

## Lesson 6      13 December, 2020

### Uzziah's Heart Was Lifted Up

#### **Lesson Scope:** [2 Chronicles 26](#)

*References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise*

#### Lesson Focus

Sixteen-year-old Uzziah became Judah's tenth king and ruled for fifty-two years. He came to the throne at a difficult time. Due to a military failure, his father had been killed. The people chose Uzziah as his successor.

Early in his reign, it is noted that "he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD." He undertook an expedition against his father's enemies and won the battles against the Philistines, Arabians, and Me-hunims. He strengthened the kingdom, and the report spread as far as "the entering in of Egypt." He made many improvements on the home front, being possessed of organizational ability. In spite of these successes, he strayed from the Lord later in his life.

Apparently the prophet Zechariah influenced the king for good during his life, and "as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper." However, when he became strong, pride filled his heart and his life ended in failure. Today we live in an age of unprecedented affluence. Many around us in society use their wealth to gratify selfish desires. God is forgotten as the Giver of all, and self is exalted through success in accumulating earthly possessions.

The application of Scriptural principles, such as diligence in our work and thrifty habits, enable the Christian to prosper materially. However, instead of crediting self with the ability to make wise decisions, all glory must be given to God, who gives and takes wealth according to His purposes. The Christian will not subscribe to the modern emphasis of material gain as God's stamp of approval on an individual's life. Neither will the Christian rely on prosperity as he faces challenges in life.

The Christian will seek in humility to be a faithful steward of all that God has granted him. He will be willing to share all within his power for the good of others. He will seek to give God all the glory and honour as he relates to these earthly goods. All actions will be viewed in

the light of eternity. Material prosperity is a blessing, but can become a subtle snare. When men forget God and exalt self they bring a curse upon themselves.

**Lesson Aim:** To learn truths related to the snare of self-confidence in the midst of prosperity.

**Theme Verse:** [1 Timothy 6:17](#). Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.

## Lesson Text

### Prosperity

[2 Chronicles 26:1-15](#) <sup>(KJV)</sup> Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah. <sup>2</sup> He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims. <sup>8</sup> And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad *even* to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened *himself* exceedingly. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> Also he built towers in the desert, and dug 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. <sup>11</sup> Moreover Uzziah had an 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. <sup>12</sup> The

whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour *were* two thousand and six hundred. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings *to cast* stones. <sup>15</sup> 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 marvellously helped, till he was strong.

### **Pride**

**2 Chronicles 26:16-18** <sup>(KJV)</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him four-score priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men: <sup>18</sup> 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 honour from the LORD God.

### **Punishment**

**2 Chronicles 26:19-21** <sup>(KJV)</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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 hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. <sup>21</sup> 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.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Prosperity**

1. List some of the advantages Uzziah enjoyed upon becoming king.

2. What did Uzziah do to strengthen himself spiritually? materially?
3. What is a proper view of prosperity today?

### **Pride**

4. What led Uzziah to the place where he thought he could offer 1 incense to God? ‘
5. How might pride cause us to disregard divine laws today?

### **Punishment**

6. What were the consequences of Uzziah’s disobedience?
7. How can we avoid the snare that prosperity presents?

### **Analysing the Passage**

Uzziah had the second longest reign of all Judah’s kings. Early in his reign he was helped much by the godly prophet Zechariah. His accomplishments were a marvel.

He began by rebuilding the city of Eloth and further restoring it to Judah, capitalizing on his father Amaziah’s victory over the Edomites.

He “strengthened himself exceedingly” (verse 8) by building up his armies and embarking on a series of conquests. He subdued the strong cities of the Philistines. He was victorious against the Arabians. He made the Ammonites pay annual tribute. He organized a great army and built towers in Jerusalem and forts in the southern country. He prepared weaponry for them and invented engines to “shoot arrows and great stones.” As a diversion, he was involved in husbandry (verse 10). He had many wells dug and raised great herds of cattle. He laid out farms and vineyards. Unfortunately, when he was strong, we see a shift in his attitudes. He “went into the temple of the LORD” (verse 16). Possibly he saw worship as one more area to bring under his control. However, this was not his responsibility.

He was soundly rebuked by the high priest Azariah, and eighty other brave priests. As he resisted, he was suddenly struck with leprosy, even as he held the censer. His sad end is recorded in verse 21. He ended his days as a leper in a separate house, outside the palace and apart from man and the influence he once enjoyed.

### **Principles and Applications**

#### **Prosperity**

1. Being entrusted with responsibility brings accountability (26:1-2).

God expects us to use the blessings entrusted to us for His honour and glory. In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, the lord condemned the man who refused to do anything with what he had been given. Not all are given equal benefits, but all will give an account for how they used them.

