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Israel and Judah: 30. Kings Amaziah & Uzziah of Judah

by David Sielaff, June 2018

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for June 2018](#)

Israel and Judah: 30

Kings Amaziah
and Uzziah
of Judah

THE SITUATION: King Joash of Judah was assassinated. His son King Amaziah reigned for 29 years. He was one of the good kings of Judah who (at first) honored the worship of YHWH. Later he made bad decisions that damaged his realm. Amaziah was followed by his son Uzziah, another king who started out good. He reigned 52 years as king. The narratives of his reign were sparse considering his very long tenure. Together they reigned 81 years.

Both Amaziah and Uzziah were judged to be “good kings” by the writers or compilers of Second Kings and Second Chronicles. The two kings were “good” compared to the consistently evil kings of Israel and most kings of Judah. Below is a chart of the reigns of these two kings of Judah. Their reigns of 81 years, add up to one year more than the combined rule of David and Solomon^a:

King after Solomon	King of Judah's Name	Scriptures	Length of Reign	Dates after Adam	BC (approx.)
9 th	Amaziah	2 Chronicles 25:1	29	3195–3223	776–748
10 th	Uzziah (Azariah)	2 Chronicles 26:3	52	3224–3275	747–696

The name Amaziah means “Mighty is Yah” (for YHWH). The name Uzziah means “My strength is Yah” and his second name Azariah means “Yah has helped.” Both were young when they took the throne. Amaziah was 25 years old when he began his reign, age 54 when he died. Uzziah his son was only 16 years old when he began to rule and was age 68 when he died. Let us begin.

Amaziah inherited a kingdom that suffered. This resulted from his father Joash's war with Hazael of Syria

^a This chart is from “[ELM Timeline Project](#),” page 13, note 1. Dr. Ernest Martin's chronology differs from most chronological frameworks as it attempts to use only the Scriptures to come to its dates, and minimizes the use of extrabiblical sources. David reigned 7 years in Hebron, 33 years in Jerusalem. Solomon ruled 40 years in Jerusalem.

whose small force attacked the Kingdom of Judah, and broke through the defenses of Jerusalem. The Kingdom of Judah suffered **“a depleted treasury, a despoiled palace and temple, and a discouraged people.”**^b Joash was so unpopular that his own servants (Josephus says they were his “friends,” *Antiquities of the Jews* 9:171), assassinated him, and put his son on the throne as the new king (2 Kings 12:20).

TEXT: The Rule of Amaziah, King of Judah

2 Kings 14:1–7

¹ In the second year of Joash son of Joahaz king of Israel, Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah became king. ² He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

³ He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh, but not like his father David. He performed according to all that his father Joash had done.

⁴ **But** they did not take away the high-places; the people were continually sacrificing and incense [burnt] on the high-places.

⁵ It came to pass just as the kingship was held fast in his hand that he smote his courtiers who had smitten the king his father.

⁶ Yet the sons of the smiters he did not put to death, according to what is written in the scroll of the law of Moses in which Yahweh gave instructions, saying,

“Fathers shall not be put to death on account of their sons’ sins, nor shall sons be put to death on account of their fathers’ sins, but rather shall each man be put to death for his own sin.”

2 Chronicles 25:1–16

¹ Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

² He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh, but not *wholeheartedly*.

³ It came to pass just as the kingship *under him* was held fast that he killed his courtiers who had smitten the king his father.

⁴ Yet *their* sons he did not put to death, according to what is written in the scroll of the law of Moses in which Yahweh gave instructions, saying,

“Fathers shall not be put to death on account of their sons’ sins, nor shall sons be put to death on account of their fathers’ sins, but rather shall each man be put to death for his own sin.”

⁵ Amaziah brought the house of Judah together and had them stand, according to the fathers’ houses, under chief officers of thousands and chief officers of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He mustered them from twenty years old and upward, and he found them to be 300,000 choice men going forth for enlistment, holding lance and large shield.

⁶ He also hired from Israel 100,000 masterful soldiers for a hundred talents of silver. ⁷ Then a man of the One, Elohim, came to him, saying,

“O king, let not the Israelite troops come with you, for Yahweh is not with Israel, with all the sons of Ephraim.

⁸ **But rather set out by yourself and do it; have courage for battle, or the One, Elohim.**

^b “Amaziah” from *ISBE, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 2nd edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1939).

⁷ He himself smote Edom in the salt ravine, 10,000 men, and took possession of Sela in battle. He called it Joktheel; that has been its name until this day.



Note: South of the Dead Sea was the land of Edom.

After King David's conquest of Edom, it was a vassal territory subject to Judah. A Hebrew governor earlier ruled it in the time of King Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:47).

Edom rebelled against Judah in the days of King Jehoram. Jehoram attacked Edom but was unsuccessful (2 Kings 8:20–22).

Here we read Amaziah again seeking to subject Edom so it would pay tribute to Judah.

shall make you falter before the enemy. For there is vigor with Elohim to help you **or to make you falter.**"

⁹ At this Amaziah asked the man of Elohim, **"What am I to do about the one hundred talents that I gave for the Israelite troops?"**

The man of Elohim replied, **"Yahweh has more to give you than this."**

¹⁰ So Amaziah separated them out and let the troops that had come to him from Ephraim go to their own place. Their anger against Judah was exceedingly hot, and they returned to their place in hot anger.

¹¹ As for Amaziah, he showed himself steadfast; he led his force and marched to the salt ravine. He smote 10,000 of *the sons of Seir*.

