

# 2 Chronicles 17 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES						
The Kingdom of Israel						
From Splendor to Disaster						
Splendor			Disaster			
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36			
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Inaugural 2Chr 1:1-17	Solomon's Temple 2Chr 2:1-7:22	Solomon's Glory 2Chr 8:1-9:31				
Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed	
~40 Years			~393 Years			

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Click Chart from Charles Swindoll](#)

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES						
1107	1011	971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2 Samuel	1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings		

31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36	

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

**NOTE: THESE COMMENTS ARE OFFERED IN AN "AS IS" FORMAT - IF I HAVE TIME IN THE FUTURE, THEY WILL BE UPDATED.**

**CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES**

**2 Chronicles 17:1 Jehoshaphat his son then became king in his place, and made his position over Israel firm.**

- Jehoshaphat (KJV): 1Ki 15:24 22:41 1Ch 11:10 Mt 1:8, Josaphat
- and strengthened (KJV): 2Ch 12:1 26:8 32:5 1Sa 23:16 Eze 7:27 Eph 6:10
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

## THE REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT

See related description his reign in Cf. 1Ki 15:24; 22:1-50.

**Iain Duguid:** Of all the accounts of the kings after Solomon, the account of Jehoshaphat's reign is second in length only to Hezekiah's (2 Chronicles 29–32), and only he, Hezekiah, and Josiah are likened to David (17:3; 29:2; 34:2). Jehoshaphat is presented as a prominent example of good leadership throughout the land, leading to prosperity and peace, but alongside this narrative is prophetic criticism of his alliance with the "wicked" northern kingdom. While he exhibits parallels with the reign of his father, Asa, Jehoshaphat's reforms are greater, involving arrangements for teaching the "Law of the Lord" and for a justice system throughout the land (17:7–9; 19:5–11). His failings receive less censure because he "set [his] heart to seek God" (19:3; cf. 17:4; 20:32; 22:9).

**Andrew Hill:** Jehoshaphat is portrayed favorably as a man of faith and prayer and a religious reformer. The narrative in Chronicles is apparently intentionally shaped to demonstrate the parallels between the reigns of Jehoshaphat and his father Asa. His rule is not without problems, however, and like all the kings of Judah he receives a "mixed" theological review from the biblical historian (cf. 17:3-4, 6; 19:3; 20:33). Although the narrative summarizing Jehoshaphat's kingship lacks a rigid chronological framework, the dates for his twenty-five-year reign are between 872 and 848 B.C. On the basis of comparative analysis of the date formulas for Jehoshaphat's length of reign, it is generally understood he rules for three years as a coregent with his father prior to his own twenty-two-year tenure on the throne (from 869-848 B.C.; cf. 2 Kings 3:1; 8:16; 2 Chron. 20:31). (The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

**J.A. Thompson:** The story of Jehoshaphat is presented in four phases: (1) character and organization (17:1-19), (2) alliance with the Northern Kingdom (18:1-34), (3) God's rebuke and Jehoshaphat's reformation (19:1-11), and (4) Jehoshaphat's piety rewarded (20:1-37; 21:1). (The New American Commentary – Volume 9 – 1, 2 Chronicles.)

**Jehoshaphat** ("Jehovah is Judge" - reigned 873-848 BC) **his son then became king in his place, and made his position over Israel firm** - The story of Jehoshaphat is chronicled in 2Ch 17-20 and is not found in Kings. Notice that the writer refers to the southern kingdom of Judah (and Benjamin) as **Israel** which can sometimes be confusing since the northern kingdom of 10 tribes is most often called "Israel."

**Iain Duguid:** The opening chapter has provided a comprehensive picture of success and strength, a combination of seeking God evidenced in religious reforms and a nationwide teaching strategy, strong defenses, and peace with surrounding peoples, all evidence that “the Lord was with Jehoshaphat.” This becomes the literary background for the surprising alliance with the northern kingdom that follows. Deuteronomy warns of the danger of forgetting God when he has blessed (cf. Deut. 6:10–15); the tendency to pride, even arrogance, is only too common. Jehoshaphat provides a positive example of one whose “seeking the Lord” persisted after he received “riches and honor.” The “high” of God’s ways to which he set his “heart” is paralleled later by Paul’s exhortation, “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above” (Col. 3:1–2). Jehoshaphat’s organizing of teaching that went to where the people lived recognized that following God, worshiping him alone, is a matter not only of religious activity (sacrifices and corporate gatherings) but of all of life, how and where one “walks” (2 Chron. 17:3–4; John 8:12; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:1–3).

