

## THE DECLENSION AND DEATH OF KING AMAZIAH

### **TEXT: II CHRONICLES 25:1-28**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. Anyone who has attended Bible college will tell you that not everyone who starts out well finishes well. Some students drop out or are kicked out during their freshman year.
2. Not every person who makes a profession of faith and gets baptized stays the course. Some go back to the world.
3. I have known preachers who started out with great promise, only to get entangled in sin and leave the ministry. C.H. Spurgeon said, "Now, a life may begin well, and yet may be clouded before its close. The verdure of earnestness may fade into the sere and yellow leaf of backsliding. We may have the grace of God in our earliest days, but unless we have, day by day, fresh help from on high, dead flies may pollute the ointment and spoil the sweet odor of our lives. We shall need to watch against temptation so long as we are in this wilderness of sin. Only in Heaven are we out of gunshot of the devil."
4. King Amaziah was a man who seemed to start off well, but he ended very badly. The key to his failure is found in II Chronicles 25:2b.
5. King Amaziah was the son and successor of King Joash (II Chron. 24:27; 25:1).
6. He began his reign by executing the men who had murdered his father (25:3, 4).

#### **I. KING AMAZIAH SEEMED TO START OUT RIGHT.**

1. Like many people, King Amaziah seemed to start out well but he did not finish well (cf. 25:26-28).
2. There are many people like that. Demas was a co-laborer of the apostle Paul. He started out well, but we read in II Timothy 4:10, "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."
3. In I Kings 13 we read about two prophets, both unnamed. One of them died a terrible death because he disobeyed God.
4. There are many kings in the Bible who started out well, but finished badly. The first ten years of King Asa's reign were peaceful and prosperous (II Chron. 14:1, 2, 6). This is because at that time, King Asa walked with God.
5. But when King Asa got older, he got cold, and he got careless. He lost the presence of God. It is not hard to do.

6. And so the LORD sent Hanani the seer to warn King Asa, and Hanani said to him, "Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand" (II Chron. 16:7).
7. If King Asa would have humbly accepted the prophet Hanani's rebuke, God could have easily turned things around. But unfortunately King Asa refused to repent, and he responded angrily to the prophet's rebuke (II Chron. 16:10).
8. King Asa put Hanani in prison. Others (probably those who defended the prophet Hanani) were also oppressed (II Chron. 16:10). The king who had a perfect heart for God now had a hard heart.
9. And King Asa would not repent so God afflicted him in his feet, and King Asa died the death of a backslider (II Chron. 16:12-14).
10. Sadly, there are many other examples in the Bible. For example, King Amaziah's son, King Uzziah, started out well, but God turned him into a leper because his heart was lifted up to his destruction, and he transgressed against the LORD.
11. First Corinthians 10:11 says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition..."
12. Second Chronicles 25:2 says, King Amaziah "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart." In other words, he did not serve the LORD wholeheartedly.
13. Proverbs 3:5 and 6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."
14. James 1:18 says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways."
15. King Amaziah became unstable. Unstable leaders are dangerous.
16. Things would have turned out much differently had King Amaziah served the LORD wholeheartedly. Perhaps there are some here today with a divided heart.
17. Our Lord said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:27).
18. Second Chronicles 16:9 says, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

## **II. KING AMAZIAH'S LACK OF FAITH (26:6)**

1. A divided heart indicates a lack of faith.

2. King Amaziah's lack of faith in God was revealed in the way he hired 100,000 soldiers from the northern kingdom of Israel (II Chron. 25:6).
3. The Bible teaches repeatedly that the LORD is with us to help us, and to fight our battles for us. We do not need to go to the world for help.
4. When the king of Assyria threatened Jerusalem, King Hezekiah encouraged the people and said, "With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (II Chron. 32:8).

5. The hymnwriter wrote:

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone;*

*The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own.*

*Put on the Gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer;*

*Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there.*

6. The man who wrote that great hymn was a pastor by the name of George Duffield, Jr. The hymn was written during the great revival of 1858, and it was based upon the dying words of Pastor Dudley Tyng, one of the most active preachers in that revival.
7. It is said that when Pastor Tyng preached on March 30, 1858, at a noonday prayer meeting in Philadelphia, five thousand men listened to his sermon from the text, "Go now, ye that are men, and serve the Lord," and that before the close of the meeting over a thousand men responded to the invitation for salvation.
8. A few days later, Pastor Tyng left his study for a minute and went out to his barn, where a mule was working, harnessed to a machine, shelling corn.
9. When he patted the mule on the head, his loose sleeve got caught in the cogs of the wheel and his arm was badly mangled.
10. He died within a few hours, and as he was dying, his father asked him if he had any message for his fellow ministers in the revival. He replied, "Let us all stand up for Jesus."
11. That message was delivered to them along with the sad news of his death.
12. The following Sunday, Pastor George Duffield, Jr., preached a memorial sermon in tribute to his good friend, Pastor Tyng, taking as his text Ephesians 6:14 -- "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness."
13. And he wrote this great hymn, "Stand Up For Jesus," based upon Tyng's dying words, as a fitting climax to his sermon.

