

## 2 Chronicles 26-28

Good evening and thank you so much for joining us! Would you please turn in your bibles to 2 Chronicles 26?

Now I am missing the next 2 wednesdays...Luigi is filling in

We're closing in on the finish line of 2 Chronicles, and tonight we're going to be studying chapters 26-28

The title of tonight's message is Faithful, not Flawless

Let's pray

Last week we saw kings of Judah who obeyed God initially, but faded in time. Tonight a new king named Uzziah takes the throne...

1-3

1 Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah,[fn] who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah.

2 He built Elath[fn] and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. Uzziah ruled the longest of any of the kings of Israel or Judah-52 years. And here's the reason for his long stint on the throne,

4-5

4 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done.

5 He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions[fn] of God; and as long as he sought

the LORD, God made him prosper. He was a good king-one of only 8  
6-10

6 Now he 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. 7 God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. 8 Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong. 9 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. 10 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."

Uzziah was a remarkable king, who had a broad interest in the improvement of his kingdom. Because of his many achievements, his fame spread among other nations.

11-15

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 Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. 12 The total number of chief officers[fn] of the mighty men of valor was two thousand six hundred. 13 And under their authority was an army of three

hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings to cast stones. 15 And he made devices 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. There is some debate and even controversy as to whether these were defensive or offensive inventions. If it does describe the invention of catapults, it's amazing that Uzziah and his men invented such things more than two hundred years before archaeological evidence suggests.

16 But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, (His success went to his head and 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. 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. Religious authority is what he wants. So he overstepped 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. Uzziah is a prominent example of a man who handled adversity better than success. FB Meyer said “God cannot trust some of us with prosperity and success, because our nature

could not stand them. We must tug at the oar, instead of spreading the sail, because we have not enough ballast.”

17 So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18 And they withstood King Uzziah, and 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.” This was a brave act. Uzziah was a mighty king who could order heads to roll.

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?

Why was this such a big deal? Because Uzziah distorted the picture of Jesus. See there is only One who is qualified to be both priest and king—Jesus Christ.

This is the same thing that Moses did isn't it? When the children of Israel thirsted in the wilderness, God told Moses to speak to the rock and water would gush forth from it to bring refreshing water to the Hebrews.

But Moses was frustrated with the people, he was angry, so instead of speaking to the rock Moses struck the rock 2x. What's the big deal we might say? Well we have to remember what the rock represented

1 Corinthians 10:4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

By striking the rock 2x Moses distorted the picture God was painting because Jesus would be smitten only once through His death on the Cross for our sins. This picture was so important to God that Moses was unable to enter the Promised Land because, like Uzziah, he altered the picture.

So how does Uzziah handle this rebuke from the priest?

19 Then Uzziah became furious; (the Hebrew word means “boiling”) and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 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.

20 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.

The problem was that Uzziah desired to serve God, but by his own rules. He was too proud to truly submit to God.

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

22-23

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. 23 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. It was when King Uzziah died, that a dramatic shift occurred in the prophet Isaiah's life.

Isaiah 6 1 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. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
The whole earth is full of His glory!"

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 So I said:

"Woe is me, for I am undone!  
Because I am a man of unclean lips,  
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;

For my eyes have seen the King,  
The LORD of hosts.”

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

“Behold, this has touched your lips;  
Your iniquity is taken away,  
And your sin purged.”

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

“Whom shall I send,  
And who will go for Us?”

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

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.

Chapter 27 Uzziah's son Jotham reigns in Judah

1-2

1 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah<sup>[fn]</sup> the daughter of Zadok. 2 And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still the people acted corruptly. Jotham was a good and godly king. He modeled his father Uzziah's successes – and avoided his mistakes. But the people under him were poor followers.

3 He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. The Upper Gate connected the king's palace with the Temple. Whenever a king took interest in this connection it was a positive sign. It revealed a revival in his heart - a desire to worship and seek the Lord.

Verses 4-5 talk about the cities and forts he built – and his victory over Ammon.

4 Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers. 5 He also fought with the king of the Ammonites and defeated them. And the people of Ammon gave him in that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. 6 So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God. It's always a good idea to prepare our ways before the Lord  
Let's finish 27

7 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 So Jotham rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place. Uzziah was a good king. Jotham was a better king. But then comes a man named Ahaz

## CHAPTER 28

This man named Ahaz was perhaps the worst king of Judah. But what made Ahaz so wicked?

