

# *Uzziah*

*Unthankful To God  
For His Success*

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## UZZIAH OVERESTIMATED HIS OWN IMPORTANCE

Uzziahs story is told in 2 Kings 15:1-7 (where he is called Azariah), and in 2 Chron. 26:1-23. He is also mentioned in Isaiah 1:1; Isaiah 6:1; Isaiah 7:1; Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; Zech. 14:5.

We are never closer to failure than during our greatest successes. If we fail to recognize Gods part in our achievements, they are no better than failures. Uzziah (also called Azariah) was a remarkably successful king. His achievements brought him fame. He was successful in war and peace, in planning and execution, in building and planting.

Uzziah overestimated his own importance in bringing about the great achievements he experienced. He did so many things well that a consuming pride gradually invaded his life like the leprous disease that finally destroyed his body. In trying to act like a priest, he took on a role that God did not mean for him to have. He had forgotten not only how much God had given him, but also that God had certain roles for others that he needed to respect.

Uzziahs pride was rooted in his lack of thankfulness. We have no accounts of this kings ever showing appreciation to God for the marvelous gifts he received. Our accomplishments may not compare with Uzziahs, but we still owe a debt of thanksgiving to God for our very lives. If God is not getting the credit for your successes, shouldnt you start looking at your life differently?

## **Uzziah becomes King**

### **2 Kings 15:1-7**

Uzziah son of Amaziah began to rule over Judah in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of King Jeroboam II of Israel.

He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years.

His mother was Jecoliah, from Jerusalem. He did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight, just as his father, Amaziah, had done.

But he did not destroy the pagan shrines, where the people offered sacrifices and burned incense.

The Lord struck the king with leprosy, which lasted until the day of his death; he lived in a house by himself. The king's son Jotham was put in charge of the royal palace, and he governed the people of the land

The rest of the events in Uzziah's reign and all his deeds are recorded in The Book of the History of the Kings of Judah. [7] When Uzziah died, he was buried near his ancestors in the City of David. Then his son Jotham became the next king.

Azariah was also known as Uzziah. His story is given in greater detail in 2 Chron. 26. He is also mentioned in Isaiah 1:1 and Isaiah 6:1. Before the beginning of Azariah's reign, Israel broke down 200 yards of Jerusalem's walls after defeating Judah and carrying off their king, Amaziah (2 Kings 14:13; 2 Chron. 25:23-24). But during Azariah's 52-year reign,

Judah rebuilt the wall, refortified the city with anti-siege weapons, and gained independence from Israel. Azariah's devotion to God helped Judah enjoy peace and prosperity such as it had not experienced since the days of Solomon. During this time, however, Israel declined drastically and would soon be overthrown

Although Azariah accomplished a great deal, he failed to destroy the high places, the location of pagan shrines in Judah, just as his father Amaziah and grandfather Joash had failed to do. Azariah imitated the kings he had heard stories about and had watched while growing up. Although Azariah's father and grandfather were basically good kings, they were poor models in some important areas.

To rise above the influence of poor models, we must seek better ones. Christ provides a perfect model. No matter how you were raised or who has influenced your life, you can move beyond those limitations by taking Christ as your example and consciously trying to live as he did.

For 10 years Jotham was the co-ruler with his father, Azariah. A father and son would rule together for any of the following reasons: (1) the father was very old and needed help; (2) the father wanted to train his son in leading the nation; (3) the father was sick or exiled. There were many co-regents during the period of the kings—Asa/Jehoshaphat; Jehoshaphat/Jehoram; Azariah/Jotham; Jehoash/Jeroboam II; Hezekiah/Manasseh.

## **2 Chron. 26:1-23**

The people of Judah then crowned Amaziah's sixteen-year-old son, Uzziah, as their next king. After his father's death, Uzziah rebuilt the town of Elath and restored it to Judah.

Uzziah was sixteen when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother was Jecoliah, from Jerusalem. He did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight, just as his father, Amaziah, had done. Uzziah sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. And as long as the king sought the Lord, God gave him success.

He declared war on the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Then he built new towns in the Ashdod area and in other parts of Philistia. God helped him not only with his wars against the Philistines, but also in his battles with the Arabs of Gur and in his wars with the Meunites.

The Meunites paid annual tribute to him, and his fame spread even to Egypt, for he had become very powerful.

Uzziah built fortified towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the angle in the wall. He also constructed forts in the wilderness and dug many water cisterns, because he kept great herds of livestock in the foothills of Judah and on the plains. He was also a man who loved the soil. He had many workers who cared for his farms and vineyards, both on the hillsides and in the fertile valleys.

