

II CHRONICLES 24-25

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Chronicles chapter 24 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

If you remember from our previous studies, we have seen that the Southern Kingdom was in a very dark period of time in regard to their spiritual condition.

As we move into II Chronicles chapter 24 tonight, there is a light that shines forth in the kingdom. We are moving away from this dark period for the Southern Kingdom of Judah and towards a short period of spiritual reform.

Let me give you just a little recap of what we have seen.

We saw that Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, was a wicked King. He killed all his brothers to protect his position as King.

Not only that, but we are told in II Chronicles 21:6, "**And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.**"

Because of that God brought judgment upon him in the form of some kind of deadly intestinal disease, which took his life after eight years of his reign.

Then, in his death his son, Ahaziah became King, and he too was evil.

This is what we are told of Ahaziah in II Chronicles 22:3-5, **“He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. Therefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram.”**

And Joram, King in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, the son of Ahab and Jezebel, was also judged for his wickedness and only after one year on the throne, he was assassinated by Jehu, a military leader from the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

With the death of Ahaziah we saw that Athaliah, his mother, instead of mourning over the death of her son, kills all the royal heirs to the throne, and now, for the next six years she is the King or acted as the King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

But in destroying all her grandsons, she missed one.

Joash was only a year old at this time, and he was hidden away by Jehoshabeath, sister of Ahaziah.

And both Jehoshabeath and her husband, Jehoiada, hid Joash away in the Temple apartments for six years, and now it was time to make this child the rightful King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

As they crowned this 7-year-old boy as the next King in Judah, word gets back to Athaliah on what is happening, and she cries out, **“Treason! Treason!”**

Not that she saw what she was doing as treason, but what they were doing with Joash was treason to her, making him King.

But in the end, she is put to death for her actions. And Joash is now King, being trained by the High Priest, Jehoiada, who was the real power behind the throne at this time.

And thus, the false worship was destroyed, and the true worship of God was brought back to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Light was shining forth, the light of God through this young man named Joash.

With that as our background, let's begin reading in II Chronicles chapter 24, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

II CHRONICLES 24

VERSES 1-3

Jehoiada, who was the High Priest, was truly the power behind the throne. He brought a godly influence back into the land and was influencing young Joash on the things he should do.

He was a good role model for this child King. Remember, he was only seven years old when he became King!

And the people of Judah were blessed by the actions of this man.

It is as Solomon said in Proverbs 29:2, **“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.”**

Make no mistake about it, leaders of nations, leaders at work, leaders in the home and so on, influence those around them either for good or evil.

And make no mistake about it, we are all leaders in one capacity or another and thus, may we influence people in a positive way and bless them because of our actions!

Notice that it says, “**Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.**”

What do you think that means?

What that tells me is that after the death of Jehoiada we see that the positive influence in Joash’s life was gone and he did not develop that deep relationship with the Lord as he should have. Thus, he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord. And we will see that as we go through this chapter tonight.

We are also told that the High Priest, Jehoiada gave to Joash two wives and in saying that we need to understand that God is not endorsing polygamy. All God is saying is that this is what transpired, it was not right, God was not endorsing it and even though it was far less than what the Kings of his day had as wives, it was still wrong!

As we read on, we will be looking at the repair of the Temple, because it has been in disrepair for some 15 years!

VERSES 4-7

You have to love the heart of Joash here. And yes, he starts out strong, but in the end, he is going to fail as he moves away from the Lord.

But here we see that as he looks at the House of God, the Temple, it is a mess and he wants to repair it.

You see, during her six years on the throne, Athaliah built a temple for Baal, and she obtained many of the materials for her project by dismantling parts of the Temple of God.

We also had the nine years of the previous two Kings that did not take care the Temple of God!

Now Joash wants to rebuild and repair the Temple of God, and he sets the Levites in charge of this project.

And as I read this it seems that the Levites just don't have that same passion for the Lord or the things of God as Joash did.

The reason I say that is that as they are told to do this job, they don't do it quickly, they are dragging their feet, moving at a snail's pace you might say.

