

Kings, kings and more kings

VV notes for [2 Kings 15](#) (and [2 Chronicles 26](#))

Game of Thrones

Amaziah has just been assassinated and Azariah/Uzziah (depends on if you're reading Kings or Chronicles) becomes king at sixteen and reigns for fifty two years. Actually, 2 Chronicles 26 implies that the people of Judah made him king in place of his father Amaziah. It almost seems like it wasn't a done deal that Azariah/Uzziah would be the next king but the will of the people prevailed here. I am reminded of [John 6:15](#) where it says that the people were about to come and take Jesus by force and make him king, except that he withdrew and left.

Power, it seems, is something that is not necessarily taken but also given – by “the people” or maybe even by a prophet/God. Power can be lost just as easily (along with you're life in many cases here in the books of Kings). In this chapter, we see a list of Kings of Israel who took power by assassinating the previous king. Zechariah, last of Jehu's line (see verse 12) is assassinated by Shallum, who then takes power. Shallum is on the throne for one month before Menahem assassinates him and takes power. Menahem reigns for ten years. Further down we have Pekahiah assassinated by his captain, Pekah, who takes power. Pekah reigns for twenty years but is then assassinated by Hoshea, who takes power.

- Jesus could have taken power but didn't. Political power is a wily foe it seems, and Jesus refused to play the game. Discuss.

In verses 17-22 we see that the King of Assyria come against Israel and Manahem gathered a hefty tribute from the wealthy in Israel to give to the king of Assyria, who then left Israel alone.

- Was this good policy or did it weaken Israel. Not the length of Manahem's reign and that he wasn't assassinated.

Reading the books of Amos and Micah gives a hint to how the wealthy in Israel raised their money. See [Amos 4:1](#); [5:11,12](#); [8:4-6](#); [Micah 2:2](#); [6:10-12](#). That money is now given to the king of Assyria.

- Discuss

Pride and downfall

Now Azariah/Uzziah, king of Judah, reigned for fifty-two years but his reign was not all smooth sailing. At least it was for a while and then disaster struck. While it says that Uzziah did right in the eyes of the Lord, he was struck by the Lord with a skin disease and lived in a separate house for the rest of his life. His son Jotham becomes a regent, governing the palace and the people of the land until his father's death, when he then becomes king.

2 Chronicles 26 gives more details. Verse 5 says that, as long as he sought the Lord, God gave Uzziah success. God helps him in battle against the Philistines, the Arabs and the Meunites. Uzziah became very powerful and the Ammonites brought him tributes and his fame spread as far as Egypt. He built towers at the gates of Jerusalem and dug cisterns for livestock. He had a

well trained army and invented machines to help soldiers shoot arrows and hurl rocks. His fame continued to spread and he became very powerful.

At this point I am reminded of Solomon. Uzziah appears to be a very intelligent person who used his talents and position wisely (at first). Yet it says “as long as he sought the Lord, he prospered”.

- Discuss.

Except that Uzziah became proud and this led to his downfall. Uzziah decides to burn incense in the temple before the Lord. He is opposed by Azariah the priest and eighty other loyal priests. Uzziah becomes angry and while he rages at the priests, God strikes him and leprosy breaks out on his forehead. He is rushed out of the temple and then suffers from leprosy for the remainder of his life.

I have several questions:

What was Uzziah thinking? It's possible he was thinking he was as great as Solomon, who did offer incense before the Lord ([1 Kings 9:25](#)).

- Why was it okay for Solomon to offer incense before the Lord but Uzziah was punished for it?
- How/why was Uzziah mistaken in his assumption?

In this story, Azariah the high priest and the eighty priests with him were described as men of valour, go in after the king and stopped him. Azariah reminds Uzziah that he should not be doing this, only the priests consecrated to do so. This appears to be a case of speaking truth to power or at least keeping the leader accountable.

- Discuss.

Uzziah becomes angry and rages at the priests. This is when Uzziah is struck by the Lord.

- Why was he struck when he became angry? Was his anger a tipping point – Discuss.

Conclusions

One of the things about this chapter seems to be the use and abuse of power (and its link to money/prosperity). In the lives of a long list of kings of Israel, we see power become a corrupting force and a reason for the deaths of many. In the life of Uzziah, we see power used right but then power used wrong. And in the life of Jesus, who rejected all worldly power.

- Discuss.