



Are you determined to finish well? As we read 2 Kings 14–15, we will see many kings who were not. Amaziah let his God-given victory puff him up and make him foolish. Uzziah allowed his popularity to make him arrogant enough to assume the Levites' priestly role, then grew angry when corrected. They began well, but their ends were tragic. Amaziah was assassinated. Uzziah spent the last seven years of his life as a leper. You will reap what you sow, and the fruit of pride is never good. The northern kings were even worse, choosing to fight among themselves for power and missing the threat of the enemy at their borders. In this study, we will learn from the mistakes of the kings so that we may run our Christian race well, as God intends for us.

1. Context

- a. In the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Kings are one book: **Melachim**, meaning “kings.”
- b. After Solomon’s reign, the kingdom of Israel was divided:
 - i. Judah
 1. The 2 tribes of Judah and Benjamin became the southern kingdom of Judah.
 2. Jerusalem was the capital of Judah.
 - ii. Israel
 1. The 10 northern tribes became the northern kingdom of Israel.
 2. Samaria was the capital of Israel.
 - iii. The book of 2 Kings alternates between the kings of the north and south.
- c. One of the kings of Judah was Amaziah.
 - i. Amaziah was a king who *“did what was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David” (2 Kings 14:3)*.
 - ii. Despite David’s faults, he was quick to repent and set a high standard for the future kings.
 1. **DISCUSS**: How can we set a high standard for those around us and for those who will come after us?
 - iii. Amaziah did not tear down the high places, where men worshiped idols.
 - iv. After Amaziah defeated the Edomites, he foolishly brought his defeated foe’s gods with him.
 1. **2 Chronicles 25:14** – *“Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a*

prophet who said to him, ‘Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?’”

2. Rather than give honor to God, who had given him the victory, Amaziah turned to idols and to pride.

3. **DISCUSS:** Have you forgotten who has given you so many victories? How do you remind yourself that the credit for all the good in your life belongs to God alone?

v. Amaziah then sought to fight Joash, the king of the north, because he had become arrogant from his victory over the Edomites.

1. Joash (or Jehoash) told Amaziah to not let his victory make him overconfident.

2. Amaziah did not listen to Joash, so they fought.

3. Joash’s army was smaller than Amaziah’s, and yet he defeated Amaziah that day and took his gold and silver, for God had determined to humble Amaziah.

4. Better to humble yourself than have God humble you.

5. **DISCUSS:** Define humility. How do you cultivate this virtue and avoid falling into pride?

2. **2 Kings 14:15–25** – *“Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did—his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Jehoash rested with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then Jeroboam his son reigned in his place. Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers. In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, and reigned forty-one years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He restored the territory of Israel from the entrance of Hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hopher.”*

a. The kings’ life and death

- i. *“The chronicles of the kings”* are the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles in our Bibles.
 - ii. The phrase *“rested with his fathers”* is a euphemism for death.
 - b. Amaziah was assassinated because of a conspiracy, and Azariah was made king in his place when he was a teenager.
 - i. Azariah is better known as Uzziah.
 - c. Joash’s son, Jeroboam, became king in his place.
 - i. Jeroboam shared in the evil of the first king of Israel, whose name was also Jeroboam, in that he also worshiped idols.
 - ii. Jeroboam II regained some territory, even up to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea).
 - 1. The prophet Jonah, son of Amittai, had prophesied that Israel would regain land.
 - 2. This is the same Jonah whose story we read about in the book bearing his name.
 - 3. God told this Jonah to go preach about the coming judgment to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. Jonah said no.
 - 4. The Assyrians were brutal people, known for skinning their enemies and using their flesh as wallpaper. They would put hooks in their noses and lead their captives by a string.
3. **2 Kings 14:26–29** – *“For the LORD saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter; and whether bond or free, there was no helper for Israel. And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did—his might, how he made war, and how he recaptured for Israel, from Damascus and Hamath, what had belonged to Judah—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then Zechariah his son reigned in his place.”*
- a. God’s deliverance
 - i. God had compassion on His people, despite their evil.
 - 1. God’s heart is for our salvation, not our condemnation.
 - 2. **2 Peter 3:9** – God is *“not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”*
 - 3. **Ezekiel 18:23** – *“‘Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?’ says the Lord GOD, ‘and not that he should turn from his ways and live?’”*
 - 4. There will be a day of reckoning (either upon death, or at the time Christ returns), but until then, God pursues us.

5. **Psalm 23:6** – *“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”*
 - a. “Follow” in the Hebrew is a military term indicating a chase. God in His kindness chases after us.
 - b. **DISCUSS:** How has God’s goodness chased after you?
 - ii. God used Jeroboam to deliver Israel, even though Jeroboam was a wicked king.
 1. God can use anyone to do His good work.
 2. **DISCUSS:** When has the Lord used an unlikely source to minister to you or someone you know?
 - b. Zechariah
 - i. Jeroboam’s son Zechariah reigned after him.
 - ii. This is Zechariah the king, not Zechariah the prophet.
4. **2 Kings 15:1-7** – *“In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, became king. He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, except that the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. Then the LORD struck the king, so that he was a leper until the day of his death; so he dwelt in an isolated house. And Jotham the king’s son was over the royal house, judging the people of the land. Now the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Azariah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.”*
- a. Azariah’s reign
 - i. Azariah, or Uzziah, began his reign during Jeroboam II’s 27th year as king of Israel.
 1. The reigns of kings were used for record-keeping.
 - ii. Azariah reigned prosperously for 52 years.
 1. Azariah had the second longest reign of any king of Judah.
 - b. Azariah was a relatively good king.
 - i. Judah had 19 kings (and 1 murderous queen, Athaliah). Israel also had 19 kings, making 38 kings in all.
 1. Of the 38 kings, only 8 were considered good kings.
 2. The 8 good kings were all from Judah.
 3. Of the 8 good kings, only 1 did not mar his testimony in some way.
 4. Azariah was one of the good kings.