¹² The sons of Judah captured 10,000 alive and brought them to the top of the crag. They flung them down from the top of the crag, and all of them were mangled.

¹³ As for the men of the troops whom Amaziah had turned back from going with him to war, they ransacked the cities of Judah from Samaria unto Beth-horon. They smote 3,000 of them and plundered much plunder.

¹⁴ It occurred after Amaziah had come back from smiting the Edomites that he brought along the elohim of the sons of Seir and made them stand as elohim for himself. He **worshiped before them** and fumed incense **to them.**

¹⁵ At that Yahweh's anger grew hot against Amaziah, and He sent a prophet to him who said to him,

"Why do you seek after the elohim of the people which could not rescue their people from your hand?"

¹⁶ And it came to pass while he spoke to him that Amaziah said to him,

"Have we appointed you a counselor to the king? Leave off for your own sake! Why should they smite you?"

So the prophet left off; but first he said,

"I know that Elohim has counseled to ruin you, [why?] since you act this way and do not hearken to my counsel." [end text]

2 Kings 14:1 and 2 Chronicles 25:1. The beginning of his reign is dated to his counterpart Joash, king of Israel who began his reign two years before Amaziah was crowned.

Such cross references of kings between the two kingdoms occur frequently. They demonstrate an attempt to clarify and date these kingships. Unfortunately there are many chronological problems. More reliable data from extra-biblical ancient sources is needed to help understand the text.^c

2 Kings 14:3–4. While Amaziah was judged to be **“upright in the eyes of Yahweh,”** doing everything his father Joash of Judah had done, even so, about half way through his reign Amaziah made mistakes that brought YHWH’s displeasure down upon him and Judah. Verse 4 begins with the ominous word, **“But ...”** Like his father, King Amaziah apparently never tried to halt the worship of other gods by the people, destroy pagan altars, or suppress idolatry in his kingdom. In fact, no king tried to remove the high places except Hezekiah.

2 Kings 14:5 and 2 Chronicles 25:3. Amaziah was able to secure his royal power. He killed the assassins of his father King Joash.

Verses 6 and 4. Amaziah spared the sons of the assassins. Often other relatives were killed as well to prevent generational vendettas. By not killing them Amaziah risked future retribution from the sons, but he heeded YHWH’s instruction of mercy upon the relatives of these traitors. Amaziah followed the precepts from Moses:

“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin.”

• **Deuteronomy 24:16**

The fact that the King of Judah verbally quoted a passage from the Law of Moses indicates that he had the Law available to him as a King of Israel according to Deuteronomy 17:14–20. Amaziah knew the Law well enough to quote a passage from it.^d

2 Chronicles 25:5. In an attempt to secure and protect his kingdom and renew confidence in his reign, Amaziah assembled the men and counted the number of potential troops. The count was less 80 years before (2 Chronicles 17:14–18). He intended to go to war. (Surprisingly Amaziah was not punished by God like King David was in his aborted census attempt in 2 Samuel 24:1–9 and 1 Chronicles 21:1–17.)

2 Chronicles 25:6. In addition to his own troops, Amaziah wanted to hire a mercenary force from the Kingdom of Israel to the north of Judah. He paid 100 talents of silver to the Israelite mercenary troops.

Verse 7. Amaziah is warned by a **“man of the One, Elohim”** to forget about hiring a large number of Israelites as mercenary troops, but instead to trust God for victory.

Verse 8. God tells Amaziah he will be victorious only if he uses his own troops from Judah, but **“YHWH is not with Israel”** and He (God) can also **“make you falter”** if YHWH is disobeyed.

Verse 9. Amaziah complains, what about the money I paid already? In the end, the strong warnings to Amaziah are heeded. He is told that YHWH has much to give you, Amaziah, if you trust Him.

Verse 10. Amaziah obeys and dismisses the Israelite mercenary troops. Even though they were paid for no work, the Israelites wanted riches from looting a fallen enemy. They became angry. We will later read

^c [“ELM Timeline Project,”](#) page 13, note 1. Note the chronological problem:

“All attempts to synchronize [the kingdom of] Judah to [the kingdom of] Israel during the divided kingdom period using the chronology of Judah shown on this chart have so far failed. Additional research on other authors’ solutions to this chronology period is underway.”

Read my article [“The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb.”](#) Writings within the chambers of the Tomb structure may be a source of additional information about the kings of Judah and Israel after David’s reign because later kings were buried there, kings such as King Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:33). Something will cause the **“restitution of all things”** spoken of by Peter in Acts 3:20–21. The restitution will involve the truths of Scripture, the law, and an understandable history of the world according to the Bible. See my June 2003 Commentary, [“Restitution of All Things, What to Expect.”](#)

^d Remarkably, some 170+ years after Amaziah quoted Deuteronomy 24:16, after several kings of Judah reigned, the religious situation deteriorated so much in Jerusalem that the written law of Moses (the first five books of the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) was somehow **“lost.”** A copy was discovered in the Temple during the time of King Josiah in the days of Jeremiah (2 Kings 22:3–23:27 and 2 Chronicles 34:8–33) and a temporary reformation took place.

about what they did in anger.

Verses 7 and 11. The army of Judah defeated the army of Edom, killing 10,000 of the enemy. The battle took place at “**the salt ravine**” which is usually translated “**the Valley of Salt.**” This was also the site of a battle of King David’s army against the Edomites (2 Samuel 8:13–14; 1 Chronicles 18:12; and Psalm 59 [the title of Psalm 60, verse 1, goes with the prior psalm 59]). After his victory David put garrisons in the land of Edom.

