

## 2 Chronicles 25-26 – Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017

**2 Chronicles 25** -- 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.

- The chapter begins with an interesting detail concerning Amaziah being half-hearted in his service to and worship of the Lord.
- While he did do what was right in the Lord's sight, as one of the nine good kings, we're told that his heart was not really in it.
- In other words, this king was never really fully devoted to the Lord, in the sense that he didn't set his heart on doing God's will.

G. Campbell Morgan - "The root idea of the Hebrew word [loyal] ...is being whole, complete. Imperfection of heart consists in incomplete surrender. Some chamber of the temple is retained for selfish purposes. What it was in the case of Amaziah we are not told, but the fact remains that notwithstanding the general direction of his life ... the whole heart was not set on doing the will of God."

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."

- Lest one think that this was similar to what Athaliah did in murdering all her grandchildren, let me hasten to say that it was just.
- This because of what we're told was according to the Law in Deuteronomy, in that, it removed those who would seek revenge.
- Amaziah is actually off to a good start here, such that, he is obeying the command of God in not putting the children to death.

Deuteronomy 24:16 (NKJV) — 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 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. 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."

- What Amaziah does here by hiring these mercenaries of sorts from the northern kingdom of Israel is both strategic and shrewd.
- However, while this may be a smart thing to do militarily, it's a very foolish thing to do spiritually, because God wasn't with him.
- We do err greatly when we opt for that which seems to make sense at the expense of that which the Lord would have us to do.

One commentator said it best this way, "Even though it made military sense for Amaziah to hire and use these troops, according to the word from God, it made no spiritual sense. This is because God has power to help and to overthrow. To fight with God is to receive His help; to fight against Him is have God overthrow you."

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."

- What Amaziah says to this unnamed man of God, is basically that he's already invested too much money to back out of this.
- I find the man of God's answer to Amaziah very interesting, when he tells him that the Lord is able to give him much more.
- Thankfully, as we're about to see, Amaziah heeds the word of the Lord from this man of God, and chooses God over money.

F.B. Meyer - "But you say that you have already entered into so close an alliance that you cannot draw back. You have invested your capital; you have gone to great expenditure. Yet it will be better to forfeit these than Him."

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. 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. 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.

- Here we're told that Amaziah sent these mercenary troops home and let them keep the money, however they were very angry.
- The question becomes one of why they were so angry, which I believe was because they wouldn't plunder the spoil from war.
- The reason I believe this is why is they took much spoil anyway, which was the result of Amaziah enlisting them to begin with.

F.B. Meyer - "The soldiers of Israel committed depredations on their way back. This was the result of folly and sin of Amaziah's proposal. We may be forgiven, and delivered, and yet there will be after-consequences which will follow us from some ill-considered act. Sin may be forgiven, but its secondary results are sometimes very bitter."

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. 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."

- Sadly, this is where it takes a horrible turn for the worst, as evidenced by Amaziah in his arrogance turning to the false gods.
- It's interesting to note that God in his mercy and grace sends him a prophet to warn him only to have Amaziah threaten him.
- It seems Amaziah is so blinded by his own pride and arrogance that he's oblivious to the fact that God will destroy him for this.

17 Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another in battle." 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?" 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.

- What Amaziah does here is a perfect example of how without exception someone's pride will always lead to their fall in the end.
- Even when Amaziah is told to stay home and not meddle lest he fall and all of Judah with him, he will not heed God's warning.
- We're actually told the reason why he wouldn't heed this is because God will judge him for seeking the gods of the Edomites.

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. 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.

- I would suggest that Amaziah's downfall began with him not loving God with all his heart by virtue of him being half-hearted.
- The reason being is that when someone's heart is not fully devoted to the Lord, it's only a matter of time before it's full of pride.
- Such was the case with Amaziah who became so full of himself and as such, full of pride, that it would lead to his own death.

**2 Chronicles 26** -- 1 Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 2 He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers. 3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5 He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

- I hope you don't mind if I share with you a letter from Pastor Chuck Smith on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012, as I believe it's most apropos.
- I do so, because he references verse five here in chapter twenty-six as it relates to his concerns for the future of the movement.
- Also, I thought it would be appropriate to share it after receiving comments from online members who are asking about this.

Dear Fellow Laborer, It's 4:45, Monday morning and I'm sitting at my computer. After teaching four services yesterday, as tired as I am, I could not sleep. I felt the Lord was speaking to me about the future of Calvary Chapel and I would like to share it with you. In history, every great movement of God began with the people seeking God with their whole hearts and thus receiving the blessings of God on that movement. In the book of Judges, Israel saw the spiritual rise and decline of the nation during that period of history. Seeking the Lord, they were blessed; forsaking the Lord, they went into captivity. I fear that we might fall into the same pattern. The history of King Uzziah is recorded in 2 Chronicles 26:5, "And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper." I'm concerned when I read Paul's warning to the Galatians where he asked, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" (Galatians 3:1-3). The success of Calvary Chapel can only be contributed to the fact that it was begun in the Spirit. When J. Edwin Orr, an expert in the study of the history of revivals in the church, heard about Calvary Chapel, he came down to study this revival and concluded, "It was the Spirit of God, working through the Word of God,

