



2 Chronicles 26-28

Tape #7139
II Chronicles 26-28
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to II Chronicles, chapter twenty-six. Amaziah was the father of Uzziah. Amaziah began his reign well. God gave him victory over the Edomites, but then he did a extremely foolish thing. From the victory over the Edomites, he brought back some of the idols of their gods, and he began to worship them. So God delivered Amaziah unto the king of Israel, in the battle, as they faced off there at Bethshemesh. Joash the king of Israel, then came to Jerusalem, broke down part of the walls, took away hostages and treasure, and Amaziah was assassinated. So verse, or chapter twenty six.

Then all of the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him the king in the place of his father Amaziah. And he built Eloth, [Which is the present day, Elat, that coastal city down in the area of the gulf. His father Amaziah, had conquered the Edomites, and so Uzziah takes advantage of the fact that, that territory had become part of Judah, and he built the city of Eloth, or he rebuilt it, and,] restored it to Judah, after that Amaziah had slept with his fathers. He was sixteen years old when he began to reign, he reigned for fifty two years [A very long reign. In fact, there's only one king who had a longer reign than Uzziah, and that was Manasseh. "He reigned for fifty two years",] in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah and she was from Jerusalem. He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, [I always sort of thrill with anticipation when I read that. I cringe when I read, "And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord", because you know that, that's gonna be followed by a down hill plunge. When it reads, "And he did that which was right", you know that you're going to have a successful reign. This is the way that all of the kings are evaluated.

As you go through the Chronicles here, as it gives the name of the king, as it's introducing the king, it tells you, basically the most important thing about his life, and that is, his relationship with God. That is the most important thing about your life. All of your accomplishments or whatever else, are not as important as your relationship with God. What is your relationship with God? Are you doing that which is right in the sight of the Lord? That's what counts. That's the most important bit of information that we could have concerning any of you, and that is, your relationship with God. If you were writing tonight your autobiography, and this important issue was to be put in your biography, which indeed it should, what would you write concerning your own relationship with God?

In each of the kings, his relationship with God was an important factor, and it surely affected how he reigned, and the kind of a reign that he had.] *according to all that his father Amaziah did (26:1-4).*

Now, Amaziah, the writer here graciously overlooks his worship of these gods of the Edomites, which was a horrible sin, for which he was punished. But we read...

He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: [Now, it should be noted that during the reign of Uzziah, Isaiah was alive. In fact Isaiah began his ministry at the death of Uzziah. In chapter six of Isaiah, he speaks of, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and lifted up, sitting upon the throne, his train did fill the temple. Then said I, woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips." Then he saw a cherubim that took a coal from off the altar, and he touched his lips, and he said, "Now are your lips clean". And then he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Who will go for me?" And, Isaiah responded, "I will go. Here am I Lord, send me." So, Isaiah's call came at the death of Uzziah. So as we move now through Uzziah, and through the reign of Jotham and Ahaz, we are dealing with a period of time in which Isaiah was prophesying unto Judah. There were two other prophets whose ministry also existed at this same time in history. Hosea, also was prophesying at this time, as was Amos. So if you really want to get an "A" in the course, you should this week, along with your continued reading in II Chronicles, you should read the prophecies of Hosea, and Amos. I won't throw Isaiah at you. That's a pretty long one, but the first six chapters of Isaiah, will give you

spiritual insight to the conditions at this time. But Hosea and Amos will also give you insight to the conditions of the nation at this particular time. It'll help you tie the prophets together with the historic period in which they were prophesying. So that's Hosea and Amos, and then of course the prophet Isaiah. Now there is a prophet, Zacharias, but that isn't this prophet, the prophet Zacharias who wrote the book of Zacharias, he comes way after the Babylonian captivity. He is down the road a long ways yet. But here's a man, Zacharias, the only place in the scripture where he's mentioned. His name only gets mentioned once, but hey, that would be pretty neat to have your name mentioned even once in the book. But, uh we don't know who he is, we don't know a single thing about him, except that he had understanding in the visions of God. But, the implication is that he had a strong influence on Uzziah. That, as long as he was alive, he exerted that influence over Uzziah, so Uzziah sought the Lord all of the days of Zacharias. "Who had the understanding in the visions of God:"] *and as long as he sought the Lord, God made his ways to prosper (26:5).*

Putting God first in our lives is so important. If we put God first in our lives, God will take care of the other issues of our lives. If we put first the other issues of our lives, then we will be so busy trying to take care of the other issues, you'll have no time for God. But, "If you'll seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness", God will take care of everything else. Now this is the mistake that is so commonly made. We are so concerned with taking care of everything else, so concerned with getting enough money to pay the bills, and all, that we're constantly, our nose is at the grindstone. Whereas if we would get the priorities of our lives correct, at putting God first, and seeking God first, then God would take care of the physical needs of our lives.