Amaziah’s attack was a war of reconquest. Amaziah took possession of the city of “**Sela**” (spelled *Selah* in the KJV). It means *rock*. In the Greek Old Testament it is translated as *Petra*.

It was renamed “Joktheel” which means “subdued by God.” The phrase “**until this day**” means that the place was still named Joktheel at the time this narrative of Second Kings was written down. “**The sons of Seir**” refers to people who lived in the land before Jacob’s brother Esau settled there. The Edomites were a mixed population of original people of Seir and of Esau.

2 Chronicles 25:12. Besides killing 10,000 Edomite soldiers, the army of Judah captured another 10,000 people and the text does not specify if they were soldiers. Petra (also called Sela or Selah) is a rocky area. The captives were thrown down from a cliff mangling and killing them all.

Verse 13. The Israelite mercenaries Amaziah paid but refused to take with him to Edom went home. They ransacked, plundered, and killed 3,000 people of Judah on their way back to the Kingdom of Israel. Why? Because they were angry for not participating in the plunder of the Edomites, so they plundered their southern brothers of Judah. Amaziah’s own subjects paid for his mistake.

Verse 14. Amaziah made another serious mistake. He took and set the Edomite gods (idols) before him, not as trophies, but he openly worshipped the weak gods in the idols that were unable to protect Edom.^e

Verse 15. YHWH (often “**slow to anger**”) angrily sent a prophet to confront Amaziah. (Seek YHWH!)

Verse 16. Amaziah replied, threatening bodily harm to the prophet from his courtiers (who probably did want to punish the prophet). Amaziah ignored that the prophet was speaking for YHWH. Criticism or harm to the prophet would be an attack on God’s anointed — disrespecting YHWH. God’s prophet said that YHWH “**has counseled to ruin**” Amaziah. God had not yet decided, but he was thinking about it. Amaziah had a short opportunity to repent of both his worship and threat to the prophet. He did not do so. The ruin of Amaziah (and the kingdom and people of Jerusalem) soon began.

After his victory over the Edomites, about 10 years later Amaziah picked a fight with the Jehoash, King of Israel.

Next comes the account of a battle between the armies of Amaziah of Judah and Jehoash of Israel.

TEXT: Amaziah of Judah Goes to War with Jehoash/Joash of Israel

2 Kings 14:8–20

⁸ Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash (son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu) king of Israel, saying, “**Do come, let us stare**

2 Chronicles 25:17–28

¹⁷ Then Amaziah king of Judah took counsel and sent word to Jehoash (son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu) king of Israel, saying, “**Come, let us stare**

^e **Henotheism** The proper label of the religion of Judah and Israel, the biblical religion of Moses. This is worshipping other gods (yes, they exist!) than YHWH, but Israel was allowed to worship YHWH only. Gentile nations could worship whatever gods they wished, although their worship of YHWH was honored. See my articles, “[Idolatry and the Sons of God](#)” and a follow-up article, “[Idolatry and Gods Punishment](#)” which biblically explains the relationship of YHWH, the Creator, to other gods.

Monotheism is the worship of one God. It teaches that other “gods” do not exist in creation, but only in the imagination of people. However, other gods did (and do) exist. Ancient peoples interacted with them. Compared to YHWH, the other gods were (and are) as nothing, just as nations are nothing compared to God (see Isaiah 40:17, 45:5, 14, 18, 22, 46:5, 9 for example).

Polytheism is the worship of many gods. This is what the Gentiles did in their worship, even though God’s existence as an active Creator was plainly available to them (Romans 1:16–32). The Gentiles had gods assigned to them by God. Many of the stories about the gods are actually accounts of humans supposedly made into gods. See Dr. Martin’s article, “[The Secret of Ancient Religion Revealed! - Part 1](#)” and “[The Secret of Ancient Religion Revealed! - Part 2.](#)”

YHWH insisted the tribes and people of Israel live up to their covenant obligation to worship YHWH alone. God repeatedly forgave many things, but regarding worship of Him alone, He demanded obedience and severely punished idolatry.

each other in the face."

⁹ Yet Jehoash king of Israel sent word to Amaziah king of Judah, saying,

"The thistle that was in Lebanon, it sent word to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying,

'Do give your daughter to my son as a wife. But an animal of the field that was in Lebanon passed by and tramped down the thistle.'

¹⁰ **You smote, yea smote Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Glory in it and stay in your own house. Now why should you stir yourself up for peril, so that you will fall, you and Judah with you?"**

¹¹ Yet Amaziah did not hearken.

So Jehoash king of Israel marched up; and they stared each other in the face, he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh in Judah.

¹² And Judah was stricken before Israel, so that they fled, each man to his tent.

¹³ It was Amaziah king of Judah (son of Jehoash son of Ahaziah) whom Jehoash king of Israel apprehended at Beth-shemesh. Then he came to Jerusalem and made a breach of four hundred cubits in the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gateway unto the Corner Gateway.

¹⁴ He took all the gold and the silver, all the vessels found in the House of Yahweh and in the treasuries of the house of the king, and the hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

¹⁵ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehoash, all that he did, and his masterful deeds how he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Israel? ¹⁶ Then Jehoash lay down with his fathers and was entombed in Samaria with the kings of Israel; his son Jeroboam reigned in his stead.

¹⁷ Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash (son of Jehoahaz) king of Israel.

