



Book of Failure? 3:00 PM: Uziahu: A Lesson in Boundaries

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Dedicated in memory of HaRav Pesach ben Avraham Moshe HaKohen

Dedicated by Danny and Ellen Gordon in memory of Ruchama Chava Rochel z"l



1. PM David Ben-Gurion, *Words and Values*, Jewish Frontier Dec. '57

The tales of the Patriarchs four thousand years ago; the travels, deeds and life of Abraham; Israel's wanderings after the Exodus from Egypt; the wars of Joshua Bin-Nun and the Judges who followed him; the life and acts of Saul, David and Solomon; the achievements of Uzziah, King of Judah, and Jeroboam II, King of Israel – are nearer and more topical, more instructive and full of life, for the generation that was born, grows up and lives in Israel, than all the speeches and debates at the Basle Congresses.

Background

2. Melachim II 15:3

וַיַּעַשׂ הַיְשָׁר בְּעֵינֵי ד' כֹּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה אִמְצִיָּהוּ אָבִיו:

And he did what was righteous in Gd's eyes, according to all that his father Amatzياهو did.

3. Divrei haYamim II 26:6-15 (Koren Jerusalem Bible)

וַיֵּצֵא וַיִּלְחֶם בְּפִלְשְׁתִּים וַיִּפְרֹץ אֶת חוֹמַת גַּת וְאֶת חוֹמַת יָבְנָה וְאֶת חוֹמַת אֲשְׁדוֹד וַיִּבְנֶה עָרִים בְּאֲשְׁדוֹד וּבְפִלְשְׁתִּים: וַיַּעֲזְרוּהוּ הָאֱלֹקִים עַל פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְעַל הָעַרְבִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים בְּגוֹר בְּעַל וְהַמְּעוֹנִים: וַיִּתְּנוּ הָעַמּוֹנִים מְנַחָה לְעִזְיָהוּ וַיִּלְחֶם שָׁמוּ עַד לְבֹא מִצְרַיִם כִּי הִחֲזִיק עַד לְמַעְלָה: וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּלִים בִּירוּשָׁלַם עַל שַׁעַר הַפִּנֵּה וְעַל שַׁעַר הַגִּיָּא וְעַל הַמִּקְצוֹעַ וַיִּסְתַּקֵּם: וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּלִים בְּמִדְבָּר וַיַּחֲצֵב בְּרוֹת רַבִּים כִּי מְקַנָּה רַב הָיָה לוֹ וּבִשְׁפֵלָה וּבְמִישׁוֹר אֲפָרַיִם וּכְרָמִים בְּהָרִים וּבְכַרְמֵל כִּי אָהַב אֲדָמָה הָיָה: וַיְהִי לְעִזְיָהוּ חֵיל עֲשָׂה מִלְחָמָה יוֹצְאֵי צָבָא לְגָדוֹד בְּמִסְפָּר פְּקָדָתָם בְּיַד יְעִיָּאל הַסּוֹפֵר וּמַעֲשֵׂיָהוּ הַשׁוֹטֵר עַל יַד חַנְנִיָּהוּ מִשְׁרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ: כֹּל מִסְפָּר רֵאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת לְגִבּוֹרֵי חֵיל אֲלָפִים וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת: וְעַל יָדָם חֵיל צָבָא שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלְפִים וְשִׁבְעַת אֲלָפִים וְחָמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת עוֹשֵׂי מִלְחָמָה בְּכַח חֵיל לְעֹזֵר לְמֶלֶךְ עַל הָאוֹיֵב: וַיִּקְּן הֵם עִזְיָהוּ לְכֹל הַצָּבָא מִגָּנִים וּרְמָחִים וְכוּכְעִים וְשָׁרִינּוֹת וּקִשְׁתוֹת וְלֵאבְנֵי קַלְעִים: וַיַּעַשׂ בִּירוּשָׁלַם חֲשִׁבְנוֹת מִחֲשֻׁבָּת חוֹשֵׁב לְהִיּוֹת עַל הַמִּגְדָּלִים וְעַל הַפְּנוֹת לִירוֹא בַחֲצִים וּבְאֲבָנִים גְּדוּלוֹת וַיֵּצֵא שָׁמוּ עַד לְמַרְחֹק כִּי הִפְלִיא לְהַעֲזֹר עַד כִּי חָזַק:

And he went forth and warred against the Pelishtim, and broke down the wall of Gat, and the wall of Yavne, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Pelishtim. And G-d helped him against the Pelishtim, and against the 'Arvim who dwelt in Gur-ba'al, and the Me'unim. And the 'Ammonim rendered tribute to 'Uzziyyahu, and his name spread abroad to the entrance of Mitzrayim; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.

