

2 Chronicles Chapter 26

Verses 1-23: The reign of Uzziah, a.k.a. Azariah (ca. 790 – 739 B.C.; compare (2 Kings 14:21-22; 15:1-7); Hosea (Hosea 1:1), Amos (Amos 1:1), Jonah, and Isaiah (Isa. Chapter 6), ministered during his reign.

Much like his father, “Amaziah” (chapter 25), and his grandfather, Joash (chapter 24), “Uzziah” began well; he was blessed with “fame” and became exceedingly “strong”. Yet the blessing seems to have caused his “heart” to be “lifted up”, in pride, making him think that he could act in the role of a priest and approach God directly (Lev. 17:3-7).

2 Chronicles 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."

“Uzziah” is named Azariah (in 2 Kings 14:21; 15:1-7).

"Which was sixteen years old": Yet as he began to reign in the twenty seventh year of Jeroboam (2 Kings 15:1). And Jeroboam began to reign in the fifteenth year of Amaziah (2 Kings 14:23). He could be but four years of age, for the solution of which (see 2 Kings 15:1).

"And made him king in the room of his father Amaziah": Which was after his death, and not when he fled to Lachish, as Kimchi thinks.

The last lesson ended with the death of Amaziah. The name "Uzziah" means strength of Jehovah. Uzziah was spoken of as Azariah as well. He was very young when he became king at the death of his father. That was not unusual in these days.

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

A port which belonged to Edom (Deut. 2:8), which very probably David took from them when he made them tributary. And which they retook when they revolted. And Amaziah got again when he defeated them. And this his son rebuilt and fortified.

"And restored it to Judah": Annexed it to the kingdom of Judah, as in the days of David and Solomon.

"After that the king slept with his fathers": After the death of his father Amaziah.

Eloth was at the head of the gulf of Akaba. Judah had lost this city under the rule of Amaziah. It appears it was in ruins when they got it back, and now Uzziah would build it back.

2 Chronicles 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."

By the consent of the people and princes of Judah (2 Kings 14:21).

"And he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem": Exclusive of the eleven or twelve years of his minority, from his father's death.

"His mother's name also [was] Jecoliah of Jerusalem": Of whom there is no further account anywhere.

For a summary of "Uzziah's life and times (see the note on 2 Kings 15:2).

He will rule longer than his father, or his grandfather. He also will be 68 at the end of his reign over Judah. "Jecoliah" means Jehovah is strong. This indicates that his mother was probably a Godly woman and taught him about the LORD.

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

"And he did [that which was] right in the sight of the LORD": At the beginning of his reign, and in an external way.

"According to all that his father Amaziah did": Who did not do what he did as David, sincerely and cordially (2 Kings 14:3).

In the beginning of Amaziah's reign, he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but in the latter part of his reign he worshipped false gods. Uzziah it appears at this point, was a Godly man also.

2 Chronicles 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."

"Zechariah": An otherwise unknown prophet during Uzziah's reign, not the priestly spokesman of 24:20, nor the prophet Zechariah who wrote the prophetic book to Judah ca. 520 B.C.

"Sought ... prosper": This summarizes a major theme (in 2 Chronicles).

This is not the same prophet who wrote the prophecy of "Zechariah".

Zechariah was a prophet of God, who understood visions that God gave. It appears as if he greatly influenced the life of Uzziah. He kept Uzziah seeking the will of the LORD. As long as Uzziah was obedient to the will of God, he greatly prospered.

Verses 6-15: A summary of Uzziah's prosperity in the realm of:

(1) Conquering the Philistines (26:6-8);

- (2) Domestic affairs (26:9-10); and
- (3) Military might (26:11-15).

In (verses 6-8), we see a description of Judah's military success to the west, east and south. Israel to the north is not mentioned.

2 Chronicles 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."

Who in the times of Jehoram broke in upon Judah, and distressed them (2 Chron. 21:16).

"And brake down the wall of Gath": Which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines.

"And the wall of Jabneh": Nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, but frequent in the Jewish writings. Where the Sanhedrim sometimes sat, and where was a famous university, and from whence sprung many of the Jewish Rabbins. It is the same which in some writers is called Jamnia, and was a port near to Joppa. And belonged to the tribe of Dan, as Josephus writes.

"And the wall of Ashdod": Another of the principalities of the Philistines, the same with the Azotus of the New Testament; he dismantled all these places.