In other words, they had no heart to restore the worship of God.

Payne gives us this perspective on why they dragged their feet.

He wrote, ***“But the Levites did not act at once, both because of natural inertia (still true even of Christian workers), and because of the priestly demands that seem to have exhausted the normal revenues on current operations and their own support.”***

Because nothing is being done to repair the House of God, Joash lets Jehoiada have it. He can't understand why the work has not been started.

Athaliah and her sons plundered the House of God, and now it is time to restore and rebuild what she destroyed.

I hate to say this but many leaders in the church today are doing the same thing. They have no concern for the house of God; to them it is a job and not a calling.

And if your heart is not in it, then don't get involved. Don't do it for the money, the recognition or whatever.

If you can't do it out of love, knowing that God has called you into the ministry, then you don't belong in that ministry.

Today we see shepherds or pastors that are nothing more than hirelings, more concerned with self and what they will make and less concerned for the sheep that God has entrusted to them.

They don't have a heart for God or the things of God as we have seen here with these Levites, and thus, we will see Joash take charge and get things moving.

How can we apply this to our own life?

Can we apply this to our own life?

This is not just an Old Testament idea, but it applies to us today.

The Bible says that we, as believers, are the Temple of God.

What's the point?

The point is this. Just as the Temple of God in the Old Testament needed repair, so do we, and on a daily basis.

You see, if we neglect being in the Word of God, if we neglect prayer, if we neglect fellowship with other believers, if we neglect going to church, it will affect our spiritual life!

We need that cleansing of the Word of God in our lives or we will manifest the works of the flesh in our life instead of the Fruit of the Spirit!

VERSE 8

What we see here is that Joash takes this matter into his own hands since the Levites were dragging their feet and he has a box placed outside the Temple so that the people could give to God for this restoration project.

We are told of this in II Kings 12:9, **“Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the Lord; and the priests who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the Lord.”**

Now I thought God owns everything, can't He just provide the funds that are needed for the repairing of the Temple?

Of course He can, as David Guzik comments on this. He wrote, *“It is possible for God to cause the money and materials to just appear by a miracle. Yet He chooses to almost always fund His work through the willing gifts of His people. He works this way because we need to be a giving people.”*

How true that is.

Here we see Joash put Jehoiada in charge and regarding the location of this chest, Dilday wrote, *“Then he placed a collection chest in a strategic location on the right side of the altar, giving the repair project a high priority and a corresponding high visibility.”*

Joash had his priority right; the Lord was first and foremost in his life, at least at this time when Jehoiada was inspiring him to do the things of God!

VERSE 9

Now we are told that this money that they collected was what Moses collected during their time in the wilderness.

What collection did Moses impose on the children of Israel in the wilderness?

First of all, in II Kings 12:4-5 we are told exactly what the children of Israel were giving for this repair of the Temple.

This is what we are told, **“And Jehoash said to the priests, ‘All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the Lord - each man’s census money, each man’s assessment money - and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the Lord, let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found.’”**

Thus, let’s look at what Moses set forth in regard to these taxes.

In Exodus 30:14-15 we see that a half-shekel was to be given by every male who was 20 years old and up every year. This money was then used for the upkeep of the Tabernacle, and now it was to be used in the upkeep of the Temple. This was the census money.

Also, there was the money that was received from personal vows, anywhere from three to fifty shekels. (Leviticus 27:1-8 and Numbers 18:15-16). This was the assessment money or substitutionary redemption payments.

And then there was the money that was brought voluntarily to the Temple, the people could freely give to the work of God above what was required of them.

This seems to be speaking of the Temple tax that was a half-shekel plus what they freely wanted to give to the Lord.

How did this work?

Let’s read on and see.

VERSE 10

Now I think I can safely say that most if not all of us dread those phone calls in which people beg you for money for some cause, and their ministry is always in trouble.

But here we see that there is no pressure to give, no guilt trips on the people that if they don't give the work of God will stop.

What we see here is all the people wanting to give to the Lord. They rejoiced in it. No one made them feel guilty; no one said the work of God was going to stop. They gave out of a joyful heart.

