

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## 2 CHRONICLES 23-26

In the southwest corner of Uganda lies the 180 year old kingdom of Toro.

The king of Toro is the leader of over one million Batooro people. He goes by the title, “[Rukirabasaija](#)” – which means “[the greatest of men.](#)” Today’s king is Rukidi IV. He’s known to his subjects as King Oyo. He became king in 1994.

Oyo is the 12<sup>th</sup> king of Toro, but what makes him unique is that he took the throne at the age of 3½ years old. King Oyo is a real-life boy king. King Oyo holds the Guinness World Record as the youngest king in the world.

Imagine, calling a three year old boy “[the greatest of men](#)”.

In 1994 large crowds and VIPs gathered for the king’s 13 hour coronation.

Reporters tell that during the ceremony the king held on to a toy car most of the time. At one point he cried for a soda. He cried again when the ceremonies started and he was taken from the arms of his mother. Just days after he was crowned King Oyo was shipped to London for two years of kindergarten.

In 2002 at the age of 10, King Oyo made a trip to America to raise money for AIDS orphans in Uganda. His humanitarian mission made several stops – including [Disneyland](#). Hey, every king needs a little down time...

The situation for the last several years in the kingdom of Toro is not unlike the situation we find in tonight’s chapters. In

835 BC a boy king took the throne of the kingdom of Judah. Joash was 6 years old at his coronation. But unlike King Oyo, King Joash's rise to power was not a smooth, orderly, peaceful succession...

It was the result of a carefully planned coup d'état by the Priest Jehoiada...

*Remember the circumstances...* When Joash's father, King Ahaziah died in battle, Joash's wicked grandma, Athaliah, seized the throne of Judah.

Queen Athaliah was Jezebel's daughter. She was an idolater - evil to the core.

And to solidify her hold on the throne Athaliah murdered all of Ahaziah's heirs. A genocidal grandma spilled the innocent blood of her own sons and grandsons.

Athaliah killed all her rivals except an infant boy.

The wife of Priest Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, rescued Prince Joash from the assassins and hid him in the Temple. He remained tucked away for six years.

Joash was enrolled in God's Witness Protection Program - and was hidden from the *Athaliah mafia* while Jehoiada taught and trained him in the Temple.

*And I hope we all appreciate the actions this quick-thinking and brave young girl... This was an incredibly close call!*

God's promise of a Messiah and Savior were made to the kings of David. Messiah was to be David's descendent.

But through the wicked Athaliah, Satan tried to destroy any hope of salvation.

And he came within an eyelash – one baby boy - of success. If Joash and the lineage of David had not survived - Messiah would never have been born. You and I would be dead in your sins and on the way to hell. This is why when we get to heaven we all should look up Jehoshabeath and tell her, “Thanks.”

Six years transpire between chapters 22 and 23. Jehoiada and his patriots realize the time has come for the throne of Judah to return to its rightful heir.

Verse 1, “In the 7<sup>th</sup> year Jehoiada strengthened himself...” He steels himself for a fight. He knows Athaliah will not give up her power willingly.

“And made a covenant with the captains of hundreds...” He lists their names. These are the leaders in the coup d tat... “And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, “Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has said of the sons of David.” This is a godly cause.

And here’s the plan... “This is what you shall do: One-third of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, shall be keeping watch over the doors; one-third shall be at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD.” They’ll divide into three flanks. When the king is revealed he’ll be surrounded with protection.

“But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they are holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death.” They were to take no chances. “You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.” Protect the king at all costs.

Verse 8 “So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions.” Jehoiada synchronized the moment of action with a shift change. This doubles the number of priests without drawing undue attention to their gathering. And it was all orchestrated on a Sabbath – another clever move... The Temple crowds would rally around the true king.

“And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of God. Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, gave him the Testimony, and made him king.” At the coronation of the kings of Judah the king was given both a crown and a copy of the Scriptures.

In Deuteronomy 17:18 Moses told Israel, "Also it shall be, when (the king) sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites." The king had his own Bible.

Therefore, he had no excuse for not obeying God's Word. This is the basis of a long-running British custom. At his or hers coronation the newly crowned queen or king is presented with a copy of the Bible.

Verse 11, "Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "Long live the king!" And it was such a thunderous roar it got the attention of the neighbors...

"Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people in the temple of the LORD." Remember she has no idea there is a king. "When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king.

All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise." All of Judah erupted in a massive celebration. "So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!"