"And built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines": Where he placed garrisons to keep them in awe (see Amos 1:8).

"Gath ... Jabneh ... Ashdod": Key Philistine cities to the southwest of Jerusalem.

God was with Uzziah. The Philistines were God's enemies, as well as enemies of Uzziah. It appears Uzziah took these walled cities for the LORD. Ashdod was a very prominent location, because it was on the way to Egypt. We see that Uzziah built other cities around these, and fortified all of them so the enemy could not get to him from this side.

2 Chronicles 26:7 "And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-baal, and the Mehunim."

Arabians ... Gur-baal": Most likely a nomadic group who lived in an area whose location is unknown.

"Mehunim": A nomadic people living in Edom (compare 2 Chron. 20:1).

2 Chronicles 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."

As tributaries to him, or; however, as desirous to live in friendship with him.

"And his name spread abroad, even to the entering in of Egypt": so far, he carried his arms, and conquered the countries that lay between Palestine and Egypt.

"For he strengthened himself exceedingly": His kingdom and its coasts from the force of enemies.

"Ammonites": Offspring of Lot who lived east of the Jordan.

As long as Uzziah had faith in God, he could not fail. God helped him against the Arabs, Philistines, Ammonites, and all of their other enemies. When Jerusalem was attacked, it was usually from the direction of Egypt. Now God had helped Uzziah get this area under his control. These lands he overcame were glad to give gifts to Uzziah in exchange for letting them live.

2 Chronicles 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."

"Corner gate": Located in the northwest section of Jerusalem.

"Valley gate": Located in the southwest section of Jerusalem.

"Turning of the wall": Located in the east section of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was fortified better than any of the other cities. The temple of the LORD was there. These towers were lifted up from the wall, so the men could see from afar. They were extra precautions made to protect Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 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."

In the desert of Arabia, to protect travelers from thieves and robbers, and particularly shepherds and their flocks, as appears by what follows. Which a certain writer thinks are the same which the Indians call pagodas. Not such as served for temples, but were buildings encompassed with good walls. Where flocks were gathered together in case of any alarm.

"And digged many wells": For the watering of the flocks, which in those hot and desert places were of great use.

"For he had much cattle, both in the low country and in the plains": Both flocks and herds.

"Husbandmen also, and vinedressers in the mountains": Husbandmen to take care of the corn, and manure the land for that, and gather it when ripe. And vinedressers to prune the vines, and look after them. Which were very often planted on mountains, and on which also corn grew (Psalm 72:16).

"And in Carmel": A place in the tribe of Judah, where Nabal dwelt (1 Sam. 25:2), or it may be put for any fruitful field.

"For he loved husbandry": Not only the profit, but the exercise of it at times.

This was an area near the Dead Sea. Water that was drinkable was not available here. The wells were dug to feed the cattle and to water the gardens. Mount Carmel is a very green small mountain. It would be an excellent place for grazing sheep. It would also be an ideal place for growing grapes, or anything else.

Verses 11-15: With over 300,000 in the army and the development of new weapons, he posed a threat to would-be assailants and thus secured the nation in peace.

2 Chronicles 26:11 "Moreover Uzziah had a 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."

A standing army.

"That went out to war by bands": To annoy his enemies, and to scour the country from thieves and robbers, that came in troops to plunder.

"According to the number of their account, by the hand of Jeiel the scribe": The secretary of war, who ordered these bands, settled their number, and directed their destination.

"And Maaseiah the ruler": Or officer over them, a lieutenant.

"Under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains": That had the command of them, or at least of one of them.

Uzziah was so blessed at this time, that he had plenty of men for harvesting the crops and also had plenty of men for battle if necessary. Jeiel seemed to be the record keeper. Maaseiah was a steward who helped arrange the armies that went out. Hananiah was a captain in the army of Uzziah.

2 Chronicles 26:12 "The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valor [were] two thousand and six hundred."

Who were the commanders and principal officers of his army; and such a number supposed a large army, as follows.

This is saying, there were 2,600 officers in this army of men.

2 Chronicles 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."

Which was larger than that in his father's time by 7500 (2 Chron. 25:5), besides officers.

"That made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy": They were ready to fight, and fight valiantly. Whenever the king had any occasion for them, or the land was invaded.