And to get things into proper perspective, God owns everything anyway. All He is asking us to do is freely give back to Him that which He has given to us for the work of the kingdom.

If your heart gives just to get in return, you know, your hundred-fold return or whatever, keep your money, God doesn't need it. Give because you want to give, and the reality is, we are blessed when we give, not always physically or monetarily, but definitely spiritually.

Let me share this true story with you. We are told,

Years ago an impoverished woman from Paris put 27 francs in a collection plate for the church's missionaries.

The pastor knew the woman was blind, so he told her, ***“Madame, you cannot afford to give this money.”***

She insisted she could.

After being questioned by the pastor she finally explained, ***“I asked a friend how much she spent each year for oil to light the lamps in her house so her family could see at night. She told me 27 francs. Since I'm blind and don't need a lamp, I figure this is money that I can give to spread the light of God into a dark world.”***

How's that for a noble attitude? She saw giving to God as an ***opportunity*** rather an ***obligation***. This is the attitude that helped Joash refurbish the Temple.

- Sandy Adams, II Chronicles 24

I like that. In fact, that is what Paul says we, as New Testament believers are to do, give out of a joyful, a hilarious heart because it is good to give back to the Lord that which He has given to us in the first place.

Paul put it this way in II Corinthians 9:6-7, **“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”**

The Amplified Bible puts these verses like this, **“[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [that blessings may come to someone] will also reap generously and with blessings. Let each one [give] as he has made up his own mind and purposed in his heart, not reluctantly or sorrowfully or under compulsion, for God loves (He takes pleasure in, prizes above other things, and is unwilling to abandon or to do without) a cheerful (joyous, “prompt to do it”) giver [whose heart is in his giving]. [Prov 22:9.]”**

You see, we are not to give **“grudgingly”** or reluctantly. God does not want us to give complaining as we do.

We are not to give **“of necessity”** or **“compulsion.”** Again, Paul is saying that we are not to allow ourselves to be manipulated to give.

You see, Paul tells us, **“God loves a cheerful giver.”**

The Greek word that Paul uses for **“cheerful”** is *HILAROS*, and it is used only here in the New Testament, and it is where we get our English word *“hilarious”* from.

How much do you give?

As much as you want!

You see, God wants your giving to be with joy; cheerful, hilarious as you rejoice in what God is going to do as you give to Him!

It is as Morgan tells us, ***“It must be hilarious giving, giving out of the heart, because you love to give, not because you are bound to give.”***

Now some feel that we need to give a tithe or 10%, just as it says in the Old Testament!

But, if you want to follow the Old Testament tithe, it was about 23%, not just 10%.

Here’s the thing. You can give 10%, 20%, 30%, even 50% if you want, it is not the amount you give, but it is that you give as you purpose in your heart and cheerfully give but also remember, what you sow is what you will reap, that is the principle!

And folks, we need to remember that our giving goes far beyond money. It speaks of our time, our talents, and our gifts.

And here with the people in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, they gave joyfully to the Lord and so should we!

VERSES 11-14

When God works on the hearts of the people, there is such an abundance of giving, not only of money, but of time, investment in the lives of others, and so on. We see here that the people gave so much to the work of God that this box had to be emptied daily.

And notice that the work of God was done not by one or two people, but as all the people came to gather. What a great lesson for us. That we work together with our brothers and sisters in the Lord for the work of the Lord, for the building up of His kingdom!

Notice what took place here.

First, we see that the worship was restored and then service unto the Lord began. We can't do anything apart from Him and yet many times we try.

Here's the thing. If your heart is not filled with the worship of God, then your service is empty. We will see that come to life when we look at the next King, Amaziah, in chapter 25.

He was doing the work, but his heart was far from the Lord. It was empty, there was the motion without the emotion or devotion, and God will not honor that.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is showing us that it was Jehoiada who influenced Joash in his service to God. He kept him moving in the right direction, on the right track.

But as we will see shortly, that is all going to change.

VERSES 15-16

Now we come to the end of the life of this priest named Jehoiada.