**Raymond Dillard:** The chapter is structured by further explicit elaborations on the general statements introduced in 17:1–6 (Williamson, 280): - Jehoshaphat’s army and fortifications (17:2) are developed in 17:12b–19; - his wealth and honor (17:5) are described in 17:10–12a; - aspects of his religious devotion (17:3, 6) are elaborated in 17:7–9. The Chronicler begins his account of Jehoshaphat by presenting him in an entirely favorable light. The chapter should be read with an eye to the author’s efforts to effect a parallel between Asa and Jehoshaphat. The Chronicler reminds his post-exilic audience once again that God never fails to reward fidelity. He calls attention to the importance of the public teaching of the law; the path to honor among the nations is found in obedience to it. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**August Konkel:** The last years of Asa’s reign were characterized by internal uprising and oppression. Jehoshaphat needed to consolidate his power within Judah to restore it to peace and stability. Israel had been an enemy during the days of Asa, but Jehoshaphat soon entered into alliance with Ahab (18:1–2). He established control over Israel (17:2), which included territory in Ephraim that Asa had taken over. Jehoshaphat’s international status, building enterprises, and army characterized the greatness of his rule. Archaeological excavations have revealed extensive fortification in rural Judah. A line of highway forts in the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea date to the time of Jehoshaphat (Mazar: 416-17; Japhet 1993: 751). ([Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**Geoffrey Kirkland:** Thesis — What are proper priorities for a godly leader? Jehoshaphat models 3 for us: I. HE PRIORITIZED THE PROTECTION OF GOD’S PEOPLE (1-2, 10-19) II. HE PRIORITIZED THE PURSUIT OF GOD’S GLORY (3-6) III. HE PRIORITIZED THE PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD (7-9)

**Ron Daniel** - 17:1-6 Jehoshaphat Follows David's Example - David is always the standard by which the kings' devotion to God is measured. In this case, David's great-great-great-grandson Jehoshaphat is said to have followed his example. He didn't turn to idolatry, but sought the Lord and followed His Word. Some may find fault with the fact that Jehoshaphat "took great pride in the ways of the Lord," saying that pride is a sin. But to clarify, pride is a sin when you are prideful of your own power (Lev. 26:19) and being contemptuous of others (Psa. 31:18). But it is not wrong to be proud of the Lord and His ways. Remember, that the apostle Paul said,

1Cor. 1:29 ...no man may boast before God.

1Cor. 1:31 ..."LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD."

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**Matthew Henry Notes: Chapter: 17** Here begin the life and reign of Jehoshaphat, who was one of the first three among the royal worthies, one of the best that ever swayed the sceptre of Judah since David's head was laid. He was the good son of a good father, so that, as this time, grace ran in the blood, even in the blood-royal. Happy the son that had such a father, to lay a good foundation in him and for him. Happy the father that had such a son, to build so wall upon the foundation he had laid! Happy the kingdom that was blessed with two such kings, two such reigns, together! In this chapter we have,

I. His accession to and establishment in the throne (v. 1, 2, 5).

II. His persona piety (v. 3, 4, 6).

III. The course he took to promote religion in his kingdom (v. 7-9).

IV. The mighty sway he bore among the neighbours (v. 10, 11).

V. The great strength of his kingdom, both in garrisons and standing forces (v. 12-19). Thus was his prosperity the reward of his piety and his piety the brightest grace and ornament of his prosperity.

**2Ch 17:1-9 Here we find concerning Jehoshaphat,**

I. What a wise man he was. As soon as he came to the crown he strengthened himself against Israel, 2Ch 17:1. Ahab, an active warlike prince, had now been three years upon the throne of Israel, the vigour of his beginning falling in with the decay of Asa's

conclusion. It is probable that the kingdom of Israel had, of late, got ground of the kingdom of Judah and began to grow formidable to it; so that the first thing Jehoshaphat had to do was to make his part good on that side, and to check the growing greatness of the king of Israel, which he did so effectually, and without bloodshed, that Ahab soon courted his alliance, so far was he from giving him any disturbance, and proved more dangerous as a friend than he could have been as an enemy. Jehoshaphat strengthened himself not to act offensively against Israel or invade them, but only to maintain his own, which he did by fortifying the cities that were on his frontiers, and putting garrisons, stronger than had been, in the cities of Ephraim, which he was master of, 2Ch 17:2. He did not strengthen himself, as his father did, by a league with the king of Syria, but by fair and regular methods, on which he might expect the blessing of God and in which he trusted God.

## **II. What a good man he was. It is an excellent character that is here given him.**

1. He walked in the ways of his father David. In the characters of the kings, David's ways are often made the standard, as 1 Ki. 15:3, 11; 2 Ki. 14:3; 16:2; 18:3. But the distinction is nowhere so strongly marked as here between his first ways and his last ways; for the last were not so good as the first. His ways, before he fell so foully in the matter of Uriah (which is mentioned long afterwards as the bar in his escutcheon, 1 Ki. 15:5), were good ways, and, though he happily recovered from that fall, yet perhaps he never, while he lived, fully retrieved the spiritual strength and comfort he lost by it. Jehoshaphat followed David as far as he followed God and no further. Paul himself thus limits our imitation of him (1 Co. 11:1): Follow me, as I follow Christ, and not otherwise. Many good people have had their first ways, which were their best ways, their first love, which was their strongest love; and in every copy we propose to write after, as we must single out that only which is good, so that chiefly which is best. The words here will admit another reading; they run thus: He walked in the ways of David his father (Hareshonim), those first ways, or those ancient ways. He proposed to himself, for his example, the primitive times of the royal family, those purest times, before the corruptions of the late reigns came in. See Jer. 6:16. The Septuagint leaves out David, and so refers it to Asa: He walked in the first ways of his father, and did not imitate him in what was amiss in him, towards the latter end of his time. It is good to be cautious in following the best men, lest we step aside after them.

