



## [2 Chronicles 26:16-21](#)

(16) But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction, for he sinned against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. (17) And Azariah the priest went in after him and with him eighty priests of the LORD, mighty men. (18) And they withstood Uzziah the king and said to him, "*It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have sinned. Nor shall it be for your honor from the LORD God.*" (19) Then Uzziah was angry. And he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, *who were standing* beside the incense altar. (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 there. Yea, he himself hurried to go out also because the LORD had stricken him. (21) And Uzziah the king was a leper until the day of his death and lived in a separate house as 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.

*A Faithful Version*

What is God's reaction to presumptuous [sin](#)? There is no [mercy](#)! He immediately struck Uzziah with leprosy, and the man was cut off. It sounds like he was cut off from just about everything for the rest of his life. He pretty much lost his crown—lost everything. He certainly lost his health, all because he sinned presumptuously.

Ambition is not a trait that impresses God—certainly not presumptuous ambition. He is looking for a humble man who will stay where [God](#) has put him and do what God tells him to do. Uzziah was king over God's people Israel. Was that enough? No! To Uzziah, he wanted to be a priest as well.

It was his strength (verse 16), his [pride](#), that drove him to do this presumptuous act. His heart was lifted up within him to make him think that he was worthy of more than what

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God had given him. He became discontent with his place. He was dissatisfied with what God had given him (his position as king); and he took to himself a position that was somebody else's.

God would never give him the authority to be a priest: He was a Jew, and the law says that only a son of Aaron could be a priest—a Levite. Uzziah knew that! But in spite of all the warnings, all of what God says, and in spite of what [the priests](#) themselves told him—he did it anyway.

Is it not interesting that he was struck with leprosy *in his forehead*? That should tell us something. What does leprosy stand for? What is it a symbol of? Defilement! It is a symbol of uncleanness—of being impure. Remember in the Pentateuch, all those rules about if somebody had a spot then they were to remain outside the camp? And they were to wash and do all various things. What they were looking for was leprosy. All the things that they had to do—all the washings, all the inspections, and everything else—were to certify whether the person was clean or unclean.

God put this uncleanness—this mark of defilement—right on Uzziah's forehead, where he could not hide it. What is right behind the forehead? The mind is the seat of intellect, as well as the seat of our character. The mind is where it is all being stored. That is where we think. God put this mark on this man's forehead to show that his character had been defiled—by [presumptuousness](#), by this overweening pride that he was greater than what God had made him.

This is why presumptuousness is such a terrible, damnable sin—because *it defiles character* that has been built. It ruins it, to the point that God cannot work with it any more. He says that person shall be cut off from His people. There is no sacrifice for this kind of sin. That is how serious presumptuousness is.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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