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. Uzziah provided the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and sling stones.

And he produced machines mounted on the walls of Jerusalem, designed by brilliant men to shoot arrows and hurl stones from the towers and the corners of the wall. His fame spread far and wide, for the Lord helped him wonderfully until he became very powerful.

But when he had become powerful, he also became proud, which led to his downfall. He sinned against the Lord his God by entering the sanctuary of the Lord's Temple and personally burning incense on the altar.

Azariah the high priest went in after him with eighty other priests of the Lord, all brave men. They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord. That is the work of the priests alone, the sons of Aaron who are set apart for this work. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have sinned. The Lord God will not honor you for this!"

Uzziah was furious and refused to set down the incense burner he was holding. But as he was standing there with the priests before the incense altar in the Lord's Temple, leprosy suddenly broke out on his forehead.

When Azariah and the other priests saw the leprosy, they rushed him out. And the king himself was eager to get out because the Lord had struck him. So King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in isolation, excluded from the Temple of the Lord. His son Jotham was put in charge of the royal palace, and he governed the people of the land.

The rest of the events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. So Uzziah died, and since he had leprosy, he was buried nearby in a burial field belonging to the kings. Then his son Jotham became the next king.

These machines were similar to the catapults later used by the Romans and were capable of slinging stones or arrows a great distance.

## **2 Chron. 26:16**

After God gave Uzziah great prosperity and power, he became proud and corrupt. It is true that “pride goes before destruction” (Proverbs 16:18). If God has given you wealth, influence, popularity, and power, be thankful, but be careful. God hates pride. While it is normal to feel elation when we accomplish something, it is wrong to be disdainful of God or to look down on others. Check your attitudes and remember to give God the credit for what you have. Use your gifts in ways that please him.

For much of his life, Uzziah “did what was right in the eyes of the LORD” (2 Chron. 26:4). But Uzziah turned away from God, and he was struck with leprosy and remained leprous until his death. He is remembered more for his arrogant act and subsequent punishment than for his great reforms. God requires lifelong obedience. spurts of obedience are not enough. Only “he who stands firm to the end” will be rewarded (Mark 13:13). Be remembered for your consistent faith; otherwise you, too, may become more famous for your downfall than for your success.

This was the year that God called Isaiah to be a prophet (Isaiah 6:1).

### Isaiah 1:1

These visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem came to Isaiah son of Amoz during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah—all kings of Judah.

Isaiah begins by bringing a message of divine judgment for both Israel and Judah. Although the advance of the Assyrians poses a problem for Judah, God foretells the destruction of Assyria and other evil surrounding nations through the prophet Isaiah. This section ends with the Assyrian invasion being held off, demonstrating the clear unfolding of God’s plan and promises for the nation at this time.

Isaiah was a prophet during the time when the original nation of Israel had been divided into two kingdoms—Israel in the north, and Judah in the south.

The northern kingdom had sinned greatly against God, and the southern kingdom was headed in the same direction—perverting justice, oppressing the poor, turning from God to idols, and looking for military aid from pagan nations rather than from God.

Isaiah came primarily as a prophet to Judah, but his message was also for the northern kingdom. Sometimes “Israel” refers to both kingdoms. Isaiah lived to see the destruction and captivity of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C.; thus, his ministry began with warning the northern kingdom.

### **Isaiah 6:1**

In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple.

The year that King Uzziah died was approximately 740 B.C. He remained leprous until he died because he tried to take over the high priest’s duties (2 Chron. 26:18-21). Although Uzziah was generally a good king with a long and prosperous reign, many of his people turned away from God.

Isaiah’s vision was his commission to be God’s messenger to his people. Isaiah was given a difficult mission. He had to tell people who believed they were blessed by God that instead God was going to destroy them because of their disobedience.

Isaiah’s lofty view of God in Isaiah 6:1-4 gives us a sense of God’s greatness, mystery, and power. Isaiah’s example of recognizing his sinfulness before God encourages us to confess our sin. His picture of forgiveness reminds us that we, too, are forgiven. When we recognize how great our God is, how sinful we are, and the extent of God’s forgiveness, we receive power to do his work. How does your concept of the greatness of God measure up to Isaiah’s?

The throne, the attending seraphs or angels, and the threefold *holy* all stressed God’s holiness.

Seraphs were a type of angel whose name is derived from the word for “burn,” perhaps indicating their purity as God’s ministers. In a time when moral and spiritual decay had peaked, it was important for Isaiah to see God in his holiness. Holiness means morally perfect, pure, and set apart from all sin.

