

The One and Only Mediator
(2 Chronicles 26:16-21)
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7/26/09

Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. **Introduction:**

A. Turn to Text in 2 Chronicles, chapter 26

B. Today we will be examining a story about King Uzziah ó a story in which each and every person hearing this message can find a valuable object lesson. For in this story we see a vivid, clear depiction of :

1. Pride ó sinful pride that infect all of us. For it is a problem inherent in our very nature ó as part of fallen humanity. And in this story we have a manifestation of that which springs from the very sin nature that every one of us is born with. I am speaking of sinful pride.
2. Peril ó the peril deserved by all on that basis (the basis of our sinful pride)
3. Priest ó The remedy in the priestly office so prominent in this story that pictures the one eternal great high priest ó the one and only Mediator.

C. And that is the title of my message today, "The One and Only Mediator."

II. Text: 2 Chronicles 26:16-21

A. Background on first part of Chap. 26 speaks of

1. Uzziah was a great king who began to rule as King of Judah when he was 16 years old. He ruled for about 52 years. For the most part King Uzziah and Judah prospered greatly under his reign. He was well known, well respected and well loved by the people, including the Prophet Isaiah who was born and lived during his reign. And they all certainly considered him to be blessed of God.
2. Back in vs. 4 of this chapter, we read, that he " *did that which was right...*", meaning he dealt fairly and justly in his office as a king and he sought to obey God.
3. Verse 5 goes on to tell us that as he sought God, God made him to prosper.

II. Text, A. Background of Chap. 26 (Con't):

4. In vs. 6-15 we read of how God helped Uzziah against his enemies and how King Uzziah grew in strength. It speaks of how he built towers at several of the gates in Jerusalem and fortified them and he built towers in the desert. He loved to farm and he became wealthy, owning lots of cattle. And his army grew large and powerful and was well armed.
5. In fact, in the verse just prior to our text for today, it tells us there in verse 15, ***“And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.”***
6. The point is (as vs. 13 points out), they ***“...made war with mighty power.”*** So we have the picture of a mighty, powerful king whom God had prospered greatly ó i.e. both personally as well as in his reign. In fact, I found it interesting to learn that the name òUzziahö means òthe strength of the Lord.ö It was God who had so prospered him up until now and made him strong. And that brings us to the story we ðll consider today. So follow with me, beginning in vs. 16 where we read í

B. (Read verses 16 ó 21).

III. Pride ó Man's problem. First let's consider the problem that led to Uzziah's demise ó Pride:

- A. In vs. 16, we read how ***“...when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction:...”*** It was this pride of heart that was his undoing. We see that it was his temporal circumstances of prosperity that led to this.
 1. Now King Uzziah knew the law and God's clear command therein that none but God's appointed high priests were to enter into the holiest where the incense altar was situated? And although God had greatly blessed Uzziah, making him strong and successful, he wasn't content with the honor that God himself had bestowed upon him. I'm reminded of the famous quotation that òRiches enlarge, rather than satisfy appetites.ö And so seems to be the case with King Uzziah for he wanted to expand his honor by performing that which was forbidden to him.

III. *Pride A. (Con't):*

2. Just like Adam and Eve living in paradise, the Garden of Eden, with an abundance of fruit freely provided, even that from the tree of life, they opted to partake of the forbidden fruit in the garden. And so we see in this a manifestation of the nature of all those who fell in Adam ó the prideful, sinful nature whereby we assert our independence ó We decide what is right in our own eyes, contrary to God's specific testimony.
3. Likewise, King Uzziah treated God's appointed way, His command, with disdain, choosing to ignore it ó his actions exposing his apparent conclusion that strict adherence to the preciseness of God's prescribed way surely wasn't that big of a deal.

B. (Be turning to Heb. 7). In defiance of God's clear instructions in the law given to Moses, Uzziah, assumed and acted in the role that was specifically reserved for others ó the Levitical priesthood. Not only were God's appointed (or consecrated) priests to come from the tribe of Levi, but from the sons of Aaron among the Levites (as vs. 18 of our text makes mention of). And of course the importance of this was that like all of the other elements of that Old Covenant law given to Moses, this temporal priesthood pointed to and typified Christ, the one appointed mediator who was to come to provide eternal deliverance (not for national Israel as served by the priesthood under this temporary covenant, but for a people chosen unto eternal salvation, referred to in the Bible as "spiritual Israel.")

