

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 8B
THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS
CHAPTER 14**

INTRODUCTION

In chapter 14, the divine writer focused more on the reign of Amaziah who succeeded his father, Joash as the King of Judah and ended with the ascension of Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, to the throne of Israel. The reign of Amaziah was one of conflicts. He began by killing those who killed his father. He did not kill the children of the killers of his father which was according to God's Word. His life was that of one confrontation after another.

In life, there will be confrontations especially when one is serving the LORD and contending for the faith faithfully. This is part of being an obedient Christian. That is why the Christian must not flee from conflict for the cause of Christ. But the Christian is also not to look for conflict when conflicts are not there. That would be presumptuous and sinful. He is to be at peace with all men as best as he could. Hebrews 12:14, "*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*"

From the life of Amaziah, we learn that there are grave

consequences for those who cause trouble and who are belligerent.

OUTLINE

1. Amaziah Reigned over Judah (vv.1-4);
2. Amaziah's Deeds as King (vv.5-14);
3. Summary of the End of Jehoash & Amaziah (vv.15-22);
4. Jeroboam II Reigned in Israel (vv.23-29).

COMMENTARY

**Amaziah Reigned over Judah
– 14:1-4**

In chapter 14, the divine writer concentrated on Judah, the Southern Kingdom. In the second year of the reign of Jehoash, King of Israel (796B.C.), Amaziah, the son of King Joash of Judah began his reign. He was twenty-five years old when he became King of Judah. He ruled Judah for 29 years in Jerusalem. He was commended for doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD. Yet his heart was not perfect like that of David, his forefather. He allowed the high places in Judah to be used by the people as places of making sacrifices and burning incense to the LORD. What he should have done was to remove all these areas and thus made the Temple in Jerusalem as the only place of worship to the LORD.

Such was the partial obedience of Amaziah. He did what was right in God's eyes only perhaps when

convenient for him or politically expedient. For whatever reason, his was not complete obedience to God; this is the common phenomenon of today's Christians. It is as if our comparison is with one another. As long as we are not too bad a Christian compared to our neighbour, we let our life of partial obedience continue.

Amaziah's Deeds as King

– 14:5-14

When Amaziah ascended the throne, the country was not politically stable. The phrase, "as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand", (14:4) suggests the presence of this condition. His father was assassinated by two of his very own servants. Amaziah survived this period before he had a firm control of the country. When there was political stability and he had control of the government, he proceeded to execute Jozachar and Jehozabad, the two assassins of his father. But he did not slay the children of these two assassins, which was the common practice of the kings in order to prevent any member of the families to take revenge. Amaziah respected the Law of Moses that the children should not be penalised for the sins of their fathers (Deuteronomy 24:26).¹ In this respect, Amaziah did the right thing and hence the comment that he did what was right in God's eyes.

¹ Deuteronomy 24:16 The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

Amaziah then built up his military strength (cf. 2 Chron. 25). He recruited 300,000 soldiers. He also hired 100,000 mercenaries from Israel and paid them a sum of 100 talents of silver. A man of God whose identity is not revealed advised him not to engage the soldiers of Israel. Amaziah told the man of God that he had paid the hundred talents of silver to the mercenary soldiers. The man of God replied that the LORD could compensate him much more than that. On this note, Amaziah instructed that the army "that was come to him out of Ephraim (another name for Samaria or Israel) return to their land. This action enraged the Israelite soldiers and they returned home with great indignation. On their return journey, they were so angry that they raided and looted the cities along the way and killed 3,000 people (14:10; 2 Chronicles 25:1). Amaziah failed to consult the LORD first before employing the mercenary soldiers. Such sufferings of innocent people would have been avoided.

Amaziah then went to war against Edomites (or Seir) who had revolted and freed themselves from the bondage of Judah during the reign of Jehoram (2 Kings 8:20-22). The battle was fought at "the valley of salt" which was at the south of the Dead Sea. The Judeans managed to take Selah meaning "the rock" which is probably Petra, which is also called "joktheel" (meaning "the blessed of God"), the Edomite capital. In that battle, he slew 10,000 Edomites. He took another 10,000 and forced them to jump to their death from the cliffs of Petra.

But he did one thing that was awfully wrong. He took back to Judah the idols of the Edomites and set them up as his gods. He bowed to these gods and even burnt incense to them. In other words, he worshipped these gods. This incurred the wrath of the LORD who sent a prophet to him. Amaziah was asked to explain why he had sought the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people from his hand? How foolish was Amaziah. The LORD spoke through His prophet that He would destroy Amaziah for not paying heed to His Word (2 Chronicles 25:14-16).

After his resounding victory over Edom, Amaziah challenged his northern neighbour, Israel, his own kinsmen, to a battle – “Come, let us look one another in the face” (14:8). God’s warning to him through His prophet should have caused him to think again. But he ignored God’s warning completely. Amaziah was now consumed with his pride believing that he was invincible. This was the turning point of his life.

Amaziah sent an emissary to Jehoash King of Israel to challenge him to battle. King Jehoash replied to Amaziah telling him a short parable: The thistle (a thorn bush) that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar (a tall and strong tree), demanding that his daughter (the cedar) be given in marriage to his son (the thistle); then a wild beast which was in the forest of Lebanon came by and trampled the thistle (14:9). The message was clear. Amaziah had smote the Edomites and his heart had lifted his pride. He should

stay at home to enjoy his moment of victory and not to meddle with things that would hurt him and even his country Judah. Amaziah was stubborn. He would not hear of it.