And please understand that he did not die because of some illness, but because he was full of days. He completed the work he was called to do, and God was gracious in allowing him to live for 130 years, for he was a positive influence in the life of Joash and because of that the nation was blessed by God.

In fact, God was very merciful towards King Joash and the Southern Kingdom of Judah and as we will see, once this man is gone, things turned downward for Joash and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

We also see that the people respected him. Look at the way he was buried, and you will see a sharp contrast to that of Joash, who was not buried in the tombs of the Kings!

In II Chronicles 21:20 we see that with Jehoram. When Jehoram died no one cared and they had such a lack of respect for this King, that they did not even bury him in the tombs of the Kings, there was no great burning of incense for him.

Because of his evil influence, the people were glad he was dead. But Jehoiada, the high priest and not a King, was buried with the Kings because the people loved him for bringing spiritual reform to the nation, by putting God back on the throne.

It was a sad day when this man died.

Of this Spurgeon wrote, ***“See the influence of one man. One man can sway a state. One man can check sin. One man can be the head of a host who shall serve God, and honor his name.”***

May we have that kind of influence upon people’s lives because of our love for the Lord!

VERSES 17-19

This just tells me that Joash was a weak man and was easily influenced by those around him and that is not always a good thing. Instead of being influenced by God and His Word, worldly men influenced him.

Who is influencing you?

Now, look at how quickly Joash changed after the death of Jehoiada. He loved the honor of men and was molded by their influence. In a sense Joash was like a spiritual chameleon, changing his behavior to fit those that were around him.

This just tells me that Joash never really had a heart for the Lord, he was just influenced by those around him as I have said, and in the end his true colors came out, and as we will see, they are not pretty.

He was more like a thermometer, measuring the temperature around him and then he just being conformed to it.

May we not be a thermometer but a thermostat and regulate or set the temperature as we go out into this world!

Peter picks up on this idea of people looking good outwardly, but in the end their true heart is revealed.

He said in II Peter 2:22, **“But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: ‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”**

What is he speaking about?

He is saying that you can wash a pig up all you want, but in the end, it will return to the mud because it is a pig and pigs love mud.

The same is true of the lost, you can clean them up outwardly, but in the end, they will return to their evil ways for they are sinners.

Only Jesus can give you a new heart and change you into a new creation.

Paul put it like this in II Corinthians 5:17, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

For Joash, it was not a true relationship with God, it was only a show for those that were around him, and in the end, he returned to his evil ways. He was influenced by those around him but never developed a true relationship with the Lord himself it seems.

Let me share with you a few remarks by some great teachers regarding what is going on here.

Trapp tells us, *“In most fawning and flattering manner did these court parasites present themselves before him . . . persuading him that during the days of Jehoiada he had been a king without a kingdom, a lord without a dominion, a subject to his subjects.”*

What a lesson for us to learn, not to be lead away by others but to imitate Christ, follow Him and those who are following after Him!

We are not to be influenced by those who have a form of righteousness but deny its power!

Spurgeon said, *“All that Joash had done was to give his heart to Jehoiada, not to Jehovah. It is very easy to be outwardly religious by giving your heart to your mother, or your father, or your aunt, or your uncle, or some good person who helps you to do what is right. You are doing all this out of love to them, which is at best but a very secondary motive. God says, ‘My son, give me thine heart.’”*

Again, it is not someone else’s faith that you live off of, but your own faith!

Now here is the great thing about our God. God’s desire is not to bring judgment and destroy Joash and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but to see their King and the nation turn from their evil ways and live.

How will He do this.

He will send prophets to warn him, but Joash refuses to heed their warnings. Joash refused to listen to these prophets and as the leader did, so do the people, they refused to listen to what God was saying to them, warning them through these prophets.

Notice what Joash does when he doesn’t like what God is saying to him through this prophet and who this prophet is!

VERSES 20-22

God sends Joash another prophet, the son of Jehoiada. And think about this for a minute. Zechariah must have been like a brother to Joash; they grew up together. And now this brother is coming to warn Joash of his ways, to call him back to the Lord as he tells him, **“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.”**

It is a wakeup call to Joash, and he can heed the warning and turn back to the Lord, or he can ignore the warning and face the judgment of God!

