



CELL GUIDE

TOPIC Pride and Piety – A Study of Uzziah’s Life

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THEME Old Testament Kings of Judah - Lessons

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MESSAGE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This week, we continue on our study of the kings of Judah, King Uzziah (2 Chron 26). He was raised by godly men in the fear and knowledge of God, his father King Amaziah and his mentor Zechariah (2 Chr 25:2). King Uzziah’s grandfather was killed (2 Chron 24:25) and King Uzziah was made king by the people of Judah at 16 years of age (2 Chron 26:1). His wife came from a great line of priests and he had his first child, Jotham, at 32 years of age (2 Chron 27:1). When King Amaziah passed on, one of King Uzziah’s first act as sole monarch was to restore Elath, which is a key trading post, to Judah (2 Chron 26:2). King Uzziah’s piety brought him great prosperity. In his piety, King Uzziah became proud, and this led to his destruction. An earthquake occurred when he was 46 years old (Amos 1:1); he became a grandfather at 52 years of age to King Ahaz (who would turn out to be a wicked king) (2 Chron 28:1). King Uzziah contracted leprosy at aged 56 (2 Chron 26:16) and he passed away a leper at 66 years of age (2 Chron 26:23).

What lessons can we learn from King Uzziah’s life about piety and pride?

UZZIAH’S PIETY AND PROSPERITY

Piety (i.e to be pious) refers to a private holiness. To be pious refers to a genuine earnest longing to please God. King Amaziah’s fathering of Uzziah is a godly example of what a father should be like and can hardly be overstated (Prov 22:6). Through the godly teachings of his father and Zechariah, King Uzziah grew up to worship and fear God. King Uzziah’s piety was rewarded by military, diplomatic, agricultural and scientific prosperity. King Uzziah was prosperous both at home (2 Chron 26:10-15) and abroad. In line with God’s promise in Prov 16:7, King Uzziah went out and made war with the Philistines, set up camp in all their towns, built cities in all the Philistine countrysides, beat all his enemies and became very strong (2 Chr. 26:6 to 26:8).

How can we be pious like King Uzziah and prosper? It starts with seeking God wholeheartedly (Deut 4:29, Jer 29:13). This means reading the Bible regularly and praying every day. We are called to pray, not just to meet our needs but also to seek the face of God. The Bible says that God rewards us generously (Isa 40:10, Rev 22:12) and **obedience reaps blessings while disobedience results in curses (Deut 28)**. Although there are times in the Bible when piety is not always rewarded by prosperity (Ps 73:12-13), we must remember that all the prosperity of the wicked, just like the

suffering of the righteous, will pass and in the end, God makes it all right and the pious really do prosper. (Ps 73:17-18).

How then can we be apply piety in our daily lives? We can read the Bible, pray for our HDB block, volunteer at Bethesda Community Services, and be a blessing to others, etc.

UZZIAH'S PRIDE AND PUNISHMENT

King Uzziah's strengths made him proud. Even though the Law teaches that only Aaron and his sons shall attend to their priesthood, and any outsider that comes near must be put to death (Num 3:10), King Uzziah broke the Law and entered into the temple to offer incense (2 Chron 26:16). Azariah the priest and 80 other priests confronted King Uzziah and told him to leave the sanctuary and that he would be punished (2 Chron 26:18). King Uzziah was furious and when he became angry, leprosy broke out on his forehead in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord (2 Chron 26:19-20). King Uzziah remained a leper till the day of his death and he lived in a separate house for he was excluded from the house of the Lord (2 Chron 26:21-23).

Isaiah proclaims in Isa 6:1 that in the year that King Uzziah died, he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up – the God of Isaiah and the God of Uzziah is a holy God, and **the only posture before our awesome God is humility.**

So what lesson can we learn from King Uzziah's punishment? **Although King Uzziah's lesson applies to all types of pride, it applies especially to that spiritual pride that a Christian is more susceptible to.** It was through pride that the devil became the devil. How do we show spiritual pride? We congratulate ourselves on our piety when we attend church weekly, tithe, give alms, read our bibles, and are a blessing to others. We compare our piety with others. We think God should be grateful for the amount of sacrifice that we have made through our service to Him in ministry. We forgive others because we think that that puts us in their debt, and not because we have been forgiven by God. Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov 16:18, James 4:6) and we should beware of pride disguised as piety. **We need to repent from past pride, plead for mercy & grace, and guard against future pride.**

CONCLUSION

Which King Uzziah do you want to be? Will it be pride or piety that wins out in the end? **Whatever life stage you may be at, the one constant is our Father God.** Wherever you may be on life's journey - whether you have just started in the world, or contending earthquakes in the world, or are greatly accomplished after a lifetime of piety and prosperity, or reeling from blows where what you had and loved has been taken from you, **pursue piety for it brings prosperity, and flee from pride for it brings punishment.** If you have been walking in pride, it is never too late to turn back to God. Build your whole life, and not just these 80 or 90 years on earth, on the Lord our Rock. What God begins to work on in this life, He will continue to perfect in the next, and one day when we die, we will like all the saints stand before him truly holy, truly pious and truly devoid of pride.

QUESTIONS

1. Piety brings prosperity. What is piety? How had Uzziah demonstrated piety in his early life from 2 Chronicles 26:1- 15? How can we develop the virtue of piety?

2. Pride brings punishment. What is pride? How did Uzziah's demonstrated pride in his late life from 2 Chronicles 26:16- 21? How can we guard against pride?

3. Beware of pride that is disguised as piety. How do we identify and guard against this kind "spiritual" pride?