



Daily Verse and Comment

2 Chronicles 26:4

(4) And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.

King James Version

The chronicler does not even compare Uzziah to David but to his father, Amaziah, whose life did not end well, though he started fine.

Uzziah seems to have followed in Joash's footsteps: "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 prosper" ([II Chronicles 26:5](#)). Joash sought God while Jehoiada the priest lived. Now another strong priest, who, as the margin says, understood the fear of God, steered Uzziah in the right direction. As long as Uzziah had this righteous guidance, God helped him with victories over surrounding nations, bringing him fame and prosperity ([II Chronicles 26:9-11](#)). The record of his early reign concludes, "So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong" (verse 15).

However, upon reaching the zenith of power and fame, he plunges toward his nadir; the butterfly turns into a worm: "But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense" ([II Chronicles 26:16](#)). Uzziah presumptuously disregarded God's Word, for it says that only the priests could perform this responsibility.

Success after success spoiled his character. He became arrogant, filled with inordinate self-esteem. In his pride, he tried to emulate the despotic Oriental kings around him, who were their nations' high priests as well. But God had purposely separated the two offices within Israel. What was the result of his flagrant presumption?

First, the priests tried to stop him from his foolish act ([II Chronicles 26:17-18](#)). In his overweening pride, Uzziah's reaction was rage. The priests had challenged his authority! Was he not the mighty king of Judah? It appears he felt that he had become infallible and invincible. The chronicler relates the disastrous ending of the tale:

Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he was leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him. King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. ([II Chronicles 26:19-21](#))

Josephus adds an interesting postscript to the story, though it is not clear if he is correct or not. He writes that the earthquake the prophet Amos mentions in [Amos 1:1](#) occurred when Uzziah invaded the Holy Place. Moreover, he says that the shaking tore the sanctuary's roof, and a ray of sunlight pierced the Temple, striking Uzziah in his forehead. When the sunbeam disappeared, leprosy remained. Tradition says this was the hand of God, showing His displeasure with Uzziah's presumptuous pride.

We see a king who started marvelously but faltered and failed along the way. Like Amaziah, when confronted with the truth of his [sin](#), he refused to [repent](#), doubling down with anger and threats. God humbled him for the rest of his life. He had sought glory and fame, and he had to live with shame and loneliness for about another decade before he died. [II Chronicles 26:23](#) records that he was buried with his fathers but separated from them in the field because “they said, 'He is a leper.'”

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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