Jesus said that the Gentiles were always worried about what they were gonna eat, what they were gonna drink, and what they were gonna wear, but He said, "Don't worry about tomorrow, about these things. You shouldn't worry about what you're gonna eat, what you're gonna drink, what you're wear, after all of these things did the Gentiles", or the heathen, "seek. But you, seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all of these things will be added unto you".

Now here is a example of a king who sought the Lord and as long as he sought the Lord, God made his ways to prosper. It was God who was with him, who blessed him, who made his ways to prosper.

When Joshua took over the rulership of the people of Israel from Moses, the leadership I should say, Moses charged Joshua to meditate in the law, to put it into practice. "And thus", he said, "shall you make your way prosperous, and thus you will have good success". Seek the law of the Lord, seek to obey the law of the Lord, seek to follow the law of the Lord. Now, David, in the first Psalm, talks about the, "blessedness of the man, who will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law does he meditate day and night". Among the other things he said, "And whatsoever he doeth, shall prosper". God will bless that person who puts God first, who seeks God with all of his heart, that person will be blessed of God.

So, Uzziah, a classic example, as long as he sought the Lord, God made his ways to prosper. Then we read of his prosperity. Prosperity in the field of battle, conquering over his enemies. Now the Philistines were perennial enemies. A strong people, and they inhabited the coastal areas, the southern coastal areas of Israel. They were a very strong people, powerful people, large people, and they were a perennial enemy to Israel. But under the reign of Uzziah...

He went forth and he warred against the Philistines, and he broke down the walls of the city of Gath, [One of the major Philistine cities.] and the walls of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, [Which of course is another Philistine city over in the coast.] and he built cities around Ashdod (26:6),

That is he established west bank settlements in the Philistine territory. So what the Jews are doing today isn't really anything new. The establishing of settlements on the west bank. It's a practice that Uzziah did, when he conquered this city of Ashdod, he planted settlements around the city of Ashdod. Planted the Jewish people in that coastal area.

And God helped him [Notice, God made him to prosper. Now again it's confirmed. "God helped him"], against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. [So God was with him, and he was prosperous in battle.] The Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: [They began to pay tribute,

so he was prosperous in a material way, financially.] *and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; [Everybody heard of the greatness, the fame, the power, of Uzziah. "His name spread abroad."] for he strengthened himself exceedingly (26:7-8).*

So he became strong.

Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them (26:9).

Now, under the reign of his father Amaziah, when he had the war with Joash, you remember Joash came to Jerusalem, and tore down six hundred feet of the wall, so now Uzziah is repairing the wall of Jerusalem. Not only does he repair the wall, but he built towers on the walls near the gates for extra protection.

Then he built towers in the desert [Now these towers in the deserted areas were watch towers. Even today, as you go through Israel, you will see out in the fields, the remains still of some of these watch towers. The people, during the wintertime, would move within the walled cities. In the spring, they would move out to the countryside where they had their fields, and they would plant their fields, and remain in the fields cultivating them, and then harvesting them in the fall. In the fields, they had built these towers, and as I say, you can see them today, they would move into the lower part of the towers, and then in the upper part of the tower, they would use that as a watch tower, to watch for people ripping off their watermelons, or their crops. So it was just a thing to watch their crops, to make sure that no one moved in on their territory.

My family was the first white family to settle in Santa Barbara. So our family history goes back in Santa Barbara. On this side of Santa Barbara, there is the uh, bird refuge there. That lake with a bird refuge and there is a hillside there, called "Nitaver's Hill", after John Nitaver. The family had a tower on that hill, and they used to graze their cattle in the area which is now, State Street, downtown Santa Barbara and all. Our family used to graze their cattle there, and that tower on Nitaver's hill, was to watch for the Indians who were rustling their cattle. So, it's something that, is again, goes way, way back, but yet, it does have a, not a modern kind of part, because when the family was watching for Indians rustling, that wasn't very modern times, but anyhow, a rather recent counterpart. So he built these towers because they had a lot of cattle.] *they dug many wells: for the cattle, both in the low country and in the plains: and then they had the husbandmen, and the vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved [Agriculture] husbandry (26:10).*

So the valleys filled with the cattle, the hillsides covered with vineyards, and orchards and a prosperous king, and a prosperous reign.

