



ISAIAH
Week 3: Isaiah, Chapter 1
Trusted. Obedient. Prophetic.
Winter 2023 w/Wednesday Night Crew

SL#3

ISAIAH
Week 2: Introduction
Wednesday Night Crew

RECAP
Experiencing
God
[Blackaby Study Bible]

**What would others find out
about Jesus Christ the Messiah,
taste of Jesus Christ the Messiah,
know of Jesus Christ the Messiah
by living with me?**

Isaiah 1

SL#4

1 The vision about Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah, Amoz's son, saw in the days of Judah's kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. CEB

Isaiah went into the temple when he heard King Uzziah died.

This is where the vision happened.

Visions continued 740 – 700 BC.

QUESTION: Can I think of a recent reaction to hard or shocking news...where did I go in my shock or in my hurt or..

SL#5

The verb "saw" (Heb. *hazah*) is often used of seeing a God-given vision (as in Num. 24:4; 1 Sam. 3:1; Jer. 23:16; Ezek. 7:13, 26; Dan. 1:17; Hos. 12:10; Obad. 1; Mic. 3:6; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 2:2–3)

SL#6

2 Peter 1:20–21

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Most important, you must know that no prophecy of scripture represents the prophet's own understanding of things, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by human will. Instead, men and women led by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. CEB

Isaiah had a living relationship with God:

Jesus in:

SL#7

John 14:10

Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I have spoken to you I don't speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me does His works.

The Vision:

- Directed to Judah and focused on Jerusalem.

(Isaiah does prophesy about other nations but only as they relate to Judah and Jerusalem)

- Jerusalem was and will be the capital city God rules from.
- The Temple resides in Jerusalem.
- The Millennium the throne of the Messiah will be located in Jerusalem.

FOUR KINGS: Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah

CO-REGENTS

- Biblical accounts compared with archaeological discoveries indicate some overlapping in the reigns of the kings mentioned in the verse.
- David set this pattern of coregency in Israel.
- Before he died, he brought Solomon to the throne.
- Partially to end the chaotic attempts of others to take the throne.

UZZIAH:

KING OF JUDAH (עֲזַרְיָה, *uzziyyah*). The 10th ruler of Judah. Also called Azariah.

- Scripture refers to the 10th king of Judah as both Uzziah (עֲזַרְיָה, *uzziyyah*, "Yahweh is my strength") and Azariah (אֶזַרְיָה, *azaryah*, "Yahweh has helped").
- They are spelled similarly in Hebrew.
- King's given and throne name?
- Book of Kings = Azariah.
Chronicles = Uzziah.
- Uzziah took the throne after his father, Amaziah, was killed while fleeing a coup that had arisen in Jerusalem, apparently in the wake of Amaziah's unsuccessful war against Israel.

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- The Judeans enthroned Uzziah either because they expected that he would be a better ruler than Amaziah or believed they could control the young king.

SL#8

2 Chronicles 26:1-5

Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was 16 years old, and made him king after his father Amaziah. ² He rebuilt Eloth, restoring it to Judah after King Amaziah had lain down with his ancestors.

³ Uzziah was 16 years old when he became king, and he ruled for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem. ⁴ He did what was right in the Lord's eyes, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁵ He sought God as long as Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God, was alive. And as long as he sought the Lord, God gave him success.

CEB

- Uzziah was made king at age 16 and reigned for **52 years** (2 Kgs 15:2; 2 Chr 26:3).
- Uzziah was the descendant of David and the son of Jecoliah and King Amaziah, who came from the inner circles of power at Jerusalem.
- Married to Jerusha, daughter of Zadok, whose name suggests she came from a priestly family.
- Because of his loyalty to Yahweh, Uzziah was successful in war against the Philistines, extending his influence to Egypt itself (2 Chr 26:8).
- The Chronicler credits him with having military prowess, building fortifications in Jerusalem, and raising and equipping an enormous army (2 Chr 26:9–10, 11–15).
- His agricultural program expanded cattle production, vineyard cultivation, and crop raising throughout Judah (2 Chr 26:10–13).
- ALL of Judah's rulers to the time of Josiah, Uzziah allowed many sacred places to continue local religious traditions.

SL#9

2 Chr 26:15-20

And so Uzziah's fame spread far and wide, because he had received wonderful help until he became powerful.

¹⁶ But as soon as he became powerful, he grew so arrogant that he acted corruptly. He was unfaithful to the Lord his God by entering the Lord's sanctuary to burn incense upon the incense

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altar. ¹⁷ The priest Azariah, accompanied by eighty other of the Lord's courageous priests, went in after him ¹⁸ and confronted King Uzziah.

"You have no right, Uzziah," he said, "to burn incense to the Lord! That privilege belongs to the priests, Aaron's descendants, who have been ordained to burn incense. Get out of this holy place because you have been unfaithful! The Lord God won't honor you for this."

¹⁹ Then Uzziah, who already had a censer in his hand ready to burn the incense, became angry. While he was fuming at the priests, skin disease^[e] erupted on his forehead in the presence of the priests before the incense altar in the Lord's temple.²⁰ When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests turned and saw the skin disease on his forehead, they rushed him out of there. Uzziah also was anxious to leave because the Lord had afflicted him. CEB

SL#10

2 Kings 15:5

⁵ Now the Lord afflicted the king with a skin disease that he had until his dying day, so he lived in a separate house. The king's son Jotham supervised the palace administration and governed the people of the land. CEB

- Disease = Leprosy?
- Co-regents
- Uzziah's son Jotham succeeded him.

- King's records Uzziah as having been given a royal burial in Jerusalem. Chronicles only allows the burial to have taken place in a field belonging to the kings of Judah.
- Matthew 1:8–9 includes Uzziah in Jesus' genealogy, though Luke 3:23–38 does not.

Extrabiblical References

Josephus repeats the Chronicler's narrative regarding Uzziah with several expansions (Begg, "Uzziah," 12–14, 17, 21). He particularly emphasizes Uzziah's military and agricultural endeavors. Josephus also expands on the account of Uzziah's disease, stating that Uzziah threatened the priest Azariah with death if he didn't acquiesce to Uzziah's demands. Josephus records Uzziah as being 68 at the time of his death, accepting that Uzziah's reign lasted to his death.

LOWELL K. HANDY¹

JOTHAM, KING OF JUDAH (יֹתָם, *yoatham*, Ιωαθαμ, *lōatham*).