transforming the lives of the people of God." Back then, we were seeking to be led and controlled by the Spirit of God; today, it seems to me that we are now seeking to be led by gifted men to share their ideas of church growth. When we read of the phenomenal growth of the church in Acts 2:42, 47 we find that "... they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers ... praising God, and having favor with all people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." I find it a little disturbing that we are scheduling pastors' conferences with featured speakers; men who are reformed in their theology and doctrinally cessationists believing that all of the gifts of the Spirit are no longer valid for today. That men like this can teach us how to develop the church through worldly wisdom and that we no longer need total dependence on the Holy Spirit. I'm not suggesting that they are not true believers in Jesus Christ and sincere and loving brothers in Christ, but I do disagree with some of their doctrinal positions. I believe we have many gifted men in our own fellowship, and it's not necessary to feature other men outside Calvary Chapel to instruct us about how to improve our ministry. I would like to see our next pastors' conference concentrate on the place of the Holy Spirit to lead us back to a full reliance on His work in developing our ministries. You are free to disagree with me, and you are also free to seek fellowship with ministries other than Calvary Chapel. Large church numbers has never been our goal, but it's of utmost importance to be true to the Word, to be led by the Holy Spirit, and to be unified in our faith. Love in Christ, from the grumpy old fossil, Chuck Smith

- We were first introduced to Uzziah back in 1 Kings 15 where his name is recorded as Azariah, which is the same as Uzziah.
- Uzziah was another of the nine good kings who did right in the sight of the Lord but is one of the eight who sinned in the end.
- This because, of his sin of self-promotion, such that, he became proud and arrogant as a king, in usurping the role of the priest.

- The life of King Uzziah is a study of a great king who had a very tragic end, such that he started out as a great and wise king.
- So much so, that he is mentioned in the book of Isaiah as being sorely missed when he died, after reigning for fifty-two years.
- It seems that Isaiah the prophet was greatly discouraged by the tragic death of Uzziah, which forced him to look to the Lord.

Isaiah 6:1 (NKJV) — 1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.

One commentator of this noted, ...when Isaiah wrote that he was called in the year King Uzziah died, he said a lot. It is to say, "In the year a great and wise king died." But it is also to say, "In the year a great and wise king who had a tragic end died." Isaiah had great reason to be discouraged and disillusioned at the death of King Uzziah, because a great king had passed away, and because his life ended tragically. Yet despite it all, he saw the enthroned LORD God who was greater than any earthly king.

6 Now he went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities around Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7 God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. 8 Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong. 9 And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. 10 Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; he also had farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil. 11 Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. 12 The total number of chief officers of the mighty men of valor was two thousand six hundred. 13 And under their authority was an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones. 15 And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.

- Here again, we have yet another good king that God blesses so abundantly we're told that his fame had spread far and wide.
- However, we're also told that God is the one who had marvelously helped him to the point that he became strong in himself.
- Sadly, as we're about to see next, this good king's heart will be lifted up in pride, and it will ultimately lead to his destruction.

16 But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

- Within this verse we have what I would argue is one of the most important lessons we can learn concerning God prospering us.
- Namely, that of the propensity for us to become proud and lifted up just as Uzziah had become after God had blessed his reign.
- It's my belief, particularly from my own experience, that the temptation in adversity is nothing like the temptation in prosperity.

G. Campbell Morgan - "The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are created by prosperity. More men are blasted by it than by adversity.... Prosperity always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

F.B. Meyer - "God cannot trust some of us with prosperity and success, because our nature could not stand them. We must tug at the oar, instead of spreading the sail, because we have not enough ballast."

17 So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18 And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, “It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.” 19 Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him. 21 King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.

- As I was thinking about what happened to Uzziah, what struck me was that he could have repented and avoided the leprosy.
- However, by the time Uzziah realizes that God was judging him for what he had done, it’s too late and he will die as a leper.
- It’s interesting to note that because of his leprosy, he is isolated and will never be able to step foot into the temple ever again.

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. 23 So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings, for they said, “He is a leper.” Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

- What’s so tragic about Uzziah’s life is that his sin of pride at the end of his life would sort of mar all the good he did in his life.
- It’s hard to imagine that such a good king, who did much good when he was young, would ruin everything when he was old.
- This speaks to the paramount importance of finishing well, especially for those of us who have been walking with God for years.

Charles Spurgeon - “I have lived long enough to observe that the greatest faults that are ever committed by professedly Christian men are not committed by young people. Most painful is it, to me to remember that the worst cases of backsliding and apostasy that I have ever seen, in this church, have been by old men and middle-aged men,—not by young people; for, somehow or other, the young people, if they are truly taught of God, know their weakness, and so they cry to God for help; but it often happens that more experienced people begin to think that they are not likely to fall into the faults and follies of the young; and I care not how old a man may be—even if seven centuries had passed over his head:—if he began to trust in himself, he would be a fool, and soon he would have a grievous fall.”