¹⁸ As for the rest of the affairs of Amaziah, are they not written on the scroll of

each other in the face."

¹⁸ Yet Jehoash king of Israel sent word to Amaziah king of Judah, saying,

"The thistle that was in Lebanon, it sent word to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying,

'Do give your daughter to my son as a wife. But an animal of the field that was in Lebanon, passed by and tramped down the thistle.'

¹⁹ **You thought that you smote Edom, and your heart has lifted you up to be glorified. Now do stay in your own house. Why should you stir yourself up for evil, so that you will fall, you and Judah with you?"**

²⁰ Yet Amaziah did not hearken; for it was from the One, Elohim, in order to give them into the hand of Jehoash, because they had sought after the elohim of Edom.

²¹ So Jehoash king of Israel marched up; and they stared each other in the face, he and Amaziah king of Judah, at Beth-shemesh in Judah.

²² And Judah was stricken before Israel, so that they fled, each man to his tent.

²³ It was Amaziah king of Judah (son of Joash son of Jehoahaz) whom Jehoash king of Israel apprehended at Beth-shemesh. Then he *brought him* to Jerusalem and made a breach of four hundred cubits in the wall of Jerusalem, from the Ephraim Gateway unto the Corner Gateway.

²⁴ He took all the gold and the silver, all the vessels found in the House of Elohim *in charge of Obed-edom*, and in the treasuries of the house of the king, and the hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

FLASHBACK from 2 Kings 13:12

As for the rest of the affairs of Joash [Jehoash], all that he did and his masterful deeds when he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Israel?

[See "[Israel and Judah: 29. Athaliah and Joash of Judah](#)," page 12]

²⁵ Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash (son of Jehoahaz) king of Israel.

²⁶ As for the rest of the affairs of Amaziah, *first and last, behold*, are they not written on the scroll of

the annals of the days of the kings of Judah?

¹⁹ They conspired against him in a conspiracy in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent in pursuit of him to Lachish, and they put him to death there.

²⁰ Then they carried him back on horses, and he was entombed in Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David.

the kings of Judah and Israel?

²⁷ From the time that Amaziah withdrew from following Yahweh, they conspired against him in a conspiracy in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But they sent in pursuit of him to Lachish, and they put him to death there.

²⁸ Then they carried him back on horses and entombed him with his fathers in the city of David.

[end text]

2 Kings 14:8 and 2 Chronicles 25:17. The two names Jehoash/Joash of Israel are used in the Hebrew seemingly without a pattern. I go with what the Concordant Version uses. Simply remember **Jehoash = Joash** of Israel.

What is meant by “**let us stare each other in the face**”? It is a challenge to do battle, not let us discuss things face to face. It was that way in First Samuel chapter 17 when Goliath challenged the army of Israel. It will be so in 2 Chronicles 25:21. This battle probably occurred in Amaziah’s 14th year, after his victory over Edom.

Verses 9–10 and 18–19. Three times Jehoash defeated the large and sophisticated Syrian army (2 Kings 13:10–13:25). He replied to Amaziah, “**You smote Edom, and your heart has lifted you up,**” then he sent a fable to Amaziah that emphasized the weakness of Judah’s situation. Some say the mention of a daughter, a son, and wife meant that Amaziah wanted to wed a daughter of Jehoash, but the text does not indicate this in any way. Or, the fable might be Jehoash’s way of saying that Judah is beneath his notice, a “little kingdom.”

“The fable ... is found in many ancient literary collections, usually with examples of animals, trees and plants, as here. Some relate to intercity quarrels. The form may be compared to Jotham’s fable (Judg. 9:8–15) ... Jehoash views himself as the strong cedar and Amaziah as the little thistle easily trodden upon.”

• Donald Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings*, p. 261^f

Verses 11 and 20. Amaziah did not heed the prophet’s words or Jehoash’s words and we know why. His worship of idols and Edomite gods brought God to anger. He shut Amaziah’s mind and gave victory to Jehoash and the Israelites (who themselves were idolaters).

Verses 11–12 and 21–22. “**Beth-shemesh**” (meaning “house of the sun”) was west of Jerusalem “**in Judah.**” The armies stare face to face, and battle begins. Judah’s army routed and fled the battlefield. The army of Israel did not chase them far.

Amaziah seemed confident to challenge the larger and more powerful kingdom and army of Israel. Why? He was told that God was against him. Perhaps the victory over Edom made him think he could humble the king of Israel.

Verses 13 and 23. These verses describe momentous events. The army of Israel defeated Judah at Beth-shemesh. King Amaziah was captured, taken to Jerusalem, and likely ordered the gates of Jerusalem opened to Jehoash and the



^f Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 9, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 261.

Israelite army. The city was captured. A large portion of the city wall was taken down.

Verses 14 and 24. Jehoash took what he wanted. Again, the city and House of YHWH were looted, the king's treasury seized and carried away, **"the hostages."** Nothing more is said about them. Amaziah likely bought his freedom with the riches of the kingdom, the Temple, and the people.

2 Kings 14:15–16. The narrative moves from Amaziah to the end of life narrative of Jehoash of Israel.

2 Kings 14:17 and 2 Chronicles 25:25. Amaziah was probably released after Jehoash died. The chronology works out that the defeat and assault on Jerusalem occurred in the 14th year of Amaziah's 29-year reign.

Verses 18 and 26. Are **"the annals of the days of the kings of Judah"** different from **"the scroll of the kings of Judah and Israel"**? Perhaps. There may be two sets of documentary records, one written in the time of Isaiah and the other compiled by Ezra the Priest from the earlier record, along with other historical works.

