

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES: GAINING DIRECTION OUT OF THE AIMLESSNESS OF APOSTASY
Part V: Gaining Direction From God's Work In The Rest Of Judah's Davidic Dynasty, 2 Chronicles 13-36
J. Learning Humbly To Stay Within God's Calling And Assignment For Us
(2 Chronicles 26:1-23)

I. Introduction

- A. If we obey the Lord and He blesses us with honor, the temptation can arise to take the credit to ourselves and become proud and promote ourselves above God's calling and assignment in life and service for us.
- B. That is a terrible sin that we must avoid at all costs, a fact clarified in the example of Uzziah's life:

II. Learning Humbly To Stay Within God's Calling And Assignment For Us, 2 Chronicles 26:1-23.

- A. After the death of Amaziah, the people of Judah made his son, Uzziah king in his place, 2 Chron. 26:1.
- B. Uzziah began his reign committed to the Lord, doing that which was right before God (2 Chronicles 26:4), and as long as he sought the Lord's counsel through a prophet named Zechariah, God prospered him, 26:5.
- C. That prosperity became very extensive and great as described in 2 Chronicles 26:2, 6-15 as follows:
 - 1. Uzziah reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem, a very long time for a king, 2 Chronicles 26:3.
 - 2. He rebuilt the valuable port of Elath on the Gulf of Aqaba to open up Arabian trade by sea and to gain from the mineral resources in the Rift Valley area, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to 2 Chronicles 26:2; Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. Five, p. 854-855.
 - 3. He firmly subdued the Philistines, invading their cities and building his own cities among them (26:6) as God helped him in his conflicts with the Philistines, the Arabians in Gurbaal and the Meunites, 26:7.
 - 4. The Ammonites paid Uzziah tribute, and his military fame spread as far as Egypt, 2 Chronicles 26:8.
 - 5. Uzziah made "fortress" towers of defense for the city of Jerusalem, placing them at various parts of the city wall, and constructed strategic towers in the southern wilderness of Judah, 2 Chronicles 26:9-10a.
 - 6. He built many cisterns for holding water reserves for his large livestock herds in various places and, as a lover of the soil, had farmers and vine dressers both in the hills and plains, 2 Chronicles 26:10b.
 - 7. Uzziah's army was also well armed, 2 Chronicles 26:11-15a:
 - a. He had 2,600 valiant military leaders who commanded an army of 307,500 men, and this infantry force could make war with great power for its day, 2 Chronicles 26:11-13 ESV.
 - b. These men had shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and stones for slinging, 26:14 ESV.
 - c. In Jerusalem, Uzziah supplied them engines made by skilled men to be placed on towers and corners of the city wall that could be used to shoot arrows and large stones at invading forces, 26:15a ESV.
 - 8. Accordingly, due to God's blessing, Uzziah's fame spread far and wide, and he became strong, 26:15b.
- D. However, instead of recalling it was God's blessing that had made him so strong, Uzziah concluded he had become great by his own might, thus turning proud, a sin that led to his downfall, 2 Chron. 26:16-23:
 - 1. In his strength as a king blessed by God, Uzziah became proud, and so usurped the role of the priests in entering the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense, 2 Chron. 26:16; Ex. 30:7-9; Num. 4:18-21.
 - 2. The high priest, Azariah and eighty brave fellow priests entered the temple after him to withstand Uzziah, saying, "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. Go out of the sanctuary, for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God," 2 Chronicles 26:18 ESV.
 - 3. In pride, Uzziah reacted with fury against these priests, and while he raged as he stood beside the altar of incense, God's judgment in the form of leprosy broke out on Uzziah's forehead, 2 Chronicles 26:19!
 - 4. The appearance of leprosy caused the priests immediately to thrust him out of the holy temple, Uzziah himself being eager to leave due to the sudden plague, and he lived separate from God's temple and other people as a leper until he died, 26:20-21a. His son, Jotham governed Judah in his place, 26:21b.
 - 5. Since Uzziah died as an unclean leper, he was buried in the field of the kings, but not with them, 26:23.

Lesson: For neglecting to credit God with his great blessings as Judah's king, Uzziah became proud, and usurped the role of the priests to his own tragic, sinful judgment by God and demise as king.

Application: (1) May we never credit God's blessing to our own innate worth, for we are always at best just saved sinners. (2) Rather, if God in His great grace blesses us in this life, may we always humbly credit Him with all the glory, and stay WITHIN the CALLING and ASSIGNMENT He has given us!