- Son of Uzziah and Jerusha, daughter of Zadok;
- Reigned as Judah's 11th ruler.
- The name "Jotham" means "the Lord is perfect."
- Father of Ahaz

¹ Handy, L. K. (2016). [Uzziah, King of Judah](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.

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Stepped to the throne in 2 Kings 15 when his father, King Uzziah, was struck with a skin disease.

Jotham ruled for 16 years (2 Kgs 15:33; 2 Chr 27:1).

Never tried to enter the temple.

SL#11

2 Chr 27:3-6

³ Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the Lord's temple and did extensive work on the wall of the elevated fortress. ⁴ He built towns in Judah's highlands and fortresses and towers in the wooded areas. ⁵ He fought against the king of the Ammonites and defeated the Ammonites. They paid him one hundred kikkars of silver, ten thousand kors^[b] of wheat, and ten thousand kors of barley that year and for the next two years. ⁶ Jotham was securely established because he maintained a faithful life before the Lord his God.

- The high places remained during Jotham's reign,
- 2 Chronicles records that the people of Judah continued their corrupt ways (2 Kgs 15:35; 2 Chr 27:2).
- Jotham is buried in the city of David (2 Kgs 15:38; 2 Chr 26:23; 27:9).

JOSHUA A. CRUTCHFIELD²

SL#12

Isaiah 1:2-4

Rebels condemned

² Hear you heavens, and listen earth, for the Lord has spoken:
I reared children; I raised them, and they turned against me!

³ An ox knows its owner, and a donkey its master's feeding trough.
But Israel doesn't know; my people don't behave intelligently.

⁴ Doom! Sinful nation, people weighed down with crimes,
evildoing offspring, corrupt children!

They have abandoned the Lord,
despised the holy one of Israel; they turned their backs on God.

QUESTIONS: How does the Lord view His people turning away from Him? (vs 2-4)

Do I see God as the Supreme Being who "owns" me? HE DESCRIBES HIMSELF AS A PARENT (vs2)

What does a life "weighed down" look like? (vs4)

Sin = Turning our back to God's actions of love

² Crutchfield, J. A. (2016). [Jotham, King of Judah](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.

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SL#13

Moses: **Deut 30:19**

¹⁹ *I call heaven and earth as my witnesses against you right now: I have set life and death, blessing and curse before you. Now choose life—so that you and your descendants will live—²⁰ by loving the Lord your God, by obeying his voice, and by clinging to him. That’s how you will survive and live long on the fertile land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors: to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

This prescription the nation was taught was not followed, was rejected.

They experienced BEING:

- Redeemed
- Delivered
- Guided
- Taught
- Needs Met
- Established

IT WAS NOT ENOUGH.

Rebellion was the reply of the nation.

QUESTIONS:

Leaving behind being chosen by God looks like what? Acts like what?

Lying down a covenant agreement = what behavior? [Turn their backs on God]

Sin upon Sin upon Sin upon Sin

Unrepented guilt = What does life look like with this?

[Sinful behavior being touted as whole, healthy and right.]

“The Holy One of Israel” is a term found twenty-nine times in Isaiah and only six times in the rest of the Old Testament.

Horton, S. M. (2000). [Isaiah: A Logion Press Commentary](#) (pp. 405–490). Logion Press.

⁵ *Why do you invite further beatings? Why continue to rebel?*

Everyone’s head throbs, and everyone’s heart fails.

⁶ *From head to toe, none are well—only bruises, cuts, and raw wounds, not treated, not bandaged, not soothed with oil.*

SL#14

Isaiah 1:7

⁷ *Your country is deserted, your cities burned with fire; your land—strangers are devouring it in plain sight. It’s a wasteland, as when foreigners raid.*

⁸ *Daughter Zion is left like a small shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city besieged.*

QUESTION: Why cannot they not see everything they had being laid to “waste”?

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Isaiah 1:9

⁹ If the Lord of heavenly forces had not spared a few of us, we would be like Sodom; we would resemble Gomorrah.

QUESTION: Is this an act of God's mercy? Or a supernatural law that intersects the natural world?

SL#15

Isaiah 1:10-14

Hands filled with bloodshed

¹⁰ Hear the Lord's word, you leaders of Sodom.

Listen to our God's teaching, people of Gomorrah!

*¹¹ **What should I think about all your sacrifices?**
says the Lord.*

I'm fed up with entirely burned offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts.

I don't want the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me, who asked this from you, this trampling of my temple's courts?

*¹³ **Stop bringing worthless offerings.***

Your incense repulses me.

New moon, sabbath, and the calling of an assembly—

I can't stand wickedness with celebration!

¹⁴ I hate your new moons and your festivals.

They've become a burden that I'm tired of bearing.

QUESTION:

What does a relationship defined by "leftovers" look like?
[Defining relationship with our leftovers?]

Holiness demands acceptable Worship =

Loving with our entire heart =

Who defines what is acceptable?

APPLYING ISAIAH TO MY TODAY:

SL#16

Psalm 51:17

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,

A broken and a contrite heart—

These, O God, You will not despise.

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2 Samuel 24:24 Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. NKJV

1 Chronicles 21:24 Then King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings with *that which costs me nothing.*” NKJV

Holiness demands acceptable Worship =

Who defines what is acceptable?

What are my “disguised” sacrifices?

Worship cost us something...what?

- God’s holiness – Do I understand what it is? Enough to explain it?
- Do I trivialize it by “taking a stand against sin” in the name of holiness?
Is this what holiness does?

SL#17

John 13:34-35

³⁴ *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.* ³⁵ *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

SL#18

2 Corinthians 3:18 *All of us are looking with unveiled faces at the glory of the Lord as if we were looking in a mirror. We are being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to the next degree of glory. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

[Poetic description of Sanctification?]