Verses 19 and 27. Amaziah's problems began when he abandoned worship of YHWH. Who were the people who conspired against the king? We are not told, but Amaziah probably was not popular because of his bad decisions that made everyone suffer. Within the lifetimes of most people then living, twice the excellent defenses of Jerusalem had been breached and the wealth of the people, the kingdom, and the Temple taken from them (2 Kings 12:17–18). Amaziah fled Jerusalem but was pursued, found, and assassinated in Lachish, a fortress southwest of Jerusalem. There is no mention of Amaziah's assassins being punished as previously (2 Kings 14:5 and 2 Chronicles 25:3, above).

Verses 20 and 28. Even though Amaziah was not popular (there is no mention of revolt at his death), as a King born of the Davidic line, he was buried **"with his fathers in the city of David."** It does not say he was buried in the Tombs of David.

James Smith gives considerable insight to the reigns of King Joash and his successor King Amaziah:

"In several respects Amaziah's reign resembles that of his father Joash.

- **Both were zealous for Yahweh at first, but turned to idolatry at last.**
- **Both opposed prophets and treated their rebukers with scorn.**
- **Both roused conspiracy against themselves by their misconduct.**
- **Both were murdered by malcontents.**
- **Further, both were unsuccessful in war.**
- **Both had to withstand a siege on their capital.**
- **Both bought off their enemy by the surrender of the greater part of their wealth, including the treasures of the temple (2 Kgs 14:3)."**

James Smith, The Books of History, 2 Ki 14:1–7^g

[The next seven verses are out of text order, but they better fit into the general sequence of events.]

TEXT: The Rule of Jeroboam II of Israel

2 Kings 14:23–29

²³ In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria for forty-one years. ²⁴ He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh. He did not withdraw from all the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, with which he caused Israel to sin.

²⁵ It was he who restored the boundary of Israel from Lebo-hamath as far as the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Yahweh Elohim of Israel that He spoke by means of His servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath-hepher.

²⁶ For Yahweh had seen the exceedingly bitter humiliation of Israel. There was nobody under restraint and nobody given free rein, and there was no helper for Israel. ²⁷ Yet Yahweh had not thought to wipe out the

^g James E. Smith, *The Books of History*, Old Testament Survey Series (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1995), 2 Ki 14:1–22.

name of Israel from under the heavens. So He saved them by means of Jeroboam son of Joash.

²⁸ The rest of the affairs of Jeroboam, all that he did, and his masterful deeds, how he fought and how he restored for Israel Damascus and Hamath of Judah, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Israel?

²⁹ Then Jeroboam lay down with his fathers, with the kings of Israel; and his son Zechariah reigned in his stead. [end text]

2 Kings 14:23–24. Jeroboam II also had a long reign, 41 years summarized in just 7 verses. Jeroboam was named after the founder and the first king of the northern Kingdom of Israel.^h Like all kings of Israel he did only evil so far as YHWH was concerned, although some had regrets toward the end of their lives.

Verse 25. Jeroboam did many good things on behalf of his people and kingdom. In fact, he did good things for all the children of Israel. YHWH used him to restore the borders of the two kingdoms of Israel to the same extent as during Solomon’s unified kingdom. The geographical terms “Lebo-hamath” and the “Sea of Arabah” are given in 1 Kings 8:65. There they refer to the extent of Solomon’s empire from northern Syria (“Lebo-hamath” is north of Damascus) to the “Sea of Arabah,” the eastern tributary of the Nile River Delta. Such was the extent of the safety God allowed Jeroboam to expand the northern Kingdom of Israel. The southern Kingdom of Judah also benefitted. Peace resulted and the wars between north and south ended.

Jeroboam also enhanced the defenses of his northern Kingdom of Israel. God sent the prophet Jonah (whose name means “dove”) to tell Jeroboam he would be successful in doing those things, although we have no details of God’s message to Jeroboam.

The prophet Jonah is mentioned, but the Book of Jonah in Scripture does not reference Jonah’s prophecy to Jeroboam. God’s prophets gave many messages during their prophetic ministries; only a few are given to us in Scripture. “Gath-hepher” was Jonah’s hometown on the border of the area allotted to the tribe of Zebulun. It means “the winepress of digging.”

Verse 26. We are given the reason for God’s restoration of Israel’s boundaries. It was because of **“the exceedingly bitter humiliation of Israel.”** This refers to all Israel, the land of the twelve tribes, both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern Kingdom of Judah. The people of the northern Kingdom were downtrodden and humiliated by Syria for a long time, and were deserving of further punishment, yet they were still God’s chosen people in a dangerous world. Jehoash had sufficient power to defeat Judah under Amaziah, the northern kingdom presumably still possessed the treasure Jehoash seized from Jerusalem and the Temple during Amaziah’s reign over Judah.ⁱ

Verse 27. YHWH used Jeroboam to be a type of savior in spite of the evil the king and the people did before God, but for now He rescued them again. Sums up:

Verses 28–29. Jeroboam’s death narrative does not say where he was buried in the northern kingdom.

[**Note:** The story does not flow directly from **2 Kings 14:21–22** to **2 Kings 15:1–4** (2 Kings 14:23–29 tells about a new king of Israel). Second Chronicles 26:1–5 does flow seamlessly from 2 Chronicles 25:28.]