1-4

1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David had done. 2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. 3 He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. How's that for an introduction – Baal worship - Molech worship which involved child sacrifice - and the proliferation of idols all over the nation of Judah. Idols were as common as rocks- they could be found everywhere.

5-8

5 Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought them to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel,

who defeated him with a great slaughter. 6 For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. 7 Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah who was second to the king. 8 And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria. Israel intended to sell Judah's women and children as slaves. What a disaster Ahaz's reign was for the southern kingdom. Imagine 200,000 women, sons, and daughters taken from their homes and husbands. This devastated families and broke the heart of the nation.

9-11

9 But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: "Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage that reaches up to heaven. 10 And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; but are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? 11 Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you." Both Israel and Judah were God's people – and Israel was guilty of sins every bit as vile as those for which Judah was being judged. God didn't want Israel to be cruel to their fellow brethren in Judah.

12-13

12 Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, 13 and said to them, “You shall not bring the captives here, for we already have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.” They heeded God’s Word through Oded.

14 So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. Four Ephraimites stand up and demand that the people obey the Lord... and the soldiers back down. These men are unsung heroes in Judah’s history.

15 Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria. Husbands and wives were reunited, and families restored. I’m sure there was rejoicing in the streets of Jerusalem – and Oded was a very popular man.

16 At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings[fn] of Assyria to help him. It was during this time that the Prophet Isaiah met King Ahaz on the highway to the Fuller’s Field. Isaiah came to comfort him, and restore hope to Jerusalem. Isaiah even offers Ahaz a sign from God. He tells Ahaz to ask for something so outlandish it would have to be from God. Ahaz

refuses, so Isaiah tells him God will give him a sign. **Isaiah 7:13, 13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel**

The virgin birth of Jesus was actually a sign to Ahaz of God's protection. Jesus won't be born for another 730 years, but the promise and manner of His birth was a sign directed toward Ahaz.

Isaiah goes on to say that Israel and Syria will both fall before this child reaches adulthood - which indeed was true.

In a few years the rising Assyrian power will sack the capitols of both Syria and Israel.

Isaiah 8 predicts that Immanuel will stretch out His wings and cover the land of Judah, and break the enemy to pieces. Judah will be delivered by "God is with us..." This Immanuel - the Son who will be virgin born - is the Warrior who delivers Judah in the days of Ahaz' son Hezekiah... In chapter 32 we'll see him at work. But here's the point... how does the wicked Ahaz respond to God's promise of deliverance? V16 tells us Ahaz ignores it and tries to buy the protection of the Assyrians. Why did he?

17-19

**17 For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. 18 The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages,**

Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there.

19 For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. Sadly Ahaz was consistent. He was “continually unfaithful.” Ahaz encouraged moral decline among God’s people.

Tragically, Ahaz was not the last ruler to “encourage moral decline.” It’s not difficult to name a few modern examples, and in our own country no less.

20 Also Tiglath-Pileser[fn] king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. Rather than be an ally, the Assyrians will eventually be a threat. At this time Assyria was on the warpath. They were a mighty war machine, and they were gobbling up kingdoms east to west. And now we see some of the details of this wicked king Ahaz

21 For Ahaz took part of the treasures from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave it to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him. Rather than trust God, Ahaz used the Temple’s holy articles to try and strike a deal with Assyria - but Assyria shows no loyalty. Hey, strike a deal with the world, and the world will reward you with zero loyalty.

22 Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This is that King Ahaz. He was “continually unfaithful”... and now “increasingly unfaithful”. The

older he got – the worse he got. It's wisely been said that compromise is like a cancer. It grows and metastasizes and gets worse.

23 For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. Sadly folks today still follow this flawed logic. They see the lies of the world, and decide they will partake because it looks like others are successful. But it ends in ruin.

24 So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. Ahaz closed down the Temple. It's like he locked the doors and disconnected the utilities on the one place where God desired to be worshiped.

25 And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers. Ahaz was a blight on the nation of Judah – a blatant blasphemer.

26 Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27 So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place. Here's the good news... Hezekiah the son rebels against

his father and serves the Lord. Hezekiah is one of Judah's godliest kings and brightest lights.

It's interesting Jotham was a godly king who had a wicked son, Ahaz. The evil Ahaz has a good son, Hezekiah. A godly Hezekiah sires the most ungodly king in Judah's history, Manasseh. Manasseh has a godly grandson named Josiah.

It doesn't always make sense. Regardless of a kid's parents, and the training they provide, kids still have a mind of their own, and will make their own choices. As parents we need to raise our kids the best we can and then pray.