

# 2 Chronicles 26 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES					
The Kingdom of Israel					
From Splendor to Disaster					
Splendor			Disaster		
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36		
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Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years		

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Click Chart from Charles Swindoll](#)

1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2 Samuel				1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**2 Chronicles 26:1 And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.**

- all the (KJV): 2Ch 22:1 33:25
- Uzziah (KJV): 2Ki 14:21 15:1-7 1Ch 3:12, Azariah, Mt 1:8,9, Ozias
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

#### Related Passages:

2 Kings 14:21 All the people of Judah took **Azariah**, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah.

2 Kings 15:1-7 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah became king. 2 He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem. 3 He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 4 Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 5 The LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper to the day of his death. And he lived in a separate house, while Jotham the king's son was over the household, judging the people of the land. 6 Now the rest of the acts of Azariah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? 7 And Azariah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Jotham his son became king in his place.

#### INTRODUCTION:

**Raymond Dillard:** The earlier history [2 Kings] had reported that Uzziah did "right" and enjoyed one of the longest reigns of the Judean kings. The Chronicler elaborates by demonstrating the tokens of divine blessing that Uzziah enjoyed; divine help, victory in warfare, a large army, wealth, fame, and building programs (2Ch 26:5–15) are all items in the author's usual repertoire for portraying the blessings that accrue to fidelity. For the Chronicler, however, such a righteous king should not have suffered a debilitating and disgraceful disease. Where the earlier history had reported Uzziah's leprosy without comment (2 Kgs 15:5), the Chronicler explains the anomaly by reporting Uzziah's pride and his cultic sin as the inciting reason for his disease.

**John Olley:** Military successes, agricultural development, and defense buildup flowed from Uzziah's decision to "seek God" (using *darash*; 2Ch 26:5 [2x]), following instruction "in the fear of God" from an otherwise unknown Zechariah (2Ch 26:5–15). At that time, "God helped him" (2Ch 26:7, 15), matching his alternative name, Azariah ("the Lord helped"), so he became "strong" (2Ch 26:8,

15). The contrast is blunt: "But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God" (2Ch 26:16). His actions denied his name, Uzziah ("the Lord is my strength"). Then follows an occasion in which "the Lord struck him," leading to a skin disease (2Ch 26:16–21; cf. 2 Kings 15:5, which gives no reason). When he was rebuked for usurping a priestly function in the temple, he was "angry" (za'ap, "rage"; 2Ch 26:19). As with his father and grandfather, past faithfulness and success did not guarantee continuing humility before God. God's word was rejected.

**Frederick Mabie:** The forty-year overlap between the reigns of Uzziah in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel indicate a time of significant peace and prosperity for both kingdoms, aided by geopolitical realities such as weakness in Aram and regional distractions in Assyria. In addition to the prosperity of this period, the geographical extent of both Israel and Judah expanded considerably during the long reigns of these kings. In the northern kingdom, Jeroboam II extended the northern border of Israel to Lebo Hamath (including taking Damascus) and recaptured previously lost territory in Transjordan (cf. 2Ki 14:25, 28). In the southern kingdom, Uzziah was able to prevail over several Philistine cities in the west (including Gath and Ashdod), the Ammonites in the east, and Arabians and Meunites in the south. The Chronicler notes that these victories caused Uzziah's fame to spread "as far as the border of Egypt" (2Ch 26:8). Uzziah also rebuilt the Judean maritime port at Elath (2Ch 26:2; cf. 2Ki 14:22) and fortified the southern Negev and wilderness regions (2Ch 26:10). As a result of these territorial gains by Israel and Judah, the combined geographical extent of the northern and southern kingdoms approximated the extent seen at the height of the united monarchy under David and Solomon. Moreover, the resulting control of trade routes enhanced the prosperity of both Israel and Judah.

**Martin Selman:** This is the last of three successive reigns which concludes with a period of disobedience and disaster, and it seems that nothing is able to prevent Judah and their kings sliding into sin and judgment. Idolatry, rejection of the prophets, violence, and pride repeat themselves with devastating regularity.

**And all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the place of his father Amaziah-** Observe the chart above of the **Kings of Israel and Judah** and you will note that 7 kings are in **BOLD FONT** which identifies these kings as those who were generally good kings, and these are found only in Judah. All the rest were bad! The saying proved true for most of the kings "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." A person's sense of morality lessens as their power increases. Uzziah is also called Azariah (1 Chr. 3:12) and it may be that the Chronicler uses Uzziah in this chapter because of the possible confusion with the name of the High Priest, Azariah (cf. 2 Chr. 26:17,20; so named only in Chronicles). Almost everything we know about Uzziah is from Chronicles.

It should be noted that in Uzziah's time Joel, Amos, and Hosea were prophesying, and in the year of his death Isaiah began to minister (Amos 1:1; Hosea 1:1; Isaiah 6:1).

**August Konkell:** Uzziah (2 Chron 26:1, etc.) is also known as Azariah. The names seem to be interchangeable. . . The difference may not have had significance, because both words from which the names are derived ('zr and 'zz) can mean "victory" or "strength." The short form of Yahweh at the end of his name indicates it is the strength of God. . . The name of his mother (Jekoliah) similarly means the Lord (Yah) is able (ykl).

**Martin Selman on all the people of Judah took Uzziah** - Some difficulty is usually implied when the people (2Ch 26:1) are involved in putting a new king on the throne (cf. 2Ch 22:11; 33:25; 36:1), perhaps connected here with Amaziah's defeat (cf. 2Ch 25:21-24). However, the idea that the king could be chosen by the will of the people was never entirely lost in Judah.

**Morris** - Uzziah is the same as Azariah (2 Kings 14:21; 15:1). His name is mentioned by Tiglath-Pilezer on one of the Assyrian inscriptions.

**Believer's Study Bible** - This event occurred in 792 B.C. when Amaziah was taken captive in Israel (25:23). The unusual expression "took Uzziah ... and made him king" implies an extraordinary measure in a critical situation.

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### **Matthew Henry Notes: Chapter: 2Ch 26**

This chapter gives us an account of the reign of Uzziah (Azariah he was called in the Kings) more fully than we had it before, though it was long, and in some respects illustrious, yet it was very briefly related, 2 Ki. 14:21; 15:1, etc. Here is,

- I. His good character in general (2Ch 26:1-5)
- II. His great prosperity in his wars, his buildings, and all the affairs of his kingdom (2Ch 26:6-15).
- III. His presumption in invading the priests' office, for which he was struck with a leprosy, and confined by it (2Ch 26:16-21) even to his death (2Ch 26:22, 23).

2Ch 26:1-15

We have here an account of two things concerning Uzziah:-

## I. His piety.

In this he was not very eminent or zealous; yet he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. He kept up the pure worship of the true God as his father did, and was better than his father, inasmuch as we have no reason to think he ever worshipped idols as his father did, no, not in his latter days, when his heart was lifted up. It is said (2Ch 26:5), He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who, some think, was the son of the Zechariah whom his grandfather Joash slew. This Zechariah was one that had understanding in the visions of God, either the visions which he himself was favoured with or the visions of the preceding prophets. He was well versed in prophecy, and conversed much with the upper world, was an intelligent, devout, good man; and, it seems, had great influence with Uzziah. Happy are the great men who have such about them and are willing to be advised by them; but unhappy those who seek God only while they have such with them and have not a principle in themselves to bear them out to the end.

## II. His prosperity.

1. In general, as long as he sought the Lord, and minded religion, God made him to prosper. Note,

(1.) Those only prosper whom God makes to prosper; for prosperity is his gift.

(2.) Religion and piety are very friendly to outward prosperity. Many have found and owned this, that as long as they sought the Lord and kept close to their duty they prospered; but since they forsook God every thing has gone cross.

2. Here are several particular instances of his prosperity:-

(1.) His success in his wars: God helped him (2Ch 26:7), and then he triumphed over the Philistines (those old enemies of God's people), demolished the fortifications of their cities, and put garrisons of his own among them, 2Ch 26:6. He obliged the Ammonites to pay him tribute, 2Ch 26:8. He made all quiet about him, and kept them in awe.

(2.) The greatness of his fame and reputation. His name was celebrated throughout all the neighbouring countries (2Ch 26:8) and it was a good name, a name for good things with God and good people. This is true fame, and makes a man truly honourable.

(3.) **His buildings.** While he acted offensively abroad, he did not neglect the defence of his kingdom at home, but built towers in Jerusalem and fortified them, 2Ch 26:9. Much of the wall of Jerusalem was in his father's time broken down, particularly at the corner gate. But his best fortification of Jerusalem was his close adherence to the worship of God: if his father had not forsaken this the wall of Jerusalem would not have been broken down. While he fortified the city, he did not forget the country, but built towers in the desert too (2Ch 26:10), to protect the country people from the inroads of the plunderers, bands of whom sometimes alarmed them and plundered them, as 2Ch 21:16.

(4.) **His husbandry.** He dealt much in cattle and corn, employed many hands, and got much wealth by his dealing; for he took a pleasure in it: he loved husbandry (2Ch 26:10), and probably did himself inspect his affairs in the country, which was no disparagement to him, but an advantage, as it encouraged industry among his subjects. It is an honour to the husbandman's calling that one of the most illustrious princes of the house of David followed it and loved it. He was not one of those that delight in war, nor did he addict himself to sport and pleasure, but delighted in the innocent and quiet employments of the husbandman.

(5.) **His standing armies.** He had, as it should seem, two military establishments.

{1.} A host of fighting men that were to make excursions abroad. These went out to war by bands, 2Ch 26:11. They fetched in spoil from the neighbouring countries by way of reprisal for the depredations they had so often made upon Judah,

{2.} Another army for guards and garrisons, that were ready to defend the country in case it should be invaded, 2Ch 26:12, 13. So great were their number and valour that they made war with mighty power; no enemy durst face them, or, at least, could stand before them. Men unarmed can do little in war. Uzziah therefore furnished himself with a great armoury, whence his soldiers were supplied with arms offensive and defensive (2Ch 26:14), spears, bows, and slings, shields, helmets, and habergeons: swords are not mentioned, because it is probable that every man had a sword of his own, which he wore constantly. Engines were invented, in his time, for annoying besiegers with darts and stones shot from the towers and bulwarks, v. 15. What a pity it is that the wars and fightings which come from men's

#### QUESTION - [Who was King Uzziah in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - King Uzziah in the Bible was one of the good kings of Judah. His father was [King Amaziah](#), and his mother was a woman named Jecoliah, from Jerusalem. Uzziah was the father of [King Jotham](#). Ministering during Uzziah's reign were the prophets Hosea, [Isaiah](#), Amos, and [Jonah](#). The kings in the northern kingdom of Israel during his time were Jeroboam II, [Zechariah](#), [Shallum](#), Menahem, Pekahiah, [Pekah](#), and [Hoshea](#). Uzziah is also called [Azariah](#) in 2 Kings 14:21.

King Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for 52 years in Judah from approximately 790 to 739 BC. He "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" as his father Amaziah had done (2 Chronicles 26:4). King Uzziah sought the Lord "during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God." This Zechariah is most likely a godly prophet to whom Uzziah listened. As long as Uzziah made a point to seek God, God made him prosperous (2 Chronicles 26:5). Unfortunately, after Zechariah died, Uzziah made some mistakes later in his life.

King Uzziah in the Bible is shown as a wonderfully intelligent and innovative king, under whom the state of Judah prospered (2 Chronicles 26:6–15). He was used by God to defeat the Philistines and Arabs (verse 7), he built fortified towers and strengthened the armies of Judah (verses 9 and 14), and he commissioned skilled men to create devices that could shoot arrows and large stones at enemies from the city walls (verse 15). He also built up the land, and the Bible says he "loved the soil" (verse 10). The Ammonites paid tribute to King Uzziah, and his fame spread all over the ancient world, as far as the border of Egypt (verses 8 and 15).

Unfortunately, King Uzziah's fame and strength led him to become proud, and this led to his downfall (2 Chronicles 26:16). He committed an unfaithful act by entering the temple of God to burn incense on the altar. Burning incense on the altar was something only the [priests](#) could do. By attempting to do this himself, Uzziah was basically saying he was above following the Law. It was not a humble thing to do. Eighty courageous priests, led by a high priest named Azariah, tried to stop the king: "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the Lord God" (2 Chronicles 26:18). Uzziah became angry with the priests who dared confront him. But, "while he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead" (verse 19). Uzziah ran from the temple in fear, because God had struck him (verse 20). From that day to the day of his death, King Uzziah was a leper. He lived in a separate palace and was not allowed to enter the temple of the Lord. His son, Jotham, governed the people in his place.

King Uzziah is also mentioned in the book of Matthew as one of the ancestors of Joseph, Jesus' legal father (Matthew 1:8–9). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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[Gotquestions.org](#) - **Azariah** was a common man's name in Bible times. The name Azariah means "Yahweh has helped." Names were often given for spiritual reasons. For example, an "ah" added to a name was significant because it was part of Yahweh's name. When God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah, He was giving them His name as part of His covenant with them (Genesis 17: 4-5, 15-16).....

Another Azariah, also called Uzziah, was a king of Judah (2 Chronicles 26). Historians speculate that he reigned from 783-742 B. C., much of that time as co-regent along with his father, Amaziah. He was 16 years old when he began to reign. He was a good king and helped return the people to the worship of Yahweh alone. For that reason, God allowed him to reign as king for 52 years, significantly longer than most kings ruled. Second Chronicles 26:5 says, "And as long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success." However, in verses 14-16, things changed: "But when Uzziah grew powerful, his arrogance led to his own destruction. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense." Despite his name and despite his earlier adherence to the laws of God, his heart grew proud. He couldn't handle the success God gave him and began to believe that he was responsible for the good things in his life.