TEXT: The Reign of Azariah/Uzziah of Judah

2 Kings 14:21–22, 2 Kings 15:1–4

²¹ Now all the people of Judah took Azariah (he was sixteen years old), and they proclaimed him king in place of his father Amaziah.

²² It was he who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after the king lay down with his fathers.

2 Chronicles 26:1–5

¹ Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah (he was sixteen years old), and they proclaimed him king in place of his father Amaziah.

² It was he who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after the king lay down with his fathers.

^h The rule of Jeroboam I began with idolatry. His example was followed by all the kings of Israel. Jeroboam II was no different.

ⁱ Deliverance was predicted by Elisha and now by Jonah, giving Israel one more opportunity to repent. James Smith, *The Books of History*, 2 Kings 23–29.

¹ In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah became king.

² He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

³ He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

⁴ But they did not take away the high-places; the people were continually sacrificing and fuming incense on the high-places. [end text]

³ Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

⁴ He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

⁵ He came to seek after Elohim in the days of Zechariah who gave him understanding in the fear of Elohim; and during the days he sought after Yahweh, the One, Elohim, prospered him.

2 Kings 14:21 and 2 Chronicles 26:1. I will refer to Azariah by the name **Uzziah**, as he is more often named in both Second Kings and Second Chronicles.^j Uzziah was “proclaimed” king by “**all the people.**” This was the first time the people “chose” a king of Judah.

Starting with King Uzziah's long reign we begin the times of the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel), and the twelve Minor Prophets. From here on in these prophets, their narrative and their prophetic messages often interact with the historical narratives. Uzziah is mentioned in Isaiah 1:1; 6:1; 7:1; Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; and Zechariah 14:5.

Verses 22 and 2. Amaziah defeated the Edomites. Uzziah rebuilt Elath (modern Eilat), located at the top of the Red Sea between Sinai and Arabia. It is a port city. When controlled by Judah, the port was useful for ship trade with the Arabs and even farther with Africa and India. There are other mentions of Elath:

“The presence of Judah in Elath, at the northwest of the Gulf of Aqaba, is attested by a seal inscribed ‘belonging to Jotham’ [successor to Jeroboam II of Israel mentioned below] ... That ancient fortified port was of immense importance to Judah then, as it is to Israel today. It maintained a trade with south Arabia. Control of the port of Elath seems to have soon been lost c. 730 bc to Aram [Syria], who later let it revert to the control of their allies Edom (16:6).”

• **Wiseman, 1 and 2 Kings, 262–263**

2 Kings 15:2–3 and 2 Chronicles 26:3–4. Uzziah lived to age 68. He started as a good king who like others became arrogant and willful.

2 Chronicles 26:5. Who was this Zechariah mentioned here? Little is known about him except he was a counselor who taught young Uzziah to fear God. He was judged to be “**upright in the eyes of YHWH**” at least until Zechariah died. Many translations following the King James Version rendering:

“And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought YHWH, God made him to prosper.”

TEXT: Military Achievements of Azariah/Uzziah of Judah

2 Chronicles 26:6–15

⁶ He marched forth and made war against the Philistines; he breached the wall of Gath and the wall of Jabneh and the wall of Ashdod; then he built cities around Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines.

^j Again, Azariah means “YHWH has helped.” Uzziah means “YHWH is my strength,” similar in meaning.

⁷ The One, Elohim, helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabians who were dwelling in Gur-baal, and the Meunim.

⁸ The Ammonim brought an approach present to Uzziah, and his name spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became surpassingly steadfast.

⁹ Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem on the Corner Gateway and on the Ravine Gateway and on the Angle-Corner, and he reinforced them.

¹⁰ He also built towers in the wilderness and hewed out many cisterns, for much cattle became his both in the low foothills and on the tableland, and farmworkers and vinedressers in the hills and on the crop land, since he was a lover of the ground.

¹¹ Uzziah came to have an army engaging in war, a military host marching forth by troops as they were noted in number by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the militia clerk at the side of Hananiah, one of the king's chief officers. ¹² The entire number of the heads of the fathers' houses over the valorous masters was 2,600; ¹³ and under their hand was the army host of 307,500 men engaging in war with vigor and ability to help the king against the enemy.

¹⁴ Uzziah provided for them, for the entire host, shields and lances, helmets and body-armor, bows and sling stones. ¹⁵ He made machines in Jerusalem, devices of an engineer to be set on the towers and on the corners for shooting arrows and large stones. His name spread forth unto a far distance; for he was marvelously helped until he became steadfast. [end text]

2 Chronicles 26:6–7. Uzziah was a great king, military commander, builder, and engineer. He first subdued the Philistines and brought their cities under his control as vassals. His purpose was to subdue the Philistines. And God intervened for him to succeed in his wars. ^k

Verse 8. Ammonim (meant the Ammonites) were people who dwelt directly east of the Dead Sea, brought an “approach present” or tribute to Uzziah. The Ammonites submitted themselves to the overlordship of Judah. The entire concept of tribute was how the international power structure worked. Kingdoms were either (1) subservient to someone, (2) equal with someone, or (3) dominant over someone. Being dominant gave you extra income. Judah's income was beginning to come into the treasury. Uzziah had income to build things for his people and kingdom. ¹

Verse 9. In ancient times all great men were great builders. King Solomon probably was the model that the Israelites (both kingdoms) followed. Uzziah was no exception. He began constructing defensive structures for the protection of his capital of Jerusalem and for his people,

Verse 10. The towers in the wilderness were watchtowers to monitor movements of people, troops, trade caravans, probably even towers to lookout for ships at sea. Towers are useful only if they had some sort of distance communication signals such as flags or fire signals to communicate with other towers, and eventually with the capital at Jerusalem.