"And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD." So they seized her; and she went

by way of the entrance of the Horse Gate into the king's house, and they killed her there.” Hey, in America we would’ve housed her on death row – and allowed her to criticize her successors for the next 20 years. But in Judah, everyone knew she was guilty, and thus, executed on site.

“Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the LORD's people.” When the right king is restored to the throne revival returns to Judah. *The same is true in us...* Remove the Athaliah – the usurper in your life - return Jesus to the throne - and He’ll bring renewal.

“And all the people went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down.

They broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as it was established by David.

And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one who was in any way unclean should enter.” Worship was treated seriously again. God was not just worshipped in name only – but in Spirit and truth.

“Then he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD; and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom. So all the people of the

land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

Chapter 24, “Joash was 7 years old when he became king...”

Imagine a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader becoming president of the United States...

**Mr. Rogers** would be Secretary of State. **Barney** would be Attorney General. **Big Bird** would be Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff... Instead of Camp David the presidential retreat would be a condo at **Disney World**... The White House lawn would have a waterslide. And school attendance would be cut to 3 weeks a year.

Joash started young, but ruled a long time. “He reigned 40 years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.” He got off to a good start.

“And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.”

Between King Jehoram and his wife, Queen Athaliah a wicked monarch had sat on the throne of Judah for the last 15 years. Needless to say, nothing had been spent on the worship of God, or the Temple. And if you own a house you understand repairs are a constant. Stuff breaks and has to be fixed.

This was not just true of the OT Temple – it's also true of New Testament believers. We are God's Temple. And we also

are in constant need of repair. Neglect your spiritual life – even for a short time - and it'll become rundown.

Hey, we also need the *repairs of the Spirit and cleansing of God's Word*.

Because of Joash's heart for God his first project is to raise money for Temple renovation. "Now it happened after this that Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly."

However the Levites did not do it quickly.

So the king called Jehoiada the chief priest, and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD and of the assembly of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?" In Exodus 35 when Moses built the Tabernacle he took a freewill offering from among the people. This eventually evolved into a temple tax. In Nehemiah's day it was 1/3 shekel.

"For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals." In his online commentary David Guzik makes this comment, "It is possible for God to cause the money and materials to just appear by a miracle."

Yet He chooses to almost always fund His work through the willing gifts of His people. He works this way because we need to be a giving people.”

*It's true God doesn't need our gifts – it's us who need to give to God.*

“Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD.” Joash commissioned the construction of an offering box – and situated it by the exits – the place we've located our offering boxes.

“And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God had imposed on Israel in the wilderness. Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put them into the chest until all had given.”

I love these words, “the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put them into the chest...” Rather than being a grudge, people wanted to give. They appreciated the opportunity to give back to God. No one wanted to be left out.

Years ago an impoverished woman from Paris put 27 francs in a collection plate for the church's missionaries. The pastor knew the woman was blind, so he told her, “Madame, you cannot afford to give this money.” *She insisted she could.*

After being questioned by the pastor she finally explained, “I asked a friend how much she spent each year for oil to light the lamps in her house so her family could see at night. She told me 27 francs. Since I'm blind and don't need a lamp, I

figure this is money that I can give to spread the light of God into a dark world.”

How’s that for a noble attitude? She saw giving to God as an *opportunity* rather an *obligation*. This is the attitude that helped Joash refurbish the Temple.

“So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.” The work of God wasn’t relegated to a shoe-string budget.

They didn’t just get by. The priests had an abundance of money.

Hey, Temple repairs can be expensive. Our four new restrooms cost \$40,000 to renovate. And there are other areas of building wear that need to be repaired.

At CC we make what we receive go a long way. We’ve gotten use to God multiplying our 5 loaves and 2 fish. *But I admit an abundance would be nice...*

Tonight, I’m going to ask you to join me in two prayers...

**First**, that God would bless this church with an abundance of money. There are some ventures of faith we want to take, and more money would be advantageous.

**Second**, along with the money God will give us wisdom to use it effectively.

Verse 12, “The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also those who worked in iron and bronze to restore the house of the LORD. So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it.

When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; they made from it articles for the house of the LORD, articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

“But Jehoiada (the priest who nurtured Joash) grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was 130 years old when he died. And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.” Jehoiada had been a mighty man of God. As it turns out he was the driving force behind Joash’s godly zeal. He wielded influence over kings.

But remember verse 2, “Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.” The implication is that when the priest died off Joash fell into sin. Joash had lived off the faith and convictions of a mentor. He failed to grow his own roots. He never developed a personal walk with God.

