

Correction – 2 Chronicles 26:16-21

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Read = 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5

B. The Confronter's Bible

1. There are now dozens of different translations & versions of the Bible.
 - a. There're the basics: KJ, NKJ, NASB, NIV, CEV, The Living Bible, the Message, to name a few.
 - b. Then there are the *niche* Bibles which appeal to a certain group, like . . .
 - 1) The *Spirit-Filled Life* Bible for Charismatics.
 - 2) The *Apologetics* Bible for defenders of the Faith.
 - 3) The *Archaeological* Bible, for the hard-core historians.
 - 4) There's the *Inductive Study* Bible for serious Bible students.
 - 5) The *Prophecy* Bible
 - 6) The *Recovery* Bible for this in recovery form addiction.
 - b. Then there's the *Rainbow* Bible, recently renamed the *Full Color Bible*, for counselors.
 - 1) It's *pre-highlighted*,
 - 2) With a dozen different colors according to topic;
 - 3) God, discipleship, sin, outreach, etc.
2. Well, they just came out with a new flavor of the Full-color Study Bible called the *Confronter's Rebuking* Bible.
 - a. The next time you need to correct a backslider, you'll have a ready reference.
 - b. No longer shall you hem & haw with subtle hints about their error.
 - c. With the Confronter's Bible you can flip right to passages pre-highlighted according to topic
 - 1) *Rebukes* are in *passion pink*.
 - 2) *Sins* are in *stop-sign red*.
 - 3) *Warnings* about straying from the straight & narrow are in *off-white*.
 - d. There's even a handy index that assists in figuring out the best way to confront someone.
 - 1) Should you do it anonymously? Only if the offender is over six feet & 200 lbs.
 - 2) Should you do it at a restaurant? Yes, if the person is prone to outbursts.
 - e. If the rebukee doesn't respond to your "speaking the truth in love," try one of these Biblical alternatives -
 - 1) Like *Nehemiah*, pull their hair (Neh. 13:25),
 - 2) Like *Samson*, set their fields on fire (Judg. 15:5),
 - 3) Or, as *Elisha* with the kids who called him "Old Baldy", call out the grizzlies (2 Kings 2:24).

C. Correction

1. Few of us like to either give or receive correction.
2. While each will admit we aren't perfect, we don't want anyone pointing out **WHERE**.

3. So, it's important we realize correction is a part of the *normal Christian life*.
4. Paul reminded Timothy that *the Spirit confronts us through the Word of God*, & how it was his duty as a pastor to *challenge* those entrusted to him to *keep growing* in the faith.
5. He said the last days would be marked by *an attitude among the religious* that gave up on truth in the pursuit of justification for their own selfish desires.
6. Such people *reject* correction.
7. The challenge to us this morning is: How do we receive correction?
 - a. Do we take it humbly?
 - b. Or do we get our defenses up & strike back?
8. There's a story in 2 Chr. 26 that illustrates the importance of receiving correction with a meek and humble spirit.

II. TEXT

A. Set The Scene

1. The king of Judah at this time is Uzziah.
2. Like several of Judah's kings, he got off to a good start but in his later years went bad.
3. We saw this with Solomon.
 - a. When new to the throne, he felt in over his head.
 - b. So he humbly looked to God for help.
 - c. God blessed that dependence greatly.
 - d. But after many years of amazing blessing, Solomon began to think it was his own skill that produced success. He turned from trust in God to in himself.
4. He became the template for several of his descendants who walked a similar path.
5. They began well but went bad--& prove the saying that *power corrupts*.
6. *Uzziah's greatest success* was in renewing Judah's military might which had suffered badly under a few of the previous kings.
7. Judah became so strong under Uzziah that in v. 15 we read . . .

B. V. 15 –

And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped → till he became strong.

1. Uzziah's reign was a time of *military innovation*.
 - a. The great fear of ancient warfare was the *siege*,
 - b. When a city was surrounded by enemies for weeks & even months, in an attempt to starve them into submission.
 - c. Uzziah installed clever new weapons that would make it difficult for an enemy to lay siege to Jerusalem.
2. Judah became so secure & successful under his reign his name & fame went far & wide.
3. All this blessing was because of God's *favor* poured out on Uzziah's dependence on Him.

4. But once Judah regained her prominence as one of the main powers of the region, Uzziah let go of his dependence on the Lord, shifting it instead to *himself*.

C. V. 16

But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

1. Uzziah's reign was one of the longest, *52 years*.
2. It took *decades* to restore the military & defenses,
3. So what we read here took place in his last years.
4. **Success ruined him**, as it does in many people.
 - a. Uzziah began to think it was his own skill that had made him famous.
 - b. Judah was strong, he assumed, because **HE** was!
5. His pride swelled, as v. 16 says, all the way to the point of ruin.

