

AMAZIAH & UZZIAH: DANGERS OF PRIDE

Saturday, September 30

Reading: 2 Chronicles 25-26

2 Chronicles 26:5 *[Uzziah] sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.*

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). The truth of these words is seen in the lives of King Amaziah and his son Uzziah. Amaziah began his reign well. He followed the law of Moses and obeyed the command of God’s prophet even when it cost him in money and damage to his kingdom. But the author of Chronicles is clear that “he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not whole-heartedly” (25:2). Literally this statement reads “not with a perfect heart.” There was trouble brewing inside the king that would eventually destroy him.

After God gave him a great military victory over Edom, Amaziah brought back their gods and began to worship them. This was foolishness as these false idols had not been able to save the people of Edom who worshipped them. God sends a prophet to warn him against this idolatry and stupidity, but the king refuses to listen. Instead, he plans a war against the northern kingdom of Israel. His pride over the former victory had spurred him to another foolish action. He is soundly defeated, Jerusalem is looted, and later Amaziah will be assassinated by his own men.

His son Uzziah did learn from some of his father’s mistakes. He did not turn to idol worship and God blessed him with victory over his enemies. His fame and power became known throughout the region. But his power went to his head.

Uzziah sinned by trying to offer incense in the temple. He believed he could perform the duties that only the priests were allowed to do. When confronted by the priests he flies into a rage and threatened them. God strikes the king with leprosy and he remained in isolation until the day he died.

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. It is always dangerous to have close fellowship with unbelievers. While Amaziah did obey God and dismissed the soldiers from rebellious Israel there were consequences for his allowing them to join in the first place, both for himself (loss of the money used to pay them) and his people (destruction and looting by the angered soldiers from Israel). While we are not to isolate ourselves from unbelievers (how can we reach them for Christ if we do!), we should not make them our closest friends and comrades. Who are your closest friends? Do they love and seek to honor God as you do?
2. Both Amaziah and Uzziah started well. For a majority of their reigns they sought the Lord and God gave them success (26:5). But their lives would be remembered for their failing at the end. It is important that believers remain faithful and end well. At the end of his life the Apostle Paul could say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). May it be our goal to live faithfully for God and finish with our testimony unmarred.
3. The root word for pride means ‘to be high.’ Jesus warned that “those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Matthew 23:12). “Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up” (James 4:10).