada’s son the king made some vicious enemies.

Joash’s life is a sad story. He started out strong but finished a disgrace. I like how G. Campbell Morgan sums up Joash, “The story offers a striking illustration of how a weak man is easily influenced. It emphasizes the need of strong individual character, which is only created by direct dealing with God.”

26 These are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad^[fn] the son of Shimeath the Ammonites, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith^[fn] the Moabitess. 27 Now concerning his sons, and the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they are written in the annals of the book of the kings. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Chapter 25 discusses the reign of Joash's son Amaziah

1 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart. He went through the motions - without the devotion. Amaziah was outwardly righteous, but permitted inner compromise. And this is a reminder to us that God looks at the motive for our serving of Him.

In verses 3-4 we see an example of Amaziah's obedience

3 Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. 4 However he did not execute their children, but did as it is written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin."^[fn]

It was the standard practice of the ancient world to execute not only the guilty person in a murder, but also their entire family.

Amaziah went against the conventional practice of his day and

obeyed the word of God instead **Deuteronomy 24:16 Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to**

death for their fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.

5-6

5 Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to their fathers' houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them to be three hundred thousand choice men, able to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. 6 He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. In assembling an army to wage a battle against Edom, Amaziah hired mercenary troops from the northern tribes of Israel. But remember Israel is a wicked kingdom, they have no good kings during this time.

7 But a man of God came to him, saying, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel—not with any of the children of Ephraim. 8 But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! Even so, God shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has power to help and to overthrow." The prophet warns Amaziah not to ally himself with the idolaters of Israel. This is what got the previous kings of Judah in trouble. Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah all allied with Israel.

9 Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?"

And the man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." Amaziah invested a fortune in hiring these

troops, so he wants to know-what about the money he invested?
“And the man of God answered, “The LORD is able to give you much more than this.”

Here’s a common hindrance to obeying God we can sometimes face. What about our investment? No, not just talking financially...

“I’ve got 20 years with this company, I can’t just pick up and move even if God tells me.”

“I know he’s an unbeliever, and it’s wrong to date him, but we’ve been going out for 5 years, how can I just give it up.”

“I’ve got an “A” in the class. If I take a stand now it might jeopardize my grade and diploma.”

Look at what the prophet says to Amaziah in verse 9, “The LORD is able to give you much more than this.”

Yes, there’s often a cost to obey God. You might lose your initial investment, but God is faithful to reimburse any perceived loss.

Jesus told His disciples in **Matthew 19:29, And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[fn] or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.**

You know what this means-it’s really impossible to sacrifice for God. He returns your investment, plus some.

10 So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

Why would these troops be so angry-they got paid and didn't have to fight? Because they probably counted on the anticipated plunder as additional income.

11 Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir. Walking in obedience to God, Amaziah saw the victory God promised. The Edomites, who had apparently rebelled against Judah's authority, were defeated.

12-13

12 Also the children of Judah took captive ten thousand alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces.

13 But as for the soldiers of the army which Amaziah had discharged, so that they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much spoil. While Amaziah was preoccupied with Edom in the south, the disappointed Israelis attack and pillage a few Judean villages on their way back home.

What happens next has to be one of the stupidest decisions in the Scripture. Amaziah has just defeated the Edomites. But for some strange reason Amaziah chooses to worship the gods of the people he just defeated.

14 Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. Why would Amaziah be so foolish? Evidently,

Amaziah's victory went to his head. And when you're intoxicated with pride you don't always think straight. Suddenly, the king assumes he's invincible and he no longer needs God.

15-16

15 Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, "Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?" 16 So it was, as he talked with him, that the king said to him, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?"

Then the prophet ceased, and said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice." King Amaziah threatens God's spokesman. Judgment awaits the proud king

17 Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to Joash^[fn] the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another in battle." Fresh off a victory over Edom, Amaziah thinks he can defeat Israel.

Understand what this is like... A local High School football team wins their first few games and thinks they can't be beat - so they challenge OSU. Their success went to their head!

18-19

18 And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 19 Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites,

and your heart is lifted up to boast. Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall—you and Judah with you?” The Israeli king Joash is trying to be kind. Why spill innocent blood?

20-24

20 But Amaziah would not heed, for it came from God, that He might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought the gods of Edom. 21 So Joash king of Israel went out; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. 22 And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 23 Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. 24 And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king’s house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. Judah was absolutely routed by the northern kingdom of Israel.

Let’s finish the chapter

25 Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 26 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, indeed are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27 After the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 28 Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of Judah. The embarrassing loss against Israel undermined Amaziah’s support among the leaders of Judah.

You see how the chronicler is reminding Judah of this. To come back and stay committed to the Lord, or there are disastrous consequences!