

Survey of the Bible part 46 **2 Chronicles 25:16 - 27:1-2**

King Amaziah of Judah has just recently defeated the Edomites and instead of giving thanks and glory to God he brings the idols of the Edomites back to Judah and sets them up as his own gods in place of the one true God and Creator.

And the obvious question that he is confronted with from God is this.

2 Chronicles 25:14-15 ¹⁴ Now after Amaziah came from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought the gods of the sons of Seir, set them up as his gods, bowed down before them and burned incense to them. ¹⁵ Then the anger of the LORD burned against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, "Why have you sought the gods of the people who have not delivered their own people from your hand?"

Even if you are not spiritually attuned to giving thanks to the God of Israel of whom you are supposed to be representing before the people of God, at least have enough common sense not to bow down to the gods who were weaker than the God you represent who delivered your enemies into your hands.

Again, it's just amazing how deceitful and wicked the heart of man is outside of God doing a work in that heart.

But even after God sends a prophet to Amaziah, warning him of God's displeasure with him, Amaziah continues in his sin and ultimately he is killed for his rebellion. In his place his son Uzziah becomes king.

2 Chronicles 26:3-4 ³ Uzziah was ^asixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah of Jerusalem. ⁴ He did right in the sight of the LORD according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

How is it possible for Uzziah to be doing right in the sight of the Lord according to all that his father Amaziah had done, when Amaziah had turned his back on the Lord?

This is a reference to those things that Amaziah had done early on in his reign when we're told this.

2 Chronicles 25:2 ² He did right in the sight of the LORD, yet not with a whole heart.

And so, Uzziah actually begins his reign doing those things that were right but at some point in his reign he does something stupid and ill advised.

2 Chronicles 26:16 ¹⁶ But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

He had built up a mighty army and fortified many cities and extended the kingdom in such a way that even local kings paid him tribute.

But it isn't until he becomes strong in both a military and political sense that we see him relying on his own supposed strength instead of realizing that it is God who has blessed him.

Why does this seem to be a pattern with people?

Because the heart of man once again leans on its own understanding and wisdom and strength rather than depending on God. This is what Paul meant when he addressed the very nature of man.

Ephesians 2:1-3 ^{NAU} And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

The heart of man naturally turns from God because that heart has no interest in the one true God. It is more concerned for itself as Uzziah makes clear in our text.

The other thing to note in our text concerning Uzziah is that he appears to be doing something noble as he desires to worship God in the temple with incense.

What could possibly be wrong with that?

2 Chronicles 29:17-19 ¹⁷ Now they began the consecration on the first *day* of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they entered the porch of the LORD. Then they consecrated the house of the LORD in eight days, and finished on the sixteenth day of the first month. ¹⁸ Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed the whole house of the LORD, the altar of burnt

offering with all of its utensils, and the table of showbread with all of its utensils. ¹⁹ "Moreover, all the utensils which King Ahaz had discarded during his reign in his unfaithfulness, we have prepared and consecrated; and behold, they are before the altar of the LORD."

God has made it clear as to how He desires to be worshipped. And it is always in spirit and in truth.

Well, what is the truth of the matter concerning who can enter the temple with incense?

Only the priests of Aaron's descent.

Exodus 30:7-10 ⁷ "Aaron shall burn fragrant incense on it; he shall burn it every morning when he trims the lamps. ⁸ "When Aaron trims the lamps at twilight, he shall burn incense. *There shall be* perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. ⁹ "You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it. ¹⁰ "Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."

Numbers 16:38-40 ³⁸ "As for the censers of these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives, let them be made into hammered sheets for a plating of the altar, since they did present them before the LORD and they are holy; and they shall be for a sign to the sons of Israel." ³⁹ So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers which the men who were burned had offered, and they hammered them out as a plating for the altar, ⁴⁰ as a reminder to the sons of Israel that no layman who is not of the descendants of Aaron should come near to burn incense before the LORD; so that he will not become like Korah and his company-- just as the LORD had spoken to him through Moses.

God has chosen the means by which He must be worshipped and so even if someone has a desire to worship God it must be according to His word as a sign of respect and fear for the God who has spoken.

So, the question comes up today. How are we to worship God?

In spirit and in truth.

And what is the truth of the matter for us as to how that is to be accomplished?

Everything according to His word.

We no longer offer incense but we do offer prayer to God which is signified as incense that rises to the Lord and is pleasing to Him. We do come together as His people as we are shown to be the tabernacle in which God resides as He has taken up residence in our hearts with the Spirit of God.

We are to come before the Lord with a sacrifice of praise as we come before Him with the sacrifice for our sins, that is the sacrifice of the lamb of God who came to take away our sin, which is the only way we can come before His presence.

To worship God in spirit and in truth is to worship God through Jesus Christ our God and Savior.

Uzziah decides to worship God according to the flesh and it is his flesh that will suffer.

2 Chronicles 26:19-21 ¹⁹ But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, the leprosy broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense. ²⁰ Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he *was* leprous on his forehead; and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him. ²¹ King Uzziah was a leper to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, being a leper, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And Jotham his son *was* over the king's house judging the people of the land.