We can learn from Azariah's name that simply beginning well does not ensure a lifetime of obedience to God. Even having the name of the Lord as part of our heritage does not free us from the responsibility to live up to that name. We may be born into a Christian home, learn about Jesus from nursery school, and walk faithfully for a time, but God places a high value on faithfulness. Enduring to the end is important (Matthew 24:13; James 5:11; 2 Timothy 2:12). When the Lord is part of our identity, we must live out our days in a way that continues to honor His name.

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**James Smith - UZZIAH; or, FAILURE THROUGH PRIDE. 2 Chronicles 26.**

"The fall thou darest to despise—  
May be the angel's slackened hand

Has suffered it, that he may rise  
And take a firmer, surer stand;  
Or, trusting less to earthly things,  
May henceforth learn to use his wings."  
—Procter.

Uzziah was but a lad of sixteen when he was crowned king of Judah. His reign was a long one, extending over fifty-two years. It was good for him that he came under the godly influence of the clear-visioned Zechariah, the burden of whose message was, "If ye forsake the Lord ye cannot prosper" (chap. 24:20). Who can reckon up the full value of that life, which has been illumined with a definite message from God. Zechariah's word had burned its way into the heart of young Uzziah, for in his days he sought God (2Ch 26:5). The story of his life reveals to us—

### **I. An Encouraging Testimony.**

The writer of the Chronicles tells us that, "As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (2Ch 26:5). As long as God got His true place in the life and work of Uzziah, there were no interruptions to the steady march of his rising prosperity. All true and abiding prosperity is "God-made," and the condition of it is seeking to know and how to do His will. Mark that it was "as long as he sought the Lord," and no longer that the divine benediction rested on him and his work. It is ours to go on trusting; it is His to go on blessing.

### **II. An Assuring Confirmation.**

"He was marvellously helped till he was strong" (2Ch 26:15). God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians (2Ch 26:7), to build towers, and to dig many wells (v. 10). He also gave him a great host "that made war with mighty power to help him against the enemy" (2Ch 26:13). The help of God is intensely practical. They are always marvellously helped that are helped of God. It is surely God's purpose to make those strong who seek Him, that His will may be done in them. God will still bear them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts (distributions) of the Holy Ghost (Heb. 2:4). "Be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

### **III. A Terrible Fall.**

"But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction" (2Ch 26:16). It is a great privilege to be helped of God and made strong, but every privilege has its corresponding temptation and danger. Peter was made strong to walk on the sea, but even then he began to sink. Elijah was made strong to overcome the wicked works of Ahab, yet afterwards he fled before the wrath of Jezebel. Yes, Uzziah fell.

**1. THE CAUSE.** "His heart was lifted up." Lifted up through pride and self-confidence. As long as he sought the honour of the Lord, God lifted him up, but now that he seeks to honour himself by assuming the priestly office he falls from the grace of God (2Ch 26:18). His position as king gave him no right as priest. A man's worldly position gives him no authority or fitness for the holy ministry. Uzziah, in his presumption, was setting aside the revealed will of God. He must have known that the Levites had been chosen of God from among the children of Israel to do the service of the tabernacle. A solemn warning had also been given: "The stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (Num. 18:6, 7). But, in his own name, and in his own strength, he would go, so his pride led to his fall. It is of the nature of self-righteousness to despise the work and office of the Priestly Saviour.

**2. THE EFFECT.** "He was a leper unto the day of his death" (2Ch 26:21). He was wroth, and would not go back when Azariah the priest remonstrated with him, but when the Lord smote him with leprosy "he hastened to go out" (2Ch 26:20). Instead of his work being accepted of God, he was smitten with a curse, and driven out from His presence with a lifelong brand of sin upon him. Like many other lepers, the plague was in his head. Having been smitten with a sense of his presumption and sin, God did not need to cast him out of His holy place, for he himself hastened to go out. The holy presence of God is no place of comfort and rest for the unforgiven sinner. Heaven is no home for those who ignore the work of Christ, who is our Great High Priest. He is the One Mediator between God and man; the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man can come unto the Father but by Him. It was Uzziah's own sin that "cut him off from the house of the Lord" (2Ch 26:21). It is the sin of putting proud self in the place of the Lord's Anointed that kindles the wrath of God, and cuts that soul off from fellowship with Him. The man who sets aside God's appointed way of life does it to his own destruction. "There is none other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

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**John Butler - 2 Chronicles 26—Reign of Uzziah.** He was called Azariah in the account of his reign given in Second Kings. This account of his 52 year reign is much fuller than the report in Second Kings. •Faith: he sought the Lord. •Freedom: he freed Israel of many enemies. •Fortifying: he built up defenses in many cities. •Fear: other nations feared him and gave gifts to him. •Farming: Uzziah “loved husbandry [farming]” (v. 10) and did much in this area. •Forces: his armed forces were many and mighty and had the latest equipment. •Fame: “his name was spread far abroad” (v. 15). •Failure: this was the great blot on his life. It includes the place of his sin (he intruded into the priests’ office); the pride for his sin (he was puffed up by his successes and this helped cause his sin); the protest of his sin (Azariah and other priests protested Uzziah’s sinful act); the punishment for his sin (he was made a leper the rest of his life and had to dwell in a separate place because of it).

**2 Chronicles 26:2 He built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers.**

- Eloth (KJV): 2Ch 8:17 2Ki 14:22 16:6, Elath
- restored (KJV): 2Ch 25:23,28

Eloth (Elath)

## UZZIAH PROSPERS

**He built Eloth and restored it to Judah after the king slept with his fathers-** Eloth (Elath) was a valuable port on the [Gulf of Aqaba \(map\)](#).

**Bob Utley** - "Eloth" This is an alternate name for Elath, a city at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba, close to Ezion-geber. Solomon had started a commercial fleet in this area (1 Kgs. 9:26-28) and Jehoshaphat tried to restart it, but failed (2 Chr. 20:35-37). Apparently Uzziah was also attempting to restart these lucrative trade routes. Edom had earlier captured this area but Amaziah defeated Edom and his son recaptured the area.

**Walton on Eloth** - Elath (or Eloth) was the seaport constructed by Solomon at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba (see comment on 2 Chron 8:17). It was closely associated with the nearby port of Ezion Geber. It opened trade for Judah with Arabia, Africa and India. Uzziah apparently attempted to revive the Red Sea trade instituted by Solomon. ([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)-page 447)

**Martin Selman:** “Eloth” was an important port at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba, very close to Ezion-Geber where Solomon and Jehoshaphat had kept ships (2 Chr. 8:17-18; 20:35-37). Uzziah’s reclaiming it for Judah signified two things. - It brought Amaziah’s unfinished Edomite business to an end (2 Chr. 21:8-10; 25:11-12), and - symbolized the beginning of a prosperity unparalleled in Judah since the days of Solomon

**2 Chronicles 26:3 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.**

- Uzziah (KJV): Isa 1:1 6:1 Ho 1:1 Am 1:1 Zec 14:5
- Jecoliah (KJV): 2Ki 15:2,3, Jecholiah

**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.**

**Bob Utley** - "he reigned fifty-two years" However, the number includes (1) co-reign with his father Amaziah (2) co-reign with his son, Jotham.

**2 Chronicles 26:4 He did right in the sight of the LORD according to all that his father Amaziah had done.**

- according to all (KJV): 2Ch 25:2

## POSITIVE MORAL



## EVALUATION

**He did right in the sight of the LORD according to all that his father Amaziah had done** - The next verse gives us a major part of the secret of his spiritual success.

**Morris** - It is striking that many of Judah's kings, beginning with Solomon and including such stalwarts as Asa, Joash and Amaziah, started their reigns doing "right in the sight of the LORD," then later descended into compromise with paganism or into outright rebellion against God's Word. This same phenomenon is often noted among modern Christian leaders--not only among political leaders--but among religious and educational leaders as well.

**Right in the sight - 25x** - Deut. 12:25; Deut. 12:28; Deut. 13:18; 1 Ki. 15:5; 1 Ki. 15:11; 1 Ki. 22:43; 2 Ki. 12:2; 2 Ki. 14:3; 2 Ki. 15:3; 2 Ki. 15:34; 2 Ki. 16:2; 2 Ki. 18:3; 2 Ki. 22:2; 2 Chr. 14:2; 2 Chr. 20:32; 2 Chr. 24:2; 2 Chr. 25:2; 2 Chr. 26:4; 2 Chr. 27:2; 2 Chr. 28:1; 2 Chr. 29:2; 2 Chr. 30:4; 2 Chr. 34:2; Acts 4:19; Rom. 12:17

**2 Chronicles 26:5 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.**

- he sought God (KJV): 2Ch 24:2 Judges 2:7 Ho 6:4 Mk 4:16,17 Ac 20:30
- had (KJV): Ge 41:15,38 Da 1:17 2:19 5:16 10:1
- visions (KJV): Heb. seeing
- and as long (KJV): 2Ch 15:2 25:8 1Ch 22:11,13 Ps 1:3

**He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding through the vision of God**- This is not the famous the post[exilic prophet Zechariah who wrote the prophetic book. We do not know who this was but he apparently did function like the priest Jehoiada who was a powerful influence on the life of Joash

**THOUGHT** - While believers today do not have personal prophets or priests to keep us on the straight and narrow highway of holiness (Isaiah 35:8), walking worthy of the calling with which we have been called (Eph 4:1+), we do have the entire "prophetic" Word of God to guide us daily in the way of righteousness and holiness and truth! And unlike Jehoiada and Zechariah, this "prophet" never dies, but will follow us all the days of our life, the "hound of Heaven," continually speaking to us and guiding us. Oh, how grateful we should be that God has left us with His eternal, immutable, powerful Word which is now our life! (Dt 32:47+, cf Mt 4:4+, Lk 4:4+).

**Bob Utley** - YHWH spoke to Uzziah, both by prophet and by priest (cf. 2 Chr. 26:17). Initially he listened to Zechariah but later rejected the message of Azariah, the High Priest (v. 19).

**and as long as he sought the LORD, God prospered him** - This is a conditional statement. The critical time phrase is **as long as!**

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, is this not a principle we too can practice? That's rhetorical of course! We must (enabled by His Spirit) daily practice this principle of seeking God in His Word and in prayer. The chronicler advocates "double seeking" (just as in 2Ch 26:5!) "Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually." (1Ch 6:11) You will experience the good hand of the LORD and He will prosper you, spiritually for sure and possibly also materially (but this is less important than being spiritually rich).

**Bob Utley** - This is a central theme of Chronicles. It expresses the performance-based Mosaic covenant (i.e., the two ways, cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28; 30:15,19; Psalm 1). Notice the "blessings" are conditional through time (cf. 2 Chr. 15:2).

**Morris - sought the LORD.** Uzziah's rebellion, after a particularly long and successful reign, was halted by the sudden judgment of lifelong leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:21). The principle that material prosperity accompanies faithfulness to God, and vice versa, was apparently applicable to the kings of Judah and Israel in most cases. This principle may possibly apply to modern heads of state as well, but certainly cannot be applied to Christians in general (note all the martyrs listed in Hebrews 11). God's true rewards for his faithful servants await the future life. (**ED: YES THAT IS TRUE, BUT WE CAN EXPERIENCE SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY EVEN NOW AND THAT SHOULD BE OUR DESIRE AND GOAL IN THIS SHORT LIFE!**)

**Raymond Dillard:** Uzziah, like Joash before him (2Ch 24:2), had one particular adviser who helped him to remain faithful to Yahweh. Nothing more is known of this individual, unless he is identified with the Zechariah who served as a witness for Isaiah (Isa 8:2); however, the statement that Uzziah sought Yahweh "during the days" of Zechariah is best understood as implying that he had



died during the reign of Uzziah.

**Martin Selman:** We read that, under Zechariah's influence, the Lord gave Uzziah success. The Hebrew text reads literally: "the Lord God made him prosper." The Hebrew verb used is *tsalach*, which literally means "to break out." In some contexts the verb is related to the working of the Holy Spirit in a person's life, as in the case of Samson, about whom we read: "The Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power."

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### Till He Became Strong

His fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong. —2 Chronicles 26:15

In George MacDonald's fairy tale *Lilith*, giants live among normal people. These giants must conduct their daily affairs very carefully. When they sleep, their snoring is disruptive. When they turn over, houses may be crushed under their weight.

In the Bible, Uzziah became a "giant" of a man after becoming king at age 16. The keys to his success are recorded in 2 Chronicles 26. His father Amaziah set a good example for him (2 Chronicles 26:4). The prophet Zechariah instructed him (2 Chronicles 26:5). He had an army of fighting men and capable generals who helped him (2 Chronicles 26:11-15). And God prospered him (2 Chronicles 26:5).

Clearly, King Uzziah became a "giant" through the Lord's blessing. But after attaining success, he grew careless and stumbled badly. The clue to his demise is found in the phrase "he was marvelously helped till he became strong" (2 Chronicles 26:15).

