

The Better Way

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SPRING CHURCH OF CHRIST

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:00 a.m.
Worship.....10:00 a.m.
Afternoon Worship.....1:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:30 p.m.
(via Zoom Meetings)

ELDERS

David P. Brown
Ken Cohn
John West

DEACONS

Bret Bailey
J. D. Gunter
Eric Paluka

EVANGELIST

David P. Brown

SECRETARY

Sonya West

UZZIAH'S SIN

Guy N. Woods

And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly. Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry. Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains. The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred. And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones. And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him. And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land (2 Chronicles 26:8-21).

The reign of Uzziah was one of great prosperity in Judah. It is, indeed, sometimes styled "the golden age of Judah." Both by conquest, and commerce, the accumulation of wealth in the realm was greater than the people had ever known before. We learn, from the prophets,

that during this period, the rich lived in palaces of hewn stone and ivory, and slept on beds with damask covering. The food they ate was only of the best, the lambs being specially selected out of the flocks, and the calves being fattened in the stalls. They sang to the accompaniment of harps, drank wine from golden beakers, and anointed themselves with the most precious anointment (Amos 6:1-7). This unparalleled prosperity was, however, limited to the upper classes. The rich became richer, and the poor, poorer. Small farmers lost their lands, and the nobles acquired them. Oppression and injustice became the order of the day.

Uzziah's power was made manifest to the nations about him by the most vigorous of campaigns. He repelled the Philistines and the Arabians; he established power over the Edomites; he fortified Elath, the port on the Red Sea (now often in the news in the current Jewish-Arab conflict); and, the Ammonites, awed by his great power, submitted to him.

He strengthened the nation and the capital by erecting strong castles on the frontier, towers in open country, and by laying up abundant stores of weapons in his arsenals. It is said of him that **“he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men, to be upon the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal.”** And, it is immediately added, **“his name spread far abroad.”**

Nor did he limit his efforts to military might. He caused many wells to be sunk; because he loved farming, and he promoted agriculture, ranching and the breeding of cattle. These sane and sensible measures, under the Lord's guidance and blessing, quickly brought prosperity to his land. As Kitto indicates, Uzziah became great, not by his own wisdom, but because he was a righteous man, and was, by the Lord, **“marvelously helped, till he was strong.”** But, alas, the story of Uzziah does not end here. Like so many others of his day, *and ours*, prosperity turned his heart away from God, and grievous sin entered his life. We shall have occasion to note here, as so often before in these lessons, that prosperity has more perils to faith than adversity. Shakespeare said, “It is the bright day that brings forth the adder, and that craves wary walking!”

UZZIAH'S GREAT SIN

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against Jehovah his God; for he went into the temple of Jehovah to burn

incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: and they withstood Uzziah the King, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed: neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah God.

What a commentary we have here on weak, human nature. It is said of Uzziah that **“when he was strong, his heart was lifted up.”** Elated with pride in consequence of the success and prosperity which had attended his reign, his ambition knew no restraint, and he arrogantly sought to perform religious acts permissible only to the priests. It would appear that Uzziah was so inflamed with ambition that he disregarded God's order, and attempted to officiate at the altar himself. None but the priests ordained of God might properly offer incense at the golden altar; or, for that matter, under ordinary circumstances, so much as enter the sacred room. Uzziah seems to have deliberately determined to invade the priest's office, thus repeating the sin of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. His ambition was to be chief in all things, both in religion and in the state! Egyptian monarchs performed dual functions in idolatrous temples; perhaps Uzziah would imitate them. He thus disregarded a direct command of God; he treated with contempt the sacred records of his people; and he defied him by whom Uzziah had been so greatly honored. As has been so aptly said, “A reign of fifty-two years was spoiled in an hour.”

It is to be said to the credit of the priests of that day that they were courageous men. They did not hesitate to protest the unwarranted action of the king. It is likely that Uzziah had entered the area with many of his followers and bodyguard, and the priests did not know but what force would be used against them. The priests were, however, **“valiant”** men, and were prepared to defend the sacred edifice against this profane intrusion by force, if necessary. Many of the priests were young, war-like men, and accustomed to fighting. They were prepared to do so here, if Uzziah should seek to resist them. Azariah the high priest at the time, pointed out several things to the arrogant king: (1) His action was a positive violation of the will of God; (2) it disregarded God's appointed way of sacrifice; (3) it was not a proper function of the king, as monarch, thus to

participate; (4) it would not honor him; on the contrary, it would reflect seriously on his judgment. It was one of the most courageous protests ever made. It was made in defense of righteousness, and against the most powerful man in the realm (See Exodus 30:7, 8; Num. 16:40; 18:7). There are times when faithful men, whatever the consequences, must rise in defense of the truth.

UZZIAH'S PUNISHMENT

Then Uzziah was wroth; and he had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy brake forth in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah, beside the altar of incense.

Far from profiting by the rebuke; and, in penitence, abandoning the rash attempt, Uzziah, in wrath, would have proceeded to burn incense, but for a remarkable event. Just as he began, **“the leprosy brake forth in his forehead,”** in full view of the priests before him. He was inflicted with antiquity’s most loathsome, and at that time, incurable disease. We know, from Amos 1:1, that a mighty earthquake struck the land about this time; and, Josephus, the Jewish historian, asserts in his history of the Jews that it occurred just at the moment Uzziah was stricken! Stanley vividly described the event as follows:

The solid building of the temple rocked, its roof opened, the darkness of its inner recess was suddenly lighted up by the full blaze of the sun; and as the king looked up toward it, a leprous disfigurement mounted into his face.

