

Great Expectations

How we do things matters. It matters a great deal. We see this illustrated in the life of Amaziah.

Amaziah lived some 2,800 years ago. He became King of Judah, at the age of 25, on the death of his father Joash. He reigned for some 29 years in Jerusalem.

His reign started well. Like his father, he turned to God's word, especially the teachings given through Moses. However he soon faced a challenge. It concerned the way he ruled.

The people of God had often been troubled by the people of Edom. Amaziah planned a military campaign. However, although we do not know how large the Edomite army was, the number in his was not as great as it had been in the days of Asa and Jehoshaphat. His plan was to get help. He looked north to the tribe of Ephraim and hired mercenaries. It was a mistake. He soon discovered it. How? God sent a messenger.

We do not know the prophet's name. He is simply called (*2 Chronicles 25 verse 7*) a "man of God". His name is not important. The challenge he gave Amaziah is.

What did Amaziah do? He hired a force of some 100,000 men for 100 talents (*verse 6*). The men were strong, brave and able. They were "mighty men of valour". Thus, from the human point of view, things looked good. Amaziah had a sizeable army. But from the Divine perspective things were bad. Why? Amaziah made a big mistake.

The error he made we frequently make. He failed to depend upon God. That was the key lesson the prophet was sent to teach. In *verse 7* the king is told not to go to battle with the men of Ephraim. In *verse 8* he is taught to rely upon God. He is not to presume, because he has a large, brave and strong army, God will give victory. The man of God knows what God may do. He may grant victory. But he may also send defeat. Why? Because Amaziah is not to do things in his own

strength. He is to rely upon the power of the Holy Spirit (*see also Zechariah 4 verse 6*).

However he had paid 100 talents for the 100,000 men of Ephraim. If they were sent home the money would be wasted! The man of God told Amaziah not to worry. Why not? Because, as we see in *verse 9*, "the LORD is able to give" his people "much more".

Amaziah heeded the prophet's advice. However, during another period of war, he forgot the lessons learned. We frequently make the same mistake. To help us avoid not to let us seek to note the essential truths God would have us learn. There are three.

First, Amaziah was to remember God is committed to his people. He has made a covenant with them. He has promised to be their God. He will look after them. He will provide.

Secondly, Amaziah was reminded God is just. He can help or cast down. He helps those who rely upon him. He casts down those who do things their way in their own strength. We sometimes wonder why things go wrong. It is not because God forgets us. It may be because we forget to rely upon him.

Thirdly, God is kind. He showed mercy to Amaziah. A prophet was sent to help him see his mistake and to urge him to look to God. We have the Scripture. It is the prophetic word given to instruct us.

Relying upon God, Amaziah enjoyed victory. He was strong in the LORD (*verse 8*).

As we rely upon God we shall see him do something similar for us. We can expect him to preserve our school and cause it to prosper. We will see him cause the church to grow. We can have great expectations because we have such a great God.