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Introduction

Uzziah, the son of Amaziah, succeeds; and begins his reign piously and prosperously, which continued during the life of Zechariah the prophet, 2 Chronicles 26:1-5. He fights successfully against the Philistines, and takes and dismantles some of their chief cities, 2 Chronicles 26:6; prevails over the Arabians and Mehunims, 2 Chronicles 26:7; and brings the Ammonites under tribute, 2 Chronicles 26:8. He fortifies Jerusalem, and builds towers in different parts of the country, and delights in husbandry, 2 Chronicles 26:9, 2 Chronicles 26:10. An account of his military strength, warlike instruments, and machines, 2 Chronicles 26:11-15. He is elated with his prosperity, invades the priest's office, and is smitten with the leprosy, 2 Chronicles 26:16-20. He is obliged to abdicate the regal office, and dwell apart from this people, his son Jotham acting as regent, 2 Chronicles 26:21. His death and burial, 2 Chronicles 26:22, 2 Chronicles 26:23.

Verse 1

The people of Judah took Uzziah - They all agreed to place this son on his father's throne.

Verse 2

He built Eloth - See the notes on 2 Kings 14:21. This king is called by several different names; see the note on 2 Kings 15:1.

Verse 5

In the days of Zechariah - Who this was we know not, but by the character that is given of him here. He was wise in the visions of God - in giving the true interpretation of Divine prophecies. He was probably the tutor of Uzziah.

Verse 7

And God helped him - "And the Word of the Lord helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians who lived in Gerar, and the plains of Meun." - Targum. These are supposed to be the Arabs which are called the Meuneons, or Munites, or Meonites.

Verse 8

The Ammonites gave gifts - Paid an annual tribute.

Verse 10

Built towers in the desert - For the defense of his flocks, and his shepherds and husbandmen.

And in Carmel - Calmet remarks that there were two Carmels in Judea: one in the tribe of Judah, where Nabal lived, and the other on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, near to Kishon; and both fertile in vines.

He loved husbandry - This is a perfection in a king: on husbandry every state depends. Let their trade or commerce be what they may, there can be no true national prosperity if agriculture do not prosper; for the king himself is served by the field. When, therefore, the king of a country encourages agriculture, an emulation is excited among his subjects; the science is cultivated; and the earth yields its proper increase; then, should trade and commerce fail, the people cannot be reduced to wretchedness, because there is plenty of bread.

Verse 14

Shields, and spears - He prepared a vast number of military weapons, that he might have them in readiness to put into the hands of his subjects on any exigency.

Verse 15

Engines - to shoot arrows and great stones - The Targum says, "He made in Jerusalem ingenious instruments, and little hollow towers, to stand upon the towers and upon the bastions, for the shooting of arrows, and projecting of great stones."

This is the very first intimation on record of any warlike engines for the attack or defense of besieged places; and this account is long prior to any thing of the kind among either the Greeks or Romans. Previously to such inventions, the besieged could only be starved out, and hence sieges were very long and tedious. Shalmaneser consumed three years before such an inconsiderable place as Samaria, 2 Kings 17:5, 2 Kings 17:6; Sardanapalus maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers had no engines proper for the attack and destruction of walls, etc., and it is well known that Troy sustained a siege of ten years, the Greeks not possessing any machine of the kind here referred to. The Jews alone were the inventors of such

engines; and the invention took place in the reign of Uzziah, about eight hundred years before the Christian era. It is no wonder that, in consequence of this, his name spread far abroad, and struck terror into his enemies.

Verse 16

He transgressed against the Lord - "He sinned against the Word of the Lord his God." - T.

Went into the temple to burn incense - Thus assuming to himself the priest's office. See this whole transaction explained in the notes on 2 Kings 15:5 (note).

Verse 20

Because the Lord had smitten him - "Because the Word of the Lord had brought the plague upon him." - T.

Verse 21

And dwelt in a several house - He was separated, because of the infectious nature of his disorder, from all society, domestic, civil, and religious.

Jotham - was over the king's house - He became regent of the land; his father being no longer able to perform the functions of the regal office.

Verse 22

The rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet - write - This work, however, is totally lost; for we have not any history of this king in the writings of Isaiah. He is barely mentioned, Isaiah 1:1; Isaiah 6:1.

Verse 23

They buried him - in the field of the burial - As he was a leper, he was not permitted to be buried in the common burial-place of the kings; as it was supposed that even a place of sepulture must be defiled by the body of one who had died of this most afflictive and dangerous malady.