We also need to discover God's holiness. Our daily frustrations, society's pressures, and our shortcomings reduce and narrow our view of God. We need the Bible's view of God as high and lifted up to empower us to deal with our problems and concerns. God's moral perfection, properly seen, will purify us from sin, cleanse our minds from our problems, and enable us to worship and to serve.

### **Isaiah 7:1**

During the reign of Ahaz son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah, Jerusalem was attacked by King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah of Israel, the son of Remaliah. The city withstood the attack, however, and was not taken.

The year was 734 B.C. Ahaz, king of Judah in Jerusalem, was about to be attacked by an alliance of the northern kingdom of Israel and Aram. He was frightened by the possible end of his reign and by the invading armies who killed many people or took them as captives (2 Chron. 28:5-21).

But, as Isaiah predicted, the kingdom of Judah did not come to an end at this time. The sign of Immanuel would be a sign of deliverance.

### **Hosea 1:1**

The Lord gave these messages to Hosea son of Beeri during the years when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah, and Jeroboam son of Jehoash was king of Israel.

Hosea was a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. He served from 753 to 715 B.C. Under the reign of Jeroboam II, the northern kingdom had prospered materially but had decayed spiritually.

The people were greedy and had adopted the moral behavior and idolatrous religion of the surrounding Canaanites.

Hosea's role was to show how the northern kingdom had been unfaithful to God, their "husband" and provider, and had married themselves to Baal and the gods of Canaan. He warned that unless they repented of their sin and turned back to God, they were headed for destruction.

Hosea spoke of God's characteristics—his powerful love and fierce justice—and how their practical experience of these should affect their lives and make them return to God. Unfortunately, the people had broken their covenant with God, and they would receive the punishments God had promised (Deut. 27-28).

Amos 1:1

This message was given to Amos, a shepherd from the town of Tekoa in Judah. He received this message in visions two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam II, the son of Jehoash, was king of Israel.

Amos was a shepherd and fig grower from the southern kingdom (Judah), but he prophesied to the northern kingdom (Israel). Israel was politically at the height of its power with a prosperous economy, but the nation was spiritually corrupt. Idols were worshiped throughout the land, and especially at Bethel, which was supposed to be the nation's religious center.

Like Hosea, Amos was sent by God to denounce this social and religious corruption. About 30 or 40 years after Amos prophesied, Assyria destroyed the capital city, Samaria, and conquered Israel (722 B.C.). Uzziah reigned in Judah from 792-740; Jeroboam II reigned in Israel from 793-753.

Tekoa, Amos's hometown, was located in the rugged sheep country of Judah, about ten miles south of Jerusalem. Long before Amos was born, a woman of Tekoa had helped reconcile David and his rebellious son, Absalom (2 Samuel 14:1-23).

Amos raised sheep—not a particularly “spiritual” job—yet he became a channel of God's message to others. Your job may not cause you to feel spiritual or successful, but it is a vital work if you are in the place God wants you to be. God can work through you to do extraordinary things, no matter how ordinary your occupation.

The prophet Zechariah and other historical records from this period mention an earthquake that occurred at this time (Zech. 14:5).

## **Zech. 14:5**

You will flee through this valley, for it will reach across to Azal. Yes, you will flee as you did from the earthquake in the days of King Uzziah of Judah. Then the Lord my God will come, and all his holy ones with him.

This chapter portrays the eventual triumph of the Messiah over all the earth and his reign over God's people. But the chronological order of these future events is not clear. They show that God has various ways of dealing with his people. Now we are to watch as the events unfold and God provides an escape for his people.

### **Lesson from Life.**

During his early years, as king, he pleased the Lord. He was a successful warrior and city builder. He was skillful in organizing and delegating. He reigned for 52 years.

He developed a prideful attitude due to his great success. He tried to perform the priests duties, in direct disobedience to God.

He failed to remove many of the symbols of idolatry in the land

Lack of thankfulness to God can lead to pride. Even successful people must acknowledge the role God has for others in their lives

When people have power, they often think they can live above the law. But even rulers are subject to God, as Uzziah discovered. No matter what your position in society, God expects you to honor, worship, and obey him.

### **Key verses:**

“In Jerusalem he made machines designed by skillful men for use on the towers and on the corner defenses to shoot arrows and hurl large stones. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense” (2 Chron. 26:15-16).

Uzziah’s pride was rooted in his lack of thankfulness.

**To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Verse Concept: Matthew Henry’s Concept Bible Commentary.