

# 2 Chronicles 26 - Uzziah's Good Reign in Judah; Uzziah's Pride

IV. Judah's Kings (2 Chr 10:1—36:23)

(2) Reform and apostasy in Judah (2 Chr 12:1—36:14)

(J) Uzziah becomes a leper after usurping priestly prerogatives (26:1-23)

## 2 Chronicles 26

(J) Uzziah becomes a leper after usurping priestly prerogatives (26:1-23) (Cf. 2 Kings 14:21-22; 15:1-7)

**1** Now all the people of Judah took **Uzziah**, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah.

**1** And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.

**1** All the people of Judah made Uzziah king in place of his father Amaziah. Uzziah was sixteen years old at the time.

**1** Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.

- "...Uzziah" - a good king, not a great one. There was no revival during his reign; he began well but ended poorly

— It was during this period that Isaiah began his ministry. He was commissioned at the death of Uzziah (Is 6:1).

**2** He built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king lay down with his fathers.

**2** He built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers.

**2** He rebuilt Eloth and restored it to Judah after King Amaziah had been laid to rest with his ancestors.

**2** He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

**3** Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah of Jerusalem.

**3** Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jechiliah of Jerusalem.

**3** Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned for 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah. She was from Jerusalem.

**3** Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

- Apparently the leadership of Judah, fearing early in Amaziah's reign that he was unstable and incompetent, made his young son Uzziah vice-regent

— In other words after Amaziah had reigned only six years (796-790 BC) Uzziah, then (in 790 BC) 16 years old, was appointed second to the king

— From then until Amaziah's death (767 BC) they reigned together for 23 years (790-767 BC). Then Uzziah reigned alone for 29 years until his own death.

4 He did what was right in the sight of the LORD, in accordance with everything that his father Amaziah had done.

4 He did right in the sight of the LORD according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

4 He practiced what the LORD considered to be right, following the example set by his father Amaziah's accomplishments.

4 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.

5 He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him successful.

5 He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God prospered him.

5 Uzziah kept on seeking God during the lifetime of Zechariah, who taught him how to fear God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosperous.

5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

- Zechariah, however, was stoned to death by some Judeans before the death of Amaziah's predecessor Joash (24:21-22), who died in 796 BC

— Uzziah, then, obviously was of a teachable age before 796 BC (by 796 BC he would have been 10 years old)

— His major independent accomplishments could not have come about until his sole regency began in 767 BC, so these are the ones with which the historian is particularly concerned

### **Uzziah's Initial Successes**

**6** Now he went out and fought against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities in *the area of Ashdod* and among the Philistines.

**6** Now he went out and warred against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities in *the area of* Ashdod and among the Philistines.

**6** One time Uzziah went out and battled the Philistines. He tore down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod, and built cities in the Ashdod area among the Philistines.

**6** And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines.

**7** God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, and the Meunites.

**7** God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, and the Meunites.

**7** God helped Uzziah defeat the Philistines, the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, and the Meunites.

**7** And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Meunims.

**8** The Ammonites gave tribute to Uzziah, and his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong.

**8** The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah, and his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong.

**8** The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah, and his reputation extended as far as the border with Egypt as he became stronger and stronger.

**8** And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.

**9** Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress, and he fortified them.

**9** Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the corner buttress and fortified them.

**9** Uzziah also built towers in Jerusalem, at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the Angle and fortified them.

**9** Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them.

**10** He also built towers in the wilderness and carved out many cisterns, for he had much livestock, both in the lowland and in the plain. *He also had* plowmen and vinedressers in

the hill country and the fertile fields, for he loved the soil.

10 He built towers in the wilderness and hewed many cisterns, for he had much livestock, both in the lowland and in the plain. *He also had* plowmen and vinedressers in the hill country and the fertile fields, for he loved the soil.

10 He also built watchtowers in the wilderness and had many cisterns hewed out, since he also possessed large herds, both in the Shephelah and in the midland plains. He had many farmers and vinedressers throughout the hills and fertile lands because he loved farming.

10 Also he built towers in the desert, and dugged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.

11 Moreover, Uzziah had an army ready for battle, which entered combat by divisions according to the number of their muster, recorded by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the official, under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's officers.

11 Moreover, Uzziah had an army ready for battle, which entered combat by divisions according to the number of their muster, prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the official, under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's officers.

11 Uzziah kept a standing army, equipped for battle, garrisoned in divisions according to an organizational structure devised by his royal secretary Jeiel and his officer Maaseiah, who reported to Hananiah, one of the king's commanders.

**11** Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains.

12 The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant warriors, was 2,600.

12 The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant warriors, was 2,600.

12 The number of senior leaders of the ancestral houses of his elite forces numbered 2,600.

12 The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred.

13 Under their direction was an army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy.

13 Under their direction was an elite army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy.

13 Uzziah commanded an army of 307,500 who could fight formidably on behalf of the king against any enemy.

13 And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.

14 Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slingstones.

14 Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones.

14 In addition, Uzziah equipped the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and stones for use in slings.

14 And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones.

- Uzziah reorganized an army of 307,500 men (similar in size to Amaziah's army, 2 Chr 25:5) into well-trained and well-equipped divisions under 2,600 leaders

15 In Jerusalem he made machines *of war* invented by skillful workmen to be on the towers and the corners, for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. So his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped until he *was* strong.