Those last four words serve as a dire warning to us all. Uzziah's "heart was lifted up, to his destruction" (2 Chronicles 26:16). He usurped the priestly duties and became leprous (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

We have all been marvelously helped—by our Lord God, by those He has given to set an example for us, and by those who serve alongside us. When we become strong, we must take heed, or we too will stumble. (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

When all goes well and I feel strong,  
Oh, help me, Lord, to see  
That I must place my confidence  
In You and not in me.  
—Anon.

I have never met a man who has given me as much trouble as myself.  
—D. L. Moody

**2 Chronicles 26:6 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.**

- the wall of Gath (KJV): 2Sa 8:1 1Ch 18:1
- Jabneh (KJV): Jabneh, or Jamnia, was given to the tribe of Dan; and was situated between Lydda and Azotus. It is now called Yebna, and is described as "a village about twelve miles distant from Jaffa, (Joppa,) in a fine open plain, surrounded by hills, and covered by herbage. On sloping hills of easy ascent, by which the plains were bordered, Yebna, Ekron, Ashdod, and Askalon were in sight."
- about (KJV): or, in the country of, 1Sa 5:1,6



See GATH & ASHDOD  
[Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) (Click to enlarge)

## BEGINNING OF A LIST OF UZZIAH'S SUCCESSES

**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.** The list of Uzziah's successes demonstrates YHWH's blessings.

**John Olley** This section's (2Ch 26:6-15) key theme is seen in the repetition of words from 2Ch 26:7– 8 in 2Ch 26:15b: - “fame” (Hb. shem, “name”), - God’s “help” (‘azar), and - “strong” (khazaq).

**Andrew Hill:** The report of Uzziah’s prosperity (2Ch 26:6–15) has no parallel in 2 Kings. The litany of achievements attesting divine favor include military victory over Judah’s archenemies (2Ch 26:6–8), extensive building activity and agricultural bounty (2Ch 26:9–10), and the marshalling of a large, well-trained, and well-equipped army (2Ch 26:11–15). The unit is framed by a formula of prosperity that highlights Uzziah’s “fame” and “power” (2Ch 26:8, 15). In combination these two epithets are a recipe for pride and eventual selfdestruction, since a proud heart tends to “forget the LORD” (Deut. 8:14).

**Walton - military successes.** Although there are no other literary sources which describe Uzziah’s victories over the Philistines, Arabs and Meunites, there is archaeological evidence of destruction at the Philistine city of Ashdod, which may have been done during the time of Uzziah. There is also evidence that Uzziah constructed fortresses in these newly conquered territories. Gath (Tell es-Safi; see comment on 1 Sam 5:8), Ashdod and Jabneh form a triangle about ten or fifteen miles on each side that dominates the northern section of the Philistine plain directly west of Jerusalem. Tell Mor near the Philistine city of Ashdod provides one example of such a fortress. Since Uzziah was not able to expand north because of the power of Israel under Jeroboam II, he turned his attention to the west and south, subduing people groups that had taken advantage of previously unstable conditions in Judah([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)- page 447)

**2 Chronicles 26:7 God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, and the Meunites.**

- God helped (KJV): 2Ch 14:11 1Ch 5:20 12:18 Ps 18:29,34,35 Isa 14:29 Ac 26:22
- the Arabians (KJV): 2Ch 17:11 21:16

**God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, andthe Meunites** ([note](#)) - Their capital was Maan, 12 mi SE of Petra.

**Raymond Dillard:** These verses (2Ch 26:6-8) summarize Uzziah’s foreign policy. His conquests were oriented to the west, south, and southeast, a fact that fits well with the rule of a powerful Jeroboam II to the north. Uzziah’s conquest of Jabneh suggests that he regained control of the area through which Jehoash of Israel had attacked his father Amaziah (2Ch 25:21). Jabneh is probably to be equated with Jabneel (Josh 15:11); the site would later be called “Jamnia” and would become a leading center of Jewish learning and religious life after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Uzziah’s campaigns against the Philistines not only represented the on-going conflict of traditional enemies; no doubt Uzziah had the important strategic purpose of reasserting some control over the

international coastal highway (“Via Maris”). A similar strategic goal to control a major artery of international commerce influenced the campaign against Elat (2Ch 26:1–2).

**Andrew Hill:** It appears that economic concerns motivate King Uzziah’s imperialistic agenda. Wresting control of the coastal highway from the Philistines and the recapture of Elath (2Ch 26:1–2) have significant implications for Judah’s role in international commerce.

**J.A. Thompson:** Significant conquests of Uzziah directed against Philistines and Arabs on his southwestern borders are not taken up. His conquests in these areas were strengthened by the construction of fortresses in conquered territory. The whole paragraph was intended to demonstrate how Uzziah prospered in foreign affairs. Military activity to the north was not possible because Jeroboam II was too strong for Uzziah.

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**Helped (05826)** ['azar](#) means to protect, aid, help, succor, support, give material or nonmaterial encouragement. **Azar** often refers to aid in the form of military assistance and in many instances refers to **help** from Jehovah as illustrated by the uses below. Webster says to **help** means to aid, to assist, to succor (see below), to lend strength or means towards effecting a purpose. To relieve; to cure, or to mitigate pain or disease. To remedy; to change for the better. The [Septuagint](#) translates **'azar** most often with the word group that includes [boáo](#), [boetheo](#), [boethos](#), all conveying the general idea of running to the aid of one who cries out for help (e.g., see He 2:18-note which uses [boetheo](#)) which is similar to the English word **succour** (from Latin *succurrere* = to run up, run to help) means literally to run to and so to run to to support, to go to the aid of, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to succor a besieged city; to succor prisoners.

**The Theological Lexicon of the OT** notes that...Connotations can vary from “to support” (Ezra 10:15), “to help out” (Josh 1:14; cf. Ge 2:18), “to assist” (Ge 49:25) to “to stand with to deliver” (Da 10:13; cf. Lam 4:17) and “to come to aid” (2Sa 21:17; cf. Ps 60:13 = Ps 108:13). To this extent, the Hebrew terms coincide with the English terms “to help” and “help.” (Jenni, E., & Westermann, C. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (872). Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers)

**Azar -76v- ally(1), furthered(1), granted(1), help(38), helped(19), helper(6), helpers(2), helping(1), helps(8), protect(1), restrains(1), supporting(1).** Gen. 49:25; Deut. 32:38; Jos. 1:14; Jos. 10:4; Jos. 10:6; Jos. 10:33; 1 Sam. 7:12; 2 Sam. 8:5; 2 Sam. 18:3; 2 Sam. 21:17; 1 Ki. 1:7; 1 Ki. 20:16; 2 Ki. 14:26; 1 Chr. 5:20; 1 Chr. 12:1; 1 Chr. 12:17; 1 Chr. 12:18; 1 Chr. 12:19; 1 Chr. 12:21; 1 Chr. 12:22; 1 Chr. 15:26; 1 Chr. 18:5; 1 Chr. 22:17; 2 Chr. 14:11; 2 Chr. 18:31; 2 Chr. 19:2; 2 Chr. 20:23; 2 Chr. 25:8; 2 Chr. 26:7; 2 Chr. 26:13; 2 Chr. 26:15; 2 Chr. 28:16; 2 Chr. 28:23; 2 Chr. 32:3; 2 Chr. 32:8; Ezr. 8:22; Ezr. 10:15; Job 9:13; Job 26:2; Job 29:12; Job 30:13; Ps. 10:14; Ps. 22:11; Ps. 28:7; Ps. 30:10; Ps. 37:40; Ps. 46:5; Ps. 54:4; Ps. 72:12; Ps. 79:9; Ps. 86:17; Ps. 107:12; Ps. 109:26; Ps. 118:7; Ps. 118:13; Ps. 119:86; Ps. 119:173; Ps. 119:175; Isa. 30:7; Isa. 31:3; Isa. 41:6; Isa. 41:10; Isa. 41:13; Isa. 41:14; Isa. 44:2; Isa. 49:8; Isa. 50:7; Isa. 50:9; Isa. 63:5; Jer. 47:4; Lam. 1:7; Ezek. 30:8; Dan. 10:13; Dan. 11:34; Dan. 11:45; Zech. 1:15

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**Meunim, Meunite.** People living in Edom (Mt Seir, 1 Chr 4:42) who were dispossessed of their rich pasturelands by the Simeonites (v 41). Later, Meunites from Edom attacked Judah’s King Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:1); later still, King Uzziah of Judah defeated them (26:7, KJV Mehunims). Their original land possession, association with Arabs and Ammonites, and prolonged hostility recall Judges 10:11, 12, where “Maonites” are named oppressors of Israel. This word, by Hebrew rules of vocalization, could well become “Meunites,” suggesting Maon (Ma’in, Maan) in the Edomite area south of the Dead Sea as their home.

The Meunim are listed among the families of temple servants returning to Jerusalem following the exile (Ezr 2:50, KJV Mehunim; Neh 7:52). However, because ancient enemies seem unlikely temple servants, some suggest that these Meunim were descendants of the Caleb clan within Judah to whom another town named Maon, west of the Dead Sea and south of Hebron, was allotted (Jos 15:20, 55; cf. 1 Sm 30:14). First Chronicles 2:45 suggests the city’s name became eponymous; “Meunite,” like the modern Khirbet Ma’in, could derive from it. This Maon gave David refuge and another wife (1 Sm 23:24–28; 25).

This reconstruction involving two groups, two Maons, and temple servants with very foreign names, is tentative. An alternate view holds that hostile foreigners, formerly captured to become temple slaves (cf. Jos 9:7; Ez 44:6–8), attained freedom during exile and temple-guild status on returning. (BORROW [Baker encyclopedia of the Bible](#) Volume: 3)

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**2 Chronicles 26:8 The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah, and his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong.**

- the Ammonites (KJV): 2Ch 20:1 Ge 19:38 De 2:19 Jud 11:15-18 1Sa 11:1 2Sa 8:2

- his name (KJV): Ge 12:2 2Sa 8:13 1Ki 4:31 Mt 4:24
- spread (KJV): Heb. went

## RECEIVED TRIBUTE FROM ENEMIES

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

**Martin Selman:** Two benefits accrue to Uzziah. The first is fame (2Ch 26:8, 15), which associates him especially with David (cf. 1 Chr. 14:17; 17:8), and the second is that he became very powerful (2Ch 26:8, 15). The latter often characterized the first part of a reign (cf. 2 Chr. 12:1; 17:1; 27:6), and may be a play here on Uzziah's name (it means, "Yahweh is strong").

**2 Chronicles 26:9 Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the corner buttress and fortified them.**

- the corner gate (KJV): 2Ch 25:23 2Ki 14:13 Jer 31:38 Zec 14:10
- the valley gate (KJV): Ne 3:13,19,32
- the turning (KJV): Ne 3:20,24

## FORTIFIED THE "FORT"

**Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the [Corner Gate](#) (NW corner of city) and at the [Valley Gate](#) (SW area) and at the corner buttress and fortified them -**

**Ryrie** - This portion of the wall was likely destroyed by Jehoash (2Ch 25:23).

**Andrew Hill:** It also seems likely that some of the building activity is related to the restoration of destruction caused by the well-known earthquake during Uzziah's reign (cf. Amos 1:1; Zech. 14:5).

**Corner Gate.** Gate presumably located in the northwest corner of the Jerusalem wall. After King Jehoash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah, he tore down a section of the Jerusalem wall from the Corner Gate to the Ephraim Gate (2 Kgs 14:13; 2 Chr 25:23); later King Uzziah of Judah built towers at this gate (2 Chr 26:9). Jeremiah (31:38) foretells a time when the Jerusalem wall will be rebuilt from the tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate; Zechariah (2Ch 14:10) also envisions a period of security and prosperity epitomized by the presence of the Jerusalem wall, including the Corner Gate. (BORROW [Baker encyclopedia of the Bible](#) Volume: 1)

**Valley Gate.** Gate from which Nehemiah went out to inspect the walls of Jerusalem and by which he reentered (Neh 2:13, 14). It was on the west side of the city facing the [Tyropean Valley](#). King Uzziah is said to have built and fortified a tower at this gate (2 Chr 26:9). (BORROW [Baker encyclopedia of the Bible](#) Volume: 4)

**2 Chronicles 26:10 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.**

- digged many wells (KJV): or, cut out many cisterns, Ge 26:18-21
- he had much (KJV): 2Ki 3:4 1Ch 27:26-31
- Carmel (KJV): or, fruitful fields, 2Ki 19:23 Isa 29:17

## GOD GIVES UZZIAH AGRICULTURAL SUCCESS

**He built towers in the wilderness** (Southern Judah) **and hewed many cisterns, for he had much livestock, both in the lowland** ([Shephelah](#), the foothills) **and in the plain** (tableland E Jordan R). **He also had plowmen and vinedressers in the hill country and the fertile fields, for he loved the soil.**

**Raymond Dillard:** The **towers** provided defensive positions, but may also have served as storehouses and as refuge for workers tending fields or livestock (1 Chr 27:25–31). Because of his love of the soil (v 10), Uzziah could with justice be considered the patron saint of farming. After the rise of the monarchy in Israel, in addition to the landed property of free Israelites, there developed extensive crown lands through purchase, take over, or other means (1 Sam 8:12–14; 22:7; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 8:3–6; 1 Chr 27:25–31). These crown lands would have provided a source of supplies and trade commodities for the court, employment for those without other means, and could be granted as fiefs in reward for faithful service. Ordinarily only the poorest of the land served as vinedressers and laborers on royal estates (2 Kgs 24:14; 25:12; Jer 52:16; Jer 40:9–10; see Graham, BA 47 [1985] 55–58; and Rainey, BASOR 245 [1982] 55–58).