Moreover Uzziah had a host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of the account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. [And don't ask me to read you any more names tonight, that's your quota.] The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand six hundred (26:11-12).

That is, they, that's how many captains they had.

But they had an army of three hundred and seven thousand, five hundred men. And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all of the host shields, and spears, helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made in Jerusalem war engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones with them. And his name spread abroad; and he was marvelously helped, until he was strong (26:13-15).

So they devised these inventions, these machines, probably cross bow types of machines, for shooting arrows. Then these machines that would hurl these big stones. Now, over in Israel today, in the area of the Herodian, you will see a pile of round stones, that have been chipped round. They're round like a ball, they had great chippers, and uh, and they are about so big. You try to lift them, and I would estimate their weight at about a hundred and fifty pounds. These balls, round rocks, were used as some of the first kind of cannon balls, shot with catapults. You can imagine the damage that a rock this size could do to a wall, to a invading group of men. So he had developed these weapons of war. He had a well armored army with uh, the shields, the helmets, and their bows, and slings.

"But his name again spread far abroad, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong." Here is the second mention to his name. He was popular. Uzziah was an extremely popular king. So that everyone was talking about him. That's what, "his name spread abroad" really means. Everybody was talking about

Uzziah. Everywhere you'd go, you'd hear his name in the conversation of the people. He was admired and looked up to by the people, because he was strong and brought the nation into a position of great strength.

With Uzziah sitting on the throne, people had tremendous confidence. They weren't worried about the enemies, they weren't worried about their problems. It was a time of national prosperity. Unemployment was down, prosperity was up. Everybody was feeling great. You know, "Happy times are here!". When Uzziah died, there went sort of a shudder through the people. Here was this popular king, he's now dead. "What are we gonna do? His son is not the equal to his father. What's gonna happen to us now?"

During that time, when there was this sort of unrest at the death of Uzziah, is when Isaiah said, "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and lifted up, sitting on the throne". "The throne is empty, Uzziah's dead!" No, the throne isn't empty! Isaiah got a vision of the Lord sitting upon the throne. What confidence that, that brings when you realize God rules, and God reigns. So, he was strong, but then, verse sixteen, tragic. Tragedy strikes.

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: ["Pride goeth before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." His heart was lifted up, pride, to his own destruction. There is a danger to success. There is a danger in prosperity. The danger of success is feeling independent of God. The danger of success is feeling that you can do anything. We feel that we finally have found the secret formula. We feel that we're capable now, of doing anything we wish to do. That we can somehow put God aside, and we can live independent of God. Such was the case with Uzziah. "When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction:"] *for he transgressed against Jehovah his God, and went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense (26:16).*

The first king of Israel, Saul, had gone to Gibeon to meet Samuel at the time that the Philistines were invading the land. When Samuel did not show up immediately, and the Philistines were approaching, and the people were getting excited, Saul offered a sacrifice unto the Lord. While the smoke of the sacrifice still came up, Samuel came and he said, "Saul, what have you done?" And Saul said, "Well the people were getting so nervous and, and frightened, that I forced myself, and I offered the sacrifice". He said, "You have done foolishly." You see, Saul was called to be a king, not a priest. He had no business intruding into the priestly act of offering a sacrifice. That was not his job. He was intruding into an area where he had not been called of God to serve.

Now, here is Uzziah following the same, foolish mistake of Saul, the first king, in that he now, is going into the temple to offer incense at the altar of incense. This was a job that was reserved for the priests. Only the priests were to go into the holy place, and only the high priest into the Holy of Holies. So he is treading into an area where he doesn't belong. He is seeking to do something that he was not called of God to do. Though it may look on the surface as, "Hey, it's a part of my worship of God", God has prescribed the way He is to be approached, and the way He is to be worshiped. If we do not follow God's prescribed patterns, then we are intruding in areas where we have no business being.