C. Now to consider God's commentary on this, follow with me in his word in Heb. 7:23-28 (Read). So we see the seriousness of Uzziah's sinful, prideful action is due unto the fact that the priestly office he dared to fulfill typified that which only the eternal high priest, the promised Messiah, was appointed to fulfill, was capable of fulfilling and would fulfill in His obedience unto death.

D. Now like Uzziah, when things are going well for us, our tendency is to not need God quite so much ó to become indifferent toward the very God that blessed us. But notice in our story, that King Uzziah's prosperity and resultant pride (while making him indifferent to God's specific commands concerning His appointed priests, it had not left him indifferent toward religion, for he desired to perform that which he knew to be of a religious nature. And so, consider the parallels that can be drawn with the religion of today that comes in the name of Christ, who use this same book (the Bible), who know many truths concerning Christ, yet who, by their doctrine, (i.e. ó by how they presume sinners are saved (their gospel) ó they unwittingly deny the success of the work of mediation that Christ came to accomplish.

III. *Pride (Con't)*:

- E. We sadly see the manifestation of sinful man's determination (his pride) as religious men and women who invoke the name of Christ, cling to the notion that they make the distinguishing difference in their own presumed eternal salvation, that it depends upon a contributing work of their own hand, rather than solely depending upon and resting in the successful, fully accomplished, redeeming work of a suitable Substitute, the One Mediator ó the Lord Jesus Christ.
- F. Now as we consider this story's application to us in our day, we may tend to excuse ourselves by thinking this would only apply to those greatly blessed in their temporal circumstances (like King Uzziah). But think again. Consider that this religious pride afflicts not just the high and mighty who have achieved some level of notoriety as it pertains to their temporal circumstances, but it also afflicts the outwardly meek and lowly ó those who seemingly have no reason to presume they are particularly blessed based upon their outward circumstances ó at least as they compare themselves to others who may be more prosperous. But, the reality is that this religious pride afflicts us all, for by nature we all pridefully presume to be religiously strong as we all initially imagine there is way in which we, by our own free will choice, act of faith, our dedication to or involvement in religion, etc., might accomplish that which was appointed to be accomplished by our one appointed high priest, the one mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why we're all called to repentance, because of the truth of Prov. 16:25 ó ***“There is a way that seems right to a man...”***
- G. Now many who profess to be of the Christian faith (& particularly those labeled Protestants) accurately understand that the Old Covenant was abolished at the advent of Christ and that accordingly there is no longer any need for an earthly priest, no longer a God appointed earthly mediator to picture Christ for He has already come. And yet many of these same folks make no pretense as they boldly assert that Christ's work of mediation (which would more accurately be depicted as a mere attempt at mediation) is ultimately ineffective for most for whom He lived and died. In fact, it is only deemed to be effective for those who rise to the occasion and do something to appropriate that unto themselves (whether it be by the exercise of their faith or something else done by or through them). And that is to presume that the real work of reconciliation before God is accomplished by their act of faith ó a work performed outside that of God's appointed mediator ó a work that they attribute to making the real difference in their salvation.

III. *Pride (Con't)*:

- H. While many, like me in years past, never would openly deny my need for Christ as a mediator or even recognize that fact within my own heart and mind, my doctrine exposed no less. My doctrine, my gospel at that time, didn't really require the mediation of Christ. Instead, I imagined the pivotal issue in my salvation hinged upon that which I would do for myself so as to appropriate God's blessing ó not upon the work of Christ, the one and only Mediator.
- I. Well, as sinners born in darkness, we are unaware of our complicity with Uzziah unless and until God graciously confronts us with the true Gospel. We only become aware by God-given faith under the sound of the true gospel you're hearing even today. So, this is vitally important and I pray that even in the hearing of this Gospel message that God might grant someone spiritual eyes to see ó to be made aware. This religious pride we all possess in common with Uzziah should be evident in the honest answers (whether openly admitted or simply held close, harbored within one's heart) to the question concerning the basis of their hope. Why do you believe you will be eternally blessed in heaven's glory or what distinguishes you from those who perish? Let me ask you, would your honest answer be like one of the answers that I once would have given and that so many would give even now if they were honest with themselves. Is your real hope (if you are honest) derived from things such as the following?:
1. I remember when under great conviction, I walked down a church aisle and professed faith in my Christ before men and I was baptized to profess the same.
 2. I'm truly sorry for my sins ó even sorry enough to actually reform. I've cried genuine tears of remorse over my sins and asked God to forgive me.
 3. I prove my faith by my pocketbook ó putting my money where my mouth is. I donate money to the church (a tithe or more than a tithe)
 4. I walk my talk ó I'm moral and truly sincere about my faith.
 5. Because I believe ó pure and simple

