

JULY 29

2 Chronicles 24-25

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Vs. 1-3 Jehoiada was Joash's uncle and really looked out for him. Joash only lived to be 47. That will make sense later. Verse 2 doesn't mean much now, but it will in a few verses.

Vs. 4-7 So far, so good. Joash looks like a model king. He got the Levites and priests working to repair the temple.

Vs. 8-14 This is all very cool.

V. 14 Twice in this section there is a curious phrase, *all the days of Jehoiada*. This points to another of those "weaknesses" that we are all prone to and have seen in the church. There are believers who look good as long as there are others around them. They are kind of like the seed sown on rocky ground. They pop up and look good, but when the godly influence leaves them alone, they have no "root in themselves," no genuine relationship with God. Church activities and even working in the harvest provided them with a purpose that was no deeper than the activity, and they never had "their own" relationship with Christ.

Vs. 15-16 This was a great honor. Not only did God grant Jehoiada a long life and influence, but he was buried among the kings. Jehoiada was used by God to save the Davidic line. Now there were surely other people roaming around who could trace their lineage back to David. You see this in the genealogies of Joseph and Mary in the NT, showing that Jesus' lineage went back to David two different ways. Still, Jehoiada showed great courage and faith in the promise of God to do what he did. Also, you realize that Jehoiada was no spring chicken. Humanly speaking, his goose should have already been cooked before this all began. He was at least in his 90s when the Lord moved him to save Judah and the line of David. As a result of God's use and purpose for him, he lived to be 130. That's older than Moses was when he died.

Vs. 17-19 Just the mention of the Asherim gives you an idea of how these princes enticed Joash. This was very sexual worship. How could you resist? It was immediately more fun than worshipping Yahweh. The Levites and the Sons of Korah were no match to the wild women of Borneo who served at the Asherim ("groves" or places of worship) in the worship of Astarte, the sensual Canaanite goddess. And being king, who could tell him to stop? Notice that there were many whom God sent to try to break through to Joash. The Lord gave him many opportunities.

Vs. 20-22 This is kind of cool that the Spirit *clothed Zechariah*. The reason why this rebuke went deeper is that it looks like it was public. Growing up, Zechariah would have been like a big brother to Joash.

Jesus refers to this murder twice, the last time being the Wednesday before He died. The fact that they waited until Zechariah came out of the holy place and was walking toward the altar adds a deeper irony to the ambush of these murderers. In the holy place Zechariah was standing before the Lord, interceding for the people. Verse 22 is Ezra's commentary on King Joash, the "fake" believer. This murder would be a foreshadowing of the murder of Jesus.

Vs. 23-24 Notice that this judgment didn't come the next day. God waited. The more you read the Bible, the more you see that "waiting" is almost an attribute of God. His waiting causes His people to grow in faith, and it causes the rebellious to think everything's cool so they keep on sinning. The result is that God's people get stronger and write psalms of praise, and the other guys get a rude awakening. Here, Jerusalem was taken, the army was defeated and all these princes were killed by a small force. It was a very obvious judgment on Jerusalem.

Vs. 25-27 Notice that Joash wasn't buried in the tombs of the kings. It is interesting, and probably just trivia, that the two assassins were both descendants of Lot, children from a forbidden relationship and an awful heritage.

2 Chronicles 25

This is a very strange story and you only hear half of it in Kings. This is now the great-great grandson of Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat's sin had now seeped into the 4th generation. Read this and try to figure out what could possibly have been going on in Amaziah's mind. It blows me away, but actually we saw this with some of the kings of the north who lived with Elijah and Elisha. God helped them, but they didn't grow in faith or follow God.

Vs. 1-4 As you read this, except for Ezra's note in v. 2, this guy looks pretty kosher and shows some genuine faith and obedience.

Vs. 5-13 This entire story will make you scratch your head. He obeyed God in not facing Edom with a large army of mercenaries. God gave him the victory, but he showed incredible cruelty to his prisoners. And then...

Vs. 14-16 What was going on? How did Amaziah view spirituality? Was it that he had this victory and thought that he had done this himself? Were the idols made out of diamond and incredibly valuable?