I think of so much of the worship today, that is not really prescribed by God, but developed by man, and much of it copied after pagan religions. I often wonder what God's attitude is concerning these things, that come not really from the scriptures, but are following the patterns of other religions. Way back in the wilderness, Korah, one of the priests from the tribe of Kohath, came to Moses and said, "You've taken too much upon yourself, putting Aaron your brother, as the one to offer the incense to the Lord. We are Levites also, and we have the right to offer incense, just as much as does Aaron. You only gave him the job because he was your brother. You're practicing nepotism". So Moses said, "Well, you fellows come down tomorrow, bring your little brass censers and stand here before the Lord, and we'll see who the Lord has chosen to offer the sacrifice". So he came down, Korah, with two hundred men, and the fire came out from the altar of God and consumed the two hundred men, the earth opened up and swallowed Korah, and God confirmed that it was the job of Aaron to offer the incense. They took the little brass censers, the little bowls, the two hundred of them, and they beat them into a brass plate. With that brass plate, they covered the altar, so that in generations to come, when they saw that brass plate, they realized that not just anybody was to offer the offering of incense, but it was a specified task for the priests, that were descendants of Aaron. It was something that belonged to Aaron's family. That brass plate over the altar was a reminder of that fact.

But here is the king, intruding into the temple, with the intention of offering on the altar of incense, because he felt, “I can do anything. I’m the king, I’m great! Everybody’s talking about me. You know, I’ve conquered the enemies. I’m prosperous, I can do anything”, and he thought that he could do things independent of God, and the word of God.

So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him eighty other priests of the Lord, that were valiant men: [They were brave to withstand the king. After all you don’t rebuke the king.] But they withstood Uzziah the king, [That is, they stood in front of him.] and said unto him, It is not yours to burn incense unto the Lord, but it’s the duty of the priests the sons of Aaron, [As we said, God put it in the hands of Aaron and his family. “The sons of Aaron”,] that are consecrated to burn incense: so get out of the sanctuary; for you have trespassed; neither shall it be for your honor from Jehovah God (26:17-18).

So they stood before him, they rebuked him for this impertinent act. Reminding him that this is a job that belongs to the sons of Aaron. Men who have been consecrated to this task. This isn’t the job of the king. Instead of repenting, he became angry. Now this is a very common mistake, and God help us.

So often times when we are doing something that we should not be doing, and someone calls our attention to our trespass, to our sin, we many times get angry. We feel, “Hey, who are you to tell me?”, you know. We get angry instead of repenting. Now, for the king to get angry, what these priests are saying is right, it is true, he is being rightfully rebuked. But he is taking the rebuke in the wrong way. He’s not receiving it, he’s not accepting it. The Bible says, “A fool hateth instruction”. My wife quotes that to me often. Ha, ha! But he wouldn’t receive.

He became angry, and as the result, he broke out with leprosy on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, and beside the incense altar. [Here he was, standing beside the incense altar, in this holy place, and suddenly he breaks out with leprosy. Well, according to the law, a leper was not to come into the house of the Lord, not even into the precincts.] So Azariah the chief priest, and the priest, looked upon him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from there; but, he himself hurried to get out because the Lord had smitten him (26:19-20).

Now I do not believe that the Lord would have smitten him, had he been receptive to the rebuke. Had he said, “Lord, I’m sorry. God I’ve sinned against you, I’ve done wrong”, and would’ve acknowledged his sin, I don’t think the Lord would’ve smitten him. I think that his anger, his response to the rebuke is what brought the hand of God upon him. I also believe, that even after breaking out with leprosy, had he repented, and confessed, that the Lord probably would’ve healed him of his leprosy, as He did Marion, after her confession. The sister of Moses, who was smitten with leprosy for speaking against Moses, and yet her confession, and repentance, God healed her. I think the same would’ve been of Uzziah, but there seemed to be no repentance, and so...

Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and he dwelt in [One of the houses, the,] several house, [That is called, but that is a house that is isolated.] being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord: and Jotham his son [Began to be co-regent.] he was in the king’s house, judging the people of the land. [So there was a co-regency here, until the death of Uzziah.] Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, the first and the last, Isaiah wrote about, [As we said, Isaiah was prophet at this time.] the son of Amoz, wrote about them. So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead (26:21-23).