SL#19

2 Corinthians 3:2-18

² *You are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.* ³ *You show that you are Christ’s letter, delivered by us. You weren’t written with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. You weren’t written on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*

⁴ *This is the confidence that we have through Christ in the presence of God.* ⁵ *It isn’t that we ourselves are qualified to claim that anything came from us. No, our qualification is from*

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God. ⁶ *He has qualified us as ministers of a new covenant, not based on what is written but on the Spirit, because what is written kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

Ministers of the new covenant

⁷ *The ministry that brought death was carved in letters on stone tablets. It came with such glory that the Israelites couldn't look for long at Moses' face because his face was shining with glory, even though it was a fading glory.* ⁸ ***Won't the ministry of the Spirit be much more glorious?***

⁹ ***If the ministry that brought condemnation has glory, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness?***

¹⁰ *In fact, what was glorious isn't glorious now, because of the glory that is brighter.* ¹¹ *If the glory that fades away was glorious, how much more glorious is the one that lasts!*

¹² *So, since we have such a hope, we act with great confidence.* ¹³ *We aren't like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the Israelites couldn't watch the end of what was fading away.* ¹⁴ *But their minds were closed. Right up to the present day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. The veil is not removed because it is taken away by Christ.* ¹⁵ *Even today, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts.* ¹⁶ *But whenever someone turns back to the Lord, the veil is removed.* ¹⁷ *The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Lord's Spirit is, there is freedom.* ¹⁸ *All of us are looking with unveiled faces at the glory of the Lord as if we were looking in a mirror. We are being transformed into that same image from one degree of glory to the next degree of glory. This comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.* CEB

January 23rd

Transformed by insight

We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. 2 Cor. 3:18.

The outstanding characteristic of a Christian is this unveiled frankness before God so that the life becomes a mirror for other lives. By being filled with the Spirit we are transformed, and by beholding we become mirrors. You always know when a man has been beholding the glory of the Lord, you feel in your inner spirit that he is the mirror of the Lord's own character. Beware of anything which would sully that mirror in you; it is nearly always a good thing, the good that is not the best.

The golden rule for your life and mine is this concentrated keeping of the life open towards God. Let everything else—work, clothes, food, everything on earth—go by the board, saving that one thing. The rush of other things always tends to obscure this concentration on God. We have to maintain ourselves in the place of beholding, keeping the life absolutely spiritual all through. Let other things come and go as they may, let other people criticize as they will, but never allow anything to obscure the life that is hid with Christ in God. Never be hurried out of the relationship of abiding in Him. It is the one thing that is apt to fluctuate but it ought not to. The severest discipline of a Christian's life is to learn how to keep "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

UTMOST FOR HIS HIGHEST by OSWALD CHAMBERS

SL#20

Exodus 34:29-35

²⁹ *Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two covenant tablets in his hand, Moses didn't realize that the skin of his face shone brightly because he had been talking with God.* ³⁰ *When Aaron and all the Israelites saw the skin of Moses' face shining brightly, they were afraid to come near him.* ³¹ *But Moses called them closer. So Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and Moses spoke with them.* ³² *After that,*

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all the Israelites came near as well, and Moses commanded them everything that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ Whenever Moses went into the Lord's presence to speak with him, Moses would take the veil off until he came out again. When Moses came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded,³⁵ the Israelites would see that the skin of Moses' face was shining brightly. So Moses would put the veil on his face again until the next time he went in to speak with the Lord.

SL#21

We may set out Paul's comparisons between the two covenants as follows.

Old Covenant

engraved on stone tablets (vv. 3–7)
a death-dealing written code (v. 6)
dispensation of death (v. 7)
dispensation of condemnation (v. 9)
glorious (vv. 7, 9–11)
far more glorious (vv. 9–11)
fading (vv. 7, 11)

New Covenant

written on "hearts of flesh" tablets (v. 3)
a life-giving Spirit (v. 6)
dispensation of the Spirit (v. 8)
dispensation of righteousness (v. 9)
glorious (v. 8)
permanent (v. 11)

Harris, M. J. (2008). [2 Corinthians](#). In T. Longman III & Garland, David E. (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Romans–Galatians (Revised Edition)* (Vol. 11, pp. 462–465). Zondervan.

OLD COVENANT = Brought Death. God's Holiness cannot be near sin as it...

AFRAID OF GOD'S PRESENCE. God defines the parameters of the relationship by a set of rules and measured obedience. VEILED

NEW COVENANT = Personal. Relationship like Moses had? God defines the parameters of each relationship by being WITH. UNVEILED

CLOSING:

Which Covenant is the one I embrace? Follow? Live by?

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Applying
Isaiah to
My Today
CEB

Am I attempting to hide sin?
[If I cannot live it out loud, I am hiding.]

Trusting in substitutes for God
is one way to show we have departed from God.
[If time = worship, what am I worshipping?]

Do I attempt to define the parameters of what a
relationship with God is to look like or do I let
scripture lead me, challenge me, convict me?

LEARN TO DO WHAT IS GOOD. (vs.17)
What am I currently learning from the LORD?

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NKJV The Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke all these words, saying:

²“I *am* the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of ^[a]bondage.

³“You shall have no other gods before Me.

⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁵ you shall not bow down to them nor ^[b]serve them. For I, the Lord your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting ^[c]the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

⁷“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

⁸“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. ¹¹ For *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

¹²“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³“You shall not murder.

¹⁴“You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵“You shall not steal.

¹⁶“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

The People Afraid of God’s Presence

¹⁸ Now all the people witnessed the thunders, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. ¹⁹ Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”

²⁰ And Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.” ²¹ So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*.

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CEB The Ten Commandments

20 Then God spoke all these words:

² I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³ You must have no other gods before^[a] me.

⁴ Do not make an idol for yourself—no form whatsoever—of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. ⁵ Do not bow down to them or worship them, because I, the Lord your God, am a passionate God. I punish children for their parents' sins even to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me. ⁶ But I am loyal and gracious to the thousandth generation^[b] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ Do not use the Lord your God's name as if it were of no significance; the Lord won't forgive anyone who uses his name that way.

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. ⁹ Six days you may work and do all your tasks, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you. ¹¹ Because the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days, but rested on the seventh day. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹² Honor your father and your mother so that your life will be long on the fertile land that the Lord your God is giving you.

¹³ Do not kill.^[c]

¹⁴ Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵ Do not steal.

¹⁶ Do not testify falsely against your neighbor.

¹⁷ Do not desire and try to take your neighbor's house. Do not desire and try to take your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox, donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.

¹⁸ When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the horn, and the mountain smoking, the people shook with fear and stood at a distance. ¹⁹ They said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we'll listen. But don't let God speak to us, or we'll die."