**J.A. Thompson:** Many cisterns have been discovered that were in use in Uzziah's time, judging from the debris found in them. A cistern was dug into the limestone and sealed with lime plaster to provide a continuing supply of water (Jer 2:13; 38:6) caught during rainstorms. There evidently was a sizeable group of workers tending Uzziah's fields and pastures. The "fertile lands" (karmel) may be a place, Carmel (not to be confused with Mount Carmel in the north) south of Hebron (cf. 1 Sam 25). This verse gives an excellent summary of the agricultural zones and the agricultural activities in Judah, whose royal property (1 Sam 8:12-14; 22:7; 1 Kgs 21; 2 Kgs 8:3-6; 1 Chr 27:25-31) supported the king and provided rewards for faithful service.

**2 Chronicles 26:11 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.**

- went out (KJV): 2Ki 5:2

### UZZIAH'S IMPRESSIVE MILITARY MIGHT COURTESY OF YAHWEH

**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.**

**Andrew Hill:** The Chronicler regards the maintenance of a large army by the king of Judah as a sign of God's blessing. In addition to the militia levied by tribe and led by tribal chieftain or clan elder, Uzziah's army includes another layer of leadership in the royal officials who function like chiefs of staff in today's military parlance (2 Chron. 26:11). The organization of the militia into "divisions" (2Ch 26:11) represents a new development in Israel's military structure. The same is true for the armaments provided for the soldiers (2Ch 26:14), since in earlier times the conscript was required to provide his own weapons (cf. Jdg. 20:16-17; 1 Chron. 12:2, 8, 24). Thus, the reign of Uzziah witnesses the increasing sophistication of warfare as practiced by the Israelites.

**Walton** on military successes. Although there are no other literary sources which describe Uzziah's victories over the Philistines, Arabs and Meunites, there is archaeological evidence of destruction at the Philistine city of Ashdod, which may have been done during the time of Uzziah. There is also evidence that Uzziah constructed fortresses in these newly conquered territories. Gath (Tell es-Safi; see comment on 1 Sam 5:8), Ashdod and Jabneh form a triangle about ten or fifteen miles on each side that dominates the northern section of the Philistine plain directly west of Jerusalem. Tell Mor near the Philistine city of Ashdod provides one example of such a fortress. Since Uzziah was not able to expand north because of the power of Israel under Jeroboam II, he turned his attention to the west and south, subduing people groups that had taken advantage of previously unstable conditions in Judah. ([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)- page 447)

**2 Chronicles 26:12 The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant warriors, was 2,600.**

**The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant([chayil](#)) warriors ([gibbor](#)), was 2,600.**

**Valiant** (wealth, strength, riches, army) ([02428](#)) **chayil** strength, wealth, army. This word has the basic idea of strength and influence. This word has the basic idea of strength and influence. It can be used to speak of the strength of people (1 Sam. 2:4; 9:1; 2 Sam. 22:40); of horses (Ps. 33:17); or of nations (Esth. 1:3). God is often seen as the supplier of this strength (2 Sam. 22:33; Hab. 3:19). When describing men, it can speak of those who are strong for war (Deut. 3:18; 2 Ki. 24:16; Jer. 48:14); able to judge (Ex. 18:21, 25); or are righteous in behavior (1 Ki. 1:52).

**Warriors** (mighty) ([01368](#)) **gibbor** cp related verb **gabar** = be strong, accomplish, excel, prevail) is from a root which is commonly

associated with warfare and has to do with the strength and vitality of the successful warrior. And thus this adjective means powerful, strong, brave, mighty. Warrior. Hero. Mighty man (cp "mighty [gibbor] men of David" - 2Sa 23:8). **See discussion of this word group from TWOT - [Gibbor Word Group](#)**

**2 Chronicles 26:13 Under their direction was an elite army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy.**

- three hundred (KJV): 2Ch 11:1 13:3 14:8 17:14-19

### **ARMY ABLE TO HELP UZZIAH**

**Under their direction was an elite army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help**([azar](#); Lxx = [boetheo](#)) **the king against the enemy.**

**Martin Selman:** The expression “**to help the king**” (2Ch 26:13, NRSV, RSV) is a deliberate echo of God’s help (2Ch 26:7, 15), and is paralleled by similar assistance for David (1 Chr. 12:1, 18, 21-22), Solomon (1 Chr. 22:17), and Hezekiah (2 Chr. 32:3).

**2 Chronicles 26:14 Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones.**

- slings to cast stones (KJV): Heb. stones of slings, Jud 20:16 1Sa 17:49

### **UZZIAH'S WELL ARMED ARMY**

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

**Walton** on arms. The wealth of Uzziah afforded him the opportunity to arm his soldiers with the traditional weaponry in the Near East in the Iron Age. The weapons mentioned here were also those listed as ones used by the Assyrian army. The Assyrians describe their weaponry in detail in their annals, and they are often depicted in wall reliefs at the king's palace. It can be presumed that Uzziah began to build up his army because of the threat of Assyria and of neighboring Israel. ([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)- page 448)

**2 Chronicles 26:15 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.**

- cunning men (KJV): 2Ch 2:7,14 Ex 31:4
- spread far (KJV): Heb. went forth, Mt 4:24

### **UZZIAH AN INVENTOR OF SORTS AND HIS FAME SPREAD**

**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** - Since catapults were not invented until 300 years later, this may refer to defensive structures that protected those shooting arrows and throwing stones

**Walton** - The “machines” made by Uzziah were probably protective shielding devices mounted on the walls providing protection for defenders to throw stones and shoot arrows at the enemy. The material remains from the Judahite fortress at Lachish attest to the nature of Uzziah’s constructions. Additionally, they are represented in the Assyrian wall reliefs at Sennacherib’s palace at Nineveh. In the past some interpreters had suggested that these were catapults, but there is no evidence of the use of catapults this early. ([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)- page 448)



**Hence his fame spread afar, for he was marvelously helped until he was strong**- Who marvelously helped with all the preceding successes? Clearly this is a reference to Yahweh's good hand of blessing on Uzziah while he sought the Lord (Oh, how we need to remember this principle - primarily for the prospering of our spirituality!)

Andrew Hill: The Chronicler suggests that Uzziah is an inventor of sorts, designing "machines" (26:15; or "inventions," from the Heb. hsb, "to think") for use in combat. The immediate context suggests that this new offensive weapon is a type of catapult.

Martin Selman: Verse 15 forms an inclusion with verses 7-8 by repeating the three key terms, fame, helped, and powerful/strong (v. 15), which characterize the section. The adverb "marvelously" (NRSV, RSV) or "wonderfully" (REB, NEB) always implies that God is the subject, cf. GNB, "the help he received from God" (cf. Isa. 28:29; 29:14; Joel 2:26; Ps. 31:21).

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#### **F B Meyer - He was marvellously helped, till he was strong.**

Great and marvellous are Thy works, O God; that our soul knoweth quite well. Thou hast showed marvellous loving-kindness. We must sing to Thee; for Thou hast done marvellous things. It is marvellous that Thou shouldst have set Thy love upon us; that Thou shouldst have watched over our interests with unwearied care; that our sins, or unbelief, or declensions, have never diverted Thy love from us. "Marvellous" is the only word we can use, as we think of the condescension of the well-beloved Son to the manger-bed; of the agony and bloody-sweat; of the cross and passion— and all for us who were His enemies. But it is most marvellous of all that Thou hast made us children, heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ. To think that we shall shine as the sun of Thy kingdom, that we are to sit upon His throne, and be included in that circle of love and life of which the throne of God and the Lamb is the center! Surely the marvels of Thy grace will only seem the greater when eternity with its boundless ages gives us time to explore them.

The danger, however, is that we should become strong in our own conceit, and credit ourselves with the position which is due to the grace of God alone. Oh for the truly humble spirit of the little child, that we may never vaunt our selves! The laden ship sinks in the water; the fruit-burdened bough stoops to the ground; the truest scientist is the humblest disciple. Oh to be submerged and abashed for the marvellous help of God!

God cannot trust some of us with prosperity and success, because our nature could not stand them. We must tug at the oar, instead of spreading the sail, because we have not enough ballast.

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#### **G Campbell Morgan - -2 Chr 26.15-16**

Uzziah was one of the most remarkable of the kings of Judah. He was a man of strong character, and the early period of his reign was characterized by true prosperity. He was victorious in his campaigns against the enemies of his people, and eminently successful in his development of the internal resources of the nation. At once a man of war and a lover of husbandry, he was an ideal ruler for those troublous times. During the first years of his reign he went quietly forward in dependence upon God. Then there came a change over the man, and the story of it is told by the chronicler in these words. How significant they are! The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are created by prosperity. More men are blasted by it than by adversity. Man, dependent upon God, is independent of all else. In the moment when the heart begins to feel independent of God, because of personal strength, that very strength becomes weakness; and unless there be repentance and return, ruin is inevitable. Prosperity always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. The pride of Uzziah led him to an act of sacrilege. He entered into the sacred courts, and violated the ordinances of God concerning the offering of sacrifices. He was smitten with leprosy, and the last years of his life were spent as a prisoner, isolated from his fellowmen.

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[\*\*Baker encyclopedia of the Bible\*\*](#) **Volume: 1** - Although the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel were not noted for technical advancements in offensive warfare, a number of their kings worked at improving fortifications and means of defense. **Uzziah** was especially remembered for his accomplishments in defensive warfare. Along with other measures, "in Jerusalem he made engines, invented by skilful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and great stone" (2 Chr 26:15). Those "**engines**" were special protective structures built to facilitate the task of the archers and to permit huge stones to be dropped on the heads of assaulting troops. A depiction of Uzziah's devices appears on the reliefs of Sennacherib commemorating the siege of Lachish. On the towers, corners, and crenelated battlements, defenders have erected structures made of wooden frames that hold their shields. The high screen formed by the shields permits the defenders to stand rather than crouch, and to use both hands freely to discharge their weapons.

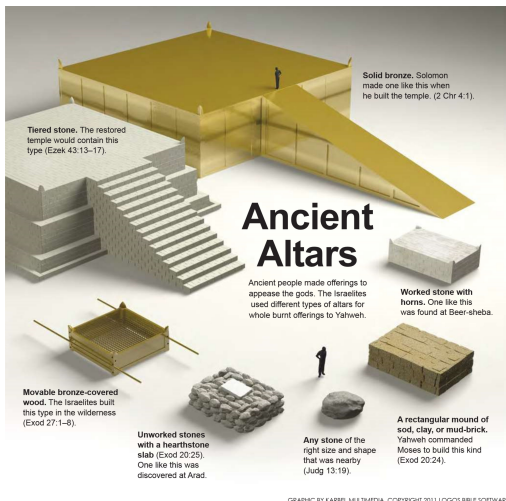
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**2 Chronicles 26:16 But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.**

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- when he was (KJV): 2Ch 25:19 32:25 De 8:14,17 32:13-15 Pr 16:18 Hab 2:4 Col 2:18
- went into (KJV): 2Ki 16:12,13
- to burn (KJV): Nu 16:1,7,18,35 1Ki 12:33 13:1-4



Click to Enlarge  
Source: [Logos Bible Software](#)

## PRIDE THE ACHILLES' HEEL OF MANY A MAN

**But** - Oh if this term of contrast had not been present in Uzziah's life, for "but" always marks a "change of direction" and in this context, a change in his mindset from humble and seeking to prideful and sinning!

when he became strong ([chazaq](#)), his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly ([shachath](#)) (2Ch 26:16-23), 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 (see [study](#)) - It is fascinating to compare the same verb ([chazaq](#)), used here of Uzziah and then of his son in 2Ch 27:6+. The father stood tall and became proud, while the son in effect "bowed!" There is also a repeat use of the verb **acted corruptly** ([shachath](#)) here and in 2Ch 27:2, translated in both places in the Septuagint with the verb [kataphtheiro](#) which literally means to destroy (in Lev 26:39 = "will **rot away** because of their iniquity") or to ruin. In Uzziah's case his pride led to his ruin! In the case of Jotham, it was the people who were ruined by their actions!

This decline (backsliding) did not happen in a moment but was progressive - pride > acted corruptly > unfaithful > presumptuous in performing duty only for priests (cf Ex 30:1-10+)! **He acted corruptly** ([chazaq](#)), by attempting to altar incense. What irony, as incense is a picture of prayers, something he could have done without taking this sinful action! The **altar of incense** was in the Holy Place, just outside the Holy of holies and was off limits to all except the priests. But that's what pride (and power) will do to your opinion of yourself! His pride would soon take him down as it always does!

**THOUGHT** - If God has given you wealth, influence, popularity, and power, be thankful, but be careful. Remember Who it comes from and use it to glorify and honor His Name!

The Law was clear and even came with a warning of what happened in the [rebellion of Korah](#) "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." (Nu 16:40+)

**Paul Apple** - SUCCESS FOSTERS PRIDE WHICH OFTEN LEADS TO SELF-EXALTATION WHICH THEN RESULTS IN JUDGMENT

**G. Campbell Morgan:** The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are created by prosperity. More men are blasted by it than by adversity.... Prosperity always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

**Thomas Constable:** Unfortunately, Uzziah took personal credit for what God had given him (2Ch 26:16). The writer noted several times that Uzziah was strong (2Ch 26:8, 15, 16). His pride led to self-exaltation; he put himself above God.

