

CHAPTER 25

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 25

This chapter begins with the reign of Amaziah, and some of the first acts of it, slaying those that killed his father, (^{<4201>}2 Chronicles 25:1-4), raising a large army in his own kingdom, to which he added 100,000 more he hired out of Israel, whom yet he sent home by the advice of a prophet, (^{<4216>}2 Chronicles 25:5-10), and with his own army marched against the Edomites, and obtained a victory over them, (^{<4213>}2 Chronicles 25:11,12), but the Israelites being displeased with him for dismissing them, fell on some of his cities, and slew many in them, (^{<4213>}2 Chronicles 25:13), and such was his stupidity, as to worship the gods of the Edomites he had conquered, for which he was reprov'd by a prophet, (^{<4214>}2 Chronicles 25:14-16) and being elated with his victory, he sent a challenge to the king of Israel, who accepting of it, a battle ensued, in which Judah was worsted, their king taken, and treasuries spoiled, (^{<4217>}2 Chronicles 25:17-24), and the chapter is closed with the death and burial of Amaziah, (^{<4225>}2 Chronicles 25:25-28).

Ver. 1-4. *Amaziah was twenty five years old when he began to reign*, etc.]. Of these verses, (See Gill on “^{<4214>}2 Kings 14:2-6”).

Ver. 5. *Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together*, etc.]. The inhabitants thereof:

and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; he divided the people, according to their families throughout his kingdom, into thousands and hundreds, and out of their respective families appointed captains over them:

and he numbered them from twenty years old and above; the usual age men were numbered at for war, to the fiftieth, according to Josephus; the Roman law ^{f86} obliged none to be soldiers after fifty, nor might any be dismissed before ^{f87}; the age of military men with the Romans was from seventeen to forty six, or, as some, forty five; but with the Persians from twenty as here to fifty ^{f88}:

and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield; which shows that their number was greatly decreased since the times of Jehoshaphat, (^{<4474>}2 Chronicles 17:14-18), occasioned by the wars under Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Joash; some copies of the Vulgate Latin ^{f89} have only 30,000.

Ver. 6. *He hired also one hundred thousand mighty men of valour out of Israel,* etc.] The ten tribes, judging his own army not sufficient for his expedition against the Edomites he was meditating:

for one hundred talents of silver; which amounted to 35,300 pounds sterling, and according to Beckius ^{f90} were about five florins and a half to each soldier.

Ver. 7. *But there came a man of God to him,* etc.] Who the Jews say ^{f91} was the brother of the king, Amos, the father of Isaiah, but without foundation:

saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; to war against Edom; meaning the 100,000 men he had hired, and suggesting that to have them with him would not be to his advantage, but his detriment, for the following reason:

for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit,

with all the children of Ephraim; they being idolaters, worshippers of the calves; and as they had forsaken the Lord, he had forsaken them; therefore no help could be expected from them; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord is not their help.”

Ver. 8. *But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle,* etc.] An ironical expression; if thou wilt not be advised, take them with thee, and try what thou canst do; exert all thy courage, and use thy military skill, and mark the issue:

God shall make thee fall before the enemy; notwithstanding the number of thy troops, and those of thy auxiliaries; though some take them to be spoken seriously, and read the words, “but go thou”; that is, alone, without the hired troops, and fight boldly and courageously; or otherwise “God shall make thee fall”, etc.

for God hath power to help and to cast down; to help with a few, and to cast down with many; to help without the hired Israelites, and to cast down with them.

Ver. 9. *And Amaziah said to the man of God, but what shall we do for the one hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?* etc.] They will be lost, there is no demanding them back again; this he spake with some concern, as loath to lose so much money:

and the man of God answered, the Lord is able to give thee much more than this; whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof, the gold and silver, and all the riches of it; and therefore he had no need to trouble himself about the loss of his money, which, if obedient to the will of God, he might expect it would be abundantly repaid him.

Ver. 10. *Then Amaziah separated them,* etc.] From his army, among whom they were incorporated and ranked, to wit,

the army that was come to him out of Ephraim; which he had hired of the ten tribes, these he singled out:

to go home again; to their own country:

wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger; it being a great slight put upon them, and a reproach to them, to be thus dismissed, as they thought; and especially if they understood that it was because they were idolaters; and the rather as they might have hoped to have had their share in the plunder of the Edomites.