6. **Where Uzziah differed** from the other kings who went bad, is that **they turned from God to idols**.
 - a. Uzziah didn't turn to idols; he went in a different direction -
 - b. He took it upon himself to worship the true God—but in a way **he wanted to** rather than the way **God had provided**.
7. In the Mosaic law, God made it clear only the priests were allowed into the temple.
8. No one else was permitted there → on pain of death.
9. But Uzziah had grown so arrogant, he thought he was **above** the rules that applied to others.
 - a. He went to the temple grounds, grabbed one of the incense censers used by the priests
 - b. And walked straight into the Holy Place where the table of showbread, golden lampstand, & the altar of incense were.
10. Some commentators think the reason Uzziah did this was **because** of his success in rebuilding Judah's military.
 - a. In the ancient world, battle wasn't just the contest of 2 armies vying for supremacy.
 - b. It was a contest to see **whose god was superior**.
 - c. In many of the pagan nations around Israel, the **king** was also the **chief priest**.
 - d. The idea was that by **uniting** the offices of king & chief priest, it increased the power of the military.
 - e. Since Uzziah was all about making Judah stronger, that may be the justification he used for his actions.
11. But God knew his **real motive** – He'd grown proud, to the point of a ruinous arrogance.

D. Vs. 17-18

¹⁷So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were 80 priests of the LORD; valiant men. ¹⁸And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for

the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.”

1. The high priest Azariah led all the priests who were on duty to confront King Uzziah.
 - a. They reminded him *only* the priests were allowed to enter the sacred rooms of the temple.
 - b. They told him what he was doing *would not*, indeed **COULD** not be blessed by the Lord because sin can *never* be blessed by God.
 4. It's Uzziah's *reaction* to their rebuke we want to consider, but let's not miss an important point here.
 - a. Uzziah thought he could worship God any way he wanted → but he was *wrong*.
 - b. God can only be worshiped the way He's shown.
 - c. We cannot come to God *our way*. We must come **His** way, or we cannot come *at all*.
 5. Many people think all they need to gain eternal life is to *be sincere, & not hurt anyone*.
 - a. But we don't pave our own road to God; we must travel *the route He's made*.
 - b. That way is Jesus.
 - c. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life," He said, "No one comes to the Father but through Me."
 6. Who are you trusting in this morning for heaven? Jesus or yourself?
 7. Back to our story: Uzziah's been rebuked by the priests for a serious error. How will he react?
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E. V. 19

Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar.

1. There he is, caught with the proverbial "smoking gun" is in his hand; in this case it's *actually smoking*.
 - a. Standing beside the incense altar, he's *inches away* from the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of holies where the glory of God hovers over the ark of the covenant.
 - b. Because v. 16 says his heart was lifted up *to destruction*, his *intent* was probably to go through the veil right in to the presence of God, which would have resulted in his immediate death.
 - c. Azariah's arrival & rebuke **saved his life**.
2. But Uzziah isn't thankful; he's angry—furious he got caught & steamed anyone would dare challenge him.
 - a. After all, he's the king, the ruler, top-dog, the boss!
 - b. Doesn't Azariah know who he's messing with? This is the famous & powerful Uzziah!
3. Uzziah never paused to consider if what Azariah said was *true* – only that he

didn't want to hear it.

4. But wait – what the priests said & did was right on!
 5. Uzziah *ought* to have humbly repented.
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6. Note how the writer puts it;

While he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead . . .

7. This was an *instantaneous judgment* from God -
 - a. *Not just for* his sin of entering the temple *but for* his rejection of the priests' rebuke.
 - b. If Uzziah had repented of his pride, this judgment would not have befallen him.
 - c. It was the *maintaining of his pride & refusal to repent* that resulted in leprosy –
 - d. A disease which drove him *not only* from the temple but even from the palace.
 - e. In grasping for what was not his, he lost what he had.

F. Vs. 20-21

²⁰ And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him. ²¹ King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

1. Ambition, enflamed by pride, is a curse that leads to great loss.
 2. But it's Uzziah's *response to the rebuke* of the priests we need to consider today.
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G. Receiving Correction

1. As I said earlier, *correction* is a part of *the normal Christian life*.
2. Because none of us will be perfect this side of heaven, we're constantly in *need* of change.
3. As Romans 8:29 says, we're being conformed *into* the image of Christ, it's a process.
4. Sometimes change happens in small things; other times, we need a major overhaul.
5. The only way we can make *many* of the changes *necessary* to be conformed to Christ is if we're made *aware* of what needs changing.
6. **How** will we react when that awareness comes? What attitude do we bring to being corrected?
7. When someone points out something wrong in you, how do you respond?
 - a. That someone may be the *Holy Spirit*. It may be your *spouse*.
 - b. That someone may be a *parent*, or a *child*.
 - c. It may be a *friend*, another Christian, or an *unbeliever*!
 - d. It doesn't really matter **WHO** is doing the correction. The issue is: **How do we respond?**

8. Are we like Uzziah?
 - a. Do we grow angry & hostile?
 - d. Do we fire back an “Oh yeah?!? Well, who died & made you God?”
9. Or do we listen & respond with humility?
 - a. **Knowing & owning** the fact we *aren't* perfect.
 - b. And that having others occasionally remind us of that **is a good thing.**

H. Called To Correct

1. In Romans 15:14 Paul writes . . .

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

- a. **Admonish** means to “call attention to something because it’s urgent & important.”
- b. It was used of those who warned others of impending danger.