**John Olley:** Unlike Hezekiah, who subsequently "humbled himself" (2Ch 32:25, 26), or Jehoshaphat, whose "heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord" (2Ch 17:6), Uzziah demonstrated an arrogant angry disregard for God's requirements in worship, and there

is no mention of any repentance despite his "destruction" (a form of shakhat, "spoil, mar, ruin").

**August Konkell:** Incense was widely used in ancient worship. In the temple, incense symbolized the appeasement of divine wrath; it expressed the presence of the holy within the common and protected the worshiper from the divine presence. Offering incense was one of the daily rituals of temple confession.

**J.A. Thompson:** The word translated "**became powerful**" provides the link to the previous section. It also gives an insight regarding the character of Uzziah and of all strong leaders. He had always been a strong leader, and this had enabled him to do great works. He had not been one of the weak kings of Judah who was easily swayed by others (like Jehoshaphat) or too open and accommodating with the leaders in the north. But as is often the case with strong leaders, this virtue gave way to a headstrong, I-can-do-no-wrong attitude. It was precisely his strength that blinded him to the effrontery of his action. Uzziah's pride was expressed in usurping the role of the priest. The verb translated "was unfaithful" (ma'al) is used frequently in Chronicles (1 Chr 2:7; 5:25; 28:19-25; 29:6; 36:14) for various serious violations of covenant loyalty and responsibilities. Only the priests were to burn incense (Exod 30:1-10; Num 16:40; 18:1-7).

**Frederick Mabie:** Although potentially risking their lives, a group of eighty priests confront Uzziah with the covenantal requirements concerning incense and declare that his unfaithfulness will jeopardize God's blessing on his rule. Uzziah's lack of a godly response to the rebuke from the priests will lead to his inability to discharge fully his regnal responsibilities (cf. 2Ch 26:9-21).

**Martin Selman:** Uzziah's problem was that he was not content with the authority God had given him and wanted to add more priestly functions to his royal power. Absolute power, however, has no place in God's kingdom, for at least two reasons. Effective biblical leadership is always aware that it is a gift rather than a possession, and it always involves some kind of partnership or team dimension. For these and other reason, Jesus' own leadership was chiefly characterized by obedient servanthood. Unfortunately, Uzziah's prosperity made him blind as to how generous God had been, and, when he tried to take a leadership gift that was not his, even what he had was taken away (cf. Luke 19:25).

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**Became strong** (02388) (**chazaq**) conveys the basic meaning of to be or become strong, to make strong or strengthen, in the Hiphil to take hold of or seize ("retain His anger" - Mic 7:18+), in the Hithpael to strengthen oneself (to take courage 1 Sa 30:6). To be courageous. To overpower. **Chazaq** describes strength - severity of a famine (a "strong" famine) (2 Ki 25:3, Jer 52:6), strength of humans to overpower (David and Goliath 1 Sa 17:50, cf 1 Sa 17:35 = seized; Amnon and Tamar = 2 Sa 13:14), in a battle, to capture (2 Chr 8:3), Samson's last demonstration of supernatural strength he prays "please strengthen me" (Jdg 16:28). Used in the charge "Be strong and courageous" (Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18, Josh 10:25, "be firm" = Josh 23:6; "Be strong and courageous" = Dt 31:6-7, 23). **Chazaq** used 12 times in Ex 4-14 of hardening Pharaoh's heart (cf similar use in Josh 11:20). In a great passage in Da 11:32+ we read "'By smooth words he will turn to godlessness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their God will display strength (chazaq) and take action.'"

**Chazaq is commonly used in Kings and Chronicles** - 1 Ki. 1:50; 1 Ki. 2:2; 1 Ki. 2:28; 1 Ki. 9:9; 1 Ki. 16:22; 1 Ki. 20:22; 1 Ki. 20:23; 1 Ki. 20:25; 2 Ki. 2:12; 2 Ki. 3:26; 2 Ki. 4:8; 2 Ki. 4:27; 2 Ki. 12:5; 2 Ki. 12:6; 2 Ki. 12:7; 2 Ki. 12:8; 2 Ki. 12:12; 2 Ki. 12:14; 2 Ki. 14:5; 2 Ki. 15:19; 2 Ki. 22:5; 2 Ki. 22:6; 2 Ki. 25:3; 1 Chr. 11:10; 1 Chr. 19:12; 1 Chr. 19:13; 1 Chr. 21:4; 1 Chr. 22:13; 1 Chr. 26:27; 1 Chr. 28:7; 1 Chr. 28:10; 1 Chr. 28:20; 1 Chr. 29:12; 2 Chr. 1:1; 2 Chr. 7:22; 2 Chr. 8:3; 2 Chr. 11:11; 2 Chr. 11:12; 2 Chr. 11:17; 2 Chr. 12:13; 2 Chr. 13:7; 2 Chr. 13:8; 2 Chr. 13:21; 2 Chr. 15:7; 2 Chr. 15:8; 2 Chr. 16:9; 2 Chr. 17:1; 2 Chr. 19:11; 2 Chr. 21:4; 2 Chr. 23:1; 2 Chr. 24:5; 2 Chr. 24:12; 2 Chr. 25:3; 2 Chr. 25:8; 2 Chr. 25:11; 2 Chr. 26:8; 2 Chr. 26:9; 2 Chr. 26:15; 2 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 27:5; 2 Chr. 27:6; 2 Chr. 28:15; 2 Chr. 28:20; 2 Chr. 29:3; 2 Chr. 29:34; 2 Chr. 31:4; 2 Chr. 32:5; 2 Chr. 32:7; 2 Chr. 34:8; 2 Chr. 34:10; 2 Chr. 35:2

**Acted corruptly** (07843) (**shachath**) means to decay, to go to ruin, to corrupt, to destroy (Sodom and Gomorrah = Ge 13:10, Ge 18:28, 31-32), to lay waste (Egypt from swarms of flies -Ex 8:24). **Shachath** is used of Israelites who worshiped the golden calf (Ex 32:7; Dt 9:12; 32:5, Hos 9:9). God warned He would **destroy** Israel if they were turned away from following Him (Nu 32:15). **Shachath** describes Israel's behavior as more corrupt after a judge died (Jdg 2:19).

**Shachath in Kings and Chronicles** - 2 Ki. 8:19; 2 Ki. 13:23; 2 Ki. 18:25; 2 Ki. 19:12; 1 Chr. 20:1; 1 Chr. 21:12; 1 Chr. 21:15; 2 Chr. 12:7; 2 Chr. 12:12; 2 Chr. 21:7; 2 Chr. 24:23; 2 Chr. 25:16; 2 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 27:2; 2 Chr. 34:11; 2 Chr. 35:21; 2 Chr. 36:19

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#### Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 26:16-23

Here is the only blot we find on the name of king Uzziah, and it is such a one as lies not on any other of the kings. Whoredom, murder, oppression, persecution, and especially idolatry, gave characters to the bad kings and some of them blemishes to the good ones, David himself not excepted, witness the matter of Uriah. But we find not Uzziah charged with any of these; and yet he

transgressed against the Lord his God, and fell under the marks of his displeasure in consequence, not, as other kings, in vexatious wars or rebellions, but an incurable disease.

**I. His sin was invading the priest's office.** The good way is one; by-paths are many. The transgression of his predecessors was forsaking the temple of the Lord, flying off from it (2Ch 24:18), and burning incense upon idolatrous altars, 2Ch 25:14. His was intruding into the temple of the Lord further than was allowed him, and attempting him to burn incense upon the altar of God, for which, it is likely, he pretended an extraordinary zeal and affection. See how hard it is to avoid one extreme and not run into another.

**1. That which was at the bottom of his sin was pride of heart, a lust that ruins more than any other whatsoever** (2Ch 26:16): When he was strong (and he was marvellously helped by the good providence of God till he was so, 2Ch 26:15), when he had grown very great and considerable in wealth, interest, and power, instead of lifting up the name of God in gratitude to him who had done so much for him, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. Thus the prosperity of fools, by puffing them up with pride, destroys them. Now that he had done so much business, and won so much honour, he began to think no business, no honour, too great or too good for him, no, not that of the priesthood Men's pretending to forbidden knowledge, and exercising themselves in things too high for them, are owing to the pride of their heart, and the fleshly mind they are vainly puffed up with.

**2. His sin was going into the temple of the Lord to burn incense,** probably on some solemn feast day, or when he himself had some special occasion for supplicating the divine favour. What could move him to this piece of presumption, or put it into his head, I cannot conjecture. None of all his predecessors, not the best, not the worst, attempted it. The law, he knew, was express against him, and there was no usage or precedent for him. He could not pretend any necessity, as there was for David's eating the show-bread.

(1.) Perhaps he fancied the priests did not do their office so dexterously, decently, and devoutly, as they ought, and he could do it better. Or,

(2.) He observed that the idolatrous kings did themselves burn incense at the altars of their gods; his father did so, and Jeroboam (1 Ki. 13:1), an ambition of which honour was perhaps one thing that tempted them from the house of God, where it was not permitted them; and he, being resolved to cleave to God's altar, would try to break through this restraint and come as near it as the idolatrous kings did to their altars. But it is called a transgression against the Lord his God. He was not content with the honours God had put upon him, but would usurp those that were forbidden him, like our first parents.

**3. He was opposed in this attempt by the chief priest and other priests that attended and assisted him** 2Ch 26:17, 18. They were ready to burn incense for the king, according to the duty of their place; but, when he offered to do it himself, they plainly let him know that he meddled with that which did not belong to him, and that it was at his peril. They did not resist him by laying violent hands on him, though they were valiant men, but by reasoning with him and showing him,

(1.) **That it was not lawful for him to burn incense:** "It appertaineth not to thee, O Uzziah! but to the priests, whose birthright it is, as sons of Aaron, and who are consecrated to the service." Aaron and his sons were appointed by the law to burn incense, Ex. 30:7. See Deu. 33:10; 1 Chr. 23:13. David had blessed the people and Solomon and Jehoshaphat had prayed with them and preached to them. Uzziah might have done this, and it would have been to his praise; but as for burning incense, that service was to be performed by the priests only. The kingly and priestly offices were separated by the law of Moses, not to be united again but in the person of the Messiah. If Uzziah did intend to honour God, and gain acceptance with him, in what he did, he was quite out in his aim; for, being a service purely of divine institution, he could not expect it should be accepted unless it were done in the way and by the hands that God had appointed.

(2.) **That it was not safe.** It shall not be for thy honour from the Lord God. More is implied: "It will be thy disgrace, and it is at thy peril." The law runs expressly against all strangers that came nigh (Nu 3:10, 18:7), that is, all that were not priests. Korah and his accomplices, though Levites, paid dearly for offering to burn incense, which was the work of the priests only, Num. 16:35. The incense of our prayers must be by faith put into the hands of our Lord Jesus, the great high priest of our profession, else we cannot expect it should be accepted by God, Rev. 8:3.

**4. He fell into a passion with the priests that reproved him, and would push forward to do what he intended notwithstanding** (2Ch 26:19): Uzziah was wroth, and would not part with the censer out of his

hand. He took it ill to be checked, and would not bear interference. Nitimur in vetitum-We are prone to do what is forbidden.

**II. His punishment was an incurable leprosy, which rose up in his forehead while he was contending with the priests.** If he had submitted to the priests' admonition, acknowledged his error, and gone back, all would have been well; but when he was wroth with the priests, and fell foul upon them, then God was wroth with him and smote him with a plague of leprosy. Josephus says that he threatened the priests with death if they opposed him, and that then the earth shook, the roof of the temple opened, and through the cleft a beam of the sun darted directly upon the king's face, wherein immediately the leprosy appeared. And some conjecture that that was the earthquake in the days of Uzziah which we read of Amos 1:1 and Zec. 14:5. Now this sudden stroke,

**1. Ended the controversy between him and the priests;** for, when the leprosy appeared, they were emboldened to thrust him out of the temple; nay, he himself hasted to go out, because the Lord had smitten him with a disease which was in a particular manner a token of his displeasure, and which he knew secluded him from common converse with men, much more from the altar of God. He would not be convinced by what the priests said, but God took an effectual course to convince him. If presumptuous men will not be made to see their error by the judgments of God's mouth, they shall be made to see it by the judgments of his hand. It evinced some religious fear of God in the heart of this king, even in the midst of his transgression, that, as soon as he found God was angry with him, he not only let fall his attempt, but retired with the utmost precipitation. Though he strove with the priests, he would not strive with his Maker.

**2. It remained a lasting punishment of his transgression;** for he continued a leper to the day of his death, shut up in confinement, and shut out from society, and forced to leave it to his son to manage all his business, 2Ch 26:21. Thus God gave an instance of his resisting the proud and of his jealousy for the purity and honour of his own institutions; thus he gave fair warning even to great and good men to know and keep their distance, and not to intrude into those things which they have not seen; and thus he gave Uzziah a loud and constant call to repentance, and a long space to repent, which we have reason to hope he improved. He had been a man of much business in the world; but being taken off from that, and confined to a separate house, he had leisure to think of another world and prepare for it. By this judgment upon the king God intended to possess the people with a great veneration for the temple, the priesthood, and other sacred things, which they had been apt to think meanly of. While the king was a leper, he was as good as dead, dead while he lived, and buried alive; and so the law was, in effect, answered, that the stranger who cometh nigh shall be put to death. The disgrace survived him; for, when he was dead, they would not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings because he was a leper, which stained all his other glory.

