

2 CHRONICLES: A TALE OF TWO HOUSES

AMAZIAH

Questions to aid in the study of this section 2 Chronicles 25:1-28

1. At what age did Amaziah pass away? v. 1
2. Why is the name of his mother given? v. 1
3. Does verse 2 where it says “he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord but not with a loyal heart,” (NKJV) mean he did the Lord’s will half heartedly or did it for periods of time and then for other periods of time he rejected the Lord’s will? Or does it mean he did the Lord’s will most of the time but fell constantly into sin? Or did he do God’s will for most of the first part of his life and reject it most of the second half of his life?
4. Verses 3 and 4 tell us he did execute the servants who murdered his father the king, but he observed the law by not executing their children. Why is this fact noticed? What does the phrase, “...as soon as the kingdom was established for him...”, imply about Amaziah’s control of the kingdom?
5. Verse 5 tells us that he numbered the fighting men of Israel according to their father’s houses, so this was an army built around the family units. Would this have been an advantage over other army structures? They had captains of 1000 and 100 over them. How was this similar to the Roman army?
6. Why did they number fighting men from 20 years old and upward? Why not younger or older? At what age can you fight in the US army, British, etc.? Why were they called choice men? Did the Lord give them especially good health and strength or did they only take into the army those who were exceptional?
7. Why are spear and shield mentioned in verse 5 and not sword? Was it assumed that all could handle the sword but that spear and shield were a next step in military prowess?
8. Having a choice force of 300,000 why did he hire the 100,000 soldiers of Israel? Was he trying to help Israel? Was he trying to make them an ally? Did he feel natural kinship?
9. According to verse 7 why did the Lord not want Amaziah to hire the soldiers from Israel?
10. What is in God’s power according to verse 8? What would happen to Amaziah and Judah if they included the 100,000 from Israel in their battles? For Judah to win their battles what was the absolute basic necessity, implied by why Israel could not be included?
11. Why does the Lord exhort Amaziah to go to battle and be strong at the beginning of verse 8 according to versions such as the NKJV and KJV? How do other versions such as the NIV render the first part of verse 8?

Answers:

1. Apparently Amaziah passed away at 54 years of age.
2. Does mentioning his mother tell us who really had the main influence in his life? Often the kings had several wives and many children so mothers probably saw more of the children than the fathers did. Maybe his mother was ambivalent towards the Lord? Or was his mother a woman who tried to influence him in the direction of righteousness and he rebelled eventually.
3. It seems that verse 2 tells us that Amaziah was a mixed bag when it came to doing the Lord’s will.

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4. In those kingdoms of the time it was not unusual for a king to execute the whole family as Darius did when he executed the men and their families who had plotted against Daniel and had him thrown to the lions. (Daniel 6) This also proves the point that he did follow God's law at least to some degree. The phrase, "... as soon as the kingdom was established for him ...", seems to imply that Amaziah's control of the kingdom was not strong at the outset. He may have had to prove he could manage. Maybe he had not paid much attention to what his father had to do in order to rule a kingdom and had to play catch up in the practical details.
5. Smaller units in armies do seem to fight as though they were brothers. The present (Summer 2004) series called "Band of Brothers" is about a unit in the US army after D-Day in Europe. Under Amaziah Judah had captains over 100 or "centurions" as the Romans would call them.
6. According to Number 1:3 and other verses in the same chapter, the census they took of Israel was from 20 years old and upward, and includes the phrase all those who were able to go to war. Amaziah followed this precedent found in the law.
7. Spear and shield. I do not know.
8. The text does not tell us why he hired the soldiers from Israel.
9. In spite of the fact that the soldiers of Israel were mighty men of valor the Lord was not with them, not with any of the children of Ephraim. We know that the northern kingdom of Israel, often represented by Ephraim, as it is here, had given themselves, they and their kings to idolatry, having followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who set up calf idols in Bethel (House of God) in the south and Dan, in the north, and told Israel that these were the gods who had saved them out of Egypt. (1 Kings 12:26-33)
10. It is in God's power to help or to overthrow. Judah would suffer defeat if they took long the soldiers from Israel in their battles. The absolute necessity for Judah was that God be with them in their battles.
11. At the beginning of verse 8 there seems to be a touch of humor or sarcasm according to some versions such as the NKJV and KJV. God exhorts Amaziah to go into battle with the attachment from Israel and to be strong, but warns him that he will not succeed if he takes the Israelite soldiers. The NIV renders the first part of verse 8 as a conditional clause using the words, "Even if you go and fight courageously in battle, God will overthrow you before the enemy"