

Who was King Uzziah in the Bible?

King Uzziah in the Bible was one of the good kings of Judah. His father was King Amaziah, and his mother was a woman named Jecoliah, from Jerusalem. Uzziah was the father of King Jotham. Ministering during Uzziah's reign were the prophets Hosea, Isaiah, Amos, and Jonah. The kings in the northern kingdom of Israel during his time were Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea. Uzziah is also called Azariah in 2 Kings 14:21.

King Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for 52 years in Judah from approximately 790 to 739 BC. He "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" as his father Amaziah had done (2 Chronicles 26:4). King Uzziah sought the Lord "during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God." This Zechariah is most likely a godly prophet to whom Uzziah listened. As long as Uzziah made a point to seek God, God made him prosperous (2 Chronicles 26:5). Unfortunately, after Zechariah died, Uzziah made some mistakes later in his life.

King Uzziah in the Bible is shown as a wonderfully intelligent and innovative king, under whom the state of Judah prospered (2 Chronicles 26:6-15). He was used by God to defeat the Philistines and Arabs (verse 7), he built fortified towers and strengthened the armies of Judah (verses 9 and 14), and he commissioned skilled men to create devices that could shoot arrows and large stones at enemies from the city walls (verse 15). He also built up the land, and the Bible says he "loved the soil" (verse 10). The Ammonites paid tribute to King Uzziah, and his fame spread all over the ancient world, as far as the border of Egypt (verses 8 and 15).

Unfortunately, King Uzziah's fame and strength led him to become proud, and this led to

his downfall (2 Chronicles 26:16). He committed an unfaithful act by entering the temple of God to burn incense on the altar. Burning incense on the altar was something only the priests could do. By attempting to do this himself, Uzziah was basically saying he was above following the Law. It was not a humble thing to do. Eighty courageous priests, led by a high priest named Azariah, tried to stop the king: "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the Lord. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the Lord God" (2 Chronicles 26:18). Uzziah became angry with the priests who dared confront him. But, "while he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the Lord's temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead" (verse 19). Uzziah ran from the temple in fear, because God had struck him (verse 20). From that day to the day of his death, King Uzziah was a leper. He lived in a separate palace and was not allowed to enter the temple of the Lord. His son, Jotham, governed the people in his place.

King Uzziah is also mentioned in the book of Matthew as one of the ancestors of Joseph, Jesus' legal father (Matthew 1:8-9).