**3. It was a punishment that answered the sin as face does face in a glass.**

- (1.) Pride was at the bottom of his transgression, and thus God humbled him and put dishonour upon him.
- (2.) He invaded the office of the priests in contempt of them, and God struck him with a disease which in a particular manner made him subject to the inspection and sentence of the priests; for to them pertained the judgment of the leprosy, Deu. 24:8.
- (3.) He thrust himself into the temple of God, whither the priests only had admission, and for that was thrust out of the very courts of the temple, into which the meanest of his subjects that was ceremonially clean had free access.
- (4.) He confronted the priests that faced him and opposed his presumption, and for that the leprosy rose in his forehead, which, in Miriam's case, is compared to her father's spitting in her face, Num. 12:14. (
- (5.) He invaded the dignity of the priesthood, which he had no right to, and for that he was deprived even of his royal dignity, which he had a right to. Those that covet forbidden honours forfeit allowed ones. Adam, by catching at the tree of knowledge of which he might not eat, debarred himself from the tree of life, of which he might have eaten. Let all that read it say, The Lord is righteous.

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### Hearts Lifted Up

As long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper. —2 Chronicles 26:5

It's tragic to witness someone starting out well in life and then finishing poorly. That's the life story of Uzziah. He had been appointed king at the tender age of 16. Despite being so young, we read that "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord . . . 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 prosper" (2 Chronicles 26:4-5).

Uzziah's fame spread and his army grew stronger (v.8). He had 2,600 chief officers and 307,500 soldiers who helped him defeat his enemies (vv.12-13).

Sadly, we then read, "When he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction" (v.16). Uzziah had failed to remember the One who had given him success and those who had given godly counsel. He sinned against the Lord when he burned incense in the temple, and God struck him with leprosy (vv.16-19). He remained "a leper until the day of his death" (v.21).

To finish well, we need to avoid having a heart that is "lifted up." Let's remind ourselves often of the warning in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." And let's keep seeking the Lord, obeying Him, and thanking Him for all He has done. by Albert Lee (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Blessed Savior, make me humble,  
Take away my sinful pride;  
In myself I'm sure to stumble,  
Help me stay close by Your side.  
—D. De Haan

You won't get indigestion by swallowing your pride.

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### **A Strong Finish**

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. --James 4:6

Long-distance runners know the importance of a strong finish. They know that many races are won or lost in the final steps.

Uzziah made a splendid start when he became king at age 16. Through his faithfulness to God, he restored his nation to honor and glory. Then he became proud and believed that the rules no longer applied to him.

Uzziah entered the temple to burn incense--a privilege restricted to the priests. Even when confronted about his sin, he arrogantly refused to listen--until leprosy broke out on his forehead. God had gotten his attention.

Uzziah stumbled before the finish line. He was disqualified. Instead of a record of great victories, he left his throne in disgrace.

King Uzziah doesn't stand alone in history. Many men and women who once walked humbly with God become proud and walk away from Him. They persist in disobedience and refuse to hear the voice of God or the rebuke of friends. The way they finish spoils their race.

Have you wandered off course because you stopped following the Lord? You can get back on track and by God's grace get your "second wind." Humble yourself before God and you can still finish strong. --H W Robinson (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

O Lord, it's true, I've wandered far  
From what I know is right;  
But now I want to come back home  
And please You day and night.  
--K. De Haan

People who think they don't need God are in a no-win situation.

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### **Who Is Great?**

Not unto us, O Lord, . . . but to Your name give glory, because of Your mercy, because of Your truth. —Psalm 115:1

During World War II, Harry Truman became President of the United States when Franklin Delano Roosevelt died. Truman said he felt as if a great weight had been dropped on him, and he asked people to pray for him. It is said that his old colleague Sam Rayburn tried to help him be humble when he said, "They'll tell you what a great man you are, Harry, but you and I both know you ain't."

In 2 Chronicles 26 we read about Uzziah, who was a remarkable king. He took office when he was 16 and ruled over the nation of Judah for 52 years (2Ch 26:1-3). He was God-fearing and led the nation into a long era of prosperity. His fame spread far and wide, but he apparently listened to people tell him how great he was. In his pride he assumed the role of the priest, a role God had clearly reserved for the descendants of Aaron. For this act of disobedience God afflicted him with leprosy (2Ch 26:19).

There are no truly great men or women, only a great God who enables some to be effective leaders and outstanding benefactors of mankind. Realizing this will help us to overcome envy when others are highly praised, and it will keep us from becoming proud if someone tells us how great we are. Only God is truly great and worthy of praise. —H V Lugt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Not I, but Christ, be honored, loved, exalted;  
Not I, but Christ, be seen, be known, be heard;  
Not I, but Christ, in every look and action;  
Not I, but Christ, in every thought and word.  
—Whiddington

We think too much of ourselves when we think too little of God.

**2 Chronicles 26:17 Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men.**

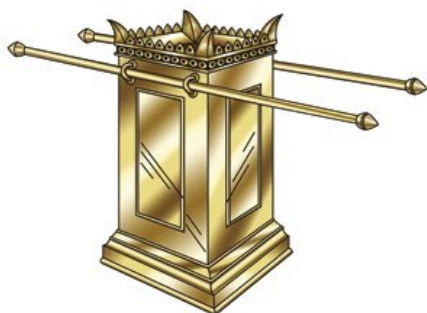
- Azariah (KJV): 1Ch 6:10
- valiant men (KJV): 1Ch 12:28 26:6

**Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant ([chayil](#)) men** (literally "sons of strength") - It is a bit ironic that the priests used **valiant ([chayil](#)) men** for Uzziah himself had **valiant ([chayil](#)) warriors ([gibbor](#))** (2Ch 26:11). But they were not in the Temple. Pride corrupted Azariah's thinking, deceiving him into thinking that since he had power and had experienced such success on all fronts, he himself was in a sense "above the law"! No one is "above the law," except the Law Giver, the Most High God!

[Bob Utley](#) on **valiant ([chayil](#)) men** - They were willing to confront an arrogant king with unlimited power. They were to support Azariah the High Priest, protect the sacred precincts and try to keep Uzziah from sinning

**2 Chronicles 26:18 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."**

- withstood Uzziah (KJV): 2Ch 16:7-9 19:2 Jer 13:18 Mt 10:18,28 14:4 2Co 5:16 Ga 2:11
- not unto thee (KJV): Nu 16:40,46-48 18:7
- to the priests (KJV): Ex 30:7,8 Heb 5:4
- go out (KJV): 1Co 5:5
- neither shall it be (KJV): 1Sa 2:30 Da 4:37 Joh 5:44 Jas 2:1



Altar of Incense

**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** (command to the king!) **of the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful ([maal](#); Lxx = [aphistemi](#)) and will have no honor from the LORD God - Unfaithful([maal](#))** is translated in the Lxx with [aphistemi](#) which means to depart, desert, fall or draw away, withdraw go away, which is what Uzziah did. Or better stated, this is what pride caused Uzziah to do! Watch out for pride as it will cause you to stumble!

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - The account of Uzziah's violation of and intrusion into the holy place demonstrates several important truths: (1) even rulers are subject to the laws of God; (2) those who violate God's laws suffer His judgment; (3) the strength and



courage of Azariah and the priests in withstanding the king are exemplary for spiritual people in every age. Uzziah spent the remainder of his life with the loathsome disease of leprosy.

**Bob Utley** - Azariah the High Priest had a stern message for arrogant Uzziah. "Get out" (Qal IMPERATIVE) "for you have been unfaithful" a term also used of (1) Moses – Deut. 32:51, (2) trans-Jordan tribes – 1 Chr. 5:25, (3) Rehoboam – 2 Chr. 12:2, (4) Ahaz of Judah – 2 Chr. 28:22 (5) Hezekiah, in a warning – 2 Chr. 30:7. All involved disobedience to YHWH or His law.

**Unfaithful** (verb) (be or act unfaithful) (04603) **maal** means to act unfaithfully, to trespass, to violate one's duty, to break faith, to commit a violation, to act in a manner which is untrustworthy or unreliable in relation to an agreement or relationship. It is often used in Hebrew together with the noun **maal** (04604 - described below), so literally it could be translated "trespasses a trespass." (NIV = "commits a violation") (following use both verb and noun forms of **maal** - Lev 5:15, 6:2, Nu 5:6, 27, Josh 22:20, 22:31) The idea of **maal** is that of a conscious act of treachery or unfaithfulness against the Lord. In fact in Ezek 39:23 and Da 9:7 **maal** describes the sin which resulted in Judah's exile to Babylon! They were unfaithful to their covenant with Yahweh. **Maal** describes the horrid sin of Achan (Josh 7:1) in which he took "the things that were under the ban." (Josh 6:18) **Maal** describes King Uzziah's prideful usurping of priestly authority and offering incense in the Temple in 2Chr 26:16-18. **Maal** is also used to refer to adultery (Nu 5:12, 27) and worshipping pagan deities (Nu 31:16; Ezek 20:27).

**Maal - 32v - act(1), acted(2), acted treacherously(2), acting(1), acting treacherously(1), acting unfaithfully(1), acts(2), became...unfaithful(1), been(1), been unfaithful(5), broke faith(1), committed(6), committing unfaithfulness(1), err(1), perpetrated(1), unfaithful(3), unfaithfulness they committed(1), violated(1).** Lev. 5:15; Lev. 6:2; Lev. 26:40; Num. 5:6; Num. 5:27; Deut. 32:51; Jos. 7:1; Jos. 22:16; Jos. 22:20; Jos. 22:31; 1 Chr. 2:7; 1 Chr. 5:25; 1 Chr. 10:13; 2 Chr. 12:2; 2 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 26:18; 2 Chr. 28:22; 2 Chr. 29:6; 2 Chr. 30:7; Ezr. 10:2; Ezr. 10:10; Neh. 1:8; Neh. 13:27; Prov. 16:10; Ezek. 14:13; Ezek. 15:8; Ezek. 17:20; Ezek. 18:24; Ezek. 20:27; Ezek. 39:23; Ezek. 39:26; Dan. 9:7

**2 Chronicles 26:19 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.**

- he (KJV): 2Ch 16:10 25:16
- even (KJV): Nu 12:10 2Ki 5:27

#### Related Passage:

2 Chronicles 16:10+ Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.

Proverbs 19:3 (UZZIAH IS REALLY ANGRY AGAINST JEHOVAH!!!) The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.

### UZZIAH CURSED BY GOD WITH LEPROSY

**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.**

**Bob Utley** - Uzziah was warned but still intended to follow his own thoughts/plans. But YHWH steps in (cf. 2 Chr. 26:20)! Uzziah became a leper. From this historical account, later Judaism saw leprosy (cf. Leviticus 13-14) as a divinely given disease (cf. Num. 12:10).

Josephus, *Antiq.* 9.10.4., adds an interesting note:

"Accordingly, when a remarkable day was come, and a general festival was to be celebrated, he put on the holy garment, and went into the temple to offer incense to God upon the golden altar, which he was prohibited to do by Azariah the high priest, who had fourscore priests with him, and who told him that it was not lawful for him to offer sacrifice, and that 'none besides the posterity of Aaron were permitted so to do.' And when they cried out, that he must go out of the temple, and not transgress against God, he was wroth at them, and threatened to kill them, unless they would hold their peace. In the meantime, a great earthquake shook the ground, and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the



king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately; and before the city, at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke off from the rest on the west, and rolled itself four furlongs, and stood still at the east mountain, till the roads, as well as the king's gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction. Now, as soon as the priests saw that the king's face was infected with the leprosy, they told him of the calamity he was under, and commanded that he should go out of the city as a polluted person."

[Bob Utley](#) comments - It is based on (1) both Amos (i.e., Amos 1:1) and Zechariah (i.e., Zech 14:5) mention an earthquake at this time (2) the term "leprosy" (BDB 280) can also refer to the sun shining; this is how Josephus took the word

**Raymond Dillard:** Uzziah's sin was a cultic transgression and brings immediate retribution in the appearance of a skin disease; Uzziah's pride brought him to usurp the honor or glory of the priest's role, but he would receive no honor (2Ch 26:18) from the Lord. Just as a cultic sin produced a plague in the wilderness (Num 16:46–50), so also Uzziah was punished with a disease. It was the offering of incense that formed the climax of the condemnation of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 12:33; Williamson, 339). The Chronicler has similarly shown disease as a consequence of transgression in the cases of Asa and Jehoram (16:12–13; 21:12–19).

**Walton on leprosy** - Mari King Yahdun-Lim calls down a curse of leprosy on whoever desecrated the temple that he was dedicating, so it is clear that this is a common connection. Those studying the ancient Near Eastern languages have concluded that the term often translated "leprosy" is more accurately rendered "lesion," or, less technical, "scaly skin." Such patches could be swelled or weeping, as well as flaking. Similar broad terminology also exists in Akkadian, where the Babylonians likewise considered it an unclean condition and the punishment of the gods. Clinical leprosy (Hansen's Disease) has not been attested in the ancient Near East prior to the time of Alexander the Great. None of the most prominent characteristics of Hansen's disease are listed in the text, and the symptoms that are listed argue against a relationship to Hansen's disease. The condition discussed in the text is not presented as contagious. Descriptions would suggest that modern diagnoses would include psoriasis, eczema, favus and seborrheic dermatitis, as well as a number of fungal-type infections. Because of this, it is not clear exactly what type of skin disease Uzziah had. Comparison to "snow" most likely concerns the flakiness rather than the color ("white" is added in the translations that contain it). The great cultural aversion to skin diseases may be that in appearance and sometimes odor they resemble the rotting skin of the corpse and are therefore associated with death. This natural revulsion adds considerably to the victim's outcast status when combined with the quarantine that is ritually rather than medically motivated. It is not certain whether Uzziah was quarantined because of the disease or because of his cultic offenses. Naaman had a similar disease and was able to continue his duties as commander in chief. It is presumed that Jotham, son of Uzziah, took over official duties as coregent after Uzziah's cultic offense. ([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)- page 448)

**2 Chronicles 26:20 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.**

- hasted also (KJV): Es 6:12
- the Lord (KJV): Lev 14:34 De 28:22,35

## UZZIAH'S "SCARLET LETTER"

The scarlet letter was worn as a punitive mark of adultery, which is apropos for King Uzziah has in a sense committed an unfaithful act, sort of a spiritual adultery if you will.

**Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and behold, he was leprous on his forehead-** Note the location of the leprosy is near his mind, a mind which had become prideful and presumptuous. Is the location of the leprous mark mere coincidence? I doubt it because God never does anything without purpose and meaning!

**John Olley:** his forehead revealed an infectious skin disease that made him unclean, necessitating his rapid removal from the temple. It seems Uzziah himself was terrified as "he himself hurried to go out," realizing the dangers of his breaking first the "holyprofane" and now "clean-unclean" distinctions (cf. Lev. 10:10–11). He lived the rest of his life quarantined "in a separate house," relieved of royal duties. In his royal "pride" he sought to take on the special access of a priestly role, but instead he was now "excluded from the house of the Lord."

**and they hurried him out of there, and he himself also hastened to get out because the LORD had smitten him.**

**Frederick Mabie:** Ironically, while Uzziah refuses to leave the temple when confronted by the priests, he becomes "eager to leave"

in the light of God's judgment through a skin disease.

**2 Chronicles 26:21 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.**

- Uzziah (KJV): 2Ki 15:5
- dwelt (KJV): Lev 13:46 Nu 5:2,3 12:15 2Ki 7:3

#### Related Passage:

Numbers 5:2+ "Command the sons of Israel that they send away from the camp **every leper** and everyone having a discharge and everyone who is unclean because of a dead person.

**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.**

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - Jotham, his son, was probably made coregent at this time, about 10 years before Uzziah's death in 740 B.C. Thus Jotham's rule effectually began c. 750 B.C., in the second year of Pekah (2 Kin. 15:32).

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#### QUESTION - [Who was King Jotham in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Jotham became king of Judah at age twenty-five and reigned for sixteen years, from 750 to 735 BC (2 Kings 15:33; 2 Chronicles 27:1). "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the Lord. The people, however, continued their corrupt practices" (2 Chronicles 27:2; see also 2 Kings 15:34–35). [King Uzziah](#) had been faithful to the Lord but then became prideful and attempted to burn incense on the altar of the Lord, something only priests were permitted to do (2 Chronicles 26:16–20). As a result, God afflicted Uzziah with leprosy. Uzziah lived out the rest of his days in a separate house, while his son Jotham oversaw the palace and governed the people (2 Chronicles 26:21). Jotham did not repeat his father's mistake of presumptuously entering the temple.

"Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the Lord his God" (2 Chronicles 27:6). He rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple and also did work on the wall at the hill of Ophel and built towns, forts, and towers (2 Chronicles 27:3–4). However, King Jotham failed to remove the high places so the people continued to make sacrifices there (2 Kings 15:35). Jotham waged a successful war against the [Ammonites](#), resulting in their paying him tribute for three years (2 Chronicles 27:5). During Jotham's reign "the Lord began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah" (2 Kings 15:37). During the reign of Jotham's son [Ahaz](#), the [Arameans](#) would march against Judah, resulting in defeat and heavy casualties for Judah (2 Chronicles 28:5). Initial defeat was followed by Ahaz seeking help from the Assyrians and ultimately looting and shutting up God's temple and creating more high places (2 Kings 16:5–18; 2 Chronicles 28:5–25).

Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah all prophesied during Jotham's reign (Isaiah 1:1; Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1). Also, the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1–5 were recorded during Jotham's reign (1 Chronicles 5:17).

Despite Jotham's godly example, his son Ahaz proved to be a wicked king. Even so, both Jotham and Ahaz are ancestors of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:9). God is able to use all people to accomplish His good purposes. [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 26:22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first to last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written.**

- first (KJV): 2Ch 9:29 12:15
- Isaiah (KJV): Isa 1:1, 6:1

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz concerning Judah and Jerusalem, which he saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

Isaiah 6:1 In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.

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

**2 Chronicles 26:23** 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.

- slept (KJV): 2Ki 15:6,7
- they buried him (KJV): 2Ch 26:18 21:20 28:27 33:20

**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.**

**John Olley:** The Chronicler still mentions that Uzziah was “buried with his fathers” but adds that it was in a “burial field,” probably adjacent to the royal tombs themselves. His final description expresses isolation: “He is a leper.” The proverb that summarizes Uzziah’s reign is succinct: “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).

**Walton** - There is an epitaph now preserved in the Israel Museum marking the burial place of Uzziah, king of Judah. It represented a secondary burial of his bones. ([IVP Bible Background Commentary on the OT](#)- page 448)

#### **PAUL APPLE - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:**

- 1) What is the essence of biblical humility?
- 2) Why does extreme power lead to a lust for more power and self-exaltation?
- 3) How do we receive God’s word of correction and rebuke?
- 4) How much courage did it take for the company of priests to confront the king?

#### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION: PAGE 578**

**Raymond Dillard:** Uzziah was a great king: during his reign Judah reclaimed in the South much of the territorial extent of the Solomonic empire; the kingdom prospered through conquest, the control of strategic trade routes, and the receipt of tribute. Yet isn’t it ironic that Uzziah is now largely remembered only because of his disease and the fact that it was the year of his death in which Isaiah received his call? In spite of the wealth, success, power, and conquests of Uzziah, Isaiah could see that the day was not far off when cities would lie deserted, uninhabited, ruined, and ravaged (Isa 6:11–12). Uzziah for the Chronicler was one more example of how even legitimate power could be corrupted; with Rehoboam, Amaziah, and Joash before him, Uzziah too would succumb to wrongdoing and suffer the immediate consequence of divine retribution.

**Andrew Hill:** Azariah identifies the key issue in the conflict with Uzziah by appealing to the special divine anointing or consecration of the priesthood for the specific task of offering such sacrifices (26:18; cf. Ps. 133). Even as the Davidic king is anointed to shepherd the Israelite nation, so the Aaronic priest is anointed to serve God and the people through the ministry of ritual sacrifice. This divinely ordained division of labor and service is also designed to separate political power from religious authority in Israelite society in order to prevent abuse of one office by the other. Azariah’s threat to Uzziah is cast generally as a censure of divine honor for the king (2 Chron. 26:18). The king does not have to wait long before the priestly threat becomes a divine curse. Enraged at the priests for intercepting him in the temple and thwarting his attempt to burn incense on the altar, Uzziah is afflicted by God (2Ch 26:20). It is important to notice that God’s anger breaks out against Uzziah only after he has vented his anger against the priests (26:19). The king was warned to leave, but he ignored that warning. His disregard for the Lord’s priests and the Lord’s sanctuary implicitly signals a disregard for God himself. God will not stand idly by when his holiness has been violated by ritual impropriety (cf. Aaron’s sons, Lev. 10:1-2; the men of Korah, Num. 16:35).

**Mark Boda:** The fear of God is an important motif in the Old Testament and represents the human covenantal response to the awesome presence of the holy God. The initial reaction of the people to the presence of God on Sinai is one of abject fear (Deut 5:5), a reaction that leads to the people’s commissioning Moses as their mediator (Deut 5:22- 27). God’s response is his desire that they would indeed “fear” him, which means to keep all his commands (Deut 5:29). Such a “fear” is listed alongside instructions to keep his statutes, to listen, to obey, and even to love the Lord with one’s whole being and keep God’s commands on one’s heart (Deut 6:1-6). The fear of the Lord is, thus, the human covenantal response to Yahweh’s gracious initiative and will be considered as foundational to a life of wisdom (Prov 1:7).

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**Richard Rohlin:** The Rise and Fall of Uzziah

## I. The Rise of Uzziah God blessed Uzziah in a number of ways:

- Spiritually – Uzziah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord... As his father had done.
- Militarily – Uzziah defeated all of his enemies, built up his cities, and increased the size of his army. Most importantly, he built up the walls of Jerusalem that had been broken down in his grandfather's time. Uzziah's might was such that under him Judah became a major world power, and his fame spread all the way to Pharaoh's court.
- Economically – Uzziah "loved the soil." He was gifted with an understanding of farming and husbandry, and the land flourished under his reign.
- Creatively – Uzziah was a true "renaissance man", and devised and built all manner of "machines... to shoot arrows and great stones."

All of the blessings in Uzziah's life came for this simple reason: That the Lord helped him.

- He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper. (2Ch 26:5)
- And his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. (2Ch 26:15)

## II. The Fall of Uzziah = Pride

### 1) The cause of pride

- Uzziah's pride is innate within himself. Pride is the essence of the Sin Nature. Success does not cause pride, but both success and failure can provide the environment in which pride can grow.
- Many people make the mistake of thinking that because success/wealth can make way for pride, that success in and of itself is somehow wrong.

### 2) The claims of pride

- Uzziah's pride asserts itself over things for which he could take no credit:
  - Victory in battle (Proverbs 21:31) – Inventive genius (Exodus 35:31-32)
  - Economic growth and success (Deuteronomy 8:18)
  - Spiritual fervor (Ephesians 2:8-10)

### 3) The crimes of pride

- But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the LORD his God and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. (2Ch 26:16)
- Uzziah was unfaithful– to the God who had proved to be so faithful to him.
- If God made Uzziah to prosper so long as he sought Him, the moment Uzziah became unfaithful, God's hand of blessing was removed.
- This is not to say that God's hand of love – toward David or toward David's house – was removed.
- God had made an eternal covenant with the house of David, and even though Uzziah might be unfaithful, God is never so.
- But one of the most loving things that God can do for us sometimes is to remove his hand of blessing (Heb 12:6-8)
- Although Uzziah's unfaithfulness to the Lord was a matter of the heart, it manifested in a very specific sin: Uzziah entered the temple of the Lord in order to burn incense on the altar of incense.
- The Altar of Incense was the altar located in the Holy Place.
- Only the priests were allowed to offer incense on the Altar of Incense.
- The incense had to be of a specific formula, only accessible to the priests.
- When the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, attempted to offer "strange" or "common" incense, the Lord struck them dead (Leviticus 10). In many ways, Uzziah's sin is similar to that of Saul (1 Samuel 13).
- God ordained three positions of authority in ancient Israel: Those of prophet, priest, and king.
- Each of these roles would be eventually fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is our Prophet, our Priest, and our King.
- Both Saul and Uzziah sought to enhance their authority, their prestige, or their military prowess by usurping the God-given roles of those around them.
- This is one of the ways in which pride often rears its head in the church.
- This was a sin for two reasons:
  - 1) Uzziah sought to take upon himself a role that God did not intend for him to have. This is one of the many ways that pride

manifests itself in our lives – we seek a position, whether of authority, ministry, or influence that God did not intend for us to have, but we seek it because of the prideful way in which we view ourselves.

2) Uzziah's worship was not acceptable worship – i.e., his incense was not the right incense and it was not offered in the right way. – This is one of the defining characteristics of pride – it prevents us from being able to worship God with a whole heart

#### 4) The conclusion of pride

- It is worth noting how Azariah the priest chooses to withstand Uzziah.
- The temple was Azariah's jurisdiction – not Uzziah's, and this episode is merely the latest in the conflict between the palace and the temple that stretches back to Joash's time.
- Though confronting him with the force necessary to back up his words, Azariah does not resort to personal recriminations.
- Uzziah's anger leads to destruction – Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to burn incense, and when he became angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the LORD, by the altar of incense. (2Ch 26:19)
- Up until now, the judgment of God had not fallen. But now, Uzziah was about to follow in the generational sin of his father and grandfather. Joash, when confronted with the reproving words of Zechariah the priest, his own foster-brother, has him executed. Amaziah, when confronted with the rebuke of a prophet, threatens to strike the prophet down.
- In each instance, it is the rejection of the man of God that marks the downfall of the king.
- Now, Uzziah is experiencing his own anger with the Priests of God and repeating their folly.
- Anger and pride are generational sins – they are attitudes, dispositions, and predispositions that can be passed on from one generation to the next.
- Uzziah is struck down with leprosy – with tzaraat – at the very moment he becomes angry with Azariah and the priests of God.
- This form of leprosy was an extremely painful, often fatal, and highly contagious fungus, that would literally eat away at the victim's skin.
- In Jewish culture, to have leprosy was considered to be one of the “walking dead.” Leprosy made you ceremonially unclean and unfit for worship.
- But contemporary historical accounts give us an additional perspective on what happened that day:
- In the mean time a great earthquake shook the ground and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately. (Josephus Flavius, Antiquities IX 10:4)
- This earthquake is the same one referenced in the beginning of the book of Amos 1:1
- Uzziah's pride thus had two results:  
First, it made him unfit to worship God.  
Second, it eventually destroyed everything he had built. – Joash destroyed the only family he had ever had. – Amaziah was conquered by the very things he sought to conquer. – Uzziah destroyed the very things that had become his source of pride.