²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Don't be afraid, because God has come only to test you and to make sure you are always in awe of God so that you don't sin." ²¹ The people stood at a distance while Moses approached the thick darkness in which God was present. CEB



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Isaiah 1:19-31

¹⁹ *If you agree and obey, you will eat the best food of the land.*

²⁰ *But if you refuse and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.*

The Lord has said this.

Zion will be redeemed

²¹ *This faithful town has become a prostitute!*

She was full of justice; righteousness lived in her—but now murderers.

²² *Your silver has become impure; your beer is diluted with water.*

²³ *Your princes are rebels, companions of thieves.*

Everyone loves a bribe and pursues gifts. They don't defend the orphan, and the widow's cause never reaches them.

²⁴ *Therefore, says the Lord God of heavenly forces, the mighty one of Israel:*

Doom! I will vent my anger against my foes; I will take it out on my enemies,

²⁵ *and I will turn my hand against you. I will refine your impurities as with lye, and remove all your cinders.*

²⁶ *Then I will restore your judges as in earlier times, and your counselors as at the beginning.*

After this you will be called Righteous City, Faithful Town.

²⁷ *Zion will be redeemed by justice, and those who change their lives by righteousness.*

²⁸ *But God will shatter rebels and sinners alike; those who abandon the Lord will be finished.*

²⁹ *You will be ashamed of the oaks you once desired, and embarrassed by the gardens you once chose.*

³⁰ *You will be like an oak with withering leaves, like a garden without water.*

³¹ *The strong will be like dry twigs, their deeds like sparks; the two will burn together, with no one to extinguish them.*

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NotES:

Isaiah 1:15-18

¹⁵ *When you extend your hands, I'll hide my eyes from you. Even when you pray for a long time, I won't listen. Your hands are stained with blood.*

¹⁶ *Wash! Be clean! Remove your ugly deeds from my sight. Put an end to such evil;*

¹⁷ ***learn to do good.***

Seek justice: help the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow.

¹⁸ *Come now, and let's settle this, says the Lord.*

Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be white as snow.

If they are red as crimson, they will become like wool.

QUESTION: How does one learn to do good? SEEING the needs of others and CARING that they get met. "Self actualization" is not on this list.

I want to define the parameters of this relationship – prosperity gospel.

HORTON

I. JUDGMENT AND HOPE 1:1–5:30

A. Judah: A Rebellious People 1:1–31

1. TITLE: ISAIAH UNDER FOUR KINGS 1:1

¹The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

This verse is the heading for the entire book of Isaiah. It is called a "vision" in the sense that God revealed it to Isaiah in a powerful and dramatic way. The verb "saw" (Heb. *hazah*) is often used of seeing a God-given vision (as in Num. 24:4; 1 Sam. 3:1; Jer. 23:16; Ezek. 7:13, 26; Dan. 1:17; Hos. 12:10; Obad. 1; Mic. 3:6; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 2:2–3; etc.). Here it is used to mean a supernatural reception of God's revelatory word. "You must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but holy men spoke from God as they were carried along [led along] by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20–21). Isaiah had a living relationship with God. The Holy Spirit made God's words "vivid, concrete, close, and real" to Isaiah. Like Jesus' words, Isaiah's words were not just his, but the Father's (John 14:10).

The name "Isaiah" means "Yahweh saves" or "the Lord is salvation" and suggests the theme of the book. **It is directed to Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah does prophesy about other nations but only as they relate to Judah and Jerusalem. And it is Jerusalem that commands central attention, for it was and will be the capital city God rules from. In it stood the temple, and in the Millennium the throne of the Messiah will be located there.**

Jewish tradition says Isaiah was related to the kings of Judah. If this is true, it would explain why he was able to go in and out of the palace freely.

Careful study of the biblical accounts and comparison with archaeological discoveries indicate some overlapping in the reigns of the kings mentioned in the verse. David set this pattern of coregency in Israel. Before he died, he brought Solomon to the throne to end the chaotic attempts of others to take the throne. Likewise, many subsequent kings brought a son to the throne as coregent in order to prevent any such confusion.

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Uzziah, also called Azariah (2 Kings 14:21), reigned from 790 to 739 B.C. But in 750 he entered the Holy Place of the temple. In human pride he dared to offer incense on the golden altar—something only priests were allowed to do. God judged him by afflicting him with leprosy, and his son Jotham took over the government at that time (2 Chron. 26:21).

Because of turbulent times Jotham (a weak king) brought his son Ahaz to the throne as coruler in 744 B.C. Uzziah died in 739 and Jotham in 731. Jotham had been allowing Ahaz to lead; so when Uzziah died and Isaiah began to prophesy, Ahaz was then the actual ruler. Thus, no prophecies of Isaiah are clearly identified with the reign of Jotham. (See chronology chart, p. 22.)

Continued turbulence also prompted Ahaz to bring his son, Hezekiah, to the throne with him in 728 or 727 B.C. When Ahaz died in 715 B.C. Hezekiah began to count the years of his reign over again. His recounting was probably due to the great Passover celebration and spiritual revival at that time. Undoubtedly, Hezekiah wanted revival but could do nothing to encourage it as long as ungodly Ahaz was alive. He considered his coreign with his own father not worth counting. However, he made the mistake of breaking Ahaz's treaty with Assyria. This brought Sennacherib against him in 701 B.C. Hezekiah paid tribute to save Jerusalem. Isaiah then brought God's message of death and judgment. But such judgments of God's are conditional. When Hezekiah repented and prayed, God healed him, promising him deliverance from Assyria and fifteen more years of reign. Hezekiah then brought his son Manasseh to the throne (in 696 or 695 B.C.) to reign with him, and lived until 686 B.C.

Isaiah recorded the death of Sennacherib in 681 B.C. Thus, both Isaiah and Sennacherib lived on into the reign of Manasseh. Manasseh, however, turned against God, brought in idolatry, and filled Jerusalem with the blood of martyrs who resisted that idolatry (2 Kings 21:16). Tradition says Manasseh had Isaiah strapped to a log and sawn in half (cf. Heb. 11:37). If Isaiah was about twenty years old when he began to prophesy, he must have been in his eighties when he was martyred. Such a long life was unusual in a time when the average life span was less than thirty-five years. God must have protected him until it was time for his life to be offered like Paul's (2 Tim. 4:6).

2. REBELLIOUS PEOPLE 1:2–4

²Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.

