

Royal Lessons from the Kings
By Doug Hamilton

Azariah (Uzziah): The King of Pride

Introduction to Uzziah

2 Kings 15:1-4 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.

- His name meant “Jehovah is Strength” and he took the throne at age 16 in 791 BC. Azariah is simply another name for Uzziah, with the latter being used in the Chronicles account.
- He came to power at a difficult time. His father had just been slain because of a military failure as a result of following after the gods of Edom (2Chr 25:20).
- There seems not to be a reason why the mother is mentioned outside of which wife Amaziah sired Uzziah with.
- Like most of the kings of this era, the people were addicted to their false gods and sought to continue no matter whom was on the throne.

Leprosy

2 Kings 15:5 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.

- In the 2 Kings account we are very quickly introduced to the fact that Uzziah was stricken from the LORD with leprosy for something that he did. We will have to leave it there for now, but this goes to the heart of the lesson.

Death

2 Kings 15:6-7 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.

- He was born; he ruled; he got leprosy; he died with his son Jotham as a co-regent. In order to know more about Uzziah, we must take the advice and turn to the 2 Chronicles 26 account.

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.

- When he started out his kingship as a teen, he tried to use the vision of God by seeking Him in his decisions. The result was prosperity.
- Whenever a people of God seek out His will in their lives, prosperity will follow.
 - Proverbs 13:21 Adversity pursues sinners, But the righteous will be rewarded with prosperity.
 - Proverbs 28:25 An arrogant man stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will prosper.

Royal Lessons from the Kings
By Doug Hamilton

- Elihu wisely reminded Job about this in Job 36:11 “If they hear and serve *Him*, They will end their days in prosperity And their years in pleasures.
- As long as Uzziah trusted in the LORD with all his heart and leaned not unto his own understanding, God would direct his paths toward this prosperity. If that changed, then the plan would also be changing.

2 Chronicles 26:6-15 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.⁷ God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gur-baal, and the Meunites.⁸ The Ammonites also gave tribute to Uzziah, and his fame extended to the border of Egypt, for he became very strong.⁹ Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the corner buttress and fortified them.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.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.¹² The total number of the heads of the households, of valiant warriors, was 2,600.¹³ Under their direction was an elite army of 307,500, who could wage war with great power, to help the king against the enemy.¹⁴ Moreover, Uzziah prepared for all the army shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows and sling stones.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.

- This military that Uzziah assembled was quite the powerhouse. This was similar to what David (2 Sam 24) and many other rulers did when trusting in military might rather than Godly fear.
 - 2 Samuel 24:10 Now David’s heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, “I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.”
 - Joshua 7:2-5 ...So the men went up and spied out Ai.³ They returned to Joshua and said to him, “Do not let all the people go up; *only* about two or three thousand men need go up to Ai; do not make all the people toil up there, for they are few.”⁴ So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai.⁵ The men of Ai struck down about thirty-six of their men, and pursued them from the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them down on the descent, so the hearts of the people melted and became as water.
- Note: Around the time of Uzziah’s growing army and pride his nation was humbled with a devastating earthquake early in 750 BC. It has been estimated by geologists that it was 8.2 on the Richter scale, earning it the designation of definite article status, “the earthquake” in *Amos 1:1 The words of Amos, who was among the shepherders from Tekoa, which he envisioned in visions concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.*

Royal Lessons from the Kings

By Doug Hamilton

- If there is one thing that reminds us of our fragility it would have to be a devastating massive earthquake. When that ground begins moving in all directions, the buildings collapse and the people around you die, it does not matter how big your army is, unless you are Uzziah. It is estimated that later on that year in 750 BC, when he was 57 years of age, Uzziah would experience a life-changing event that would deal with his pride..

2 Chronicles 26:16-21 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. ¹⁷ Then Azariah the priest entered after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, valiant men. 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." 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. 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. 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.

- It was during these moments of strength the Uzziah seemed to forget where the source of that strength was coming from. He decided that he was going to carry out the job of the Levites and offer incense on the altar.
- Even when he was reminded by more than eighty priests, he persisted in his endeavor. He was insistent in his efforts. In his moment of enragement, leprosy formed on his forehead, which was the worst spot for it could not be hidden.
- Leprosy was a devastating disease in those days because it required you to be separated from the population. If you were to venture into town, you would have to cry out "Unclean! Unclean!"
- They say that pride comes before a fall. For Uzziah it was very, very true. We should heed this in our lives.
 - 1 Timothy 3:6 (KJV) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.
 - Proverbs 11:2 When pride comes, then comes dishonor, But with the humble is wisdom.
 - 1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

2 Chronicles 26:22-23 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first to last, the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, has written. 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.

- Uzziah died in 739 BC, separated from his family and his people. God has a way of reminding us of our limitations.