Instead of listening to what Zechariah had to say, Joash orders Zechariah to be put to death and this will be carried out at the very place that Jehoiada anointed Joash to be King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

How quickly he forgot the love that was shown him by Jehoiada, as he executes the son of Jehoiada for speaking the truths of God. And as he died, Zechariah called for God to repay the wickedness of Joash and as we will see in a minute, He did.

VERSES 23-24

God brings judgment by the hands of the Syrians, who only had a small company of men compared to Judah, and yet they were victorious.

And look at these wicked leaders who lead Joash away from the Lord, they were now destroyed and their spoil was plundered. And this was the result of turning away from the Lord and not listening to the prophets of God who warned them to get right with God.

You see, God promised to bless His people if they followed after Him and their success would far outweigh their numbers – Leviticus 26:8.

But, if they turned from the Lord then they would suffer a disproportionate defeat as we see here with the Syrians – Leviticus 26:17, 37.

VERSES 25-27

Joash is wounded in this battle, and he is then assassinated by his own servants because he killed the son of Jehoiada.

And just like the other evil Kings, no fanfare was given in his death; he was not even buried with the other Kings.

Remember what we read of Jehoiada at the end of his life, the High Priest. We are told in II Chronicles 24:15-16, “**But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died. 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.**”

And yet this King, Joash, was not buried in the tombs of the Kings!

Now, in his death, Amaziah, his son is now King over the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Let me close this chapter out with these remarks from Morgan, who wrote, “*The study of the story of Joash offers a striking illustration of how a weak man is easily influenced. It emphasizes the need of strong individual character, which can only be created by direct dealing with God.*”

And he said, “*However valuable the influence of a good man may be, it remains true that if a man have nothing more to lean on than that, if it should fail, collapse is almost inevitable. All foundations fail, save one.*”

Let us be strong in the Lord and depend upon Him instead of others, because, in the end, you will only have yourself to blame for what you have done!

II CHRONICLES 25

VERSES 1-2

This verse sheds some light on a works theology. You can do good things, help all kinds of people, and yet if your heart is not right before God, it is meaningless.

You can even serve God but if your heart is far from Him, if you don't have a relationship with Him, then all the work you do is meaningless.

Amaziah did good things, but his heart was far from the Lord.

Morgan said this regarding Amaziah, *“The root idea of the Hebrew word translated ‘perfect’ [loyal in the NKJV] 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.”*

Yes, it was far better for Amaziah to do good rather than evil, the people benefited from that. But he was still lost; his heart was far from the Lord. And that my friend is a sobering thought!

He had all the **MOTION** but there was no real **EMOTION** or **DEVOTION** to the Lord!

He was all show - and lacked substance. God is interested in our hearts and out of that relationship our service will flow.

May we have an undivided heart!

VERSES 3-4

The pagan Kings, if they uncovered an assassination plot against them, they would not only put to death the person responsible for this plot, but also their families and sometimes even their friends.

They showed no mercy!

Amaziah executed only those who murdered his father, just as God had said in Deuteronomy 24:16. Each person was responsible for their own sin!

And understand, that by leaving family members still living, they could conspire against the King and kill him, but Amaziah did what was right, giving it to the Lord!

VERSES 5-8

We will see that Judah is coming against the Edomites and they only have 300,000 men.

So Amaziah hires another 100,000 mercenaries from Israel to assist him in this battle.

But a prophet of God warns him not to receive help from Israel for God is not with them.

If he uses Israel to help him, they will be defeated. But if they don't rely on Israel for help, even though they will not have as many soldiers, God will give them the victory.

There are many well intentioned Christians and Christian organizations that are trying to fight against the ungodliness of this nation by working with the unsaved.

And we have seen what happens when Kings partner with unbelievers, it is a disaster. We saw it with Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, they all allied with Israel. They became unequally yoked with unbelievers!

So what will Amaziah do with this warning from God?