Isaiah begins with a message for Judah and Jerusalem. In what is pictured as a court scene, a just and holy God who made the heavens and earth calls on them to witness against Israel. Moses, the fountainhead of Israelite prophecy, had called on the heavens and earth to witness against the people when he set before them the blessings and curses of the covenant (Deut. 30:19; cf. 31:28; 32:1).

The LORD, *Yahweh*, is the self-existent, covenant-keeping, promise-fulfilling God. He had "reared" the Israelites as His children (Exod. 4:22; 15:13; Deut. 24:18; Ps. 77:15 identify them as redeemed children, delivered by God's power), guiding them, teaching them, meeting their needs, and establishing His kingdom through them. Now, in spite of God's fatherly provision and tender care for His children, they (the Heb. is in the emphatic position) had "rebelled" against Him, willfully rejecting His fatherly love and guidance.

³The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

Domestic animals who served the people had more sense than the Israelites. The ox knows whom it belongs to and who gives it direction. The donkey knows who bought it, where to go for food and who provides it (cf. Mal. 1:6). The fact that "Israel does not know" indicates they no longer had a personal relationship with God. They no longer acted like a chosen people, a covenant people. That they did not "understand" indicates that they were no longer able to discern what is true and right. They had forgotten they had been redeemed and no longer recognized God as the source of their strength, reputation, and wealth. They were no longer a witness to the glory of God. But if they had even as much good sense as an ox or a donkey, they would never have rebelled.

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⁴Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.

Isaiah responds in grief crying out “Ah” (Heb. *hoi*, “alas”) for the sinful, corrupt nation. Their guilt is a heavy load. God wanted them to be a holy people, but they have deliberately continued in the evil doings of their fathers and treated the Holy One of Israel with blasphemous contempt. “The Holy One of Israel” is a term found twenty-nine times in Isaiah and only six times in the rest of the Old Testament. It reflects what Isaiah saw in his inaugural vision (chap. 6) and emphasizes both God’s character and His claims on Israel. But Israel has rejected those claims. They have turned away, moved away, and separated themselves from Him, rejecting Him completely in total ingratitude. Idol worship may also be implied (as in Ezek. 14:3).

3. A DESOLATE LAND 1:5–9

⁵Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. ⁶From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.

Isaiah now becomes a witness to the consequences of Israel’s sin. The nation is like a person who has been viciously mugged by a robber yet does not resist attack, seemingly asking for further beating. Isaiah asks why they want to be hit again. Instead of being a holy people they are like a whipped slave. The “whole head is injured,” the “whole heart” (including the mind) is diseased. In other words, the thinking of the people and their leaders is wrong and stubbornly contrary to God’s will.

The body, from “the sole of your foot to the top of your head,” is covered with open and running wounds. None of these wounds is “cleansed or bandaged or soothed [softened] with [olive] oil.” The country is hurting and no one is helping. There seems to be no hope for recovery, and they are willfully headed for further disaster. As McKenna points out, “Isaiah never forgets that sin also has social dimensions.”

⁷Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers.

Isaiah now lists specific afflictions Israel has suffered. The land of Judah is “desolate”: its cities “burned” and its fields “stripped by foreigners” in the presence of Judah’s people, who have no power to do anything about it.

The only historical situation this description fits is that of the Assyrian invasion of 701 B.C., when Sennacherib destroyed forty-six cities of Judah. He took more than 200,000 prisoners, not to Assyria as some have assumed, but to Babylonia, to replace the 208,000 prisoners he once took from there.

Archaeologists have discovered a bas-relief more than sixty feet in length adorning the wall of a room in Sennacherib’s palace. It pictures the siege of Lachish, a city about thirty miles southwest of Jerusalem. It shows Assyrian soldiers with slings, bows and arrows, spears, battering rams, and scaling ladders attacking the city. The final panel shows Sennacherib on his throne

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receiving captives and the spoil of Lachish. Its inscription calls Sennacherib “king of the universe.” This bas-relief was apparently intended to draw attention to his capture of forty-six walled cities of Judah, with the further intent of drawing attention away from his failure to take Jerusalem (see v. 8).

⁸The Daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a field of melons, like a city under siege.

By the mercy of God Jerusalem was not captured. Yet it was left insecure. Isaiah likens it to the temporary structures—branches and mats or poles and awnings—farmers set up in the fields to guard crops. In his “Annals” Sennacherib put it this way: “I devastated the wide province of Judah; the strong, proud Hezekiah, its king, I brought in submission to my feet ... I shut up Hezekiah like a bird in a cage.”¹⁵ (See chaps. 36 and 37 for further details of Sennacherib’s campaigns.)

⁹Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.

Sennacherib was not responsible for a few survivors escaping the devastation. Yahweh, the personal God of Israel, the God of the armies of heaven, limited the destruction in order to save Jerusalem. Had He not done so, it would have been a complete ruin “like Sodom” and “like Gomorrah.” But there were survivors. And they could still be saved.

4. UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP 1:10–15

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

Now Isaiah turns to the people whose sin and rebellion were responsible for God’s allowing the devastation. Israel had become Sodom-like rulers and Gomorrah-like people and were worthy of the same destruction as Sodom and Gomorrah. It was only the grace of God that preserved a remnant. This remnant needed to listen to God’s law (Heb. *torah*, “instruction”).

¹¹“The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

Instead of obeying God, the people were simply multiplying their sacrifices to Him. The pagans around them believed that their gods needed sacrifices and that continually-offered sacrifices increased the possibility that their gods would answer their prayers. But the God who made the heavens and the earth does not need anything. He gave the sacrifices of the Law for the benefit of His people—as a means of restoring fellowship with Him and as first steps toward walking with Him.

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The “burnt offerings” were intended to express exaltation of God and dedication to His will. The “fat” was an expression of giving Him their best. The “blood of bulls and lambs and goats” was placed on the altar as an atonement—a ransom paid for their forgiveness and deliverance. Practiced without sincerity the sacrifices were an abomination to God. He hates religion when it is just a form and ceremony, lacking any true loving fellowship with Him. The multiplication of these sacrifices made God feel like vomiting.

¹²When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?

Because their hearts were not reaching out to God in faith and obedience, their continual crowding into the temple was not what God wanted. Their worship was not genuine. All they were doing was wearing out the floor of the temple courts by their “trampling.”

¹³Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—I cannot bear your evil assemblies.