Moreover 'Uzziyyahu built towers in Yerushalayim, at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the angle of the wall, and fortified them.

And he built towers in the desert, and dug many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the lowland, and in the plains: he had farmers, and vinedressers in the mountains, and in the Karmel: for he loved the soil.

Moreover 'Uzziyyahu had a host of fighting men, who went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Yechi'el the scribe and Ma'aseyahu the ruler, under the hand of Hananyahu, one of the king's captains. The whole number of the heads of the fathers' houses of the mighty men at arms was two thousand six hundred. And under their hand was an army, three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, who made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. And 'Uzziyyahu prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets, and coats of mail, and bows, and stones for slinging. And in Yerushalayim he made engines, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong.

4. Melachim II 14:21-22

וַיִּקַּח כָּל עַם יְהוּדָה אֶת עִזְרִיָּהוּ וְהוּא בֶן שֵׁשׁ עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה וַיִּמְלְכוּהוּ אֹתוֹ תַחַת אָבִיו אִמְצִיָּהוּ: הוּא בֶּנֶה אֶת אֵילַת וַיִּשְׁבְּהָ לַיהוּדָה אַחֲרֵי שִׁכַב הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם אֲבֹתָיו:

And the entire nation of Judah took Azaryah (Uzziah), and he was sixteen years old, and they coronated him in place of his father Amatzياهو. He built up Eilat and returned it to Judah, after his father lay with his ancestors.

5. Melachim II 14:28 (JPS 1985)

וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי יִרְבְּעָם וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וּגְבוּרָתוֹ אֲשֶׁר נִלְחַם וְאֲשֶׁר הִשִּׁיב אֶת דַּמֶּשֶׁק וְאֶת חַמַּת לַיהוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל הֵלֵא הֵם כְּתוּבִים...

The other events of Jeroboam's reign, and all his actions and exploits, how he fought and recovered Damascus and Hamath for Judah in Israel, are recorded...

The Failure

6. Melachim II 15:5

וַיִּנְגַע ד' אֶת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיְהִי מְצֻרָע עַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ וַיָּשָׁב בְּבֵית הַחֲפְשִׁית יוֹתָם בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל הַבַּיִת שִׁפְט אֶת עַם הָאָרֶץ:

And Gd marked the king, and he was a *metzora* until the day of his death, and he dwelled in the house of separation. And Yotam, the king's son was upon the king's house, judging the people of the land.