And the list could go on (ferently pray, read my Bible daily, etc.) Listen, While most if not all those things are admirable in and of themselves, if you take comfort from any of those things as playing any causal role in your acceptance before God ó if things such as these (things done by you, in you, or through you the sinner ó form any part of the ground or cause of your salvation, (whether you openly acknowledge it or not ó but if in your heart of hearts you know that to be case), then I pray today you'll see from the story of King Uzziah, that such notions place you in his company, for you too have dared to usurp the role that God the Father appointed to be accomplished by the one and only mediator, the God-man, the Lord Christ Jesus, for you've presumed to make the difference that only He could and did make in His obedience unto death ó by the shedding of His precious blood.

III. *Pride (Con't)*:

- J. Consider how in Paul's letter to Timothy, in I Tim. 2:5-6, we read: *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.”* Here the *“all”* is referring to all sorts of both Jews and Gentiles to whom He will be declared and revealed in due time of in each generation of This being self evident when you read this verse in the broader context).
- K. Now a *“ransom”* is that which is paid to free someone from punishment or captivity. It's not an attempt made, but a price paid. And all those for whom He gave Himself a ransom are justified before God on that basis alone. And to deny its success is to not only diminish, but to scorn the infinitely valuable blood of Christ as having been an inadequate payment in the eyes of God's law and justice.
- L. But graciously for some, God brings the Gospel our way and initially its message cuts deep as light is shed upon the awful sinfulness of those religious thoughts we had considered to be good. Perhaps that is taking place for some even today, for you're hearing God's gospel. Now, how will you react? Notice that when King Uzziah was confronted of he became angry and determined to proceed according to his own way of his way that lead to his destruction.
- M. Sadly, so may react just like King Uzziah. They react in anger and in determination to proceed their own way toward destruction. It often surfaces in this form, *“If what you are saying is true then that would mean that my beloved grandmother or some other dear friend or relative was lost, (or perhaps most importantly of yours truly) and I won't have it of I'll take my chances relying on my profession of faith, rather than looking to what you (and the scriptures) point us to of the object (not the act, but the object) of God-given faith of the faith that was purchased at the cross as a free gift for all those for whom Christ lived and died.”* And so they persist in the way that seems right to them of only to find it's a way that ends in alienation of eternal banishment from the presence of God, being cut off, just as is pictured by Uzziah as he was cast out as a leper.

IV. Peril: Now let us briefly consider this peril that awaits all who persist in this pride.

- A. In our story today, leprosy arose immediately in Uzziah's forehead. Lepers were to be sent out according to the Law of Moses to live separately, without the camp or outside the city. Not only did Azariah and the 80 priests immediately usher him out, he even began to leave on his own, seeing that God's judgment had been rendered upon him, knowing that he was to be cast out and alienated.

IV. Peril (Con't):

- B. It says that he dwelt the rest of his days in a *severalö* house. This word *severalö* means *free*. So it was free house or a separate house ó free from the company and conversation of men, free from the business of government which his son took over. Interestingly, in asserting his independence from God, he certainly became independent ó actually cut off ó free from fellowship with others ó alienated. I am reminded here how God gives us what we want. The tragic problem stems from our naturally sinful *wantsö* and desires. Uzziah got his independence alright ó his freedom, so to speak.
- C. This is serious business. I hope you can see how any who would inject themselves into fulfilling the role that Christ alone was appointed to fulfill, the role that Christ alone was able to fulfill, and the accomplishment that Christ alone did fulfill, are thinking and acting in concert with King Uzziah when his heart was lifted up to destruction.
- D. And I hope you can see that the end likewise is just as perilous. It is to be cut off, alienated and to be justly given that which our stubborn self-reliance, independence, and pride deserves ó freedom alright ó freedom from the eternal presence of a holy God who cannot and will not commune with sinners who dare to approach His presence apart from the exclusive mediation of the one and only mediator between God and men ó the man Christ Jesus.

