



Second Chronicles - Chapter Twenty Seven

III 2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23 - The Kingdom of Judah Down to the Exile (continues)

Summary of Chapter Twenty Seven

The account of Jotham's reign (750-732 BC), which includes 10 years as co-regent with his father Uzziah, is expanded from 2 Kings 15:33-38 to show that his military success and power were due to his faithfulness to God. Jotham is presented in a wholly positive way, in contrast to his father Uzziah and his son Ahaz in Chapter 28, of whom the Chronicler has nothing good to say.

III.j 2 Chronicles 27:1-9 - Reign of Jotham

Refer to the chapter summary above.

¹ Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah daughter of Zadok. ² He did what was right in the sight of the Lord just as his father Uzziah had done – only he did not invade the temple of the Lord. But the people still followed corrupt practices.

2 Chronicles 27:1-2

He did what was right in the sight of the Lord just as his father Uzziah had done. This stands in strong contrast to the evil done by the kings of Israel and some of Jotham's predecessors in Judah. Among the kings of Judah, there were good and godly kings. The pattern is seen in both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, where the son reigns as his father had before him. While this is not concretely predetermined, certainly this is a principle that shows great influence that a father has on a son.

Only he did not invade the temple of the Lord. This is a reference to Uzziah's attempt to make his own offering in the temple for which he was struck down with leprosy for the remainder of his life; refer to 2 Chronicles 26:16-21. Jotham regarded his father's sin rather as a beacon to warn him away from that rock on which Uzziah's life had been wrecked.

But the people still followed corrupt practices. 'Corrupt practices' probably refers to worship at the high places. Jotham was a relatively good, i.e. non-idolatrous king. Nevertheless, he is described as being like his father rather than like David, and he failed to centralise worship of the Lord in Jerusalem, allowing people to continue worshipping at the high places. The word **still** is important, because it reveals that this corruption did not begin with the reign of Jotham, but continued from the days of his predecessor Uzziah. Although he had a bad end to his life, the personal character of Uzziah was generally godly. Yet it was his pride that let him down and Jotham was not going to make the same mistake.

³ He built the upper gate of the house of the Lord, and did extensive building on the wall of Ophel. ⁴ Moreover, he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and forts and towers on the wooded hills. ⁵ He fought with the king of the Ammonites and prevailed against them. The Ammonites gave him that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand cors of wheat and ten thousand of barley. The Ammonites paid him the same amount in the second and the third years. ⁶ So Jotham became strong because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God.

2 Chronicles 27:3-6

He built the upper gate of the house of the Lord. This was always a positive sign in Judah. When kings and leaders were concerned about the house of the Lord, it reflected some measure of spiritual revival. The upper gate is the 'gate behind the guards' mentioned in 2 Kings 11:6, presumably damaged in the course of Joash's incursion into Jerusalem recorded in 2 Kings 14:13-14. In particular, it seems that Jotham rebuilt the link between the temple and the palace thus giving the king ease of access to the temple complex to worship the Lord on a daily basis.

His father Uzziah misunderstood the link between the royal house and the house God, demanding priestly authority. Many kings before him wanted no link between the royal house and the house of God. Jotham understood that he was a king and not a priest, yet he wanted a good, open link between the palace and the temple complex.

Charles Spurgeon comments, "Jotham must have been a man of prayer. He could not have prepared his ways thus anywhere except at the mercy-seat. He

must have been in the habit of taking his daily troubles to his God, and of seeking guidance from him in his daily difficulties, and of blessing him for his daily mercies. He must have been in constant communion with his God, or else he could not have ordered his ways aright before him.

Ophel was the higher part of the area in between the Temple Mount and the city of David: <<Afterwards he built an outer wall for the city of David west of Gihon, in the valley, reaching the entrance at the Fish Gate; he carried it around Ophel, and raised it to a very great height. He also put commanders of the army in all the fortified cities in Judah>> (2 Chronicles 33:14), and: <<Palai son of Uzai repaired opposite the Angle and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king at the court of the guard. After him Pedaiah son of Parosh and the temple servants living on Ophel made repairs up to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower>> (Nehemiah 3:25-26).

Moreover, he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and forts and towers on the wooded hills. Jotham also turned his attention to urban planning, constructing cities in the highlands of Judah that, together with a system of towers and fortification in the wooded areas, could serve both economic and military purposes. In particular, it seems that Jotham rebuilt the link between the temple and the palace as stated above. He wished to have free access from his own house to the temple. He would strengthen the link between the two houses - keeping his line of communication open to use a military term with the source of his supplies of strength and wisdom. This is one of the secrets of his prosperity and power. The building of this link between the palace and the temple was one of the chief means that he prepared his way before the Lord.

The Ammonites gave him that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand cors of wheat and ten thousand of barley. The Ammonites paid him the same amount in the second and the third years. The Ammonites had paid tribute to his father King Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26:8. This was another example of the strength of Uzziah's kingdom which was passed on to his son. He continued to extract tribute from the Ammonites, which was like a tax that recognised their lower place under Judah. The cessation of tribute after three years may reflect the rising power of Aram in the lands across the Jordan.

So Jotham became strong because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God. The same Hebrew verb is used of Uzziah in 2 Chronicles 26:16, but unlike his father, Jotham does not succumb to pride.

⁷ Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸ He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign; he reigned for sixteen years in

Jerusalem. ⁹ Jotham slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David; and his son Ahaz succeeded him.

2 Chronicles 27:7-9

Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. This was a separate record from Kings and Chronicles to which the authors had access that recorded everything of significance that occurred during the reign of the kings.

All his wars may include the initial stages of confrontation with the Syro-Ephraimite coalition.



The Resurgence of Assyrian Influence circa 740 BC

Looming over most of the latter history of the divided monarchy is the growing power and influence of Assyria. The resurgence of this ancient empire dominated much of the politics of the ancient Near East from the time of Jeroboam and Azariah until the empire's demise at the end of the 7th Century BC. Israel bore the brunt of Assyria's forays into Palestine, although Judah experienced its share of attacks as well. Assyria would eventually engulf nearly the entire Near East from Ur to Ararat to Egypt.

As the Assyrian Empire expanded westward, Aram and Israel sought to compel Judah and the other nearby states to form an anti-Assyrian alliance. Judah refused to join, therefore Aram, Israel, and perhaps Edom and Philistia attacked Judah; refer to 2 Chronicles 28:1-19. Isaiah assured King Ahaz that he needed only to trust in God, who would call upon Assyria to deal with the Aramæans and Israel.

Suffering attacks on all sides due to his refusal to join an alliance against Assyria, King Ahaz of Judah called upon King Tiglath-pileser III (also called Pul) of Assyria for help. The Assyrians captured Aram and all of Galilee and Gilead from Israel. As Isaiah had foretold, however, Ahaz's petition came at a price, for he was required to pay a large tribute to Assyria and make Judah a vassal kingdom of the empire: <<*The Lord will bring on you and on your people and on your ancestral house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah – the king of Assyria*>> (Isaiah 7:17).

Jotham slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David. After the stories of the three previous kings, each of whom started well but finished poorly, it is somewhat of a relief to read of a king who did not have such a disappointing end.