

**Tuesday, July 30**

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**2 Chronicles 26:1 - 28:27**

**26** **1** All the people of Judah had crowned Amaziah's sixteen-year-old son, Uzziah, as king in place of his father. **2** After his father's death, Uzziah rebuilt the town of Elath and restored it to Judah. **3** Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother was Jecoliah from Jerusalem. **4** He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, just as his father, Amaziah, had done. **5** Uzziah sought God during the days of Zechariah, who taught him to fear God. And as long as the king sought guidance from the LORD, God gave him success. **6** Uzziah declared war on the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Then he built new towns in the Ashdod area and in other parts of Philistia. **7** God helped him in his wars against the Philistines, his battles with the Arabs of Gur, and his wars with the Meunites. **8** The Meunites paid annual tribute to him, and his fame spread even to Egypt, for he had become very powerful. **9** Uzziah built fortified towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the angle in the wall. **10** He also constructed forts in the wilderness and dug many water cisterns, because he kept great herds of livestock in the foothills of Judah and on the plains. He was also a man who loved the soil. He had many workers who cared for his farms and vineyards, both on the hillsides and in the fertile valleys. **11** Uzziah had an army of well-trained warriors, ready to march into battle, unit by unit. This army had been mustered and organized by Jeiel, the secretary of the army, and his assistant, Maaseiah. They were under the direction of Hananiah, one of the king's officials. **12** These regiments of mighty warriors were commanded by 2,600 clan leaders. **13** The army consisted of 307,500 men, all elite troops. They were prepared to assist the king against any enemy. **14** Uzziah provided the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, coats of mail, bows, and sling stones. **15** And he built structures on the walls of Jerusalem, designed by experts to protect those who shot arrows and hurled large stones from the towers and the corners of the wall. His fame spread far and wide, for the LORD gave him marvelous help, and he became very powerful. **16** But when he had become powerful, he also became proud, which led to his downfall. He sinned against the LORD his God by entering the sanctuary of the LORD's Temple and personally burning incense on the incense altar. **17** Azariah the high priest went in after him with eighty other priests of the LORD, all brave men. **18** They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is the work of the priests alone, the descendants of Aaron who are set apart for this work. Get out of the

sanctuary, for you have sinned. The LORD God will not honor you for this!"**19** Uzziah, who was holding an incense burner, became furious. But as he was standing there raging at the priests before the incense altar in the LORD 's Temple, leprosy suddenly broke out on his forehead. **20** When Azariah the high priest and all the other priests saw the leprosy, they rushed him out. And the king himself was eager to get out because the LORD had struck him.**21** So King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in isolation in a separate house, for he was excluded from the Temple of the LORD . His son Jotham was put in charge of the royal palace, and he governed the people of the land. **22** The rest of the events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. **23**When Uzziah died, he was buried with his ancestors; his grave was in a nearby burial field belonging to the kings, for the people said, "He had leprosy." And his son Jotham became the next king.

**27 1** Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok.**2** Jotham did what was pleasing in the LORD 's sight. He did everything his father, Uzziah, had done, except that Jotham did not sin by entering the Temple of the LORD . But the people continued in their corrupt ways. **3**Jotham rebuilt the upper gate of the Temple of the LORD . He also did extensive rebuilding on the wall at the hill of Ophel. **4** He built towns in the hill country of Judah and constructed fortresses and towers in the wooded areas. **5** Jotham went to war against the Ammonites and conquered them. Over the next three years he received from them an annual tribute of 7,500 pounds of silver, 50,000 bushels of wheat, and 50,000 bushels of barley. **6**King Jotham became powerful because he was careful to live in obedience to the LORD his God. **7** The rest of the events of Jotham's reign, including all his wars and other activities, are recorded in **8** He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. **9**When Jotham died, he was buried in the City of David. And his son Ahaz became the next king.