Chapter 27

Now Jotham was twenty five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, [Like that!] according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit [He did not make the same mistake as his dad.] he did not enter into the temple of the Lord. But yet under his reign, the people began to do corruptly. [Though he did that which was right, he was not a strong leader, and thus under his reign corruption began to break out among the people.] He built the high gate of the house of the Lord, and on the wall of Ophel he built much (27:1-3).

Now Ophel was that hill that goes down from that area of the temple mount, into the valley of the

Kidron, with the Kidron valley on the one side, and the Tyropian valley on the other side, and that was the original area of the city of David. They've been doing a lot of excavations down there now, that was the original Jebusite city, and it is an interesting thing to see today. The archeological diggings on the hill of Ophel. But he built the wall on down, no doubt to the area of the Spring of Gihon, and fortified that area down in the valley.

Also he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers. He fought with the king of the Ammonites, and he prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both in the second year, and the third. [So this was tribute, paid by the Ammonites unto him.] So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God (27:4-6).

Or established his ways. Now the secret of success again. He became mighty because he established his ways before Jehovah his God. If you will establish your ways before the Lord, as of course, he's following the example of his father. As long as he sought the Lord, God made his ways to prosper. He sought the Lord, he'd established his ways before the Lord, and so he was mighty.

Now the rest of the act of Jotham, all of his wars, his ways, lo, they're written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. He was twenty five years old when he began to reign, reigned for sixteen years. And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead (27:7-9).

So we don't get much of the reign of Jotham, he actually did not reign very long. He only reigned for sixteen years, which means he died at the age of forty one. So, he was a young man still when he died. He had though this son...

Chapter 28

Ahaz who was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem: and he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father (28:1):

Look out! Trouble's on the way. Ahaz is a bad king. He is not doing that which is right before the Lord, so you know that the story of his reign is going to be disaster, because this is the most important factor of any man's life, his relationship to God. Now it tells us of the evil that he did.

He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, [who were corrupt] he made also molten images for Baalim. [That is the various gods, Baalim is the plural of Baal. The lords.] Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, [Or the, Gehenna] and he burnt his children in the fire (28:2-3),

He followed the pagan practice of offering his children as live sacrifices unto the pagan gods. As they would heat up these little iron, and stone gods in the fire, heat up the iron until it was glowing red, and then they placed their babies in the outstretched arms, and sacrificed their babies to these pagan deities. We, we cringe at that. We are, our minds are not yet prepared to think of such a horrible thing, of taking your baby and placing it in the outstretched arms of a molten hot little iron god, and allowing it to be burned to death.

Yet, I fear for our nation because we have made such a strong move in this direction. As we've pointed out before, it all began with his walking in the ways of the kings of Israel, making these molten images for Baalim.

With, with man, in the primitive societies, even with man in modern society, one of the most remarkable and exciting capacities of man, is that of reproduction. It is a glorious mystery. God giving us the capacity of procreation. The child that is formed in the mother's womb, the child that is born. It is always a thrill, it's always an awesome wonder, the birth of a child. To see that little child as it come out of the womb, to hold that little child, to cut the umbilical cord, and to watch that little child grow and develop, and to realize that all of the potential is there in that little form that you're holding! To look at those little fingers, those little hands, the little toes, and, and to realize that, you know, it's all there, life, life, new life! And it's sort of the creation of life, and it's an awesome mystery and wonder!

Because of it being such an awesome wonder, this creation of life, primitive man have always worshiped

the capacity of creation of life. Because it is such an awesome thing, it became something that men worshiped. So, the primary gods of the, of the primitive people, were the gods of procreation. Taking this God given capacity, and making it a god. Then in the worshiping of these gods of procreation, they began to worship them with all kinds of licentious sexual rites.

The gods were worshiped in rituals that were extremely licentious. Open and free sex, within the worship context of these gods and goddesses. Of course the symbolism that is all there, which we cannot discuss in a mixed company. But it all revolved around the capacity of man to create life. Now, when you have that kind of worship, that kind of worship of sex, with it's pornography, and everything else that goes with it, when you open up the doors in that area, the result is a lot of unwanted babies. You've been messing around, you've been involved in some of the rituals of the worshiping the Ashorem, and, and now, you find yourself pregnant.

So, what they would do with their unwanted pregnancies, because they didn't really have the art of abortion, they would bear the child, but when the child was born, then they would bring it to this other worship of Molech, the god of pleasure, and this is the fruit of my pleasure, and they would take then, that child, and offer it upon the little red hot arms of Molech, and they would sacrifice the baby unto the god, Molech. That was their form of getting rid of the unwanted child.