What attitude do you bring into the House of God?

I will not boast in anything No gifts, no power, no wisdom But I will boast in Jesus Christ His death and resurrection

*Why should I gain from His reward?*

*I cannot give an answer*

*But this I know with all my heart*

*His wounds have paid my ransom.*

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#### STEVEN COLE - [The Seduction Of Success \(2 Chronicles 26\)](#)

Which would you choose if you could: Success, mediocrity, or failure? That's a dumb question, isn't it? Who wants to be mediocre or to fail? We all want to succeed in our family and personal lives.

But the irony is that the success we all seek can easily destroy us. We've all heard of successful people--athletes, musicians, movie stars, or businessmen--whose success opened them up to temptations that ruined or even killed them. The poet Emily Dickinson wrote, "Success is counted sweetest by those who ne'er succeed." The Scottish essayist Carlyle wrote, "Affliction is bad; but for every person that can handle prosperity, there are a hundred that can handle adversity."

The life of King Uzziah illustrates Carlyle's point. Uzziah succeeded admirably, but his success seduced him into pride; his pride led to a sin that in a few moments nullified years of achievements. Though he reigned for 52 years and had many outstanding accomplishments, he was remembered by the sad epitaph, "He is a leper" (2Ch 26:23). Uzziah's life teaches us that ...

The seductive danger of success is pride.

Uzziah's success is described in 2Ch 26:1-15; his downfall in 2Ch 26:16-23. We'll follow that outline to glean some lessons from each section.

## **1. Success is a great good if it comes from the Lord and is used for the Lord and His purposes (2Ch 26:1-15).**

### **A. SUCCESS (IN THE TRUE SENSE) COMES ONLY FROM THE LORD.**

Uzziah was a hard-working, visionary king. But verse 5 makes it clear that the source of his success was not his effort or genius, but the Lord: "And 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." Uzziah's success was due to seeking God and His Word. The Hebrew word "seek" is the same word we have met in earlier studies which meant, literally, "to trample under foot." The idea was that when you frequent a place, you beat a path underfoot. To seek the Lord means going to Him for His wisdom and help so often that you wear a path to God.

Uzziah did that. He followed Solomon's counsel, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Prov. 3:5-6). Isaiah, whose calling to ministry began in the year King Uzziah died (Isa. 6:1), chided the people for consulting mediums and spiritists and said, rather, "should not a people consult their God?" ([Isa. 8:19](#)). Uzziah consulted God.

The source of God's wisdom is His Word. In Uzziah's day, of course, the Bible was not completed. He no doubt at least had the Law of Moses, and perhaps Job, the Psalms, and a few other portions of the Old Testament. But he also had a godly counselor, Zechariah (known only here) who had understanding in the visions (some mss. read "fear") of God. Uzziah listened to the counsel of this prophet who understood God's Word. So through God's Word and prayer, Uzziah sought God and God prospered him.

That's the only kind of success or prosperity that matters--when you live by seeking God and His wisdom through His Word and prayer. As Psalm 1:1-3 puts it:

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.

I might add that some are successful in the eyes of the world--even the Christian world--but God does not share the same opinion. Others may be considered failures or nobodies by the world--even by the Christian world--but God considers them eminently successful. So we must be careful to seek after true success that comes from seeking God through His Word and through prayer. Then, if God grants a measure of success, realize that ...

### **B. SUCCESS CAN BE USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE LORD AND OTHERS.**

Uzziah was a leader of far-reaching vision, whose accomplishments included both domestic and foreign projects. Verse 2 notes that he built Elath and restored it to Judah. Elath (modern Eilat) was the port city at the southern tip of Israel on what is today called the Gulf of Aqaba. Furthermore he subdued a number of Philistine cities to the west of Jerusalem and built Israeli cities in their region (2Ch 26:6). He conquered the Arabians and Meunites to the south, and the Ammonites to the east paid him tribute (2Ch 26:7-8). Uzziah also fortified Jerusalem, thus restoring the defense against the Northern Kingdom which his father had lost (2Ch 26:9). Furthermore he built towers for the defense of his vast agricultural and livestock holdings in the outlying countryside (2Ch 26:10). Uzziah "loved the soil" (2Ch 26:10--an early ecologist!), and the land prospered under him.

Also, Uzziah developed a strong army which "could wage war with great power" (2Ch 26:13). In addition to the traditional weapons (2Ch 26:14), Uzziah installed the latest military hardware in Jerusalem--great catapults and arrow-shooting devices (2Ch 26:15). As a result, we read twice (2Ch 26:8, 15) of his widespread fame.

Whenever God grants that kind of success and fame to a person, it should be used for the Lord and His purpose. Fame is simply an opportunity to tell more people of the greatness of God, so that His name is exalted. It also provides the opening to do more for the Lord's work and for His people, to see them established in His ways. George Washington Carver said that the only advantage of fame is that it gives you a platform for service. And, although viewed on a secular level, Erma Bombeck cuts to the heart of it when she says, "Don't confuse fame with success. Madonna is one; Helen Keller is the other." So we ought to view any measure of success God gives us as a trust to be managed for His glory and kingdom.

The hinge of the story is at the end of 2Ch 26:15: "... for he was marvelously helped until he was strong." Uzziah's problem was precisely that--he became strong. Uzziah's success and strength led to his downfall.

## 2. Success is a great danger if we don't guard against pride (2Ch 26:16-23).

Someone has said that the human being is the only animal that you can pat on the back and his head swells up. Uzziah started believing his own press clippings and his pride led to a fall. In one hour he ruined a prosperous lifetime as a successful king. When Uzziah became strong, his heart was lifted up, and that led him to enter the holy place in the temple to offer incense to the Lord. But the Law of Moses restricted that duty to the priests, and Uzziah was not a priest (Num. 18:1-7). Only the Messiah Jesus would combine the offices of Priest and King.

Perhaps Uzziah rationalized, "Yes, I know the Law of Moses, but let's not be legalistic! I've done well leading my people politically, but they also need strong religious leadership. Not being able to offer incense weakens my ability to lead and damages my public image. Besides, it's for a spiritual cause, to enhance our worship. And, all the foreign kings do it that way." It wasn't gross immorality or idolatry. The only problem was, God had forbidden it. Like another man in the Bible with a similar name, Uzzah (2 Sam. 6:6-7), who was struck dead for touching the ark of the covenant, Uzziah presumed on the holiness of God. Taking upon himself a task that required holiness, Uzziah was rendered ceremonially unclean for the rest of his life by being struck with leprosy. We should learn ...

### A. PRIDE IS AT THE HEART OF ALL SIN.

In Isaiah 14:13-14, the prophet is speaking of the king of Babylon, but most Bible scholars agree that he goes beyond the human king and speaks of Satan's fall:

But you said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly, in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

Satan's original sin was pride that led him to exalt himself against God. He dangled the same temptation in front of Eve: "If you eat this fruit, you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (see Gen. 3:5). That was the beginning of the self-esteem movement, which invariably pulls God down and lifts man up. Satan was implying that God was keeping Eve from realizing her full potential. But if she would only eat this fruit, she would be fulfilled. Ever since the human race fell into sin, all sin at its core consists of the arrogance of saying, "I know better than God and His ways. I don't need to submit to God's authority. I am an authority unto myself. I can be like God."

But Scripture is clear: "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (Prov. 16:18). "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5). If we want to avoid being opposed by God and if we want His grace in our lives, we must judge every proud thought and grow in humility. John Calvin wrote (*Institutes of the Christian Religion* [Westminster Press], ed. by John T. McNeill, II:II:11):

A saying of Chrysostom's has always pleased me very much, that the foundation of our philosophy is humility. But that of Augustine pleases me even more: "When a certain rhetorician was asked what was the chief rule in eloquence, he replied, 'Delivery'; what was the second rule, 'Delivery'; what was the third rule, 'Delivery'; so if you ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, first, second, third, and always I would answer, 'Humility.'"

He quotes further from Augustine:

"Why do we presume so much on ability of human nature? It is wounded, battered, troubled, lost. What we need is true confession, not false defense." Again: "When anyone realizes that in himself he is nothing and from himself he has no help, the weapons within him are broken, the wars are over. But all the weapons of impiety must be shattered, broken, and burned; you must remain unarmed, you must have no help in yourself. The weaker you are in yourself, the more readily the Lord will receive you."

Calvin concludes this section:

But I require only that, laying aside the disease of self-love and ambition, by which he is blinded and thinks more highly of himself than he ought [cf. Gal. 6:3], he rightly recognize himself in the faithful mirror of Scripture [cf. James 1:22-25].

The closer you draw to God through His Word, the more it confronts your proud, self-reliant nature and drives you to find your all in all in Christ. Even the Apostle Paul had to be given a thorn in the flesh to keep him from exalting himself (2 Cor. 12:7). He wrote, "And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1 Cor.



4:7). “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12). “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (Gal. 6:3).

How is it that the American church has widely embraced a teaching for which there is absolutely no support in the Bible, that our emotional problems stem from low self-esteem? Pride is the root sin, at the heart of all sin.

When Uzziah arrogantly went in to offer incense, Azariah and 80 other priests courageously confronted this powerful king (26:17-18). We learn a second lesson about pride:

## **B. PRIDE IS REVEALED BY AN ANGRY RESPONSE TO GODLY CORRECTION.**

There are other marks of pride, of course. But invariably, if you're filled with pride, you react with indignation when a godly person tries to warn or correct you. When you become as powerful and successful as Uzziah, you can start thinking that you're accountable to no one. Your hard work and intelligence got you this far. You stop listening to those who challenge you and gather “yes men” around you. Earlier in his career, Uzziah accepted the counsel of the godly Zechariah. But now he angrily rejects the counsel of 81 godly priests: “I'm the king! These priests can't tell me what to do!” Ironically, Uzziah sought honor for himself, but these priests tell him plainly, “You have been unfaithful, and you will have no honor from the Lord God” (2Ch 26:18). So Uzziah was enraged.

That's a good test of humility--how do you respond to correction? Do you examine your heart before God and admit it if you're wrong? Or, are you angry and defensive?

## **C. UNJUDGED PRIDE RESULTS IN GOD'S DISCIPLINE.**

If Uzziah would have repented on the spot, God probably would have been gracious in restoring him. But Uzziah didn't repent until he realized that he had been struck with leprosy. Then he realized that God had struck him, so he hastened to get out of the temple, probably so he wouldn't get struck dead (2Ch 26:20). The Lord never healed Uzziah--he remained a leper until he died. His spent his final years living in separate quarters. He never again worshipped in the house of the Lord (2Ch 26:21). His son had to carry on the daily affairs of the household and kingdom. When Uzziah died, they didn't put him in the same tomb with the other kings, but buried him in the field near there so that they wouldn't defile the tomb. The final comment on his life was not, “What a great king!” but rather, “He is a leper.”

You may think that God was a bit harsh with Uzziah. There's no question that His discipline was severe. But the Law prescribed death for anyone who was not a priest who entered the holy place. Uzziah could have been struck dead on the spot. We must treat God as holy.

We've lost sight of the awesome holiness of God in our day. We would dare to judge God for striking this proud man with leprosy! The promoters of self-esteem encourage us to get all our rage out toward God for the trials He has allowed into our lives! We're even being told that we need to forgive God, as if He somehow had no just cause to bring suffering into our lives! We flippantly bounce into God's presence and forget that we can only draw near through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

God will not share His glory with proud man. If a man honors the Lord, the Lord will honor that man (1 Sam. 2:30). But if a man thinks that he is free to disregard God's Word and begins exalting himself, he will come under God's discipline (if he is a believer) or God's judgment (if he dies not trusting in Christ for salvation). The more successful we become, the more it ought to drive us to our knees with the awareness of our own weakness and sin, so that we cling to God alone as our strength and salvation.

## **Conclusion**

One evening the great conductor Arturo Toscanini brilliantly conducted Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The audience went mad; people clapped, whistled, and stomped their feet. Toscanini bowed and bowed. He signaled to the orchestra, and its members stood to acknowledge the wild applause. Eventually the applause began to subside. Toscanini turned, looked intently at his musicians, and almost uncontrollably exclaimed, “Gentlemen! Gentlemen!” The men in the orchestra leaned forward to listen. Why was the maestro so disturbed? Was he angry? Had somebody missed a cue? Had the orchestra flawed the performance?

No. Toscanini was not angry. Toscanini was stirred to the very depths of his being by the sheer magnificence of Beethoven's music. Scarcely able to talk, he whispered fiercely, “Gentlemen, I am nothing.” That was an extraordinary admission, since Toscanini was not known for his humility. “Gentlemen,” he added, “you are nothing.” That was hardly news. The members of the orchestra had often heard the same message in rehearsal. “But Beethoven,” said Toscanini in a tone of adoration, “is everything, everything, everything!” (Told by Vernon Grounds, *Christianity Today*, 12/9/77, p. 13.)

That's the attitude we need toward ourselves and toward Jesus Christ. We are nothing; He is everything! If you ever receive the applause and praises of people for what you do, remember the story of King Uzziah--that the seductive danger of success is pride. And at least to yourself whisper, "Apart from Christ, I can do nothing!"

## Discussion Questions

1. Should Christians strive for success? What are God's criteria for success?
2. What criteria should we use to measure a successful church? Numbers? Budget? Programs? (See Revelation 2 & 3.)
3. Does humility mean putting yourself down? How should you respond when someone compliments you for something you have done well?
4. What is the essence of biblical humility?

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