

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

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

After Amaziah died, the people of Judah made Uzziah (aka Azariah), his sixteen-year-old son, the king. Though it seems to be an abrupt insertion, the historian then notes that after the death of his father, Uzziah restored the city of Eloth, a port on the Red Sea, to Judah.

The IVP commentary adds this information: “Elath (or Eloth) was the seaport constructed by Solomon at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. 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.”

**2Chronicles 26:3 Sixteen years old *was* Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name also *was* Jecoliah of Jerusalem.**

**2Chronicles 26:4 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.**

**2Chronicles 26:5 And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.**

Uzziah began his rule as king in Jerusalem at age 16, and he ruled for 52 years. His mother was a Jewish woman named Jecoliah. This king did what was right before the LORD, following the example of his father Amaziah.

It is noted that he “sought” (Hebrew: follow, worship, diligent) God during the lifetime of Zechariah, a prophet who understood visions of God. The implication is clear; he did not seek God with the same diligence after Zechariah died. (Sounds similar to Joash and Jehoiada. Chapter 24) This is not the prophet Zechariah that authored the subject book in scripture.

Important truth: As long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper.

It seems the kings of Judah were no different than our leaders today. They just didn’t learn from their history. You would think that there were plenty of examples by now that proved that to follow God in obedience resulted in prosperity, while rebelling against Him and following false gods resulted in judgment.

Although Uzziah’s reign is characterized as predominantly good, the NIV Commentary makes this note about conditions in the kingdom: “...the contemporaneous preaching of Hosea and Amos indicates the presence of serious moral and spiritual decay.”

**2Chronicles 26:6 And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and**

brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines.

**2Chronicles 26:7** And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims.

**2Chronicles 26:8** And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly.

Uzziah led his army against the Philistines, breaking down the walls of Gath, Jabney and Ashdod (west of Jerusalem near the Mediterranean). He then proceeded to build Jewish cities around Ashdod among the Philistines.

God was with the king and gave him victory as he led his troops against the Philistines, Arabians and Mehunims. The Ammonites responded by giving gifts of tribute to Uzziah; they wanted no part of war with him. His name began to be respected all the way to Egypt as he continued to grow ever more powerful.

**2Chronicles 26:9** Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning *of the wall*, and fortified them.

**2Chronicles 26:10** Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen *also*, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.

Uzziah strengthened the defenses around Jerusalem by building towers at the Corner Gate, the Valley Gate and the Angle (another area where the wall took a turn) and making them very strong.

JFB quote Bertheau describes the locations of these towers as follows: "...the corner gate, the northwest corner of the city; at the valley gate on the west, where the Joppa gate now is; at the "turning" — a curve in the city wall on the eastern side of Zion. The town, at this point, commanded the horse gate which defended Zion and the temple hill on the southeast."

The king also built towers or fortresses of defense in the desert and dug many wells to supply water for his great herds of cattle in the low country and plains and for the farmers and vineyards in the hill country and in Carmel. It is noted that Uzziah loved the soil (from the Hebrew).

Again, JFB provides more detail about the locations: "...Some of these 'were in the desert,' that is, in the district to the southeast of Jerusalem, on the west of the Dead Sea, an extensive grazing district 'in the low country' lying between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean; 'and in the plains,' east of the Jordan, within the territory of Reuben."

**2Chronicles 26:11** Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains.

**2Chronicles 26:12** The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred.

**2Chronicles 26:13** And under their hand *was* an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.

I liked the wording of the NLT on this section: *“Uzziah had an army of well-trained warriors, ready to march into battle, unit by unit. This great army of fighting men had been mustered and organized by Jeiel, the secretary of the army, and his assistant, Maaseiah. They were under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king’s officials. Twenty-six hundred clan leaders commanded these regiments of seasoned warriors. The army consisted of 307,500 men, all elite troops. They were prepared to assist the king against any enemy.”*

**2Chronicles 26:14** And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones.

**2Chronicles 26:15** And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

Uzziah provided a variety of weapons for his military forces—shields, spears, helmets, habergeons (armored breastplates of mail), bows (and arrows would be understood) and slings for throwing stones. The king was evidently an innovator. He commissioned skilled men to invent engines to place on the towers and bulwarks (corner areas of the wall) that could shoot arrows and large stones.

Uzziah’s fame spread far abroad because the LORD helped him greatly until he became very strong.

Adam Clarke makes this observation: *“This is the very first intimation on record of any warlike engines for the attack or defense of besieged places; and this account is long prior to any thing of the kind among either the Greeks or Romans. Previously to such inventions, the besieged could only be starved out, and hence sieges were very long and tedious....The Jews alone were the inventors of such engines; and the invention took place in the reign of Uzziah, about eight hundred years before the Christian era. It is no wonder that, in consequence of this, his name spread far abroad, and struck terror into his enemies.”*

**2Chronicles 26:16** ¶ But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

**2Chronicles 26:17** And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men:

**2Chronicles 26:18** And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the

**sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God.**

Sad to say, instead of acknowledging God's empowerment, the king became very prideful and suffered the resulting consequences. He decided he was worthy to go into the temple and burn incense upon the altar of incense—a duty that only the priests were allowed to perform according to God's command. Azariah the high priest followed him trying to stop him, and 80 courageous priests blocked his way to the altar. They reminded him that only the priests who were descendants of Aaron were set apart for burning that incense and told him to get out of the sanctuary. They warned him that the LORD God would certainly not approve of his sin.

I assume this was after the death of the prophet Zechariah mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

Guzik used a good quote by 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."

**2Chronicles 26:19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.**

**2Chronicles 26:20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.**

**2Chronicles 26:21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.**

Uzziah became very angry. As he stood there in anger before the priests holding the censer, leprosy appeared in his forehead in clear view of the temple priests and they pushed him out of the sanctuary. Finally, he understood that he had done wrong and that God had judged him for it. Uzziah remained a leper until the day of his death. He lived in a house set apart from others because he was a leper, and he could no longer go to the temple. His son Jotham became co-regent and served as the active judge of the people of Judah.

The NIV Commentary dates this event as follows: "His son 'Jotham' assumed coregency in the palace. The date of this transfer of power is 751 B.C., since Jotham's twentieth year (2Ki 15:30) was equivalent to his son Ahaz's twelfth (16:2), which is 732."

**2Chronicles 26:22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah**

**the prophet, the son of Amoz, write.**

**2Chronicles 26:23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which *belonged* to the kings; for they said, He *is* a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.**

The Chronicler closes his account on Uzziah, stating that the prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, had written more about him. It must have been another record, because he is basically just mentioned in the book of Isaiah that is part of our bible.

Uzziah was buried with his father in a field that belonged to the kings but not with previous kings because of his leprosy. He was yet another of the kings of Judah that started so well only to end so poorly.

Jotham succeeded his father as king.