14. The words were originally written simply as the concluding exhortation to his sermon, but the Sunday School superintendent had a fly-leaf printed for the children in Sunday School.
15. A stray copy found its way into a Baptist newspaper, and from that newspaper it has gone out all over the world.
16. *Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own.*
17. But King Amaziah was not trusting in God's strength. He was trusting the arm of flesh. He was wrong to recruit mercenaries from Israel.
18. So God sent a prophet to rebuke the king, and to his credit, King Amaziah sent the soldiers back to Israel (25:6-9).
19. There is a principle here in verse 9. Sometimes obeying God involves a great financial loss. But, "The LORD is able to give thee much more than this" (25:9b).
20. Christians often face a choice: work on the Lord's Day and make more money, or refuse to work on the Lord's Day, and make less money.
21. "The LORD is able to give thee much more than this" (25:9b).
22. Some Christians say, "If I give my ten percent tithe, plus extra for missions, I will have a difficult time paying my bills.
23. "The LORD is able to give thee much more than this" (25:9b).
24. The great German reformer Martin Luther said, "People go through three conversions: their head, their heart, and their pocketbook. Unfortunately, not all at the same time."
25. Someone said, "There are two things that can ruin a church—loose living and tight giving."
26. John Wesley said, "Gain all you can, save all you can, and give away all you can." A preacher once used this as his three-point outline. One of the members walked up to him after the service and said, "I loved your first point and your second point, but you ruined it for me on your last point!" Cf. II Chronicles 25:9b!
27. Another problem with King Amaziah's decision to hire soldiers from Israel was it caused bitter resentment (II Chron. 25:10).
28. When we do wrong, we can repent and we can try and make things right, but often there are serious consequences. In this case, these angry Israelite mercenaries plundered "the cities of Judah from Samaria even unto Bethhoron, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil" (25:13).

29. King Amaziah was not trusting in the LORD when he hired these soldiers, and now he was suffering the consequences. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).
30. There are consequences for sins that a Christian commits. There are consequences in this present life, like we see in II Chronicles 25:10 and 13.
31. God forgives us when we sin, but there are consequences for sin. For example, the Bible says, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (II Cor. 6:14).
32. But some Christians disobey this clear command and marry an unbeliever. Then after the wedding they repent, but the damage is done and they suffer the consequences as their unsaved mate lives for the things of this world and turns his back on God.
33. King David got forgiveness for his sin of adultery with Bathsheba, but his heart was broken as he watched his young son die. And soon his family was torn apart and ruined.
34. There are consequences to sin. Many years ago I heard an illustration, that has stuck with me every since. A young boy was misbehaving, and to teach him a lesson, his father told him to drive a nail in the barn door every time he did something bad.
35. The father gave his son a box of nails and a hammer. The boy continued to get into trouble, and each time he sinned he drove a nail in the barn door.
36. Soon he came to his father and said, "Dad, I am all out of nails. Now what do I do?" He told his father he was truly sorry for being a bad boy, and his father forgave him.
37. Next his father told him to go and pull out all the nails because he was forgiven.
38. The son pulled them all out, and came to his father and said, "Dad, I have pulled all the nails, but now there are holes all over the barn door, and it looks ugly!"
39. Yes, the scars of sin are ugly. Over time, God's grace covers many skin scars, but some are carried throughout life.

### **III. KING AMAZIAH TURNED AWAY FROM FOLLOWING THE LORD (25:14-16, 27)**

1. The LORD gave King Amaziah and his army a great victory over the Edomites, but rather than thanking God, King Amaziah foolishly took the idols of Edom back to Jerusalem with him (25:14-16; cf. Psalm 115).
2. Exodus 20:4 and 5 says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."
3. God delivered King Amaziah and his army, but King Amaziah took the idols of his defeated enemy and "bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them" (II Chron. 25:14).
4. Burning incense to idols is demonic. First Corinthians 10:20 says when heathens offer up a sacrifice to an idol, they are worshipping devils, and not God.
5. These false gods could not help the Edomites. How foolish to think they would now help Judah!
6. When the LORD sent a prophet to rebuke King Amaziah, the king refused to repent. Instead of humbling himself he threatened the prophet, and said, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Forbear (stop)" (II Chron. 25:16).
7. Then King Amaziah threatened to smite him (25:16). The Hebrew word translated "smitten" literally means, "to beat, slay, kill."
8. The prophet gave the backslidden king one final warning (25:16b).
9. The prophet made it clear that King Amaziah had reached the point of no return -- "God hath determined to destroy thee..." (25:16).
10. But it wasn't his last warning from God. "But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God..." (25:20). An unsaved king, King Joash, rebuked the proud King Amaziah but he still would not listen (25:18, 19).
11. It is a sad situation when an unsaved man has to rebuke and correct a believer, but this does happen some times.
12. Pride led to the downfall of King Amaziah. The Bible says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).
13. After he defeated the Edomites, King Amaziah saw himself as a giant tree, but in reality he was only a little thistle that would soon be crushed (II Chron. 25:17-19).
14. He was badly defeated by the Israelites, taken as a prisoner by King Joash, and eventually assassinated (25:22-28).

## **CONCLUSION:**

1. We see in the sad story of King Amaziah a vivid Old Testament illustration of "the sin unto death," referred to by the apostle John in I John 5:16.
2. David almost committed this sin but he repented, and so the prophet Nathan told him, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (II Samuel 12:13).
3. But proud and stubborn King Amaziah would not repent, and so the prophet told him, "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel" (II Chron. 25:16).
4. I have seen several people commit this sin unto death. Do not end up like King Amaziah!
5. Spurgeon said, "He who has committed the sin which is unto death...will never repent...he will continue hardened and unbelieving...he has crossed over into that dark region of despair where hope and mercy never come."