15 In Jerusalem he made engines *of war* invented by skillful men to be on the towers and on the corners for the purpose of shooting arrows and great stones. Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he *was* strong.

15 He also had various siege engines built by skilled designers and placed them on the towers and on the corner ramparts that could fire arrows and very large stones. His reputation spread far and wide, and he was marvelously assisted until he grew very strong.

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.

- He pioneered the use of certain advanced weapons such as catapults to hurl arrows and large stones a great distance. All this enhanced his reputation and increased his strength.

### **Uzziah's Arrogance and Apostasy (Cf. 2 Kings 15:4-7)**

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

**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.

**16** But after he had become strong, in his arrogance he acted corruptly and became unfaithful to the LORD his God, and he dared to enter the LORD's Temple to burn incense

on the incense altar.

**16** But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

- Unfortunately, Uzziah took personal credit for what God had given him
- His pride led to self-exultation; he put himself above God

17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him, and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men.

17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men.

17 Azariah the priest ran after him, along with 80 of the LORD's valiant priests,

17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

- The inevitable nemesis, pride, proved to be his downfall (Cf. Prov. 16:18; 18:12)
- Apparently he began to depend on men and weapons rather than on the Lord
- He even presumed to offer incense in the temple, a sacrilege for which Azariah the priest and 80 other priests roundly condemned him

18 They opposed Uzziah the king 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 have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been untrue and will have no honor from the LORD God."

18 They opposed Uzziah the king 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 been unfaithful and will have no honor from the LORD God."

18 and they opposed King Uzziah. "Uzziah, it's not for you to burn incense to the LORD," they told him, "but for the priests to do, Aaron's descendants who are consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary now, because you have been unfaithful and won't receive any honor from the LORD God."

18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

- He was unfaithful to the Law (2 Chr 26:16-18), which limited this function to the priest (Ex 30:7-8)

— The Mosaic Law permitted only the priests to offer incense in the temple (Ex 30:1-10; Num 3:10,38; 16:40; 18:1-7)

— The Davidic kings could offer sacrifices on the bronze altar in the temple courtyard, as could the ordinary Israelites, but Uzziah's presumptuous act of offering incense in the holy place constituted rebellion against God's will

19 But Uzziah, with a censer in his hand for burning incense, was enraged; and while he was enraged with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the altar of incense.

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.

19 Uzziah flew into a rage while he held in his hand a censer to burn incense. As he got angry at the priests, leprosy broke out all over his forehead right in front of the priests beside the incense altar in the LORD's Temple.

**19** Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

- Leprosy was one way to exclude the king from the Temple! (Cf. Lev 13)

- Evidently Uzziah wanted to become more than a king, namely, a priest-king, like other Egyptian and northern Israelite kings (Cf. 1 Kings 12:33)

20 Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead; and they quickly removed him from there, and he himself also hurried to get out because the LORD had stricken him.

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.

20 So Azariah the chief priest and all the priests stared at Uzziah, who was infected with leprosy in his forehead! They all rushed at him and hurried him out of the Temple. Uzziah was in a hurry to get out anyway, because the LORD had struck him.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

21 King Uzziah had leprosy to the day of his death; and he lived in a separate house, afflicted as *he was* with leprosy, for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. And his son Jotham *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

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.

21 King Uzziah remained a leper until the day he died. Because he was a leper, he lived in a separate residence and remained disqualified to enter the LORD's Temple. His son Jotham served in the royal palace, judging the people of the land.

**21** And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several 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.

- Uzziah's leprosy meant that he could no longer enjoy personal worship at the temple

— Rather than caring for the temple and building it up, as God had said David's son would do, Uzziah could not even enter its courtyard

— The king's leprosy was an outward evidence of his inward uncleanness (Cf. Is 6:5)

Uzziah's sin was not a moral failure, like David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah had been. He committed it in an act of worship. This illustrates the fact that departure from any aspect of God's will constitutes serious sin. "To obey is better than a sacrifice" (1 Sam 15:22; Cf. 2 Sam 6:6).

**22** Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, the first to the last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written.

**22** Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first to last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written.

**22** Now the rest of Uzziah's accomplishments, from first to last, have been recorded by Amoz's son Isaiah the prophet.

**22** Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write.

- He had to yield the reins of government to Jotham his son; he was in quarantine the rest of his life

23 So Uzziah lay down with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the grave which belonged to the kings, for they said, "He had leprosy." And his son Jotham became king in his place.

23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the grave which belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." And Jotham his son became king in his place.

23 Uzziah died, as had his ancestors, and they buried him alongside his ancestors in a grave in a field that belonged to the kings, because they said, "He was a leper." Uzziah's

son Jotham became king to replace him.

23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

- Even in death he was ostracized because of his disease and was buried near his fathers (ancestors), not with them (Cf. 21:20; 24:25; 28:27)

Uzziah's reign was the fourth in a group of kings who began well but ended poorly: Asa, Joash, Amaziah, and Uzziah. Their histories show the reader how difficult, yet how important, it is to hold the confidence of right standing with God, that we have at the beginning of our lives, firm until the end (Cf. 1 Cor 10:12; Heb 3:14).