V. 16 is a pretty awesome verse. Notice that the prophet stopped arguing with Amaziah.

Vs. 17-24 This is the story we have already seen in Kings. Now we understand why Amaziah lost the battle and why he was so arrogant. In fact, his arrogance shows us what must have been going on in his heart when he won the battle with the Edomites. He really thought he had won the battle on his own. God made sure Amaziah was publicly humiliated by having the city wall torn down and the treasures taken.

V. 20 This is Ezra's commentary to the new generation returning to the land.

Vs. 25-28 It is amazing that God punished Amaziah, but didn't take him out. Actually, his ungodliness became a test of the godliness of the people; and they took care of him. Maybe this is also Ezra's encouragement to the people and leaders of Israel not to tolerate an ungodly ruler.

V. 28 He was still honored in burial as a descendant of David, the line of promise.

Romans 12

Vs. 1-2 One of the challenges in v. 1 is to be able to think through all the past 11 chapters and understand the impact of *I appeal to you **therefore**, brothers, by the mercies of God...* How would you summarize what Paul and the Spirit have said in such a way as to give you such a spiritual shot of adrenaline that you would live a supernatural life on earth, submitted to Christ and submitted to God's purpose of redemption in the world?

The spiritual "awe" of what Paul has been writing is going to be used to convince these people to take command of their lives on earth, so that they can work together as a mixed church, proclaiming the testimony of God's glory in a lost world.

V. 3 Do you detect that Paul is addressing a problem here? Verses 1-2, then, are to have the impact of getting them to see their own personal issues as insignificant in comparison to God's redemptive mercy, plan and calling.

Vs. 3-8 How do you think having a mixed "Jew-Gentile" congregation aggravated the problem with gifts? God assigns gifts according to His will, not our background or ethnicity. What do you see in these verses that gave them a spiritual understanding to help them get along together? It all began with God.

Vs. 9-13 How would you title these verses? If Paul kept referring back to vs. 1 and 2, it would sound something like, on the basis of the past 11 chapters, (insert vs. 1 and 2), and so now let us.... God is expecting our maturity to rise to the level of being able to do this in spite of what goes on around us.

Vs. 14-21 These disciples were to have lived like Jesus commanded in the Sermon on the Mount. The impact of chapters 1-11 and the summary of 12:1-2 were supposed to put these people in the spiritual frame of mind to serve with strength, humility and sacrifice.

What Paul is writing here is very similar to what Jesus told His disciples in the Sermon on the Mount. If disciples are focused on Christ and the work in the harvest, their perspective on themselves and on life is supposed to lift them above themselves and give them a spiritual vision of how to live in this harvest.

Psalm 22:19-31

This part of the psalm still seems to be "messianic" in describing the aftermath of Christ's death and resurrection. The words here seem like something reflected from Isaiah 53:10-12.

Vs. 19-21 The deliverance has been from the irrational violence of men. Notice the "wild life." I grew up around these kinds of people.

Vs. 22-24 This seems like David is giving testimony to Israel of deliverance and praising God.

Vs. 25-26 This is David's praise to God and confidence in God's blessing on those who follow Him.

Vs. 27-31 This is the proclamation to the earth that there is deliverance in God. This is what we, as disciples, get to pass on in the harvest.

Proverbs 20:8-10

These all seem a little random. As I read this first one, I think of what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:15, *The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.*

V. 8 This was God's ideal for a king or a person who ruled others. David and Solomon were men like this, and were renowned for their judgments, until their unconfessed sin and its damage ruined them.

V. 9 We all have sinned, but that doesn't mean we can't judge. Verse 9 is true in that we cannot say we have made our hearts pure, but we can say that God in His Word, through His Spirit, is working on our hearts.

V. 10 The judgments, or the stuff that goes into discerning one thing from another, come from true weights and measures. The one who sets these weights and measures morally, and who sees the hearts of men, is God. It is on the basis of God's truth that we can determine right from wrong and make just judgments, even though we ourselves are needy. God's Word gives us the true "weights and balances."