As we look at our society today in the United States, we haven't really developed that far from them. We don't call it Ashorem, our worship of the sexual goddess, or Ashtoreth. We don't call it Molech, our worship of pleasure, and sex. But in our time, we have seen a tremendous liberalizing of our attitudes towards sexual relationships. We hear these low-class people, who are made stars in Hollywood, talk about having their baby, and, "It's his baby, but I don't know if I'm gonna marry him or not", or, "I don't plan to marry him". This kind of weird lifestyle by these people that are held up as role models for us.

Now, as a result of this liberalized attitudes towards sex, we come up with a lot of unwanted pregnancies. So, of course we now sacrifice the unwanted pregnancies to the god of Molech. Only, we say we do it in a more humane way, we abort the child while it is still in the womb being formed. We don't give it the opportunity of ever being born, as though it is less sinful then, than it would be later. I cannot be convinced of that. I do believe, that as a nation, we're gonna have to answer to God.

I would hate to be one of those Supreme Court justices, who was guilty of opening the door to pornography, and then guilty of opening the doors of abortion. I'd hate to be one of those Supreme Court judges who sit on the highest court on the land, when they stand in the highest court of the universe! We see the downward trend. He is causing his children to be burnt in the fires to Molech.

this is copying the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree (28:3-4).

"Righteousness exalts a nation, sin is a reproach to any people", and the nation's strength, lies in its moral strength, not in its physical strength. When morally, a nation goes down hill, it is weak.

Wherefore [because of this] Jehovah his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and they carried away a great multitude of the people captives, and brought them to Damascus. [The capital of Syria.] And he also was delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter. For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand men in one day of battle, which were all valiant men; [They were all warriors.] because they had forsaken Jehovah God of their fathers (28:5-6).

So as a result of their forsaking God, God has forsaken them. Forsaken of God, they become an easy prey to their enemies. They have no defense, for God was their defense, and that has now been removed. Thus, they are a prey of the enemy.

And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, [Probably not king Jotham, not king Ahaz's son, but one of the sons of Jotham, and this fellow, we had his name back in verse eleven, of chapter twenty six. So he was an older man, and he was one of the king's sons, but that is one of the kings of, of Israel. But not uh, not the son of Ahaz. Ahaz was too young. And, uh I told you I wasn't gonna read any more names, so I'm just gonna skip that one. Oh you think I can't?] Azrikam the governor of the house,

and Elkanah that was next to the king. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren [Now, children of Israel, the northern kingdom, carried away captives from Judah.] two hundred thousand, women, sons and daughters, and they took much spoil from them, and they brought the spoil to Samaria (28:7-8).

Now, under the law of God, under Moses, the children of Israel were not to take other Israelites as slaves. So, when here, the nation of Israel, the northern kingdom, conquered over the southern kingdom, these men who came down to war carried back two hundred thousand women, and children, and all to be made slaves unto them, in the northern kingdom.

But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was Oded: [Now we don't know anything about him, except he stood up at this time.] and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and he said unto them, Behold, because the Lord God of your fathers was angry with Judah, he's delivered them into your hand, and you've slain them in a rage that reached up to heaven. [In other words, "You were over zealous. Your rage is come before God. You, you took too much vengeance yourselves".] And now you purpose to keep under as slaves the children of Judah and Jerusalem for your bondmen and your bondwomen: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against Jehovah your God (28:9-10).

In other words, "It's because of their sin that God gave them over into your hands, but hey, you're pretty sinful yourselves. And what you are doing is wrong". Then certain...

Now hear me [he said] therefore, and deliver these captives again, ["Set these people free!"] for they are your brethren: for the fierce wrath of Jehovah is going to be upon you. Now there were certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, and Berechiah the son of [Now, I'll not try that one.] and they stood up [These four men, ha, ha. They stood up,] against them that came from the war, [These were leaders.] And they said unto them, You shall not bring the captives here: for whereas we have offended against Jehovah already, you intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel. So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all of the congregation. [They would not allow them to bring them on into Samaria.] And the men which were expressed by name, they rose up, and they took the captives, and with the spoil they clothed those that were naked [Now, this shows the shameful way in which they brought the captives back. They brought them back naked, and without shoes, and so they clothed those that were naked.] and they made sandals for those that did not have them, they gave them food and drink, and they anointed them, and carried all of the feeble of them upon donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of the palm trees, to their brethren: and from there they [these men] returned back to Samaria (28:11-15).