It turns out that Jotham becomes king and he seems to have gained some wisdom from being the son of Uzziah.

2 Chronicles 27:1-2 ^{NAU} Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. ² He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done; however he did not enter the temple of the LORD. But the people continued acting corruptly.

And so, aside from doing what God had condemned regarding the entering into the temple, Jotham did those things that pleased the Lord.

By the way, why was it important for only a priest to enter into the temple to offer up incense and sacrifices to the Lord?

Because of who the priest represented.

Only the priest of God can be a mediator between God and men. And since the priest represented the priest to come, that is Christ, for a mere layman to try and enter into the presence of God without the proper credentials according to God's word there is no way for entrance into God's holy presence.

Hebrews 7:11-17 ¹¹ Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need *was there* for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron? ¹² For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also. ¹³ For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar. ¹⁴ For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests. ¹⁵ And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek, ¹⁶ who has become *such* not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life. ¹⁷ For it is attested *of Him*, "YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

So, if the Levitical priests cannot offer access to the true tabernacle of God then what was the function of the Levitical priesthood?

To be a sign and a shadow of the coming Priest who would also be our prophet and king who alone can give us access to the true tabernacle. And we see this clearly at Christ's death.

Mark 15:36-38 ³⁶ Someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave Him a drink, saying, "Let us see whether Elijah will come to take Him down." ³⁷ And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. ³⁸ And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

What is the significance of God tearing this curtain in two from top to bottom uniting both the holy place and the most holy place in the temple?

God had broken down the barrier between God and men, but had also broken down the barrier between Gentile and Jew entering into the most holy place.

Ephesians 2:11-22 ¹¹ Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision " by the so-called "Circumcision," *which is* performed in the flesh by human hands-- ¹² *remember* that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For He Himself is our peace, who made both *groups into* one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, ¹⁵ by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, *which is* the Law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, *thus* establishing peace, ¹⁶ and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. ¹⁷ AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; ¹⁸ for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹ So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, ²¹ in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

When Paul speaks of the Gentiles being excluded from the commonwealth of Israel what does he mean?

He means that they didn't share in the blessings of approaching God through the priesthood. They were outside of those blessings and therefore outside of His protection and well-being if you will.

But now that "the" Priest has come onto the scene and has brought near both Jew and Gentile into one group as He tore down the barrier of the dividing wall between Jew and Gentile what does the Gentile now share in?

The commonwealth of Israel who are made fellow citizens with the saints and are now part of God's household.

Well, we know that the commonwealth of Israel as found in the O.T. has been replaced by the commonwealth of Israel as Christ now defines it in the N.T.

And so, Israel was never replaced by the Church, the church simply identifies the true Israel. That's what we saw last week as both Jew and Gentile now make up the people of God who were represented in the O.T. Israel which was a shadow of the N.T. Israel. This is precisely what Paul shows us.

Romans 11:1-3 ^{NAU} I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in *the passage about Elijah*, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³ "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE."

What was Elijah saying about Israel?

All Israel has abandoned the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Well, if all Israel has abandoned God then this automatically disqualifies them as God's people who are called Israel. Thus all Israel is gone. But notice God's response.

Romans 11:4 ⁴ But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

What has God just told Elijah who was sure that all Israel has abandoned God?

God says that I have chosen a remnant of Israel out of the broader non-believing Israel and this is the true Israel. I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL."

He has kept a people for Himself and He will be their God and they will be His people. But notice what Paul says right after this.

Romans 11:5-7 ⁵ In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to *God's* gracious choice. ⁶ But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. ⁷ What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

According to Paul's reasoning if the present Israel who have abandoned God through hardened hearts, and who are compared to the Israel of old who abandoned God, then who becomes the true Israel as God instructed Elijah and is now instructing the church at Rome full of Gentiles?

The remnant that God chooses for Himself who are now one people from both the Jews and Gentiles as the dividing walls are broken down between these two peoples. This was the mystery that was hidden for ages.

Romans 11:25-27 ⁵ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; ²⁶ and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." ²⁷ "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS."

This partial hardening has happened to whom?

Israel. What Israel are we talking about there?

The physical descendants of Abraham. And how long does this hardening last?

Until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. What is the fullness of the Gentiles?

^{NAU} **John 10:16** "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock *with* one shepherd.

"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. Which fold is Jesus speaking of there?

The Jews. So, who are the other sheep who are not of this Jewish fold?

And so, when these two folds come together how many flocks will there be under how many shepherds?

One flock one shepherd. And when Jesus says this He has just uncovered the mystery that Paul spoke of so we see that the mission of our Messiah Jesus was for the specific purpose of bringing both Jew and Gentile into one fold as He has personally chosen a people for Himself and it is not until the fullness of the

Gentiles comes to pass that God can declare, thus all Israel will be saved.

That is all of the remnant of the world who were chosen before the foundations of the world will be saved and I will raise them up at the last day.

And so, it would appear that Jotham, though technically king of the southern kingdom called Judah, and not king of Israel, is in fact part of the true Israel and will one day be raised up at the last day by Christ and thus all Israel, both Jew and Gentile will rejoice together on that day.