This is speaking of the men in the army who were not officers. 307,500 men were the regular army.

2 Chronicles 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."

For every soldier in the army.

"Shields and spears": Defensive and offensive weapons, the one to cover and protect their bodies, the other to push and pierce their enemies.

"And helmets, and habergeons": The first of these were a covering for the head in the day of battle, and the other coats of mail, to defend the body.

"And bows": To shoot arrows out of.

"And slings to cast stones": At which the Benjamites formerly were very expert.

These are items used in war. A habergeon is a breastplate. The army of Uzziah was well equipped in the weapons of war.

2 Chronicles 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 marvelously helped, till he was strong."

Such as with the Romans were called "catapultae", "ballistae", "scorpiones", etc. And by this it appears that these were not first invented in Greece and Rome, but in Judea. It is said, that the Romans received the machine to batter cities from the Greeks. And that the Trojan horse was no other than a battering ram. But if they did, the invention of them must be ascribed, not to them, but rather to the Syrians and Phoenicians, according to Pliny. Though others suppose the Carthaginians, who were a colony of theirs, to be the inventors of them. Yet, after all, they seem to be the device of some skillful men among the Jews, in the times of Uzziah. According to Diodorus Siculus, they were not found out when Nineveh was besieged in the times of Sardanapalus.

"And his name spread far abroad": In distant countries, for his warlike dispositions and preparations, which made them stand in fear of him.

"For he was helped until he was strong": He was wonderfully helped by the Lord to build fortified places, raise a numerous army, and provide all sorts of armor for them. And invent such machines as would greatly annoy the enemy, whereby he became very potent, and injected dread round about him.

The engine here, is speaking of an invention of a catapult to throw the stones great distances. He was marvelously helped by God, would be a correct statement. As long as he stayed true to the LORD, he was greatly blessed.

Verses 16-18: Uzziah attempted to usurp the role of the priest, which is forbidden in the Levitical code (compare Num. 3:10; 18:7).

(Proverbs 16:18), indicates that pride precipitates a fall, and it did in his case. Even the king could not live above God's law.

2 Chronicles 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."

Became great and powerful, through his victories, the enlargement of his dominions, and having a numerous army. And these well-equipped, and many fortified cities and towers.

"His heart was lifted up to his destruction": He grew vain and proud, elated with his flourishing circumstances, which issued in his ruin.

"For he transgressed against the Lord his God": Who had helped him, and made him so great, and had bestowed so many favors upon him. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord his God;" what his transgression was, follows.

"And went into the temple of the Lord": The Holy Place, into which none but the priests might enter.

"To burn incense upon the altar of incense": Which stood there.

(See the note on 25:14-19).

His strength from blessings from the LORD caused him to think very highly of himself. He decided he could burn his own incense before the LORD, instead of taking it and letting the priest do this for him. It was forbidden for him to burn the incense since he was not a Levite and had not been anointed to be priest.

Verses 17-19: This passage illustrates the truth that although the believer should obey (Matt. 22:21), and support the legally constituted government (1 Peter 2:13-17). And even pray for governmental leadership (1 Tim. 2:1-3), where rulers violate the law of God, the believer is to stand for God. No man is above the law of the land or the law of God.

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

To hinder him from doing it, and to persuade him to go out. This was the High Priest, as appears from (2 Chron. 26:20), and is thought to be the same that is spoken of (in 1 Chron. 6:10).

"And with him eighty priests of the Lord, that were valiant men": Not only able bodied men, but men of spirit and courage, and zealous for the honor of God.

2 Chronicles 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 honor from the LORD God."

They not only stood against him, but stood about him, surrounded him, so as to hinder him from approaching the altar of incense.

"And said unto him, it appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord": it did not belong to his office as a king, it was no part of it.

"But to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense": And to them only. For even the Levites might not do it, only those of the tribe of Levi, that descended from Aaron (see Num. 16:35).

"Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed": By going into that.

"Neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God": But to his hurt, and be a brand of infamy upon him. For more is designed than is expressed, and as the event showed.

The High Priest Azariah and the 80 priests with him, tried to stop Uzziah from committing this terrible act. The king was not authorized of God to burn incense. The priests stood face to face with the king and told him not to do this. They asked him to leave and he would not.

Verses 19 and 21: As a result of Uzziah's pride, "leprosy ever rose up in his forehead" and he had to live in isolation, in accord with Levitical law (Lev. 13:46).