**28 1** Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. He did not do what was pleasing in the sight of the LORD, as his ancestor David had done. **2** Instead, he followed the example of the kings of Israel. He cast metal images for the worship of Baal.**3** He offered sacrifices in the valley of Ben-Hinnom, even sacrificing his own sons in the fire. In this way, he followed the detestable practices of the pagan nations the LORD had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites.**4** He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the pagan shrines and on the hills and under every green tree. **5** Because of all this, the LORD his God allowed the king of Aram to defeat Ahaz and to exile large numbers of his people to Damascus. The armies of the king of Israel also defeated Ahaz and inflicted many casualties on

his army. **6** In a single day Pekah son of Remaliah, Israel's king, killed 120,000 of Judah's troops, all of them experienced warriors, because they had abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors. **7** Then Zicri, a warrior from Ephraim, killed Maaseiah, the king's son; Azrikam, the king's palace commander; and Elkanah, the king's second-in-command. **8** The armies of Israel captured 200,000 women and children from Judah and seized tremendous amounts of plunder, which they took back to Samaria. **9** But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there in Samaria when the army of Israel returned home. He went out to meet them and said, "The LORD, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah and let you defeat them. But you have gone too far, killing them without mercy, and all heaven is disturbed. **10** And now you are planning to make slaves of these people from Judah and Jerusalem. What about your own sins against the LORD your God? **11** Listen to me and return these prisoners you have taken, for they are your own relatives. Watch out, because now the LORD's fierce anger has been turned against you!" **12** Then some of the leaders of Israel — Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai — agreed with this and confronted the men returning from battle. **13** "You must not bring the prisoners here!" they declared. "We cannot afford to add to our sins and guilt. Our guilt is already great, and the LORD's fierce anger is already turned against Israel." **14** So the warriors released the prisoners and handed over the plunder in the sight of the leaders and all the people. **15** Then the four men just mentioned by name came forward and distributed clothes from the plunder to the prisoners who were naked. They provided clothing and sandals to wear, gave them enough food and drink, and dressed their wounds with olive oil. They put those who were weak on donkeys and took all the prisoners back to their own people in Jericho, the city of palms. Then they returned to Samaria. **16** At that time King Ahaz of Judah asked the king of Assyria for help. **17** The armies of Edom had again invaded Judah and taken captives. **18** And the Philistines had raided towns located in the foothills of Judah and in the Negev of Judah. They had already captured and occupied Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, Gederath, Soco with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages. **19** The LORD was humbling Judah because of King Ahaz of Judah, for he had encouraged his people to sin and had been utterly unfaithful to the LORD. **20** So when King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria arrived, he attacked Ahaz instead of helping him. **21** Ahaz took valuable items from the LORD's Temple, the royal palace, and from the homes of his officials and gave them to the king of Assyria as tribute. But this did not help him. **22** Even during this time of trouble, King Ahaz continued to reject the LORD. **23** He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus who had defeated him, for he said, "Since these gods helped the kings of Aram, they will help me, too, if I sacrifice to them." But instead, they led to his ruin and the ruin of all Judah. **24** The king took the various articles from the Temple of God and broke them into pieces. He shut the doors of the LORD's Temple so that no one could worship there, and he set

up altars to pagan gods in every corner of Jerusalem. **25** He made pagan shrines in all the towns of Judah for offering sacrifices to other gods. In this way, he aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of his ancestors. **26** The rest of the events of Ahaz's reign and everything he did, from beginning to end, are recorded in *The Book of Kings of Judah and Israel* **27** When Ahaz died, he was buried in Jerusalem but not in the royal cemetery of the kings of Judah. Then his son Hezekiah became the next king.

### **Romans 13:1 - 14**

**13** **1** Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. **2** So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. **3** For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. **4** The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. **5** So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. **6** Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. **7** Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority. **8** Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law. **9** For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." **10** Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God's law. **11** This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. **12** The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. **13** Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy. **14** Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.

### **Psalm 23:1 - 6**

**23** **1** The LORD is my shepherd; I have all that I need. **2** He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. **3** He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name. **4** Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. **5** You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies. You honor me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings. **6** Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

### **Proverbs 20:11**

**20** **11** Even children are known by the way they act, whether their conduct is pure, and whether it is right.