Cisterns are catch basins for water, almost like limited or artificial wells, but dependent on catching rain. These provided water for flocks and cattle. They also provided water for agriculture and horticulture. Growing populations need water available for growth.

Verse 11. The army was well organized. In ancient times there were no standing armies and few professional military other than contingents of fighters to guard the king, the palace and royal treasury, and be bodyguards to select high officials. The Levites took care of the security of the Temple.

Verses 12–13. The army was counted by Uzziah's officials. Again, no censure came from God, so one of two things took place: (1) either God allowed the military census to occur, or (2) Uzziah's intentions were not predatory or imperialistic beyond the bounds YHWH set for His people Israel.

^k The Philistines and Arabians helped the Ethiopians raid and ravish Judah and Jerusalem previously (2 Chronicles 21:11–17).

¹ Today on a local level such a scheme is called a “protection racket.” Pay us or we will harm your farms, flocks, your cities, your people, or you. It was (and is) gangsterism. If those options were unacceptable, then another option was to move elsewhere. That option was a good one after the flood. Then there was plenty of good land everywhere for many generations.

Verse 14. This verse tells us that Uzziah was able to pay for all this. Weapons and armor were ready in advance of need.

Verse 15. “His name spread forth ...” referring to the fame of Uzziah. The *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (the Greek Old Testament, LXX, 2007) gives an interesting rendering that is clearer to our modern understanding, yet technically correct:

“And he [Uzziah] made machines in Jerusalem [Jerusalem] devised by a mathematician [singular, not Uzziah] to be on the towers and on the corners, to fire projectiles and large stones. And their construction was noised abroad far and wide, because it was marveled at in order to be of help until he [Uzziah] became strong.”

• 2 Chronicles 26:15, Greek NETS

These ingenious machines were designed specifically for use on the towers in Jerusalem. If correct, this Greek translation indicates an inventor made the machines for King Uzziah. The phrase “His name spread forth,” may mean Uzziah’s name or the inventor’s name. We cannot know for sure.

The Greek word for “mathematician” is λογιστοῦ (*logistou*) a singular noun and a common Greek term meaning “a calculator, teacher of arithmetic, ... a calculator, reasoner, ...” (“λογιστής,” Liddell-Scott, *Greek Lexicon*, Abridged). This translation of the Greek Old Testament of 2 Chronicles 26:15 fits the Hebrew.

TEXT: Leprosy and Death of King Azariah/Uzziah of Judah

2 Kings 15:5–7, 32–33

⁵ Yahweh touched the king, and he remained leprous until the day of his death. He dwelt in another house divested of his duties, while Jotham the king’s son was over

2 Chronicles 26:16–27:1

¹⁶ Yet as soon as he was steadfast, his heart became haughty, and he even acted corruptly; he offended Yahweh his Elohim when he entered the temple of Yahweh to fume incense on the incense altar.

¹⁷ At that Azariah the priest came in after him, and with him eighty priests of Yahweh, sons of valor.

¹⁸ They stood up against king Uzziah and said to him,

“It is not for you, Uzziah, to fume incense to Yahweh, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron who are hallowed to fume incense. Forth with you from the Sanctuary; for you have offended, and there will be not glory in it for you from Yahweh Elohim.”

¹⁹ Now Uzziah became irate while the censer for fuming incense was in his hand. But during his ire at the priests a leprous disease flashed up on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the House of Yahweh beside the incense altar.

²⁰ When Azariah the head priest and all the priests turned toward him, behold, he was leprous on his forehead; so they hustled him from there; and he too pressed on to go forth, for Yahweh *had* touched *him*.

²¹ King Uzziah remained leprous until the day of his death. He dwelt in another house divested of his duties, being leprous, for he was severed from the House of Yahweh, while *his son* Jotham was over

the royal house, judging the people of the land.

⁶ As for **the rest of the affairs of Azariah** and all that he did, are they not written on the scroll of **the annals of the days of the kings of Judah**?

⁷ Then Azariah lay down with his fathers, and they entombed him with his fathers in the city of David; his son Jotham reigned in his stead.

... ³² In the second year of Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, **Jotham son of Azariah** king of Judah **became king**. ³³ He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years; his mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok.

the royal house, judging the people of the land.

²² As for **the rest of the affairs of Uzziah**, *first and last*, **Isaiah son of Amoz**, the prophet, **has written**.

²³ Then Uzziah lay down with his fathers, and they entombed him with his fathers, *in the entombment field of the kings*, for they said, **"he was leprous"**; his son Jotham reigned in his stead.

^{27:1} Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years; his mother's name was Jerushah daughter of Zadok. [end text]

2 Chronicles 26:16. **"Steadfast"** means he was secure on his throne and powerful in his kingdom. Unfortunately this caused Uzziah to be arrogant toward God. He forgot the fear of God taught to him by his teacher Zechariah. Uzziah acted corruptly and transgressed the Temple.^m What did Uzziah do that **"offended YHWH his Elohim"**?

He walked into an inner sanctuary of the Temple and burned incense to YHWH. The altar of incense was inside the Holy Place, just in front of the curtain leading west to enter the Holy of Holies. Uzziah was not a Levitical priest. Only designated priests had the right to enter this chamber according to the Law of Moses or by any standard established by King David, the Levites and Aaronic priests.