7. Divrei haYamim II 26:16-22 (Koren Jerusalem Bible)

וַיִּכְחַזְקוּתוֹ גְּבוּה לְבוֹ עַד לְהַשְׁחִית וַיִּמְעַל בְּד' אֱלֹהָיו וַיָּבֵא אֶל הַיֵּכָל ד' לְהַקְטִיר עַל מִזְבֵּחַ הַקְּטֹרֶת: וַיָּבֵא אַחֲרָיו עֲזַרְיָהוּ הַכֹּהֵן וַעֲמֹו כַּהֲנִים לְד' שְׂמוֹנִים בְּנֵי הָיִל: וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ עַל עֲזַרְיָהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ לֹא לָךְ עֲזַרְיָהוּ לְהַקְטִיר לְד' כִּי לַכַּהֲנִים בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן הַמְּקַדְּשִׁים לְהַקְטִיר צֵא מִן הַמִּקְדָּשׁ כִּי מְעַלְתָּ וְלֹא לָךְ לְכַבֹּד מִד' אֱלֹהִים: וַיִּזְעַף עֲזַרְיָהוּ וּבְקִדּוֹ מִקְטָרֶת לְהַקְטִיר וַיִּבְזַעְפוּ עִם הַכַּהֲנִים וַהֲצַרְעַת נִרְחָה בְּמַצְחֹו לִפְנֵי הַכַּהֲנִים בְּבֵית ד' מֵעַל לְמִזְבֵּחַ הַקְּטֹרֶת: וַיִּפֹּן אֵלָיו עֲזַרְיָהוּ כִּהְיָ הָרֹאשׁ וְכָל הַכַּהֲנִים וְהִנֵּה הוּא מְצַרֵּעַ בְּמַצְחֹו וַיִּבְהַלּוּהוּ מִשָּׁם וְגַם הוּא נִדְחָף לְצֵאתָ כִּי נִגְעָו ד': וַיְהִי עֲזַרְיָהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ מְצַרֵּעַ עַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ וַיָּשָׁב בְּבֵית הַחֲפְשִׁית מְצַרֵּעַ כִּי נִגְזַר מִבְּעֵית ד' יוֹתָם בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ שׁוֹפֵט אֶת עַם הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּתֵּר דְּבָרֵי עֲזַרְיָהוּ הָרֹאשֹׁנִים וְהָאַחֲרֹנִים כְּתָב יִשְׁעֵיהוּ בֶּן אֲמוּץ הַנְּבִיא:

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his G-d, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And 'Azaryahu the priest went in after him and with him eighty priests of the Lord, who were men of valour: and they withstood 'Uzziyyahu the king, and said to him, It is not for thee, 'Uzziyyahu, to burn incense to the Lord, but for the priests the sons of Aharon, who are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; for it shall not be for thy honour from the Lord G-d. Then 'Uzziyyahu was angry, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was angry with the priests, the tzara'at broke out on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, beside the incense altar. And 'Azaryahu the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was diseased in his forehead, and they thrust him out quickly from there; and he himself hastened to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. And 'Uzziyyahu the king was afflicted with tzara'at to the day of his death, and dwelt in the house of separation, being diseased; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord: and Yotam his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land. Now the rest of the acts of 'Uzziyyahu, first and last, did Yesha'yahu the prophet, the son of Amotz, write.

8. Audio recordings of classes on Yeshayah <https://www.yutorah.org/search/?teacher=81072&collection=7733>

9. Yeshayah 2:2-3

וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים כִּכּוֹן יִהְיֶה הַר בְּיַת ד' בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים וְנִשְׂא מִגְּבְעוֹת וַנִּהְרוּ אֵלָיו כָּל הַגּוֹיִם: וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וַאֲמָרוּ לִכְוֹן נִנְעֵלָה אֵל הַר ד' אֵל בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּרְגְּבוּ מִדְּרָכָיו וַיִּנְלַכֶּה בְּאַרְחֻתָיו כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וְדִבְרַי ד' מִירוּשָׁלַם:

And it will be, at the end of days, the mountain of the house of G-d will be established at the head of mountains and elevated above hills, and nations will stream there. Great nations will say, "Let us ascend to the mountain of G-d and the house of the G-d of Yaakov, and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths, for Torah will come from Zion and the word of G-d from Jerusalem."

10. Devarim 17:16-17

(טז) רַק לֹא יִרְכֹּב לוֹ סוּסִים וְלֹא יִשִּׁיב אֶת הָעָם מְצַרִּימָה לְמַעַן הַרְבּוֹת סוּס וּד' אָמַר לָכֶם לֹא תִסְפוּן לָשׁוּב בְּדֶרֶךְ הַזֶּה עוֹד: (יז) וְלֹא יִרְכֹּב לוֹ נָשִׁים וְלֹא יִסוּר לְכַבּוֹ וְנָכֶסֶף וְנִזְהָב לֹא יִרְכֹּב לוֹ מְאֹד:

Only, he shall not acquire many horses, and he shall not return the nation to Egypt to increase horses. Gd has told you, "Do not return along this path again." And he shall not increase women, and his heart shall not be swayed. And he shall not increase a lot of silver and gold for himself.