God commanded them to stop “meaningless offerings,” worship that was mere form or that was intended to persuade God to let them continue in their own willful ways. God cannot be bribed or deceived. Incense made the temple courts fragrant, but it was repulsive to God. The celebrations at the time of the new moon, the weekly and annual Sabbaths (Lev. 23:1–44), the “convocations” (or assemblies), were all intended to be holy. Yet God saw them as “evil,” for He saw their hearts, and He could not stand their religious activities. The Septuagint translates the last part of the verse (“evil assemblies”) as “fasting and ritual preparation,” which suggests that all their worship activities were repulsive to God.

¹⁴Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

Emphatically, the “New Moon festivals” and the “appointed feasts” of Leviticus 23 no longer honored God, no longer expressed love and dedication to Him, so He hated them. Instead of being a joy to Him and a blessing to the people, these religious holidays had become a heavy “burden” that God was “weary of bearing.”

¹⁵When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood;

Hands “spread out,” palms upward in an attitude of submission and desiring to receive from the Lord, meant nothing when the people were really seeking their own way and rejecting God’s teaching. God cannot look with favor on such false actions.

Multiplying prayers does not get God’s attention when hands are “full of blood.” This striking expression depicts how the people were oppressing the poor and using violence to get what they wanted.



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5. A CALL TO REPENTANCE 1:16–20

¹⁶wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong,

There was still hope. Prayers could still be heard, but the hands spread out in supplication must be cleansed. The people must realize their condition and cry out as David did in Psalm 51. David asked God to wash away all his iniquity and cleanse him from his sin. But God tells Israel they have a part to do. They must wash. But the washing must be more than a symbol or empty form. It must be a sincere repentance that makes a clear break with sinful acts and habits. It must also include an inner change, for God sees the heart. Then they will be able to “stop doing wrong.”

¹⁷learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Turning from sin and evil is the first step, but it is not enough. It must be followed by good actions. They must “learn to do right.” Doing “right” means doing good to others. Seeking “justice” means dealing honestly and fairly. They must not only cease from oppression and correct oppressors but encourage the oppressed. It also means avoiding injury to others and providing for the needs of the unfortunate. Most important, to “seek justice” means actively defending those who cannot defend themselves: specifically orphans and widows, who had no one to stand up for them and who were often victims of schemes and scams (cf. Ps. 85:8–13; Amos 5:24; Mic. 6:6–8; James 1:27).

¹⁸“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Now the LORD sums up His words that began in verse 10. “Reason together” is a legal term that is part of the court scene. It may mean “let us cease the arguments; let us do something about it.” God is taking the initiative. Their sins are indeed “like scarlet”—the deepest kind of red—referring back to the bloody hands of verse 15. It is implied that if they admit, or confess, this they shall become as white as the clearest, brightest white of snow or wool, a white that is white by its nature, indicating that their own nature would be changed by God’s grace. This exhortation continues in the following verses.

¹⁹If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land;

God’s promise to cleanse and renew their hearts and minds is conditioned upon willing obedience (to the covenant). They must do more than talk about their situation. They must do what God asks. Though foreign invaders were eating the fruit of the land, true repentance would ensure that God would make it possible for His people to enjoy its fruits again. Like the Prodigal Son of Luke 15:11–32, they could come home to God and receive His blessings.

²⁰but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

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Continued refusal and rebellion would mean that instead of their eating the fruit, the sword (of the Assyrians) would eat them. The LORD has spoken this, and His divine authority is behind His word. The people must make the choice: obey and eat or rebel and be eaten. The gospel, too, demands a choice. We may have eternal life or eternal death (John 3:16). There is no middle ground. We cannot love God and hold on to our sin at the same time.

6. RESTORATION THROUGH JUDGEMENT 1:21–31

²¹See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her—but now murderers!

God continues His case against Jerusalem. The corruption of Zion has resulted from the people's unfaithfulness to God, their unjust dealings with each other, and the rebellion and corrupt practices of their rulers. This corruption brings a lamentation over the city, which in David's time had begun as a "faithful city." Now it had become like a wife who had sunk to the unfaithful level of a prostitute. Whereas "justice" and "righteousness" had once marked the relationships of its people, now their conduct had sunk to the lowest possible level. The inhabitants had actually become "murderers." What a contrast to the God who loved them and asked them to love Him! (Deut. 6:5; 7:8). We see the same contrast in the New Testament (1 John 3:1, 14–15).

²²Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water.

The degeneration of Zion's people is compared to "dross"—ore that has no more precious metal in it and is of no value. It is further compared to "choice wine" (or the Heb. may mean beer, the common drink of the Philistines) that has been mixed with so much water that it is worthless.

²³Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow's case does not come before them.

The "rulers," who administered the various state offices and acted as judges deciding lawsuits, were "rebels" against God. They were "companions of thieves," for they would acquit thieves for a bribe. They "love bribes" instead of loving justice and loving people. They were cowards and bullies, beginning their oppression with the weakest and the most helpless, the orphans and widows (often referred to as victims in the Bible). The rulers refused to let a widow bring her case to justice.

²⁴Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel, declares: "Ah, I will get relief from my foes and avenge myself on my enemies.

"Therefore" indicates God will do something about the situation. He now reveals the judgment these conditions demanded. The three divine titles—"the Lord [*ha'adon*], the LORD [*Yahweh*] Almighty, the Mighty One of Israel"—emphasize His claims and authority. He is a divine

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Person, the Lord of the universe. God has been patient, but now His wrath will bring holy vengeance on His enemies, that is, on those who have oppressed the helpless. They who have oppressed the helpless have gotten so bad that He now considers them—a segment of His own people—His foes.

²⁵I will turn my hand against you; I will thoroughly purge away your dross and remove all your impurities.

God's hand will assail again; yet in His wrath there is also grace, for it introduces the process of purifying His people from their sinfulness. His judgment is intended to refine and purify, just as metal is refined and its dross (worthless impurities) is removed.

²⁶I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City."

God's work of chastisement will end in restoration. Judges and counselors (or administrative rulers) will be restored. Yet, no king is mentioned because the LORD is to be their King, as He was before the time of King Saul. They will be faithful to Him. Jerusalem will no longer be a prostitute but will be a righteous and faithful city. This is God's goal and will have its complete fulfillment in the Millennium.

²⁷Zion will be redeemed with justice, her penitent ones with righteousness.

