

Uzziah, Jotham & Ahaz

These three kings of Judah had a great impact on the preaching of the prophets sent at that time. We have seen in our own culture how leaders can affect the culture and how the people can influence those leaders. The sexual revolution led to legalized abortion, forever changing the nature of the political parties here. Later, this same sexual revolution legalized homosexuality and further changing the political parties and which has now led to homosexual marriage. Few alive before 1970 could have envisioned the impact that the culture had on the selection of leaders, how the leaders have pushed the culture, and how both of these have changed the landscape of the hearts who are now hearing the gospel.

There is nothing new under the sun, and this has happened as a cycle since the beginning.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. ... so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ... 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.
Rom. 1:18-23*

All the prophets with the exception of Micah began their work in the days of Uzziah and continued through the reign of Hezekiah. It will be clear from the accounts of their lives the difficulties they worked against.

*Amos... in the days of **Uzziah** of Judah, **Jeroboam** of Israel, Amos 1:1
Hosea ... in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, of Judah, **Jeroboam** of Israel Hos 1:1
Isaiah ... in the days of **Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah. Isa 1:1
Micah ... in the days of **Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, Mic 1:1*

Uzziah/Amaziah

Azaryah'. helped by Jehovah

Uzz'iyah, strength of Jehovah but in the prolonged form *Uzziya'hu*,(from McClintock & Strong).

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. 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 of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper. 2
Chron 26:3-5

In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, **Azariah** the 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.** 2Kings 15:1-2

Since he is called Uzziah in the prophets, we will stay with that name, and since this name is used in Chronicles, which is a much more specific account of his life, we will work out Chronicles.

He begins his reign at 16, and although we are not given any further information, while he was under the guidance of a prophet named Zechariah, he sought God and God made him prosper. Whether this lasted most of his life or only a short time is not recorded.

God made him to Prosper

While under the guidance of Zechariah, still seeking God, he went to war against the Philistines and won a great battle and God greatly blessed him.

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.** 2 Chron 26:6-8

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.** 2 Chron 26:15

Uzziah's Pride

Clearly after the death of Zechariah, Uzziah's false estimate of his own power and ability led him to go against God's law. He wanted to do the work of the priest and thus entered into the temple with a censer.

But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, 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. 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." 19 Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. 2 Chr. 26:16-19

Because of this pride, he sinned and entered the temple. When the priest went in to warn him about his sin, instead of being contrite and repentant he became angry. God did nothing when he entered the temple, but when he was still stubborn in his rebellion after being rebuked, God intervened with punishment.

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. 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. 2Chr. 26:19-20

The punishment was swift and final. He was definitely humbled at this moment, but there was no longer any room for repentance and he remained a leper for the rest of his life.

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. 2Chr. 26:21

Other than this one event, nothing else is written, so we have to fall back on the summary of his life in Kings, that he did what was right.

And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, 4 except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 2 Kings 15:3-5

Isaiah's Call

It was in the year that Uzziah died that Isaiah received his call. From the events in this call, we get a good assessment of the conditions in Judah as Uzziah's 52 year reign came to a close.

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." 9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'" 10 "Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed." 11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered: "Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant, The houses are without a man, The land is utterly desolate, 12 The LORD has removed men far away, And the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

Jotham

Since Jotham had been helping his father from the time of he was struck with leprosy, and he was 25 when he began to reign at the death of his father, it appears it was late in Uzziah's reign that this occurred. Jotham was a good king, but did not stop the corruption of the people.

*Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah 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.** 2Chr. 27:1-2*

Prepared his ways before the LORD

His reign was prosperous and busy and God blessed him in his work because he prepared his ways before the Lord.

*He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. 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.** 2 Chron 27:3-6*

Yet in spite of his reign and God's blessings, the people still had the terrible heart He had revealed to Isaiah. At this time, God began to punish Israel.

*Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 37 **In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah.** 38 So Jotham rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place. 2Kings 15:36-38*

Ahaz

Ahaz was twenty when he began his reign and he was more interested in the lifestyle of those he lived among than what God had revealed in His law.

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. 2 Chron 28:1-4

God sent adversaries

God was attempting to do for Judah what he had done throughout the time of the judges. He sent adversaries who would bring Judah to their senses. It failed with Ahaz because he allied himself with the king of Assyria.

Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to make war; and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome him. 6 At that time Rezin king of Syria captured Elath for Syria, and drove the men of Judah from Elath. Then the Edomites went to Elath, and dwell there to this day. 2 Kings 16:5-6*

So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." 8 And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent it as a present to the king of Assyria. 9 So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus and took it, carried its people captive to Kir, and killed Rezin. 2 Kings 16:7-9

Ahaz builds a new altar

After meeting with the king of Assyria and seeing the altar they used to worship their idols, he gives a command to get the plans, remove the altar God had revealed to Israel and replace it with his heathen altar.

Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. 11 Then Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made it before King Ahaz came back from Damascus. 2 Kings 16:10-12

He also brought the bronze altar which was before the Lord, from the front of the temple — from between the new altar and the house of the Lord — and put it on the north side of the new altar. 15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great new altar burn the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by." 2 Kings 16:14-16

Great evil in Judah.

Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the Lord. This is that King Ahaz. 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. 2 Chron 28:22-24