But they delivered the people back to Jericho, where they could make their way on up into Judah.

And at that time did king Ahaz send to the kings of Assyria to help him. [He would not trust in the Lord, or did not lean upon the Lord. Of course he wasn't even serving the Lord. But he sent to the king of Assyria to the king of Assyria to help him.] For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. [I mean he's getting it from all directions! The Assyrians came down, Israel came down from the north, and now he's getting it from the south, Edom has come against him and carried away captives.] The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, the south of Judah, and had taken Bethshemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederot, and Shchocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo [That sounds like a comic character in the comic strips, doesn't it?] also the villages thereof: and they dwelt there (28:16-18).

So, from the west the Philistines were attacking, and from the south, and from the southeast, the Edomites were attacking, from the northeast, the Assyrians are attacking, from the northwest, Israel is attacking, I mean this king is going down fast!

For the Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz the king of Israel; for he had made Judah naked, and transgressed sorely against the Lord. And then Tilgathpileser [That's the Hebrew for Tiglathpileser.] who was the king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, and did not strengthen him. For Ahaz had took away a portion out of the house of the Lord, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not. [Actually he had taken the treasury of the house, and hired Assyria to come as mercenaries to help him, but they were really not much help.] And in the time of his

distress [Instead of repenting and turning to God.] he did trespass yet more against the Lord: that is that king Ahaz (28:19-22).

A horribly wicked man, horrible reign!

For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, [Now when he went up to Damascus, uh actually, he hired the Assyrian king, uh Tiglathpileser, who attacked Damascus, and killed Resin, the king of Syria, he then went up to pay his debt to Tiglathpileser, taking him up the money. When he came to Damascus, he saw there a pagan altar. He liked it. It looked fancy and he was attracted to it, and so when he got home, he ordered the priests to make a copy of that altar, and set it in Jerusalem, that he might worship at this altar, that was copied after the altar, there in Syria. So he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, having built this altar copied after the altar he saw in Damascus, but he worshiped the gods of Damascus.] who smote him: because he said, The gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they maybe they will help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all of Israel. So Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God, he cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God, he shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked the anger of Jehovah the God of his fathers (28:23-25).

A horribly wicked king, who brought distress upon the nation.

Now the rest of his acts and all of his ways, the first and last, behold, they're written in the book of the kings of Judah in Israel. And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead (28:26-27).

The only thing good that Ahaz did was produce Hezekiah. Because Hezekiah, as we'll find out next week was a good king.

Now here's an interesting thing. We have here sort of a series. Jotham was a good king, and yet his son Ahaz was extremely wicked. The wicked king produces a good son, Hezekiah, who is a good king, who has a son Manasseh, who is one of the most evil of all kings. He equals Ahaz in his evil. So somehow, the fathers are not passing onto their children their trust and faith in the Lord. They're not properly communicating to their children. Yet, the children of the wicked kings, have enough sense to see how that the wickedness of their parents brought ruin and destruction, and so they are good. They become strong. But these kids that are born in the strength and the affluence of the kingdom, do not follow the examples of their fathers, the things that made them strong. So you have an interesting thing. Every other generation, you have a good king, and a bad king.

We'll make some notes on that next week, as we continue in the reigns of these kings in uh, Judah. We'll, we'll spend some time with Hezekiah. He was an outstanding king, and uh, we'll spend some time with him, as we continue next week, our study through II Chronicles. We'll probably only try to cover chapters twenty nine, and thirty, because that is the reign of Hezekiah, and we to through thirty one, we'll never make it, so we'll just cover the two chapters.

There's so much, so much for us to absorb and to learn, but the heart of the matter is this, if you put God first in your life, if you do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, you'll have a successful life. God will be with you, God will bless you, God will take care of you. If you forsake the Lord, if you live after your own flesh, your own pleasure, then you are courting disaster for your life. You're gonna end up in bondage, captivity to your own flesh.

So the bottom line is, seek the Lord, with all your heart. Serve the Lord, put Him first in your life, that you might be blessed of God, with His hand of blessing upon you. May this week, we seek the Lord, putting Him first, in Jesus' name.