

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 14

2 KINGS 14:1-4 - AMAZIAH'S REIGN

V. 3 - AMAZIAH DID RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, SIMILAR TO HIS FATHER JOASH (THE BOY KING WHO SERVED GOD AS LONG AS THE GODLY HIGH PRIEST WAS AROUND). HOWEVER, HIS HEART IS NOT AFTER THE PATTERN OF DAVID. 2 CHRONICLES 25 GIVE US MORE ON THIS:

2 CHRONICLES 25:2 - HE DID RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, YET NOT WITH A WHOLE HEART.

2 KINGS 14:5-6 - AMAZIAH'S REVENGE

V. 5-6 - AMAZIAH SEEKS REVENGE AGAINST THOSE MEN WHO CONSPIRED TO KILL HIS FATHER, JOASH. THEIR ASSASSINATION OF THE KING WAS IN RESPONSE TO JOASH'S MURDER OF HIS UNCLE, THE HIGH PRIEST JEHOIADA (WE LEARNED OF THIS IN 2 KINGS 12 AND 2 CHRONICLES 24)

2 CHRONICLES 24:25-27 - WHEN THEY HAD DEPARTED FROM HIM (FOR THEY LEFT HIM VERY SICK), HIS OWN SERVANTS CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD OF THE SON OF JEHOIADA THE PRIEST, AND MURDERED HIM ON HIS BED. SO HE DIED, AND THEY BURIED HIM IN THE CITY OF DAVID, BUT THEY DID NOT BURY HIM IN THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS. 26 NOW THESE ARE THOSE WHO CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM: ZABAD THE SON OF SHIMEATH THE AMMONITISS, AND JEHOZABAD THE SON OF SHIMRITH THE MOABITISS. 27 AS TO HIS SONS AND THE MANY ORACLES AGAINST HIM AND THE REBUILDING OF THE HOUSE OF GOD, BEHOLD, THEY ARE WRITTEN IN THE TREATISE OF THE BOOK OF THE KINGS. THEN AMAZIAH HIS SON BECAME KING IN HIS PLACE.

V. 6 - THIS MAY RAISE A QUESTION IN YOUR MIND ABOUT THE RECENT INCIDENT OF ALL OF AHAB'S SON'S BEING KILLED (BY JEHU) AS A RESULT OF AHAB'S SIN. THE DIFFERENCE HERE IS THAT AMAZIAH IS EXECUTING JUSTICE UPON THOSE MEN INVOLVED IN THE KING'S KILLING. THIS WAS A LEGAL MATTER. THEY HAD COMMITTED MURDER AND WERE BEING BROUGHT TO JUSTICE. IN THAT CASE, THEIR SONS SHOULD NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE. IN THE CASE OF AHAB AND OTHER SUCH RECORDS, THAT WAS DIVINE JUSTICE AS PRONOUNCED BY THE LORD THROUGH ELIJAH. THAT WAS A SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE TO THE EVIL AND IDOLATRY THAT AHAB BROUGHT INTO ISRAEL AND IN THAT CASE THE 8TH ATTRIBUTE OF YAHWEH IS EVIDENCED:

EXODUS 34:7 - "...YET HE WILL BY NO MEANS LEAVE THE GUILTY UNPUNISHED, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN AND ON THE GRANDCHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS."

ONE IS LIMITED JUSTICE ENACTED BY THE KING AND HIS JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE PEOPLE AND THE OTHER IS DIVINE JUSTICE DECREED BY THE CREATOR HIMSELF.

2 KINGS 14:7 - AMAZIAH ALSO HAD SIGNIFICANT MILITARY VICTORY AGAINST EDM.

2 CHRONICLES 25:5-13 - SPIRITUAL INSIGHT INTO AMAZIAH'S VICTORY OVER EDM

THE LORD WAS TEACHING AMAZIAH WHERE STRENGTH AND VICTORY REALLY CAME FROM. HE INITIALLY IS TEMPTED TO BOLSTER HIS ARMY WITH HELP FROM ISRAEL (100,000 MEN). HOWEVER, "THE LORD (WAS) NOT WITH ISRAEL (2 CHRON 25:7)." THE NUMBERS MIGHT HAVE SEEMED FAVORABLE, BUT THE SPIRITUAL REALITIES WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN. IF AMAZIAH HAD THE LORD WITH HIM (BY BEING WITH THE LORD), HE WOULD HAVE MORE THAN ENOUGH, AS THE MAN OF GOD SAID (V. 9). AND SURE ENOUGH, VICTORY COMES.