Let's read on and see.

VERSE 9

Did you notice the concern of Amaziah here?

It is the money he is going to lose if he lets these men go.

Amaziah wants God's help, but he also wants the money. And God is telling Amaziah not to worry about the money, God is not broke.

We too need to trust the Word of God, the promises of God to us. It truly is a walk of faith and God can give to us great victories.

But many times we trust in the strength of man instead of standing strong in the Lord and the power of His might!

Let me share with you just a few verses showing who we are to trust and who we are not to trust.

In Jeremiah 17:5, 7 we are told, **"Thus says the Lord: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the Lord . . . Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, And whose hope is the Lord.'"**

In Psalm 118:8-9 we are told, **"It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord Than to put confidence in princes."**

In Psalm 146:3 we are told, **"Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help."**

I think that is very clear. We are to put our trust in the Lord and walk by faith and not by sight!

Meyer wrote this regarding this situation that Amaziah was in, ***“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.”***

May we not lose sight of this truth! Don’t join forces with the enemy and don’t worry about what resources you do have, God will supply all your needs, He can do that!

One writer summed it up like this. He wrote,

Here’s a hindrance to obeying God we often face. What about my investment?

“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 course. If I take a stand now, the teacher might get upset, and it jeopardize my grade.”

Hey, listen to 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 investment, but God is faithful to reimburse your loss.

- Sandy Adams, II Chronicles 25

How true that is. God will take care of His part; we are to obey and take care of our part!

VERSES 10-13

Now why in the world were these mercenaries from Israel so angry?

Yes, they were dismissed from the battle, but they should have rejoiced, they still got paid for doing nothing.

So why were they so mad?

You see, if you were victorious in battle, you would take home with you much spoil from the victory as you plundered the troops and the cities. You not only got paid, but way beyond that were the spoils of this victory!

Thus, they had lost lots of money by being dismissed and they were not happy about it, and they will try to get even with Amaziah and I think they do.

You see, on their way home to Israel, these mercenaries attack some of the cities and villages in Judah, getting back some of the spoil that they would have gained if they were able to fight against the Edomites.

And in obtaining all this spoil, they killed 3,000 people.

What we learn here is that there are consequences to the evil or ungodly alliances that we make and sometimes they are even deadly.

May we learn the lesson.

Now we see that even without these mercenaries from Israel God gives Amaziah and the children of Judah a great victory over the Edomites.

They kill 10,000 around the area of the Valley of Salt, which is down by the Dead Sea, and another 10,000 are taken captive and then thrown off some of the many high hills in that area, to their death.

In this victory you would think that Amaziah's faith has got to grow. You would think that his relationship with God has to be strengthened by this victory.

Not so as we shall see.

VERSES 14-16

As you read this of Amaziah you wonder how he could have turned away from the Lord after this great victory over the Edomites. It truly is amazing and yet how many people do the very thing today.

For Judah, they were outnumbered and yet God has just given him this great victory over the Edomites, with less troops!

And, on the heels of this victory you would think Amaziah would gather the people together to worship the Lord but, instead of doing that he gathers the gods of the people he has just defeated, and brings them home with him.

In doing this, he is now worshipping these gods. And you think, ***“Why in the world would he do something as stupid as that? God gave him this victory and the gods of the Edomites lost because their gods are dead and lifeless, they are not real! So how can he do that?”***

It is really quite simple and we see it done all the time today. When your back is up against the wall and you have no other place to turn, you turn to the true and living God for help.

But after the trouble is over you turn back to the gods of this world, the gods of the flesh. They appeal to you, even though you know they can't help you just as they could not help the Edomites, but they can satisfy your flesh.

Amaziah does just that, he went to the gods of this world, the gods of the Edomites, for he no longer needed the true and living God. Well, he may have thought that way, but the reality is, he needed God more than ever in his life, and so do we!

Once again we see that our God is so gracious, even when Amaziah turned his back on the Lord, He sends him a prophet to warn him of his destructive ways.