This can happen to kids who grow up in Christian homes. As soon as dad, or mom, or Christians friends are out of the picture they hit the skids and fall away.

“Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them.”  
And their advice was evil and wicked.

Evidently, Joash had no backbone of his own. He listened to everyone else and followed the pack. He was a **thermometer** – he read the surrounding temperature and conformed. I want to be a **thermostat** – and set the temperature of the room.

Joash was too impressionable. He never formed his own beliefs and values.

Verse 18 tells us the outcome of Joash’s compromise, “Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass.

Yet He (God) sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.” They failed to heed the warnings.

“Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper?

Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.’ ”

So they conspired against him, and at the commandment of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.” Look at how far Joash fell – he executes the son of the man who saved his own life.

“Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on it, and repay!" The prophet's dying prayer is to ask God for justice on his murderer.

“So it happened in the spring of the year that the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.” Put bluntly, the royal court of Joash was butchered.

“For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.” Judah had Syria outnumbered, but no matter how mighty you are you can't fight with God and win.

“When they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died.” What a sad way to die...

They leave him to bleed to death. Then other people finish him off violently.

Jehoiada was such a man of integrity everyone respected him – so much so, that when Joash killed Jehoiada's son the king made some vicious enemies.

“And they buried (Joash) in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.” They considered him unworthy of a royal burial.

Joash is a sad story. He started out a bright star, but finished a disgrace.

I like how G. Campbell Morgan sums up Joash, “The story offers a striking illustration of how a weak man is easily influenced. It emphasizes the need of strong individual character, which is only created by direct dealing with God.”

“These are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess.

Now concerning his sons, and the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they are written in the annals of the book of the kings.

Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.”

Chapter 25 “Amaziah was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart.”

He went through the *motions* - without the *devotion*.

Amaziah was outwardly righteous, but had impure motives. He was all show - and lacked substance.

Verse 3... “Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king.

However he did not execute their children, but did as it is written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin." He tempered justice with mercy.

"Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to their fathers' houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from 20 years old and above, and found them to be 300,000 choice men, able to go to war, who could handle spear and shield." Obviously, Amaziah is preparing for battle.

"He also hired 100,000 mighty men of valor from Israel for 100 talents of silver." He hired an additional 100,000 Israeli mercenaries from the northern kingdom.

"But a man of God came to him, saying, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel - not with any of the children of Ephraim. But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! Even so, God shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has power to help and to overthrow."

The prophet warns Amaziah not to ally himself with the idolaters to the north. This is what got the king's predecessors in trouble. Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah all allied with Israel. They became unequally yoked with unbelievers.

"Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops

of Israel?" Amaziah invested a fortune. A talent is 100 pounds - a lot of silver. *What about the money?* "And the man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this."

Here's a hindrance to obeying God we often face. *What about my investment?*

*"I've got 20 years with this company, I can't just pick up and move even if God tells me."* "I know he's an unbeliever, and it's wrong to date him, but we've been going out for 5 years, how can I just give it up." *I've got an "A" in the course. If I take a stand now, the teacher might get upset, and it jeopardize my grade."*

Hey, listen to what the prophet says to Amaziah in verse 9, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." Yes, there's often a cost to obey God. You might lose your investment, but God is faithful to reimburse your loss.

Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 19:29, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life." In other words, it really is impossible to *sacrifice* for God. He returns your investment, plus some.

"So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger." In their eyes Judah reneged on its deal.

"Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed 10,000 of the

people of Seir. Also the children of Judah took captive 10,000 alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces.”

Amaziah won a decisive victory over Judah’s ancient enemy, the Edomites.

“But as for the soldiers of the army (the soldiers of fortune) which Amaziah had discharged, so that they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed 3000 in them, and took much spoil.”

While Amaziah was preoccupied with Edom in the south, the disappointed Israelis attack and pillage a few Judean villages on their way back home.

What happens next has to be one of the stupidest stunts in the Scripture.

Amaziah has just defeated the Edomites – routed them – trounced them – “they all were dashed to pieces.” Obviously, their gods did them no good.

But for some strange reason Amaziah chooses to worship the gods of the people he just defeated. Verse 14, “Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them.

Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, “Why

have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?" It made no sense.

Evidently, Amaziah's victory went to his head. And when you're intoxicated with pride you don't always think straight. Suddenly, the king assumes he's invincible. He no longer needs God. Among the gods of Edom, he's greater than the gods.

Amaziah gets the bighead. He has *fat head* of himself on the palace wall.

