

# FASCINATING STORIES OF FORGOTTEN LIVES

## STUDY FOURTEEN

### Uzziah: The Leader Who Became a Loser

*2 Chronicles 26:1–21*

*They're all turning to Uzziah. One day, he believed it. That's when his demise began—when his favorite piece of furniture in the palace was a mirror.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll



To deepen your study, scan to listen.

**H**UBRIS—excessive pride, arrogance, self-confidence. While every human heart harbors it, it often hangs like a neon sign over the lives of some public figures.

Look no further than one very public figure, Richard Milhous Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, from 1969 until his resignation in 1974.

Intelligent and ambitious, Nixon graduated third in his Duke University Law School class. After service in the United States Navy, he served as a US House Representative, a US Senator, the US Vice President, and ultimately the US President. Regardless of our political party, perspective, or persuasion, we must acknowledge that Nixon's presidency undoubtedly witnessed significant and impactful achievements in both domestic and foreign policy.

Sadly, despite his faithful government service accomplishments, he will forever be remembered as the president who resigned his office over the Watergate break-in and cover-up, a nightmarish political scandal waged against political rivals—with Nixon himself complicit in the crimes. Pursuing political power at all costs and with disregard for the law, he embodied the definition of hubris. He started well but finished badly.

In this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study, we examine the Old Testament king of Judah, Uzziah. He assumed the throne as a young boy and reigned over a strong, secure, and prosperous nation—until hubris found its way into Uzziah's life. Having started well, guided by strong spiritual counsel, he finished badly—a disgraced, deposed, and isolated man.



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## PREPARE YOUR HEART

Read the Lord's encouragement in [Jeremiah 9:23–24](#): to boast only in that we “truly know” God. Ask the Lord to help you glorify in Him alone through your study of His Word.



## TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Our final *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study in this series looks at the rise and tragic fall of King Uzziah recorded in 2 Chronicles 26. Uzziah's father, Amaziah also started well, but, late in his reign, Amaziah defied God's command not to go to battle with the northern tribes of Israel, who routed his army and looted the temple of its treasures. Disgraced, Amaziah fled for his life to [Lachish](#) and was assassinated there. You can find Lachish on the Bible maps at [insight.org](#).

Uzziah took his father's place on the throne of Judah at sixteen years of age. Following godly guidance and determined to do only “what was pleasing in the LORD's sight” (2 Chronicles 26:4), Uzziah began his rule as a model king during a period when few kings were worth emulating. He built his reign on a solid foundation only for cracks to appear later in his life.



## Observation: Faithful Start . . . Prideful Fall

As you read the account of Uzziah's reign, look carefully for highlights, achievements, and key turning points. In narratives, the biblical author focuses on events and people, so we can learn valuable lessons from their examples.<sup>1</sup>

### Uzziah's Faithful Start—2 Chronicles 26:1–5

According to [2 Chronicles 26:1–5](#), how long was Uzziah's reign, and what was his initial achievement? What was [Elath](#)'s strategic importance to Judah, according to *Holman Bible Dictionary* at [studylight.org](#)?

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What was the key to Uzziah's success in *2 Chronicles 26:4–5*? Why is this point significant? Who was Uzziah's mentor? How did he shape Uzziah, and what was required of the king to receive God's continual blessing?

## Uzziah's Kingly Exploits—*2 Chronicles 26:6–15*

The first of Uzziah's successes occurred on the battlefield. Which foes did Judah conquer, and how far had his fame spread, according to *2 Chronicles 26:6–8*? What was the reason for his victories in *26:7*?

What aspects of farming and agricultural development did Uzziah bring to Jerusalem and surrounding Judah, according to *26:9–10*?

The chronicler detailed the army Uzziah assembled. What do you note about its size and strategic organization, according to *26:11–13*?

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How did the king prepare his warriors for every battle contingency, and what innovative weaponry was designed and employed, according to [2 Chronicles 26:14–15](#)?

*Uzziah had a war machine, and he put creative men into it. The city of Jerusalem became a citadel of strength and military might . . . “until he was strong” [2 Chronicles 26:15 NASB]. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

## Uzziah’s Proudful Fall—2 Chronicles 26:16–21

Uzziah’s “fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped *until* he was strong” (2 Chronicles 26:15 NASB, emphasis added). The fate of Uzziah’s entire life hinged on that one word: *until*. God was strengthening Uzziah and giving him success, but then God’s help stopped. What changed? The chronicler explains:

*When he had become powerful, he also became proud, which led to his downfall. (26:16)*

Pride undermined the foundation of God’s blessing in Uzziah’s life. According to [26:16–18](#), what presumptuous act did Uzziah commit, why was it sinful, and who bravely confronted him?