2 KINGS 14:8-14 - AMAZIAH CHALLENGES JEHOASH, KING OF ISRAEL

COMING OFF THE HEELS OF AMAZIAH'S VICTORY OVER EDM, HE TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO ISRAEL AND KING JEHOASH. 2 CHRONICLES 25:13 TOLD US THAT THE ISRAELITE SOLDIERS AMAZIAH HAD SENT HOME ENDED UP RAIDING SOME OF THE CITIES OF JUDAH. PERHAPS THIS WAS AMAZIAH'S MOTIVATION TO WAR WITH ISRAEL.

V. 9-10 - JEHOASH'S REPLY IS ESSENTIALLY - "DON'T GET OVER EXCITED THAT YOU DEFEATED EDM AND TRY AND MESS WITH ISRAEL. IT'S CUTE THAT YOU'RE TRYING TO CHALLENGE ME, BUT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU JUST STAYED HOME." NEVERTHELESS AMAZIAH PERSISTED.

V. 12-14 - AMAZIAH'S ARROGANCE LEADS TO A DEVASTATING DEFEAT AT THE HANDS OF ISRAEL. 2 KINGS 14 GIVES US NO INDICATION THAT HIS THREAT AGAINST ISRAEL WAS DIRECTED BY THE LORD. INSTEAD WE SEE A KING WHO IS "PUFFED UP" AFTER HIS VICTORY OVER EDM AND WANTS TO KEEP WINNING. EDM MAY HAVE BEEN A VICTORY FROM THE LORD, BUT THREATENING ISRAEL WAS NOT GOD'S IDEA. NOT ONLY DID AMAZIAH'S ARROGANCE LED TO JUDAH'S DEFEAT, BUT IT LEAD TO HIS OWN CAPTURE, THE DESTRUCTION OF SOME OF THE WALL OF JERUSALEM AND THE PLUNDERING OF VALUABLE THINGS FROM THE LORD'S HOUSE. THESE ITEMS WERE THE ITEMS THAT HIS FATHER HAD COMMISSIONED TO BE MADE WHEN THE TEMPLE WAS RESTORED AFTER ATHALIAH AND NOW THEY ARE JUST SPOILS IN A MILITARY CONFLICT THAT NEVER SHOULD HAVE BEEN.

AMAZIAH THINKS VICTORY COMES FROM HIS HAND. HE IS WRONG. THAT MIGHT BE HOW IT WORKS FOR EDM OR BABYLON, BUT FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, VICTORY COMES FROM HIM. AND AMAZIAH MADE THE CLASSIC MISTAKE THINKING THAT VICTORY CAME BY HIS OWN POWER. THIS IS A GOOD REMINDER FOR US AS WELL - WE SHOULD REALIZE THAT GOD BRINGS THE VICTORY IN OUR LIVES AND OUR RESPONSE SHOULD BE TO GIVE HIM GLORY AND STAY HUMBLE.

WE SHOULD NOT CONFUSE A SPIRITUAL VICTORY IN ONE AREA OF OUR LIVES WITH INVINCIBILITY IN EVERY AREA OF OUR LIVES. MANY CHRISTIANS DO NOT REMAIN SOBER-MINDED AND DEPENDANT ON GOD AFTER THEY START TO SEE GOD WORK IN THEIR LIVES. WE FORGET HOW DESPERATELY WE NEED HIM! GOD DELIVERS US, ANSWERS A PRAYER, HELPS US, ETC...AND THEN WE ARE TEMPTED TO STOP PRAYING, SEEKING, OBEYING, RELYING. SUCH A STRATEGY IS ABOUT AS BRILLIANT AS AMAZIAH DEFEATING EDM AND LOOKING TO TAKE ON ISRAEL IN THIS RECORD. IT'S FOOLISH. AND DANGEROUS.

BEYOND THIS TRUTH, 2 CHRONICLES 25 SHOWS US THE POINT WHERE AMAZIAH HAD TURNED HIS HEART AWAY FROM THE LORD...AND WHAT A TRAGIC PLACE HE TURNED HIS HEART TO INSTEAD.