c. The leper-king

- i. God struck Azariah with leprosy.
- ii. In our day, leprosy can be cured by a drug concoction and is called Hansen's Disease after the doctor who discovered the bacteria responsible.
- iii. Until the 1880s, leprosy was a slow-working, incurable death sentence.
 1. Leprosy attacks the cartilage of people's extremities, causing them to lose skin. Then the disease attacks their nervous system, impairing their ability to feel pain and thus their ability to quickly get away from danger.
 2. Lepers were quarantined and thus became socially isolated.
 3. God did not strike Azariah—or Uzziah—indiscriminately.

5. **2 Chronicles 26:15–23** – *“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. So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 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.’ Then Uzziah became furious; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense. 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. 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. 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. Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings, for they said, ‘He is a leper.’ Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.”*

a. Popularity and pride

- i. Azariah was a popular and successful king, for under him Judah had building projects, military conquests, and a prosperous economy. His popularity made him arrogant.
 1. Uzziah thought he could perform the duties of a priest, but God had separated the Levites for His priestly service.
 2. Azariah the high priest (not the king) tried to stop Uzziah from sinning against the Lord, and the king became angry.

- ii. God struck Uzziah with leprosy for his sin.
 - 1. Uzziah was isolated for the last seven years of his life and had his son Jotham reign as a puppet king in his place.
 - b. Running the race
 - i. Finishing well is more important than starting well.
 - 1. Uzziah had various prophets speaking into his life, including Isaiah (**Isaiah 1:1**), Hosea (**Hosea 1:1**), Amos (**Amos 1:1**), and Zechariah.
 - 2. Uzziah was held more accountable because he had more people speaking into his life than others.
 - 3. **DISCUSS**: Are you running well?
 - c. Zechariah's prophecy
 - i. Zechariah prophesied that just as there was an earthquake during Uzziah's reign, there will be one during the second coming of Christ.
 - 1. **Zechariah 14:1-5** – *“Behold, the day of the LORD is coming, and your spoil will be divided in your midst. For I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem; the city shall be taken, the houses rifled, and the women ravished. Half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east. And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.”*
 - 2. The “battle against Jerusalem” is Armageddon.
 - ii. Isaiah was commissioned to service in the year Uzziah died. His vision of the Lord on His throne (**Isaiah 6:1-3**) is like the vision John had (**Revelation 4**).
6. **2 Kings 15:8-18** – *“In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. Then Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and struck and killed him in front of the people; and he reigned in his place. Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. This was the word*

of the LORD which He spoke to Jehu, saying, 'Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.' And so it was. Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him; and he reigned in his place. Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he led, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked Tiphshah, all who were there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked it. All the women there who were with child he ripped open. In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin."

a. Conspiracies and defeats

- i. Five kings in the north would follow one another in rapid succession.
 1. Only one out of the five died of natural causes—the others died of murder, conspiracies, and assassinations.
- ii. Israel would unravel and be invaded by the Assyrians.
 1. In a modern map, Assyria would cover most of Syria and Iraq, as well as a little of Iran.

b. Zechariah

- i. Zechariah reigned for 6 months. Contrast that to Uzziah's 52 years.
 1. Shallum killed Zechariah in front of all the people, unashamed, likely thinking he was doing them a favor.
 2. Zechariah's assassination ended Jehu's dynasty.

c. Shallum

- i. Shallum only reigned a month before Menahem assassinated him.
 1. You reap what you sow (**Hosea 8:7; Galatians 6:7–8**).
 2. We should sow righteousness so we can reap the same.
 3. **DISCUSS:** What are you sowing today?

d. Menahem

- i. Menahem was brutal, and the worst of the murderers.

7. **2 Kings 15:19–31** – "Pul king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to strengthen the kingdom under his control. And Menahem exacted the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land. Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Menahem rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place. In the fiftieth year of Azariah

king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. Then Pekah the son of Remaliah, an officer of his, conspired against him and killed him in Samaria, in the citadel of the king's house, along with Argob and Arieah; and with him were fifty men of Gilead. He killed him and reigned in his place. Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, and reigned twenty years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he carried them captive to Assyria. Then Hoshea the son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed him; so he reigned in his place in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, indeed they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel."

- a. The coming of the Assyrians
 - i. Pul, the king of Assyria, was also called Tiglath-Pileser III.
 1. Menahem paid Pul 1,000 talents of silver to leave Israel alone.
 - a. Each talent was 75 pounds.
 - b. In total, Manahem gave Pul 75,000 pounds of silver.
 - c. Silver now sells for 38 dollars per ounce. In today's currency, Manahem paid Pul 46 million dollars.
 2. Manahem took the money from the wealthy.
 - ii. Pul took the money and left, but he would later return with vengeance.
 1. If you appease the Enemy, he may retreat but he will return.
 2. **DISCUSS:** Have you tried to negotiate with the world, the flesh, or the Devil? What was the result?
- b. Pekahiah
 - i. Menahem's son Pekahiah became king but only reigned for two years.
- c. Pekah
 - i. Pekahiah's officer Pekah killed the king and reigned in his place.
 - ii. Pul, or Tiglath-Pileser III, returned to Israel during Pekah's reign.
 1. Pul took seven cities in Israel and all the land of the tribe of Naphtali. He also took captive the Israelites living there.
- d. Hoshea
 - i. Hoshea killed Pekah and reigned in his place.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)