What was Uzziah’s response to the priests’ challenge in [26:19](#)? What does that tell you about the condition of Uzziah’s heart?

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God judged Uzziah by afflicting him with “leprosy” (2 Chronicles 26:19). What is the irony of God’s judgment upon the man who considered himself worthy of approaching God’s presence? What did the priests immediately do in [26:19–20](#)? Cross-reference [Leviticus 13:45–46](#).

According to [2 Chronicles 26:21](#), what were the three consequences of Uzziah’s sin of pride?

*Here’s a man whom God had blessed. Because he was proud, he began to act corruptly. That’s the way it works. First the heart corrupts and then the actions. Pride comes out in little arrogant comments. It comes out in a sneer, in a little sarcasm. Before long, in a jaded spirit. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



## **Interpretation: God Alone Receives the Glory**

King Uzziah took for himself the glory that belonged to God alone. He got caught in the pride trap that snared many kings. Years later, the prophet Isaiah described God’s glory in [Isaiah 42:5–8](#). God is the creator. He chooses, through His divine appointment and empowerment, to use His people for His purposes. What would God do through the coming Messiah, according to [42:6–7](#)?

Now, focus on the next verse:

*“I am the LORD; that is my name!  
I will not give my glory to anyone else,  
nor share my praise with carved idols.” (Isaiah 42:8)*

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The Hebrew word for “glory” is *kabod*. Consult your Bible-study resources or *Holman Bible Dictionary* online at [studylight.org](http://studylight.org) to define *glory*. In your own words, summarize the meaning of God’s glory.

Consider the three phrases from Isaiah 42:8. For each phrase listed below, specifically address how, over time, Uzziah inappropriately assumed for himself that which was reserved for God.

“*I am the LORD; that is my **name!***”

“*I will not give my **glory** to anyone else,*”

“*Nor share my **praise** with carved idols.*”

Uzziah basked in his own fame, reveled in his accomplishments, and soaked up others’ praise. By taking the glory meant for God, Uzziah turned his kingdom—which was once a monument for God—into a monument for himself.

*No matter how gifted we may be, no matter how valuable others may think we are, and no matter how many people hang on our words or heed our counsel—we have no right whatever to take lightly God’s name, or eclipse His glory, or rob Him of His praise. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

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## Correlation: Heinous Hubris

Hubris, or pride, is the taproot from which all other sin sprouts. Let's investigate pride from several angles.

*Proverbs 16:5, 18–19* addresses the Lord's view of pride. What strong words does the writer use to describe this sin?

Who is addressed in *Isaiah 14:12–15*, what was his signature sin, and what were the consequences of his sin?

According to *1 Timothy 3:6; James 4:6–10; 1 Peter 5:5–6*, who or what is the common source of pride and the cause of pride's consequences?

Reflecting on these verses, how do they underscore the insidious, dangerous, and devastating impact of pride in the lives of believers?

*Pride stinks! The problem is, the proud person is the only one who doesn't smell it. Others smell it, but a proud person doesn't know he or she stinks.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

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## **Application: Heeding the Warning Signs of Hubris**

Uzziah's tragic example raises five warning signs that pride is taking root in us and our ministry is becoming more of a monument to self rather than a movement of God.

1. *When greater battles are fought within than without, the ministry has begun to slip.*
2. *When more attention is directed to the leader than to the Lord, a monument is being built.*
3. *When God's help is nice but not essential for survival, ministry is slipping.*
4. *When worthwhile reproofs are resisted rather than received, a monument is being built.*
5. *When the consequences of sin are ignored rather than feared, one is in deep trouble.*

Do any of these warning signs point to prideful characteristics in your life? If so, what is your percolating pride, and which warning sign is flashing?

What changes can you make to move away from pride and toward a God-honoring life characterized by humility?

Uzziah wasn't always a proud, presumptuous king. Which of sixteen-year-old Uzziah's qualities can you emulate?

Isaiah's formula for giving God glory is to remember to sign God's name on every accomplishment you make, for it is only by His grace that we achieve anything. Reflect His character in all you do. And sing His praises for any success He may bring your way.

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## A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, give me the courage to face the mirror of Your Word and to see even the first markings of arrogance. Forgive me for selfish deeds and conceit that have motivated me before. Rebuke me this very day for walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. Show me ways to stay off the pedestal. May I not be proud of how humble I am. I have seen the life of Uzziah. God help me if I ever do that. In the strong name of Jesus Christ. Amen.*

## ENDNOTE

1. To learn more about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* Bible-study method, go to the web page, "[How Does Pastor Chuck Swindoll Study the Bible?](#)"

For the 2026 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study was developed by Marshall F. Davis in collaboration with Aaron Massey, senior vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, and Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages. Copyright © 1989, 2026 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

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