



Writing Life Faith



Life of a King: Amaziah's Conquest

The Twelfth King.

You can read King Amaziah's story in 2 Kings 14:1-22 and 2 Chronicles 25.

When I, Amaziah, son of Joash, became King, I terminated my father's assassins. But I obeyed Moses' Law by sparing their children.

I quickly organized my army. I even hired Israelite soldiers. Although I let them go when a man of God approached. He told me God wasn't with Israel. So what need did I have for their soldiers? I summoned my courage, and we set off to battle Edom. The LORD gave us a great victory, and we killed 20,000 of the enemy.

Then I realized, perhaps it was the Edomites' gods who had turned on them. Maybe our God had nothing to do with it. So I brought their gods home with me. Knowing what I knew, I refused to listen to the prophets' warnings. With my newfound power, I sent a challenge to King Jehoash of Israel. He could come and fight me, or look like a coward for life. We would win. God, the gods, somebody was with us.

It's time for the war to begin...

Amaziah, son of Joash and Jehoadin, kicks off his reign by assassinating his father's assassins. From there, things take a dark turn as he battles the Edomites, uncovering a fateful principle we should all bear in mind.

Let's see what he did and how he did it.

The Beginning.

"Amaziah did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, but not wholeheartedly."
(2 Chronicles 25:2)

Right after establishing himself as king, Amaziah has his father's assassins murdered. To look on the bright side, he obeys the Law of Moses by not putting their children to death.

He quickly organizes Judah's army. He appoints captains and generals, then takes a census. To ensure victory, he pays Israel 7,500 pounds of silver and hires 100,000 fighting men. Next, he prepares to leave for war. Then a man of God comes to him with a declaration.

The Middle.

"Your Majesty, do not hire troops from Israel, for the LORD is not with Israel. He will not help those people of Ephraim!" (2 Chronicles 25:7b)

Amaziah is left with a big choice. Will he trust God? Or will he trust himself and his military strength? If he listens to the LORD, it will cost him the silver he paid Israel. Fortunately, he obeys the man of God. **Obeying the LORD comes with a price.** The Israelite troops are sent home. 100,000 men in the red, Amaziah summons his courage to fight Edom. Meanwhile, the Israelite troops he sent home get busy looting Judah's towns. He shouldn't have hired them in the first place.

When Judah's army arrives in the Valley of Salt, they're given victory over Edom as they kill 10,000 enemies. Another 10,000 Edomites are captured, taken to the top of a cliff, and graphically thrown onto the rocks below. Plus he conquers Sela and renames it to Joktheel.

Amaziah returns with a victory and...Edom's idols? Yep, he brings Edom's gods home and begins worshipping them! My thoughts echo the prophet's sentiments: "Why do you turn to gods who could not even save their own people from you?" **Don't trust things that can't save you.**

Amaziah doesn't take kindly to criticism and threatens the prophet. Still feeling confident in the LORD, he sends a challenge out to Jehoash of Israel. "Come meet me in battle," he says. Jehoash responds with the analogy of a thistle sending a message to a cedar tree, only to be stomped on. Amaziah doesn't listen.

The End.

"But Amaziah refused to listen, for God was determined to destroy him for turning to the gods of Edom." (2 Chronicles 25:20)

As we all expected, Judah is routed by Israel. Amaziah is captured. 600 feet of Jerusalem's wall is demolished. All the Temple's gold and silver are carried off. (On a side note, where is this treasure coming from? The Temple has literally been looted during every other king's reign.)

Amaziah lives for fifteen years after King Jehoash's death. Then he hears all-too-familiar mutterings. He flees to Lachish, but his enemies find him. Like his father, his sin earns him an assassination.

What Defined Amaziah?

When I saw Amaziah obey the man of God and send Israel's troops away, I had hope. Maybe good would come of him. I was wrong. Amaziah's life shows us that you can (to some extent)...

Control Your Destiny

"You are saying, 'I have defeated Edom,' and you are very proud of it. But my advice is to stay at home. Why stir up trouble that will only bring disaster on you and the people of Judah?" (2 Chronicles 25:19)

By this I don't mean we can rule our lives or bend God to our will. Albeit, we can choose to change our life's outcome. Bluntly put, Amaziah summoned his destruction. He controlled his destiny by disobeying God and calling for a non-ordained fight which he could not win.

It started when he took Edom's idols to Judah. **Amaziah wasn't careful after his victories.** When God grants you a 'W', don't take an ido'L' with you. When he got back, he invited fate into Judah by arrogantly sending a message to Jehoash. And he got what he deserved.

The modern turn of phrase would be, "He was asking for it..." To make this personal, what are your actions and words currently implying? What would people say you're "asking" for? Based on how we're living, are we inviting God into our lives? Or are we beckoning destruction to our doorstep? Towards whom are we walking?

When Scripture records Amaziah "following the LORD, but not wholeheartedly", that convicts me. I can easily think of sections in my life where I'm not following the LORD wholeheartedly. I need to change in these areas, and I pray you don't make the same mistakes. Please allow God to control your destiny. He's got a plan.

Good/Bad.

Halfway through this series, my hope is waning. I've realized that even the "good" kings are flawed people who screw up. We've seen 0 good kings who didn't botch up in major ways.

As we reach the *Kings Midpoint*, we need to address the unbiblical notion that says life is "good people versus bad people". This is false. Judah's kings reveal that there are no good people. Only God is good. Life isn't about good people and bad people. Life is about sinners who know God working to draw sinners who don't know God to Him. There aren't any heroes, just the LORD's servants.

Romans 3:12 says, *"All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."* Once we accept this, He will begin to work in our lives.

Everything accounted for, Scripture still labels Amaziah a good king. Again, he's unquestionably not my role model. There's only one Person I'm meant to follow.

Which is why we need to put Amaziah in his place on the Kings Chart. He is our fifth king on the 'GOOD' side.

Next week, we'll look at the life of King Uzziah, Amaziah's son. Although let's be honest, we probably know him best from a brief reference in Isaiah 6. We'll also touch on that. To quote 2 Kings 14:10b... *"Why stir up trouble that will only bring disaster on you and the people of Judah?"*



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