V. Priesthood ó We ~~ve~~ considered now (1) the pride of man that leads to our demise & (2) the Peril that awaits all who persist therein. So now let ~~s~~ consider the Priesthood, particularly as it typified the Precious, Eternal Priesthood of Christ:

- A. It ~~s~~ important that we consider not only the peril of following in Uzziah ~~s~~ footsteps, but it ~~s~~ important to see the provision made by God ~~s~~ one and only Mediator. You see, none are scared into the kingdom by a mere discussion of the peril of eternal destruction. That ~~s~~ because we really can ~~t~~ appreciate the evil of the way that seems right to us apart from beholding the remedy in the truth of salvation by grace ó by examining what it really takes for a sinner such as you and I to be reconciled before a holy God. Apart from an understanding of that, our natural persuasion of the way that seems right continues to seem right and in that state of darkness, we ~~re~~ unable to comprehend the perilous road we all begin on. We only behold the peril as we see the provision.

V. Priesthood (Con't):

- B. And oh what a provision! Only the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ as the one mediator appointed by God could and did do the work of mediation ó the work of reconciling lost sinners unto a holy God by the offering up the sacrifice of His own humanity in satisfaction to God's law and justice. That is the incense which is a sweet (satisfying) fragrance in the nostrils of God, as it is referred to in Eph. 5:2.
- C. Turn with me to Hebrews chapter 10. As we consider now the priesthood of Christ, let's read some more of God's commentary on this. Look with me first at:
1. Heb. 10:1: ***For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.***
 2. And then at verse 4: ***For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*** So, here again we see that the priests appointed under the Old Covenant foreshadowed the mediation of Christ. And their own work of mediation in fulfillment of the ceremonial Law of Moses accomplished nothing eternally speaking ó that being a sharp contrast to the accomplishment of the one eternal priest they pictured.
 3. Continue now down in verse 9 ff: ***Then said he, <i.e. ó Christ> Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, <referring to the Old Covenant> that he may establish the second. ¹⁰By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. ¹¹And every priest <i.e. ó under the Old Covenant> standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: ¹²But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ¹³From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ¹⁴For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.***
- D. So, let's consider the glory of God in Christ as we examine what it took for Him to serve out His priestly office so as to provide an everlasting, eternal redemption for the sins of His people. We had to have:
1. A suitable Substitute ó A priest appointed by God who is eternal ó the God-man ó who must be made under the law to redeem them that are under the law (Gal. 4:4-5). He had to become incarnate and take into union with His Deity a perfect humanity. And so we see that we must have a í
 2. A sinless sacrifice for perfect satisfaction to be made on our behalf ó Holy, harmless, undefiled one, without sin, (as we read earlier back in Heb. 7:26). And yet he who would bear the demerit of the sins of others (as we just read, having ***...offered one sacrifice for sins...***)

V. Priesthood, D. What it Took (Con't):

3. That requires the glorious truth of imputation ó of the sins of a people being charged to Him, for He offered Himself up without spot (Heb. 9:14), having produced no sins Himself. And just as Christ died for sins that He had no part in producing but were imputed or charged to Him, likewise for all those for whom He died, they possess a righteousness, the merits of His obedience unto death ó a merit they had absolutely no part in producing but made theirs in the same way ó by God's gracious imputation or charging to their account the satisfying merits of their Substitute. So, in His mediatorial work, we see the vital gospel principles of Substitution, Satisfaction, and Imputation.
4. And we need an eternal high priest ó "***...he hath perfected <them> forever...***" ó as we just read. He is the one as we read in Heb. 7 who "***ever liveth to make intercession...***" And so as the eternal Mediator, He keeps believers looking to Him by the power of God the H/S, having attained and maintaining for us the eternal security of all for whom He lived and died ó and that forevermore!

VI. Closing:

What wonderful news! Perhaps even today, God will use this story of King Uzziah to cause someone to evaluate their own eternal hope as to whether in their heart of hearts they are looking solely to the Savior and His finished work of mediation.

As some of you may recall, in Isaiah chapter 6 we have the record of the Prophet Isaiah's calling and conversion. And there, King Uzziah's death is mentioned in connection with the time of Isaiah's conversion. Accordingly, many believe that God used this tragic event of Uzziah's demise and ultimate death in the providential working out of His purpose to reveal Himself to Isaiah.

And so my prayer today is that God might likewise use this same story you've heard today, just as it may have been used for the Prophet Isaiah ó to reveal Himself as He is uniquely known through the Person and mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ ó the one and only Mediator!

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself ó the Bible.