2. A willingness to seek the Lord and follow the path of the faithful brings divine blessing (26:5). God does not expect each one to chart his own course today. Many faithful who have gone before have left a godly example for our encouragement. Our lives will be blessed as we follow other followers of Christ.

3. Material success and organizational ability can become a snare to our dependence on God (26:9, 14). Uzziah was able to use the strengths of others to further his projects (verses 10-11, 15). Humility is a characteristic of the people of God. When we have success, do we share credit with those who helped us? Recognizing God as the source of all our blessings will keep our trust where it belongs. We should seek to use the blessings He has entrusted us with to assist in helping with kingdom work. Schools, missions, and publishing companies are places that are in need of funds and material goods.

### **Pride**

4. Selfish pride leads to wilful actions against divine requirements (26:16). When Uzziah became prosperous, he attempted to take on a responsibility that God had clearly delegated to the spiritual leaders. We must neither allow the ease and prosperity we enjoy to make us self-confident nor to make us act according to our own thinking. God's commandments will not change.

5. The Lord will not honour those who do not fear Him (26:18). Usurping another's role or attempting to fill a place God has not called us to will bring divine displeasure on us. Rebellion and denial causes others to lose respect for us and casts dishonour on the church. God will not honour those who cause disrespect for His name.

### **Punishment**

6. Divine judgment is the result of wilful disobedience (26:19). God in His holiness will not overlook those who wilfully disobey His Word. Disobedience will cause separation from God in this life and eternal separation if not repented of.

7. A prosperous life will end in shame and disgrace when pride replaces a humble outlook (26:21). Uzziah's sin of pride caused him to be "cut off from the house of the LORD." Lucifer fell when he said, "I will be like the most High" and was cast from heaven to await an ignominious end. The individual who sets aside God's appointed way does it to his own disgrace and eventual destruction. A right beginning will not compensate for a life that ends in disobedience.

### **Important Teachings**

1. Being entrusted with responsibility brings accountability (26:1-2).
2. A willingness to seek the Lord and follow the path of the faithful brings divine blessing (26:5).
3. Material success and organizational ability can become a snare to our dependence on God (26:9, 14).
4. Selfish pride leads to wilful actions against divine requirements (26:16).
5. The Lord will not honour those who do not fear Him (26:18).
6. Divine judgment is the result of wilful disobedience (26:19).
7. A prosperous life will end in shame and disgrace when pride replaces a humble outlook (26:21).
8. When God's ways are followed, victory over the enemy results (26:6-7).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. List some of the advantages Uzziah enjoyed upon becoming king. He had God's blessing because "he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD." He had the example of godly predecessors to follow. His youthfulness gave him the chance to begin his reign with a clean slate. All the people of Judah supported him.
2. What did Uzziah do to strengthen himself spiritually? materially? "He sought God in the days of Zechariah." He followed the advice of spiritual leaders. He continued in the right that his father had done. He campaigned against Judah's enemies. He fortified Jerusalem and built towers in the desert. He raised cattle to provide for the people's needs.
3. What is a proper view of prosperity today? All that God has given belongs to Him and is to be used for His glory. Material prosperity does

not indicate divine blessing. God expects us to use what He has given to help others (1 John 3:17).

4. What led Uzziah to the place where he thought he could offer incense to God?

He had led a successful kingdom to this point. Verse 16 indicates that when he was strong, pride enticed him to take on responsibilities that were not his. After the death of the prophet Zechariah, it does not seem that Uzziah sought spiritual counsel from anyone else.

5. How might pride cause us to disregard divine laws today?

When we are overconfident in our own abilities, we will not as readily seek or heed advice from godly brethren. We might view divine directives as helpful for the weaker brother, but feel we are strong enough to ignore them. Pride will blind us to the truth.

6. What were the consequences of Uzziah's disobedience?

He was humiliated by being struck with leprosy in the temple. He was thrust from the presence of other men. He was no longer able to rule and enjoy the influence he had once enjoyed. His disobedience severed his relationship with God.

7. How can we avoid the snare that prosperity presents?

We must remember that all possessions are gifts from God to be used for His honour and glory. We need to be ready to share with others who have needs. We must not rely on wealth as an answer to adversity we face.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Today we enjoy the material and spiritual blessings God has granted us. However, we need to remember that material prosperity is always secondary to spiritual life. This is expressed in the Gospel of Matthew, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Let us keep our focus on things of eternal value in these perilous times, and not allow material pursuits to dim our heavenly vision.

### **Research Guide**

Make a study of Bible passages revealing God's attitude toward prosperity: Deuteronomy 8:10-18; Ecclesiastes 5:9-20; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 19:16-29; 1 John 3:17.