Ver. 11. *And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people,* etc.] To go to war with the Edomites; not discouraged by the dismissal of the hired troops, but trusting in the promise and power of God, he went forth with boldness and intrepidity:

and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir, ten thousand; the Edomites; so called, not because they were the posterity of Seir, but because they dwelt in Seir, from whence they drove the descendants of Seir, and dwelt in their stead; (see ¹²⁴⁷2 Kings 14:7).

Ver. 12. *And other ten thousand left alive did the children of Judah carry away captive,* etc.] The rest of the army of the Edomites, which amounted

to the same number, fell into their hands, and they took them, and carried them off:

and brought them unto the top of the rock; very probably the same on which the city Petra, the metropolis of Edom, was built, called also Selah, (^{<1417>}2 Kings 14:7) both which names signify a rock. Josephus ^{f92} calls it the great rock in Arabia; that is, Arabia Petraea:

and cast them down from the top of the rock, that they were broken all in pieces; burst asunder, bones broken, and limb from limb separated. This sort of punishment was inflicted by the Romans on various malefactors, by casting them down from the Tarpeian rock ^{f93}; and in Greece, according to the Delphian law, such as were guilty of sacrilege were led to a rock, and cast down headlong from thence ^{f94}: and now in Turkey, at a place called Constantine, a town situated on the top of a great rock, the usual way of executing great criminals is by pushing them from off the cliff ^{f95}; (see ^{<1418>}Luke 4:29), but to use captives taken in war after this manner seems cruel and barbarous; and what should be the reason of such treatment of them is not easy to say.

Ver. 13. *But the soldiers of the army which Amaziah sent back, that they should not go with him to battle, &c.*] The 100,000 men hired out of Israel, whom he dismissed before he went against Edom:

fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Bethhoron; which, though it formerly belonged to Ephraim, had been taken by the men of Judah; they did not fall on these as they returned home, for then it would have been said from Bethhoron to Samaria: but after they had returned home, they meditated this piece of revenge for the ill treatment of them, as they reckoned it:

and smote three thousand of them; of the inhabitants of the cities, who rose up and opposed them:

and took much spoil; out of them, and went their way with it.

Ver. 14. *Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, etc.*] Instead of returning thanks to God for the victory obtained, and giving him the glory of it:

that he brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods; what were the gods of the Edomites is nowhere said in Scripture;

only Josephus ^{f96} speaks of the priests of Coze, which he says was a god of the Idumaeans:

and bowed himself before them, and burned incense unto them; which was the greatest piece of sottishness and stupidity imaginable, to worship the gods of a nation conquered by him; for since they could not save them, what help could he expect from them?

Ver. 15. *Wherefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against Amaziah*, etc.] Idolatry being always highly displeasing to the Lord; and this was a most provoking instance of it, that when the Lord had given him victory over his enemies, that he should forsake him, and worship their gods:

and he sent unto him a prophet; whether the same as before, is not certain:

which said unto him, why hast thou sought after the gods of the people which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand? and therefore it was madness in him to seek after them, and worship them.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, art thou made of the king's council?* etc.] He was not indeed one of his privy council, made so by him, but he was appointed a counsellor to him by the Lord, the King of kings, to expostulate with him about his idolatry, and to advise him to relinquish it, to whose counsel he ought to have hearkened:

forbear, why shouldest thou be smitten? bidding him hold his peace, and threatening him, that if he did not, he must expect to be smitten; that is, with death, as Zechariah the prophet was by the order of his father:

then the prophet forbore; left off speaking, only added this at parting:

and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee; being given up to hardness of heart, so as to pay no regard to the Lord and his prophets, which was a sure presage of destruction:

because thou hast done this; committed such idolatry, and persisted in it:

and hast not hearkened to my counsel; to reform from it.

Ver. 17-19. *Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice*, etc.] Not of God, nor of his prophets, but of some of his nobles like himself:

and sent to Joash--king of Israel; of his message to him here, and his answer in the two following verses, see the following notes: (See Gill on “^{<1248>}2 Kings 14:8-10”).

Ver. 20-28. *But Amaziah would not hear*, etc.] What the king of Israel advised him to, not to meddle to his hurt;

for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand [of their enemies]; Amaziah and his army into the hands of Joash and his; this was the will of God, and was brought about by his providence; and that it might be, Amaziah was given up to blindness and hardness of heart, as a punishment of his idolatry:

because they sought after the gods of Edom; he and his nobles, and many of the people following his example; from hence to the end of the chapter the same things are recorded as in (^{<1241>}2 Kings 14:11-20), see the notes there,