2 CHRONICLES 25:14-16 (NLT) - WHEN KING AMAZIAH RETURNED FROM SLAUGHTERING THE EDMITES, HE BROUGHT WITH HIM IDOLS TAKEN FROM THE PEOPLE OF SEIR (AKA EDM). HE SET THEM UP AS HIS OWN GODS, BOWED DOWN IN FRONT OF THEM, AND OFFERED SACRIFICES TO THEM! 15 THIS MADE THE LORD VERY ANGRY, AND HE SENT A PROPHET TO ASK, "WHY DO YOU TURN TO GODS WHO COULD NOT EVEN SAVE THEIR OWN PEOPLE FROM YOU?" 16 BUT THE KING INTERRUPTED HIM AND SAID, "SINCE WHEN HAVE I MADE YOU THE

KING'S COUNSELOR? BE QUIET NOW BEFORE I HAVE YOU KILLED!" SO THE PROPHET STOPPED WITH THIS WARNING: "I KNOW THAT GOD HAS DETERMINED TO DESTROY YOU BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE THIS AND HAVE REFUSED TO ACCEPT MY COUNSEL."

AND SO JUDAH IS SOUNDLY DEFEATED BY ISRAEL. HOW QUICKLY THEIR DEFEAT COMES AS THEY TURN AWAY FROM YAHWEH. INSTEAD THEY ARE LEFT TO THEIR "NEW" GOD OF CHOICE AND HIS ABILITY (OR RATHER LACK OF ABILITY) TO BRING VICTORY.

2 KINGS 14:15-20 - THE OLD KINGS DIE

2 KINGS 14:21-29 - NEW KINGS RULE

AZARIAH (ALSO KNOWN AS UZZIAH IN 2 CHRONICLES 26) IS NEXT KING IN JUDAH. HE BECAME KING AT 16 YEARS OLD AFTER HIS FATHER AMAZIAH WAS ASSASSINATED AFTER A CONSPIRACY (JUST LIKE HIS FATHER WAS). WE'LL LEARN MORE ABOUT AMAZIAH IN 2 KINGS 15. ISRAEL'S NEXT KING IS NAMED JEROBOAM. HE WAS AN EVIL KING FOLLOWING AFTER THE EVIL WAYS OF HIS NAMESAKE. HE REIGNED FOR 41 YEARS. AND DURING HIS REIGN HE APPEARS TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN RESTORING REGIONS OF ISRAEL THAT HAD BEEN TAKEN BY FOREIGN POWERS.

IT'S INTERESTING THAT IN WHAT CAN BE EASILY OVERLOOKED AS A RANDOM AND INSIGNIFICANT DETAIL WE LEARN OF JONAH'S PRESENCE AT THIS TIME. THIS THE SAME JONAH OF THE BOOK OF JONAH (AND THAT ONE SWALLOWED BY A GREAT FISH INCIDENT, SEE JONAH 1:1). JEROBOAM II IS RULING IN ISRAEL AND HE'S AN EVIL AND ENDURING KING. AT FIRST GLANCE THAT IS THE EMPHASIS OF THESE FINAL FEW VERSES. CALF WORSHIP IS BACK IN STYLE. IN FACT, V. 24 TELLS US THAT JEROBOAM WAS INCREDIBLY FAITHFUL TO THOSE GOLDEN COWS ("HE DID NOT DEPART..."). WE HAVE A NEW JEROBOAM AND HE'S GOING TO BE KING FOR A WHILE. AND THEN JONAH POPS UP.

WHAT THESE CLOSING VERSES REMIND US IS THAT GOD IS STILL WORKING IN SPITE OF THE MAJOR NARRATIVE OF THE TIME. YES JEROBOAM II IS RULING AND WORSHIPPING IDOLS AND ENDORSING AND PROMOTING EVIL. BUT GOD IS NOT THWARTED BY THAT. HIS PROPHET IS STILL ON THE JOB SPEAKING. GOD STILL "SAW THE AFFLICTION OF ISRAEL" UNDER JEROBOAM (V. 26). THEIR EVIL WAS GREAT, BUT HE HAD NOT DECIDED TO BLOT THEIR NAME OUT AND FORSAKE THEM. IN FACT, HE USES EVIL JEROBOAM AS THE VEHICLE TO HELP RELIEVE THE "BITTER AFFLICTION" OF ISRAEL (V. 26-27). THE PEOPLE ARE PRAYING TO DEAD STATUES AND YET THE LIVING GOD IS SHOWING HIMSELF TO BE MERCIFUL AND GRACIOUS.