Yes, King David did similar to Uzziah and more when he played the role of priest:

"David built there an altar unto YHWH, and [David] offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So YHWH was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

• **2 Samuel 24:25**

God accepted David's action, but that was another time and a different circumstance. The Temple was yet in the future and was not dedicated to YHWH under the Mosaic rules (2 Samuel 24:18–25). David acted as he did because he was king of Jerusalem in addition to being king of all Israel. As king of Jerusalem he was a Melchizadek priest.ⁿ

Was what Uzziah did worse than what his father did? Read again 2 Chronicles 25:14–15 (page 3 above) about Amaziah's crime against God. That being said, one can only wonder, what was Uzziah thinking?

Verses 17–18. This Azariah is the head priest (verse 20) or chief priest.^o Azariah and 80 priests **"they**

^m Ben Moreell, "[Power Corrupts](#)," accessed May 20, 2018:

"When a person gains power over other persons ... it seems inevitable that a moral weakness develops in the person who exercises that power. It may take time for this weakness to become visible. In fact, its full extent is frequently left to the historians to record, but we eventually learn of it. It was Lord Acton, the British historian, who said: 'All power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely.'

Please do not misunderstand me. These persons who are corrupted by the process of ruling over their fellow men are not innately evil. They begin as honest men. Their motives for wanting to direct the actions of others may be purely patriotic and altruistic. Indeed, they may wish only 'to do good for the people.'"

ⁿ My article "[Christ as High Priest](#)" discusses 2 Samuel 8:18 where the King James Version says **"David's sons were chief rulers."** In Hebrew it says, **"David's sons were priests"** (*cohenim*, plural in Hebrew, 2 Samuel 8:18). It is plain as can be in the Hebrew. The 1985 edition of the *Tanakh* by the Jewish Publication Society translated the word correctly as **"priests."** Until the Temple was built, David and his sons could operate as priests. Once the Temple was built, that priesthood ended but it is now fulfilled by Christ — David's greater son.

^o There are 23 people in the Bible named Azariah, and it is one of the names of Uzziah himself. It is easy to confuse people in the Bible at times.

stood against him.” This reads almost as if they crowded closely around Uzziah to form a barrier with their own bodies to separate their king from the holiness. If so, this was extremely threatening to Uzziah, but they definitely confronted him. What exactly did they intend to do? The 80 priests were described as **“sons of valor,”** a military term associated with valor in combat. It may denote armed men. Did these priests also have responsibility as Temple guards? We cannot know.

“You have offended” means several things, first, that Uzziah offended God, and second, that his offense was worthy of death.

Verse 19. Uzziah’s angry reaction toward the priests was interrupted by a feeling Uzziah felt on his forehead. He broke out with leprosy ... incredible.

Verse 20. All those in the room saw this and Uzziah probably touched his forehead, felt the abnormal skin, and was in shock. The priests hustled the king out of the Holy Place, out of the court of the priests, and out of the sanctuary to the nearby royal palace. YHWH caused Uzziah’s leprosy.

Remember that YHWH caused leprosy to appear on Moses’ hand to be used as a test before Pharaoh of YHWH’s power by Moses (Exodus 4:6–7). Moses’ brother Aaron and sister Miriam experienced God’s anger when they usurped authority they were not given:

“The anger of Yahweh grew hot against them [Miriam and Aaron], and He went away. When the cloud, withdrew from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous as snow. Aaron turned around to Miriam, and behold, she was leprous.”

• **Numbers 12:9–10** (read to verse 14)

2 Kings 15:5 and 2 Chronicles 26:21. Unlike Moses and Miriam, Uzziah was never healed. He went to live **“in another house,”** probably outside the City of David. Leviticus 13:46 said lepers were to live **“outside the camp”** until their condition cleared up. Uzziah’s leprosy never did clear up. Until that time, **“he was severed from the House of Yahweh.”** He was still a royal descendant of David and did not die for several years (we do not know how many). His active public life stopped. His travel stopped.

Every moment for the rest of his life he was reminded of God’s punishment for his sin. Uzziah continued as an object lesson to the people of Judah until he died. News of his illness must have been quickly known all around the world, and put the fear of YHWH into people — Israel and gentiles — for a period of time.

His son Jotham dutifully performed the kingly duties of judging the people of Judah and performing all public functions, but certainly his son sought Uzziah’s advice. After all, he reigned for decades and was a good king who wanted the best for the people of Judah.

2 Kings 15:6. The formulaic verse says that Uzziah’s other exploits are found **“on a scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Judah.”**

2 Chronicles 26:22. The writer of Chronicles verse tells us that in his past the prophet Isaiah wrote the information about Uzziah.

Verses 7 and 23. Uzziah was buried **“in the city of David”** and **“in the entombment of the kings”** but because **“he was leprous,”** he was not buried in **“the sepulchres of David”** (2 Chronicles 32:3; Nehemiah 3:16, KJV).

[**Note:** The text jumps from 2 Kings 15:7 to 2 Kings 15:32. Second Chronicles 26:23 flows directly to 27:1.]

2 Kings 15:32–33 and 2 Chronicles 27:1. Jotham began to rule when he was 25 years old with some type of dual reign with Uzziah.

This entire episode is problematic for chronology. When did Jotham’s reign begin? When he took over the kingly duties? Perhaps. When his father died after 52 years of being a king? We can only speculate until more information comes to light.

David Sielaff, June 2018