Thus, while Uzziah railed against the priests, in anger, and was proceeding to perform an act in utter defiance of God, the stroke of God’s divine wrath fell upon him. The manner in which the wicked king was smitten is significant. Had the leprosy broken out in his hand, on his foot, or trunk of his body, it might have been hidden, for the time at least, from the eyes of men; but it was on his forehead, where all could see the evidence of his wicked act. It was there as if to say to all men, “See what occurred to this man who was so signally blessed of Jehovah, but who arrogantly defied him, and let it be a lesson to you!”

And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from thence; yea, himself hastened also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him.

When the priests observed the leprous condition of the king, they started to remove him quickly

from the area, because nothing unclean (those with leprosy were regarded as *ceremonially* unclean, according to the law of Moses) was permitted to enter the temple (Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:2). Their action was, however, unnecessary; we are informed by the sacred writer that Uzziah **“himself hastened to go out”**; the stroke was, to the king, clear evidence of God’s displeasure; and, he greatly desired to leave the premises, perhaps fearful that if he did not do so speedily, another act of God’s vengeance would fall upon him.

And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a separate house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of Jehovah; and Jotham his son was over the king’s house, judging the people of the land.

The **“separate house,”** into which Uzziah moved, was thus apart from, and not connected with, the royal palace; being thenceforth a leper, it was neither legal nor safe for him to be associated with other people; and, for the rest of his life, he thus lived. Not only was he required to live separately, he was shut off from all participation in the temple activities. We thus learn that from the seclusion required of lepers by the law, even kings were not excused. Whether Uzziah repented of his impious and profane act of attempting to take up functions of the priests in the temple of God, we are not informed; there is reason to think that such must have occurred, however; because references to him in the Old Testament indicate that as a whole, he was regarded as a good, rather than as a wicked king (2 Kin. 15:3, 34; 2 Chr. 26:4; 27:2).

Uzziah was buried in the royal cemetery, but not in the royal tombs themselves; for, being a leper, he would have polluted them. Though Uzziah retained title as king, being separated from the palace, he could not perform the duties of monarch; and his son Jotham acted in capacity of prime minister for him until the king died.

Inasmuch as Uzziah’s act of impiety in profaning the temple is comparable to that of others of whom we read in the Scriptures, it would be well for us to read, and be able to relate in brief detail what is set out, with reference to Korab, and his companions in Numbers 16:1-40, that related regarding Miriam in Numbers 12, and Gehazi in 2 Kings 5:20-27. We should also familiarize ourselves with **“the law of the leper”** (Lev. 13:45, 46).~

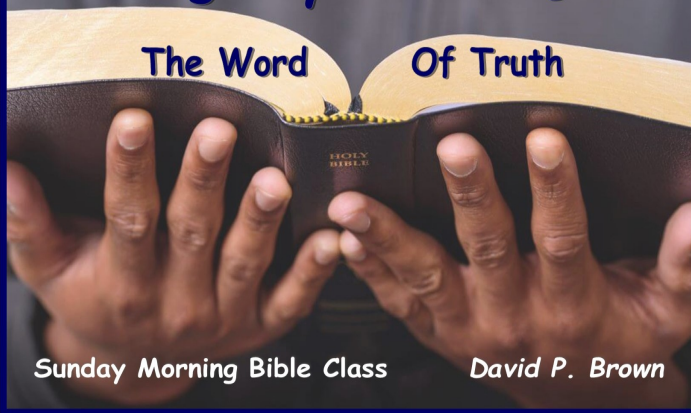
CRASE TRAINING



March 9th
After 2nd Service

Rightly Dividing

The Word Of Truth



Sunday Morning Bible Class David P. Brown

A Study Of

2ND PETER



Teacher:

David P. Brown

WEDNESDAY NIGHT
BIBLE CLASS VIA ZOOM

TEST YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Where was Apollos born?

Answer to last week's question:
Plains of Jericho; Joshua 5:10

THOSE TO SERVE

SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 2025

Announcements J.D. Gunter
Scripture Reading J.D. Gunter
Genesis 8:13-22

Song Leader Bret Bailey
Prayer Eric Paluka/Joshua West (AM)
Andrew Paluka/J.D. Gunter (PM)

Speaker David Brown

Lord's Table (AM)
(John 19:1-7)

Gary Blasingame Joshua West
Jonathan West Stephen Cohn

Lord's Table (PM)

Bret Bailey J.D. Gunter

Audio/Video Monitor Jonathan West
Camera/Door Monitor Stephen Cohn

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

(via Zoom Meeting)

Announcements Eric Paluka
Speaker Jonathan West
Bible Class Teacher David Brown

FOR MARCH

Prepare Communion Oakley
Lock Buildings Blasingame
Prepare Bulletin Board Oakley

IN NEED OF PRAYERS

Josie Contreras, Zack Nero, Edith Young, Cynthia Jackson, Glenn Kryszak, Barbara Perkins, April McCain, Gayle Barnett, Noah & Glenda Hackworth, Tania Turcios, Robbie Kirby, Debbie Brannon, Charles & Ann Nero, Chuck & Nancy Verkist, Freda Smith, Orlinda Chumbley, and Roelf & Janice Ruffner.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **Sunday, March 9th:** CRASE (Civilian Response To Active Shooter Events) Class after 2nd service.
- **Tuesday, March 25th:** Ladies' Bible Class.
- **Sunday, March 30th:** Monthly meal and afternoon singing service
- **July 14th-16th:** Spring VBS