GENERATIONS BEFORE, MOSES WROTE A SONG WHICH DECLARED YAHWEH'S GOODNESS TO BE THIS WAY.

DEUTERONOMY 32:35-39 - 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, AND RETRIBUTION, IN DUE TIME THEIR FOOT WILL SLIP; FOR THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY IS NEAR, AND THE IMPENDING THINGS ARE HASTENING UPON THEM.' 36 "FOR THE LORD WILL VINDICATE HIS PEOPLE, AND WILL HAVE COMPASSION ON HIS SERVANTS, WHEN HE SEES THAT THEIR STRENGTH IS GONE, AND THERE IS NONE REMAINING, BOND OR FREE. 37 "AND HE WILL SAY, 'WHERE ARE THEIR GODS, THE ROCK IN WHICH THEY SOUGHT REFUGE? 38 'WHO ATE THE FAT OF THEIR SACRIFICES, AND DRANK THE WINE OF THEIR DRINK OFFERING? LET THEM RISE UP AND HELP YOU, LET THEM BE YOUR HIDING PLACE! 39 'SEE NOW THAT I, I AM HE, AND THERE IS NO GOD BESIDES ME; IT IS I WHO PUT TO DEATH AND GIVE LIFE. I HAVE WOUNDED AND IT IS I WHO HEAL, AND THERE IS NO ONE WHO CAN DELIVER FROM MY HAND.

YAHWEH MERCIFULLY DELIVERS AND SAVES TO SHOW HIS GREATNESS AND POWER IN CONTRAST TO THE VERY SO-CALLED "GODS" THE PEOPLE WERE LOOKING TO FOR RELIEF.

MAKE NO MISTAKE THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCE TO THEIR SINS AND CHOICES (THEIR CAPTIVITY IS COMING A FEW GENERATIONS LATER IN 2 KINGS 17). BUT THAT'S THEIR FREE CHOICE TO MAKE. AND GOD'S FREE CHOICE TO MAKE IS TO STAY FAITHFUL TO HIS COVENANTS, CALL FOR "HIS PEOPLE" TO TURN BACK TO HIM (SURELY THE MESSAGE OF JONAH AND THE OTHER PROPHETS)

2 KINGS IS MORE LIKE OUR DAY THAN WE REALIZE. THERE IS NOT NATION OR REGION OF THE WORLD UNDER THE RULERSHIP OF A GOD-FEARING MESSIANIC KING. IN FACT, MOST NATIONS ARE LED BY EVIL AND IDOLATROUS (OR AT LEAST UNINTERESTED) RULERS. THERE IS NOT A SHINING EXAMPLE OF A PLACE OR REGION SOMEWHERE FILLED WITH GOD-FEARING, CHRIST-FOLLOWING CITIZENS. AMERICA ITSELF IS MUCH MORE LIKE ISRAEL UNDER JEROBOAM THAN IT IS JUDAH UNDER DAVID. AND YET GOD STILL RAISES UP PROPHETS AND HERALDS DECLARING HIS WAYS (THAT WOULD BE YOU, DEAR CHRISTIAN!), CALLING FOR THEIR NEIGHBORS TO RETURN TO THEIR MAKER AND RECEIVE GRACE BEFORE THE DAY OF JUDGMENT (AKA THE GOSPEL MESSAGE). AND HE IS MOTIVATED BY THE SAME THING NOW AS HE WAS THEN. HE SEES THE PLIGHT OF HUMANITY AND DOES NOT WANT TO LEAVE THEM TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, JEROBOAM II WAS STILL ON THE THRONE FOR 41 YEARS. BUT GOD WAS STILL AT WORK AND BRINGING VICTORY AND RELIEF TO ISRAEL. HERE'S THE POINT: THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF OUR LIVES AND CULTURE DON'T HAVE TO BE "PERFECTLY FAVORABLE" AND CONDUCIVE FOR US TO SPEAK THE GOSPEL MESSAGE AND HELP BRING RELIEF TO THOSE DISTRESSED IN THIS AGE. IN FACT, THAT'S WHEN RELIEF-GIVERS ARE MOST IN NEED. STOP WAITING FOR THINGS AROUND YOU TO CHANGE BEFORE YOU START SPEAKING AND DECLARING THE GREAT MESSAGE WE HAVE. FOR IT'S WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOOD THAT THAT GOOD NEWS IS NEEDED MOST.