And I love what this prophet has to say. He tells him, and I am paraphrasing, ***“Why in the world did you turn to the gods of the Edomites - they lost the battle!”***

How foolish we are at times. But as Amaziah, we too refuse to listen to what God has to say, and we become angry at His representatives and come against them.

The more you harden yourself to God, the farther you will be moving from Him until you finally reach a point of no return. Amaziah had reached that point.

VERSE 17

As you read this you may wonder why he wanted to attack the Northern Kingdom of Israel, especially after he sought their help in this battle in the first place.

The reason is simple. He found out that those mercenaries that he let go, the ones he did not use in battle, attacked his people, killing some of them and taking the spoil from these battles.

And thus, on the heels of this great victory against the Edomites, this battle against Israel should not be a problem, or so he thought!

It is amazing how we can get such a big head, thinking nothing can stop us, and, in the end, we find out we can't win apart from God.

We need to learn that lesson before we make a foolish mistake like Amaziah made!

VERSES 18-19

Here we see Joash, the King in the Northern Kingdom of Israel tell him, ***“Look, you may have had victory against the Edomites, but you are still nothing in my eyes son. You are not even in the same league as me! You are a thistle and I am a cedar tree! Go home boy, you bother me!”***

That was my paraphrase of course.

And the King James Version makes it very clear when it says, ***“Why shouldest thou meddle to thine hurt.”***

To put this in our own vernacular, ***“Don’t go looking for trouble because you will find it!”***

Or ***“If you play with fire, you will get burned!”***

One writer gives us this insight with this illustration given by Joash to Amaziah, ***“The thistle, imagining himself to be equal with the cedar, presumptuously suggested a marriage alliance between them. The difference between the two was made obvious when a wild beast passed through and crushed the thistle underfoot. Of course the beast was powerless to injure the cedar.”*** (Dilday)

VERSES 20-22

Here we see that Judah was defeated because of its sin and the reality is, we too are defeated when we play with sin, when we meddle in places we should stay away from.

And like Amaziah, we are warned.

May we listen and obey what the Lord is saying and not follow in the foolish footsteps of Amaziah who refused to listen to God!

VERSES 23-24

Not only was the house of God plundered, but so too was the Kings house, and many were taken away captive as slaves.

We also see that Joash took “**... all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God ...**” II Chronicles 25:24.

Sin too robs us of the preciousness of worship; your worship will decrease the more you sin.

Also, it not only affects your worship of God, but it destroys and robs you of your character.

Sin destroys your witness.

And lastly, you become a slave to sin.

All this came about because Amaziah did not heed the warnings of God. He worshiped the gods of the Edomites instead of the true and living God!

And let me say this. Not only do we find ourselves defeated when we meddle where we don't belong, but sin also has a way of destroying our defenses, just as Israel destroyed 600 feet of the wall of Jerusalem.

And what I mean by that is the more you sin, the harder it becomes to resist it the next time. And the more you give in to sin, the easier it becomes until one day you have become a slave to sin.

You can't meddle just a little and not be affected by it!

VERSES 25-28

We see here that the people are so upset by what Amaziah has done that he flees away to Lachish, and while there, they catch him and murder him.

Again, this all happened as a result of Amaziah not serving God with a whole heart and then not heeding the warnings that God was sending by the prophets.

Of this incident, Clarke wrote, *“He no doubt became very unpopular after having lost the battle with the Israelites; the consequence of which was the dismantling of Jerusalem, and the seizure of the royal treasures, with several other evils. It is likely that the last fifteen years of his reign were greatly embittered: so that, finding the royal city to be no place of safety, he endeavored to secure himself at Lachish; but all in vain, for thither his murderers pursued him; and he who forsook the Lord was forsaken by every friend, perished in his gainsaying, and came to an untimely end.”*

Let me close this evening with this because this is a good lesson for all of us to learn and apply to our lives.

It is this simple, *“This book, the Bible, will keep you from sin. And sin will keep you from this book!”*

May we read it, learn from it and then apply it to our lives, the Word of God!

May we serve the Lord faithfully and not just with motion, but emotion and devotion, out of love for Him!