

## **A Thistle and a Cedar**

2 Kings 14:1-22

2 Chronicles 25

by Don Falkos

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When Amaziah son of Joash was well established as king of Judah, he executed the military officers who had killed his father. Then he prepared to go to war with Edom. He mustered the army of Judah and hired mercenaries from Israel.

A prophet warned Amaziah, "Don't take these Israelites with you. If you do, no matter how hard you fight, you will be defeated."

Amaziah protested, but the prophet replied, "The Lord can do far more for you than any number of men you could hire."

The king dismissed the mercenaries and marched to the Valley of Salt. There he won a decisive victory over the Edomites. He took some of their idols home with him, set them up, worshipped them, and offered sacrifices to them.

The Lord sent a prophet to say, "Those idols couldn't even save their own people. What makes you think they can do anything for you."

Amaziah replied, "Who asked you? Shut your mouth or I'll shut it for you!"

Basking in the glory of his victory over Edom, Amaziah said to Jehoash king of Israel, "Come and meet me in battle!"

Jehoash responded, "You are like a thistle that sent a message to a cedar, 'Let your daughter marry my son.' But just then a wild animal came by and stepped on the thistle, crushing it. Enjoy your defeat of Edom, but don't be arrogant. Stay at home, and don't ask for trouble."

Amaziah refused to listen, so the armies of Israel and Judah met in battle. Judah was utterly defeated. Jehoash marched to Jerusalem, broke down a major portion of its wall, plundered the Temple and the royal palace, and took the booty back to Samaria.

Many years later, Amaziah was assassinated, and his son Uzziah was crowned in his place.