So Jehoash and Amaziah fought their battle at Beth-shemesh about 32 kilometres west of Jerusalem. The Judeans were defeated and the soldiers fled. Jehoash took Amaziah captive and proceeded to Jerusalem. He broke down the gate of Ephraim (today known as the Damascus Gate), which faced Samaria. The damage stretched for about 200 metres. Jehoash also plundered the treasures of the house of the LORD and also of the king’s palace. He also took hostages of men and women and returned to Samaria.

Summary of the End of Jehoash & Amaziah – 14:15-22

Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, King of Israel, died a natural death. He was the second generation of the Jehu line of kings to rule Israel. He was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. His son, Jeroboam II, succeeded him.

Amaziah, the king who became very proud and over confident, the son of Joash, King of Judah continued to live after Jehoash died. He died a violent death. There was a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem. No reason was given for the conspiracy against him. He fled to Lachish, a town in the south belonging to Judah. But his conspirators went after him and they slew him in the town. They brought his body back to Jerusalem where he was buried in the city of David. Then all the

people took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, to succeed his father Amaziah as King of Judah.

It seems that King Azariah was co-regent or ruled Judah together with his father, when the latter was taken prisoner by Jehoash and later released. Azariah did one thing that was commendable. He built Elath and restored it back to Judah. Elath was a celebrated port situated at the extreme end of the eastern side of the Red Sea. It is today known as the Aqaba.

Jeroboam II Reigned in Israel – 14:23-29

King Jeroboam II ruled Israel (793 B.C.) for 41 years, which is a long period (14:23). He was the third generation of Jehu to rule over Israel. God had promised that the descendants of Jehu would rule Israel to the fourth generation.

He began his reign when Amaziah was the King of Judah in his 15th year. He was no better than his father Jehoash and his grandfather, Jehoahaz. The LORD measured the evil of each king by his relationship towards Him. Jeroboam II did evil in the sight of the LORD. He followed the footsteps of his forefathers by not departing from the worship of the calf images. In fact, his very name indicates that he would pattern after Jeroboam I, who was the first one to institute the calf-worship of Jehovah. However, during his reign, he expanded the political and national boundaries of Israel. He restored Israel's influence in neighbouring Syria in the north and recaptured the coastal

towns, which were previously taken by Syria (14:28).²

All this victory despite the fact that Jeroboam II was a bad king was by the LORD'S grace and mercy. The LORD saw the bitter affliction of the Israelites, who were still His people. There was no one who could help them. The LORD had promised that He would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven and He saved them by strengthening the hand of Jeroboam II. So Jeroboam II's successes were the result of the LORD'S mercy and intervention (compare 13:4, 5). Jeroboam II died a natural death after reigning over Israel for forty-one years. He was buried with the kings of Israel in Samaria. His son, Zechariah, acceded to the throne. He was the fourth generation of Jehu. As predicted, he would be the last king in the dynasty of Jehu.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Amaziah started very well indeed. He walked in the ways of the LORD. When the LORD told him to send the mercenary soldiers of Israel back to their country after having paid them, he readily obeyed. And when he grumbled about the money that he had paid to the mercenary soldiers, the

² 2 Kings 10:32 In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; 33 From Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

prophet told him the LORD would compensate him much more in return. Many Christians have been guilty of a similar matter. We rather forfeit our spiritual beliefs, Bible study, God worship services, fellowship gatherings and prayer meetings for some other personal or material pursuits. Did not the man of God's counsel to Amaziah impact us (2 Chronicles 25:8-10)?

There is another lesson from this incident. If God is with you and God is not with the other person, an alliance is not right. This is the same as being unequally yoked with unbelievers. So God takes it seriously. God would not bless if Amaziah had been stubborn and carried on with his idea and decision to use the Israelite soldiers. The good news is that he obeyed God and was blessed. We therefore have to be careful whom we befriend and develop a lasting friendship, with whom we have joint venture in our businesses, whom we marry and other such associations.

Yet another lesson we can learn is that before embarking on any project, let us seek the LORD's will from His Word. If Amaziah had consulted the LORD first before engaging the mercenary soldiers, he would not have employed them, and he would have saved many innocent people and their families from sufferings, pain and destruction. So it is with many of us who have not consulted the LORD first by diligent and prayerful searching of the Word of God for His will and guidance, and they land themselves in many kinds of trouble and hardship.

The next thing all of us need to beware of, is our pride. Amaziah illustrates the kind of pride, which God hates. He became very successful in his exploits. But pride went into his heart and mind when he became successful and powerful. He forgot the LORD who had been with Him to ensure His success. So he was attracted by the beautiful idols of the Edomites and worshipped them. The LORD was angry with him and severely punished him. We too have to guard ourselves against the spirit of pride. God has given us ample warning in His word that He hates pride. Pride always comes before a fall. Pride always comes before destruction. So beware. Be not proud because God loves the humble and the meek. They are the ones who will inherit the earth. AMEN

DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: 2 Kings 14:1-16; Proverbs 11:2; 28:25; 1 Corinthians 8:2.

TUESDAY: 2 Kings 14:17-29; Romans 11:2-12; Titus 3:4-6.

WEDNESDAY: 2 Kings 14:1-29.

THURSDAY: 2 Kings 14:1-29.

FRIDAY: 2 Kings 14:1-29.

Discussion Questions

1. Should Christians be satisfied with partial obedience in their walk with the LORD? If not then why are

Christians not doing something about it? Are you such a Christian?

2. What caused Amaziah to become proud and arrogant?

3. Was it right for Amaziah to kill the Edomites the way he did? The Edomites were God's enemies, weren't they?

4. What possessed Amaziah to take the gods of the Edomites for himself since his own God has defeated the Edomites? Do Christians commit this same sin today?

5. Why did God grant victory to Jeroboam II when he was a bad king?

6. What important lessons are to be learned from the life of Amaziah?