Verse 16 "So it was, as he talked with him, that the king said to him, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?" King Amaziah threatens God's spokesman. "Then the prophet ceased, and said (one final word of warning), "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice." Judgment awaits the proud king.

"Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another in battle." Fresh off a victory over Edom, Amaziah thinks he can defeat Israel.

Understand what this is like... A local High School football team wins their first few games and thinks they can't be beat - so they challenge UGA. Their success went to their head... Hey, UGA is no High School team and Israel was no Edom.

"And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that was in Lebanon (Judah was just a pine needle) sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon (that's Israel), saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a

wild beast that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to boast. Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall - you and Judah with you?" The Israeli king Joash is trying to be kind. Why spill innocent blood.

"But Amaziah would not heed, for it came from God, that He might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought the gods of Edom.

So Joash king of Israel went out; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which belongs to Judah. And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate - 400 cubits. And he took all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria."

It was no doubt, a humiliating and humbling lesson for the thistle king.

"Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived 15 years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel." Amaziah reigned nearly 3 decades.

"Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, indeed are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel?"

After the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of Judah.” Amaziah died in a political coup.

Chapter 26, “Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.” Evidently, King Uzziah was a populist leader. He was the people’s choice. 2 Kings also calls him *Azariah*...

“He built Elath (the port city on the Gulf of Aqaba.) “and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers. Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king...” We’ve had a 6 year old king. Now we have a 16 year old king.

I’m sure he was always wanted to drive the royal chariot...

Imagine a Sophomore in HS on the throne... Zac Efron would be Secretary of State – Sophia Bush would be Attorney General – LeBron James would be Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – Justin Timberlake the Surgeon General, etc.

Uzziah took the throne at 16 years of age, but “he reigned 52 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.

And here’s the reason for his long stint on the throne, “And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 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.”

“Now (Uzziah) went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities around Ashdod and among the Philistines. God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites.” ...a very individualistic society - the “*me unites!*”

Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah.

His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong. And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them.

Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; he also had farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil.”

What an interesting phrase, “for he loved the soil.” Remember the Pike’s Nursery slogan, “play in the dirt again.” Apparently, Uzziah liked to garden.

He loved to get a little dirt under his fingernails. He was a farmer at heart.

Verse 11 “Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by (three men.)

The total number of chief officers of the mighty men of valor was 2,600.

And under their authority was an army of 307,500, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.” His army wielded “mighty power.”

Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones.” or giant catapults.

And he made devices (or inventions) in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.”

“But when he was strong his heart was lifted up (His success went to his head. He became prideful.) “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.”

Ancient Israel had a strict separation of church and state. The Levitical priests were not to be king. The kings from the tribe of Judah were never to be priests.

Evidently, Uzziah had become bored with civil authority. He was king - *so what*.

Real power is clout with God. Uzziah wants to climb the ecclesiastical ladder. Religious authority is what he wants. So he over-stepped his bounds. He takes up the duties of the High Priest, and enters the Temple to offer incense to God.

Uzziah is guilty of the ugliest of all varieties of pride – *spiritual pride*.

“So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were 80 priests of the LORD - valiant men. And they withstood King Uzziah...” This was a brave act.

Uzziah was strong! He was a mighty king who could order heads to roll.

But he “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 trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.” The priest stands up to the king, and orders Uzziah out of the Temple.

Hey, this was the king of Judah – famous throughout the world. In the civil arena, nobody told Uzziah what to do. *Who does this priest think he is?*

“Then Uzziah became furious (the Hebrew word means “boiling”); and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense.” I’m sure the 80 priests were waiting for the king to drop his censer, and pull out his sword to lop off the head of Azariah.

But God beats Uzziah to the punch. “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.”

A leper in the Temple was the ultimate in uncleanness. As soon as the patch appeared Uzziah lost all credibility and clout. It was obviously God’s judgment.

Uzziah desired to serve God, but by his own rules. He was too proud to truly submit to God. He *served God* only to *serve self*. And God don't play that game.

Verse 21 “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.” It's sad, but Uzziah lived the rest of his life in shame and isolation - which is usually what happens to proud people, even if they're not struck with leprosy.

“Then Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote.” Isaiah was a contemporary of Uzziah. “So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.”

And something radical occurred at this time in the life of the Prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 6 begins, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.” Uzziah had been such a strong king – a towering, dominating personality – that it was only when he was out of the way that Isaiah was able to see God in all his glory.

Leadership is vital, but a leader can cast a long shadow. And it's only when he's gone that folks can look past his influence, and see God for themselves.