The future people of Zion are to be the purified, redeemed remnant that has been converted to the Lord. His attributes of "justice" and "righteousness" will characterize them. This implies they will live in harmony with a concern for the well-being of one another.

²⁸But rebels and sinners will both be broken, and those who forsake the LORD will perish.

The people can still choose between serving God or rebelling against Him. Rebels who reject the authority of God's teachings and sinners who violate God's law will be removed from among the people by purifying fire (see v. 25). Though God's judgment is directed against the sin, the sinner who chooses to persist in sin receives it as well. In the end the ungodly "will be ... broken" (by forces from outside Israel) and "will perish" (due to their inner spiritual bankruptcy).

²⁹"You will be ashamed because of the sacred oaks in which you have delighted; you will be disgraced because of the gardens that you have chosen.

Idolatry was always involved in Israel's sin of rebellion. On the day of future judgment, sinners will be dumbfounded and humiliated because their false gods cannot help them escape the results of their sins. The "sacred oaks" and "gardens" were places where pagan rites were observed in a religion that involved nature worship and fertility cults (cf. Deut. 12:2; 1 Kings 14:23). Northern Israel had become involved with them and now they were common in Judah.

³⁰You will be like an oak with fading leaves, like a garden without water.

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In contrast to the tree and the watered garden, to which God often compared His people (Num. 24:6; Ps. 1; Jer. 11; Hos. 14), their fate will be that of the worldly things they had chosen to trust. God rejects the sinful practices of any cult or false religion (no matter what good they may also do). So the whole nation will suffer and wither away (v. 29).

³¹The mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark; both will burn together, with no one to quench the fire."

The "mighty man" is the ruler who sought to draw strength and might from the worship of false gods. All such rulers will be like "tinder"—fuel for the fire which they themselves have set! These wicked rulers will not be part of the remnant that comes through the fire purified. Instead, they will be consumed together with their wickedness. How ironic that "the mighty man will become tinder and his work a spark." In choosing paganism, the rebellious element—ruler and subject alike—have sown the seeds of their own destruction. Neopaganism can expect nothing different. Once God brings this judgment it will be too late. Nothing will stop the destruction. This anticipates the lake of fire that John saw (Rev. 20:14–15).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What are the chief things we know about Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah?
2. Why did God call the heavens and earth to witness against Israel? What had they seen?
3. In what ways had Israel become like Sodom and Gomorrah?
4. What hope did God hold out to the people?

¹ Horton, S. M. (2000). [*Isaiah: A Logion Press Commentary*](#) (pp. 405–490). Logion Press.

UZZIAH, KING OF JUDAH (זְדִיָּהּ, *uzziyyah*). The 10th ruler of Judah. Also called Azariah.

Name

Scripture refers to the 10th king of Judah as both Uzziah (זְדִיָּהּ, *uzziyyah*, "Yahweh is my strength") and Azariah (אֶזְרִיָּהּ, *azaryah*, "Yahweh has helped"). The two names are spelled similarly in Hebrew, suggesting the two forms are variant spellings. Alternatively, they may indicate the king's given and throne name. The book of Kings prefers the name Azariah, while Chronicles prefers Uzziah.

Date

Scripture records that Uzziah was made king at age 16 and reigned for 52 years (2 Kgs 15:2; 2 Chr 26:3). However, it is debated whether he reigned until his death or whether his son replaced him as king. Dates posited for his reign reflect this debate:

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- Rogerson suggests 767–739 BC (Rogerson, *Chronicle*, 134)
- Hughes proposes 772–747 BC (Hughes, *Secrets of the Times*, 275)
- Hayes and Hooker argue 785–734 BC (Hayes and Hooker, *New Chronology*, 106–108)
- Galil suggests 788~7–736~5 BC (Galil, *Chronology*, 147)

Many scholars have tried to resolve chronological issues by suggesting coregency for Judah's rulers (Hayes and Hooker, *New Chronology*, 106–108). Yet other scholars have rejected this idea (Rogerson, *Chronicle*, 135, Hughes, *Secrets of the Times*, 111–112), and the biblical data is inconclusive. If Uzziah was stricken with a disease that made him ineligible for public duties, it is more likely that he would have had to stop acting as ruler.

Genealogy

Uzziah was the descendant of David and the son of Jecoliah and King Amaziah, who came from the inner circles of power at Jerusalem. He was married to Jerusha, daughter of Zadok, whose name suggests she came from a priestly family. Uzziah's son Jotham succeeded him.

Rise to Power and Rule

The book of Kings provides little detail about Uzziah's 52-year rule. According to Kings, Uzziah took the throne after his father, Amaziah, was killed while fleeing a coup that had arisen in Jerusalem, apparently in the wake of Amaziah's unsuccessful war against Israel. The Judeans enthroned Uzziah either because they expected that he would be a better ruler than Amaziah or believed they could control the young king. Because Uzziah came to the throne of a defeated Judah during the reign of the powerful and politically astute Jeroboam II of Israel, Na'aman suggests Jeroboam II may have served as his overlord (Na'aman, "Azariah," 229). Second Kings 14:22 credits him with restoring Elath to Judah, and 2 Kgs 15:3 states that he did "what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done" (ESV). However, as with all of Judah's rulers to the time of Josiah, Uzziah allowed many sacred places to continue local religious traditions. The author of Kings hints that this is the reason he had to step down from rule.

Chronicles offers a more detailed description of Uzziah's reign. According to the Chronicler, Uzziah began his reign as a good and pious king under the tutelage of Zechariah (2 Chr 26:5). Because of his loyalty to Yahweh, Uzziah was successful in war against the Philistines, extending his influence to Egypt itself (2 Chr 26:8). The Chronicler credits him with having military prowess, building fortifications in Jerusalem, and raising and equipping an enormous army (2 Chr 26:9–10, 11–15). His agricultural program expanded cattle production, vineyard cultivation, and crop raising throughout Judah (2 Chr 26:10–13).

Skin Disease

Kings records that at some point, Uzziah came down with a skin disease that barred him from reigning (2 Kgs 15:5). At that time, his son Jotham took over the actual rule of Judah and the government in Jerusalem. The Chronicler attributes Uzziah's downfall to his pride. According to the Chronicler, "When he [Uzziah] was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction" (2 Chr 26:16).