11. Yeshayah 2:7-8

וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ כְּסָף וְנִזְהָב וְאִין קֶצֶף לְמַרְכָּבָתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ אֲרָצוֹ אֱלִילִים לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאַשֵׁר עֲשׂוֹ אֲצָבָעוֹתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ כְּסָף וְנִזְהָב וְאִין קֶצֶף לְאַצְרָתָיו וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ סוּסִים וְאִין קֶצֶף לְמַרְכָּבָתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ אֲרָצוֹ אֱלִילִים לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאַשֵׁר עֲשׂוֹ אֲצָבָעוֹתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ כְּסָף וְנִזְהָב וְאִין קֶצֶף לְאַצְרָתָיו וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ סוּסִים וְאִין קֶצֶף לְמַרְכָּבָתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ אֲרָצוֹ אֱלִילִים לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאַשֵׁר עֲשׂוֹ אֲצָבָעוֹתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ כְּסָף וְנִזְהָב וְאִין קֶצֶף לְאַצְרָתָיו וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ סוּסִים וְאִין קֶצֶף לְמַרְכָּבָתָיו: וַתִּמְלֵא אֶרֶץ אֲרָצוֹ אֱלִילִים לְמַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְאַשֵׁר עֲשׂוֹ אֲצָבָעוֹתָיו:

12. Yeshayah 2:15-16

(טו) וְעַל כָּל מִגְדָּל גְּבוּה וְעַל כָּל חוֹמָה בְּצוּרָה: (טז) וְעַל כָּל אֲנִיּוֹת תַּרְשִׁישִׁי וְעַל כָּל שְׂכִיּוֹת הַחֲמָדָה:

And on every tall tower and on every reinforced wall, and on all Tarshish boats and on all palaces of pleasure.

13. Yeshayah 5:1-7 (Koren Jerusalem Bible)

אֲשִׁירָה נָא לִידִידֵי שִׁירַת דּוּדֵי לְכַרְמֹו כָּרֶם הָיָה לִידִידֵי בְּקֶרֶן בֶּן שָׁמֹן: וַיַּעֲזֹקֶהוּ וַיִּסְקֶלְהוּ וַיִּטְעֶהוּ שָׂרֵק וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּל בְּתוֹכוֹ וְגַם יָקַב חֲצַב בּוֹ וַיִּקּוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בְּאֲשֵׁים: וְעַתָּה יוֹשֵׁב יְרוּשָׁלַם וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה שְׁפָטוּ נָא בֵּינִי וּבֵין פְּרָמִי: מַה לַעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד לְכַרְמִי וְלֹא עָשִׂיתִי בּוֹ מִדּוּעַ קִוִּיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בְּאֲשֵׁים: וְעַתָּה אֹדִיעֶנּוּ נָא אֶתְכֶם אֵת אֲשֶׁר אָנִי עֹשֶׂה לְכַרְמִי הִסֵּר מְשׁוֹפְתוֹ וְהָיָה לְבָעַר פְּרִיץ גִּדְרוֹ וְהָיָה לְמַרְמָס: וְאֲשִׁיתָהוּ בְּתֶה לֹא יִזְמַר וְלֹא יַעֲדָר וְעַלָּה שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית וְעַל הָעֵבִים אֲצַנֶּה מִהִמָּטִיר עָלָיו מָטֵר: כִּי כָרֶם ד' צְבָקוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה נָטַע שְׁעִשְׁוּעָיו וַיִּקּוּ לְמִשְׁפָּט וְהִנֵּה מִשְׁפָּח לְצַדִּיקָה וְהִנֵּה צָעֲקָה:

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved concerning his vineyard. My wellbeloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he dug it, and cleared away its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed out a wine vat in it: and he looked that it should bring forth good grapes, but it brought forth bad grapes. And now, O inhabitant of Yerushalayim, and man of Yehuda, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done it? why was it, when I looked that it should bring forth good grapes, that it brought forth bad grapes? And now; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be eaten up; and break down its wall, and it shall be trodden down: and I will lay it waste: it shall be neither pruned, nor hoed; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they drop no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Yisra'el, and the men of Yehuda his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

Review Questions

What were the main parts of Israel which Uziahu developed?

What was Yeshayah's critique of Uziahu in Perek 2?

Why was Uziahu punished so harshly for bringing ketoret?