

THE KING WHO BECAME A LEPER

II Chronicles 26:1-23

LESSON 86 -- Primary Course

MEMORY VERSE: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord”
(James 4:10).

BIBLE TEXT

II Chronicles 26:1-23

1 Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.

2 He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

3 Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem.

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

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

6 And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines.

7 And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gurbaal, and the Mehunims.

8 And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.

9 Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them.

10 Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry.

11 Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains.

12 The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred.

13 And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy.

14 And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones.

15 And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong.

16 ¶ But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write.

23 So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

NOTES

A Good Start

When a king dies, usually his son becomes king. In this lesson we shall study about a young man named Uzziah, who became king at the age of sixteen, when his father died. In some ways he reminds us of the first king that the Children of Israel ever had to rule over them. Do we remember King Saul? He started out to do the right things; he pleased God for a while. But later on he became proud; perhaps he thought he had done great things, so he disobeyed the Lord. God did not let him be the king any longer.

King Uzziah was another man who made a good start; no doubt he was saved for a time. He prayed to God and did what God told him to do. His great armies went out to battle, and God was with them. He had much cattle and land; he built high towers and strong walls. God was with him and helped him, and he was known by the people in faraway lands. But when he was very great and powerful, he, too, became proud. He thought he had made himself great. It was God who had helped him, but he did not admit that. God tells us in His Book: "Without me ye can do nothing". We should always remember that and ask God to help us do what we have to do.

Pride in the Heart

Do we understand what pride is? When people or even little children are so well pleased with themselves, or with something they are able to do, that they want to "show off" – that is pride. Some children are able to sing better than others; some have better clothes than others; some live in very fine homes. But God does not want anyone to become proud over these things. After all, He has given us everything we have, and we

should be thankful to Him for the good things we have, and that God lets us have them. God looks on the heart and not on the outside. He loves a little child who comes to Sunday School poorly-dressed just as much as the one who is well-dressed. He loves those who live in a humble cottage just as much as He loves those who live in a beautiful and big house.

God is not pleased with people who even have a proud look; and, no doubt, He is more displeased when they show the pride of their heart by their actions. God's Word reads, "An high look, and a proud heart . . . is sin" (Proverbs 21:4). God hates pride.

The Punishment

God's Word teaches that a "haughty spirit," or pride, goes before a fall; and when King Uzziah became proud and lifted up, he was sure to fall – be punished. He did something that displeased the Lord greatly. He went into the Temple to burn incense upon the altar, and he had no right to do this. The incense that was burned in the Temple was made of several kinds of sweet spices, just as God said it should be made. When it burned it made a sweet perfume in the temple and even outside for a distance. It was burned morning and evening, and seemed to mean prayer, praise, and thanksgiving to God. It was a very wrong thing for anyone but the right ones to burn the incense. Only certain ones – the priests, the sons of Aaron – were permitted to do this. Azariah, the chief priest, and 80 other priests also went into the Temple that day. They told King Uzziah that he had no right to burn incense unto the Lord; it was not his place to do so. They told him to go out, that he had done a wrong thing.

This made the king very angry. He perhaps thought that because he was the king he could do anything he pleased. While he stood there, the dreadful disease of leprosy rose up in his forehead. All the priests looked at him and saw that he was a leper. They sent him out at once, and he hurried to go out of the Temple. He knew that he had done wrong and was being punished for it. He was a leper the rest of his life and had to live by himself, away from other people. His last days must have been very sad.

We have learned in other lessons that the disease of leprosy on the body, is like sin in the heart. It grows bigger and more terrible all the time. Perhaps it begins with just a very small spot, but gradually it spreads and goes deeper into the flesh. That is the way with sin. It may begin with what seems to be a very little thing – with what is called a "little lie," a little thing stolen, or a little bit of disobedience. But it soon grows bigger and bigger; and unless the Blood of Jesus takes it out of the heart it will kill the body and send the soul away from God forever.

One time a man was to be put to death for a big robbery and a murder he had committed. Before he was put to death he was asked if there was anything he wanted to say. He said he did want to warn other boys from doing as he had done and coming to such a bad end. He said that the first thing he ever stole was a lead pencil from the desk of a schoolmate. From that time on he began to steal more and more things until he became a terrible robber.

Another robber said almost the same thing, but added that if his parents had punished him hard the first time he stole something he might not have become a robber.

Learning the Hard Way

When we study our lessons from the Word of God, let us pray that God will help us to learn them well and remember what we learn. Sometimes God tries to teach people lessons but they will not listen to His voice. Then they have to learn their lesson the "hard way" – through punishment.

There was another king in Bible times who became very proud of himself and what he had done. But God knew how to humble him, too. He was not stricken with leprosy like King Uzziah was, but he was driven out into the fields, and he ate grass as the animals. His body was wet with dew; his hair became like eagles'

feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. Worse than all that, his mind was gone! But at the end of seven years his mind was restored to him, and he received his kingdom again. God saw that he had been humbled, and had learned his lesson. This is what he said when he came back to his kingdom: "Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase" (Daniel 4:37). We shall read more about this king in a future lesson.

"Close to Thee"

God wants us to remember that every good thing we have comes from Him. He has given us these lessons from His Book so that we shall know what to do and what not to do. From this lesson we learn, first: although we are saved and make a good start, unless we pray much and keep very close to Jesus, we shall lose the love of God out of our heart. We call that backsliding.

Secondly, we must be humble before God. That is just the opposite of being proud. God says that he resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Let us remember that we are no better than the one next to us, and all that we have God has given us, and we must be thankful to Him. If we "watch and pray," we shall be able to keep saved, and then pride will not creep into our heart, and God will not have to punish us to make us as good as He wants us to be.

QUESTIONS

1. Why was King Uzziah so prosperous? II Chronicles 26:5.
2. What happened to cause him to fall? II Chronicles 26:16.
3. Whose duty was it to burn incense? II Chronicles 26:18.
4. Did the king ever recover from his leprosy? II Chronicles 26:21.
5. What two lessons may we learn from this story?

LESSON RESOURCES

TITLE

THE KING WHO BECAME A LEPER

Lesson 86

II Chronicles 26:1-23

Do No Sinful Action

WATCH AND PRAY 61

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Do No Sinful Action

**Do no sinful action,
Speak no angry word;
Ye belong to Jesus,
Children of the Lord**

PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2