2. In Hebrew 3:12-13 we find this . . .

Beware, brethren,

- a. Who’s this to – believers or unbelievers? Believers.
- b. Right – so watch what he says next.

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

- c. As Uzziah did! He *started out* good but *went* bad.
- d. This is a warning, an admonition.
- e. The person who *starts well* can *go bad & end poorly.*
- f. How can we stay on the right path?

but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

- g. Again, just as Uzziah was.

3. In v. 5 of 2 Chr. 26, we’re told that *Uzziah sought God all the days of the prophet Zechariah.*

4. The godly Zechariah encouraged the king to stay faithful to God.

- a. He exerted a healthy spiritual influence in Uzziah’s life.
- b. But when he died, that influence was never replaced.
- c. There was no one around to check Uzziah’s inclination toward pride.

5. Each of us needs that kind of positive spiritual influence.

6. That’s why the writer of Hebrews calls us to **exhort one another daily!**

- a. He says we need to do it while today **IS today** & not put it off saying, “I’ll get around to that *tomorrow.*”
- b. Today is yesterday’s tomorrow. So tomorrow *is* today. (I read way too much science fiction.)

7. The word “exhort” here means to ***come alongside*** someone in peril for the purpose of directing them into a safer path.

8. In 1983, Korean Air Flight 007 took off from Anchorage, Alaska headed for Korea.

- a. The pilots forgot to adjust the autopilot after take-off so the plane was set on a course just slightly off its flight plan.
- b. Because the drift was so slight, they passed over the last Alaskan

- directional beacon at the very edge of the allowed deviation – so no warnings sounded.
- c. But several hours later, they were hundreds of miles off course—flying though restricted Russian airspace when the Russians were test firing a new missile.
 - d. The Russians shot it down – killing 269 people.
9. Few of those who fall away from the Faith are tight with God on Sunday night, then wake up on Monday morning & decide to become hard-core apostates.
 - a. They slip away slowly. It often takes month.
 - b. And it's usually some *minor thing* that causes them to deviate from the Lord.
 - c. But with time, they get farther & farther away, & into dangerous territory.
 - d. We need other believers who'll come alongside when they see us drifting.
 - e. People who'll say, "Hey, what's up? How can I help put you back on track?"
 10. Americans put a premium on *privacy*.
 - a. So in the Body of Christ the reaction many have when corrected is – "What business is it of yours?"
 - b. The answer to that is → "You ARE my business, & I am yours!"
 - c. That's what these verses in Romans & Hebrews are saying.
 - d. We're called to *care* for one another, to pray for & admonish each other; even to rebuke one another when we get way off track.
 - e. Remember what Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim 4:2 →

Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

11. When someone close to you is drifting in their walk with God, do the **loving thing** & restore them by this 3-step process . . .
 - 1) **Pray for them** – that the Spirit would convict them & give them a repentant heart.
 - 2) **Pray for yourself** – that God would give you the right attitude & words to share.
 - 3) **Then do it.**
12. Here's a good test to make sure your motives are right before you confront. Ask → **Why** are you confronting them?
 - Is it to **put them down**, or **build them up**?
 - If it's not out of a genuine concern to **restore them** to a solid walk with Christ & His people, then go back to Step 2 & pray till your own heart is right.

I. When Corrected

1. Now, let's turn the tables: How ought we respond when corrected?
2. We should listen, **humbly**.
3. Then take what's said to the Lord & ask Him to show us the truth of the matter.
 - a. Not everything a person has to say may be valid.
 - b. But the crucial issue is – **HOW do we react** – with humility or hostility?
4. Don't respond in anger to those who confront you, even when **they** don't come in the right spirit.

5. 2 wrongs don't make a right.
 6. **Humility** is a thing of great beauty to the Lord.
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7. The **underlying sin** that fuels all others is **pride**.
 8. No where will pride be more evident than in **how we respond to criticism**, which **everyone** is going to face at some point or another.
 9. If criticisms are like thrown bricks,
 - a. **Pride** throws them back.
 - b. **Humility** uses them to build a better character.

III. CONCLUSION

A. **The Family**

1. The NT presents a picture of the church as a loving & devoted family.
2. Jesus said the greatest witness to the world of the reality of our faith in Him is the love we have for one another.
3. The premium our culture places on **individualism & privacy** often work at cross-purposes to following Jesus.
4. When individualism **isolates** us from one another, we've lost one of the most powerful dynamics of the Christian faith.
5. There's a deep hunger in the human heart for intimacy with others - a longing to know & be known, & loved just as we are.
6. God wants His Church to be a **new community**, where people lay aside the games & masks & are real with each other.
 - a. Where dedication to each other is expressed in **provoking** one another toward God.
 - b. Where our love for one another isn't based on "what have you done for me lately," →
 - c. But on "You're my brother/sister in Christ!"