God judged the king's refusal to heed the law but was merciful in that He did not kill Uzziah. With leprosy, Uzziah had to submit to the priests in a new way according to the laws of leprosy (compare Lev. Chapters 13-14), and endure isolation the rest of his life from the temple as well.

2 Chronicles 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."

With the priests, and, as Josephus says, threatened to kill them.

"And had a censer in his hand to burn incense": Ready to do it, and resolved upon it.

"And while he was wroth with the priests": And expressing his indignation, and do what he would do to them, if they continued to oppose him.

"The leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar": Which seems not only to describe the position of the priests, being beside the altar of incense, to keep the king from it. When the leprosy was seen by them in his forehead, but the quarter from whence the stroke invisibly came. Josephus says, there was earthquake at the same time, and a mountain was rent.

Uzziah was determined to burn the incense. He became very angry with the priests. When he reached the incense burner, leprosy came on his forehead. His mind was perverted to do this thing. Leprosy symbolizes sin.

2 Chronicles 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 hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him."

He was leprous all over his body, no doubt. But it appeared in his forehead very remarkably, and was seen by them all. Who, without doubt, informed him of his case, and of which he soon became sensible.

"And they thrust him out from thence": The Holy Place, he being now unfit to be in a common dwelling house, or his own palace, and much less to be in the house of God.

"Yea, himself also hasted to go out, because the Lord had smitten him": Fearing, should he continue there, that something worse would befall him. The Targum is, the Word of the Lord. The leprosy was a disease sent immediately from God, as the case of Miriam, and this of Uzziah, show. And so, the Persians had a notion, that those had it who sinned against the sun, and for that reason, and which they accounted and worshipped as God.

The priests removed the king bodily and he was now willing to go, because the leprosy had come upon him. The LORD had marked him with the leprosy for his willful sin.

Verses 21-23 (see notes on 2 Kings 15:5).

2 Chronicles 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."

(See 2 Kings 15:5).

"For he was cut off from the house of the Lord": Not, suffered to enter into that, because of his uncleanness.

"And Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land" (see 2 Kings 15:5).

Uzziah's son, Jotham, became acting king when Uzziah had to leave the king's house, because of his leprosy. No one with leprosy could enter the house of the LORD, so he was cut off from there as well.

2 Chronicles 26:22 "Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write."

Not the canonical book of Isaiah, but rather a reference to some other volume that the prophet wrote.

This is verified (in Isaiah 1:1).

"The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, [and] Hezekiah, kings of Judah."

Isaiah 6:1 "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple."

2 Chronicles 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."

Died as they did, the same year, according to Dr. Lightfoot, in which he was smitten with the leprosy. And in the year of his death it was Isaiah had the vision related in (Isa. 6:1).

"And they buried him with his fathers (see 2 Kings 15:7).

It appears that his actual burial, even though it was near that of his fathers and was indeed in Jerusalem, was not in the exact spot. The fact that he was a leper caused his separation, even in death.

2 Chronicles Chapter 26 Questions

1. How old was Uzziah, when he became king?
2. What does "Uzziah" mean?
3. What did Uzziah build and restore to Judah?
4. How many years did Uzziah reign?
5. Who was the mother of Uzziah?
6. What did her name mean?
7. Verse 4 says, he did _____ in the sight of the LORD.
8. What special understanding did Zechariah have?
9. What caused him to prosper?
10. Who did Uzziah war against?
11. Why was Ashdod an important city?
12. When Uzziah placed his faith in God, God helped him against whom?
13. What did Uzziah build at Jerusalem?
14. Why did they dig wells?
15. Who was the scribe under Uzziah?
16. How many officers did he have over his army?
17. How large was the regular army?
18. What is a habergeon?
19. What were some of the things Uzziah prepared for his army?
20. What are the engines, in verse 15, speaking of?
21. What did Uzziah do, that would mean his destruction?
22. Who were the only ones allowed to burn incense before the LORD?
23. Who tried to stop him?
24. What happened to Uzziah, when he became angry at the priest for trying to stop him?
25. Leprosy symbolizes _____.

26. How long did his leprosy continue?
27. Where did he live, while he had the leprosy?
28. Who reigned in his stead?
29. Uzziah was cut off from the house of the _____.
30. Where was he buried?