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Uzziah entered the temple of Yahweh to act as a priest in offering incense in direct opposition to the priest Azariah (the name of Uzziah as Azariah in Kings as a background for this passage is either intentional irony or a coincidence; Beentjes, “They Saw,” 65; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 379) and the 80 priests with him (likely an exaggerated number; see Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 886). Although some scholars assume that the king of Judah was in fact a priest of Yahweh, the biblical text presents Uzziah’s act as an abomination (de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, 113, 127–28; Grabbe, *Priests*, 28–29, 39–40). In response to his actions, Yahweh struck him with a skin disease that deformed his face even as he stood holding the censer (which recalls the Dathan and Abiram incident of Num 16:1–40).

Later Years, Death, and Burial

Uzziah’s exact status from this time until his death is unclear. He did not live in the palace where Jotham governed, indicating he was not a ruling monarch. Uzziah may have ceased to be the designated ruler; alternatively, Jotham may have served as acting but not crowned king. Most likely, Jotham took over the throne in all aspects and Uzziah became a living, former king.

Kings records Uzziah as having been given a royal burial in Jerusalem. Chronicles only allows the burial to have taken place in a field belonging to the kings of Judah, for he was diseased and not fit for presence among the ritually pure (2 Chr 16:11, Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* 887, Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 369). Matthew 1:8–9 includes Uzziah in Jesus’ genealogy, though Luke 3:23–38 does not.

Extrabiblical References

Josephus repeats the Chronicler’s narrative regarding Uzziah with several expansions (Begg, “Uzziah,” 12–14, 17, 21). He particularly emphasizes Uzziah’s military and agricultural endeavors. Josephus also expands on the account of Uzziah’s disease, stating that Uzziah threatened the priest Azariah with death if he didn’t acquiesce to Uzziah’s demands. Josephus records Uzziah as being 68 at the time of his death, accepting that Uzziah’s reign lasted to his death.

Bright and Wright assert that an inscription by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III mentions Azariah (Bright, *History*, 270; Wright, *Biblical Archaeology*, 162). However, the original publication of this inscription had reconstructed the name in a broken section of the text. Aside from this possible mention, there are references to Uzziah outside the Bible in texts dependent on the biblical narratives (Dalley, “Yahweh,” 23–25).

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JOTHAM

JOTHAM, KING OF JUDAH (יֹחָזָבָב, *yoatham*, Ἰωθαμ, *lōatham*). Son of Uzziah and Jerusha, daughter of Zadok; reigned in the mid-eighth century BC as Judah's 11th ruler. The name "Jotham" means "the Lord is perfect."

Biblical Relevance

Prior to his official reign, Jotham ruled over Judah when his father, King Uzziah (also called Azariah), contracted a skin disease (2 Kgs 15:5). After the illness forced Uzziah to live in separate quarters, Jotham became king at the age of 25 (Donner, "Separate States," 395). Uzziah had reigned for 52 years and left a mostly positive legacy, but he also allowed the high places of pagan worship to remain. Jotham ruled for 16 years (2 Kgs 15:33; 2 Chr 27:1).

The Chronicler appears to adopt the framework of the 2 Kings account of Jotham, but he adds material in 2 Chr 27:3b–6 about Jotham's building projects and victories over the Ammonites (Japhet, *I and II Chronicles*, 889). According to Klein, a record of building projects often indicate the Chronicler's approval of a king (Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 386).

Both accounts recognize Jotham's rule as being righteous, but 2 Chronicles notes that he did not succumb to his father's folly: He never entered the temple (2 Kgs 15:34; 2 Chr 26:16–18; 27:2). Myers states that this "may actually be an expression of approval on the part of the Chronicler indicating that Jotham observed his status as a layman and did not violate the sacred precincts as his father had done" (Myers, *II Chronicles*, 156). Second Kings notes that the high places remained during Jotham's reign, and 2 Chronicles records that the people of Judah continued their corrupt ways (2 Kgs 15:35; 2 Chr 27:2). However, neither text seems to hold Jotham responsible for the people's persistent sin (Myers, *II Chronicles*, 156). The Chronicler states that "Jotham became strong because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God" (2 Chr 27:6 NRSV).

Unlike his father, who was buried in a field due to his skin disease, Jotham is buried in the city of David (2 Kgs 15:38; 2 Chr 26:23; 27:9).

Chronological Conflict

Several chronological details regarding Jotham's reign appear to conflict. Although 2 Kgs 15:33, 2 Chr 27:1, and 2 Chr 27:8 all state that Jotham ruled for 16 years (an apparent point of

³ Handy, L. K. (2016). [Uzziah, King of Judah](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, L. Wentz, E. Ritzema, & W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Lexham Press.

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emphasis for the Chronicler, given its repetition), 2 Kgs 15:30 reports that Pekah, King of Israel, was assassinated “in the *twentieth* year of Jotham the son of Uzziah” (italics added). One explanation for the discrepancy is that the reference to Jotham’s 20th year is counting his tenure as coregent due to Uzziah’s skin disease (2 Kgs 15:5; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 55; Albright, “Chronology”). Another possibility is that Jotham was still alive for four years or more after his son Ahaz came to the throne (in contradiction to 2 Kgs 15:38, 2 Chr 27:9; Thiele, *Mysterious Numbers*, 64).

Archaeological Evidence

Excavations at Tel El-Kheleifeh in 1938–40, headed by Nelson Glueck, led to the discovery of a copper-smelting refinery. The site is believed to be Ezion-geber, a seaport from Solomon’s era that the kings of Judah possibly used at various times—particularly during the reign of Uzziah. Further excavation in a room that dates back to the eighth century BC unearthed a signet ring enclosed in a copper casing and bearing the inscription *LYTM*, “belonging to Jotham.” Glueck, Albright, and Myers accept the ring’s association with Jotham, king of Judah (Glueck, “Third Season,” 15; Albright, “Chronology”; Myers, *II Chronicles*, 151).

The ring also bears two images: a ram and what seems to be a headless person extending his arms upward (Glueck, “Third Season,” 13). The ram (Hebrew: *ayil*) could allude to the city, Eilat, where the refinery was located; parallels for the headless man have been discovered in the tomb of Khnum-hotep III, which has images depicting Asiatics arriving in Egypt with portable bellows used for making copper. Thus, the signet ring might depict the location as well as its chief industry (Avigad, “Jotham Seal,” 20).

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