2. He sought not to Baalim, but sought to the Lord God of his father, 2Ch 17:3, 4. The neighbouring nations had their Baalim, one had one Baal and another had another; but he abhorred them all, had nothing to do with them. He worshipped the Lord God of his father and him only, prayed to him only and enquired of him only; both are included in seeking him.

3. That he walked in God's commandments, not only worshipped the true God, but worshipped him according to his own institution, and not after the doings of Israel, 2Ch 17:4. Though the king of Israel was his neighbour and ally, yet he did not learn his way. Whatever dealings he had with him in civil matters, he would not have communion with him, nor comply with him in his religion. In this he kept close to the rule.

4. His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord ( 2Ch 17:6), or he lifted up his heart. He brought his heart to his work, and lifted up his heart in it; that is, he had a sincere regard to God in it. Unto thee, O Lord! do I lift up my soul. His heart was enlarged in that which is good, Ps. 119:32. He never thought he could do enough for God. He was lively and affectionate in his religion, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, cheerful and pleasant in it; he went on in his work with alacrity, as Jacob, who, after his vision of God at Bethel, lifted up his feet, Gen. 29:1, margin. He was bold and resolute in the ways of God and went on with courage. His heart was lifted up above the consideration of the difficulties that were in the way of his duty; he easily got over them all, and was not frightened with winds and clouds from sowing and reaping, Eccl. 11:4. Let us walk in the same spirit.

## **III. What a useful man he was, not only a good man, but a good king. He not only was good himself, but did good in his generation, did a great deal of good.**

1. He took away the teachers of lies, so images are called (Hab. 2:18), the high places and the groves, 2Ch 17:6. It is meant of those in which idols were worshipped; for those that were dedicated to the true God only were not taken away, ch. 20:33. It was only idolatry that he abolished. Nothing debauched the nation more than those idolatrous groves or images which he took away.

2. He sent forth teachers of truth. When he enquired into the state of religion in his kingdom he found his people generally very ignorant: they knew not that they did evil. Even in the last good reign there had been little care taken to instruct them in their duty; and therefore Jehoshaphat resolves to begin his work at the right end, deals with them as reasonable creatures, will not lead them blindfold, no, not into a reformation, but endeavours to have them well taught, knowing that that was the way to have them well cured. In this good work he employed,

(1.) His princes. Those about him he sent forth; those in the country he sent to teach in the cities of Judah, 2Ch 17:7. He ordered them, in the administration of justice, not only to correct the people when they did ill, but to teach them how to do better, and to give a reason for what they did, that the people might be informed of the difference between good and evil. The princes or judges upon the bench have a great opportunity of teaching people their duty to God and man, and it is not out of their province, for the laws of God are to be

looked upon as laws of the land.

(2.) The Levites and priests went with the princes, and taught in Judah, having the book of the law with them, 2Ch 17:8,9. They were teachers by office, Deu. 33:10. Teaching was part of the work for which they had their maintenance. The priests and the Levites had little else to do. But, it seems, they had neglected it, pretending perhaps that they could not get the people to hear them. "Well," says Jehoshaphat, "you shall go along with the princes, and they with their authority shall oblige the people to come and hear you; and then, if they be not well instructed, it is your fault." What an abundance of good may be done when Moses and Aaron thus go hand in hand in the doing of it, when princes with their power, and priests and Levites with their scripture learning, agree to teach the people the good knowledge of God and their duty! These itinerant judges and itinerant preachers together were instrumental to diffuse a blessed light throughout the cities of Judah. But it is said, They had the book of the law of the Lord with them.

{1.} For their own direction, that thence they might fetch all the instructions they gave to the people, and not teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

{2.} For the conviction of the people, that they might see that they had a divine warrant for what they said and delivered to them that only which they received from the Lord. Note, Ministers, when they go to teach the people, should have their Bibles with them.

#### IV. What a happy man he was.

1. How happy he was in the favour of his God, who signally owned and blessed him: The Lord was with him ( 2Ch 17:3); the word of the Lord was his helper (so the Chaldee paraphrase); the Lord established the kingdom in his hand, 2Ch 17:5. Those stand firmly that have the presence of God with them. If the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, that will establish the work of our hands and establish us in our integrity.

2. How happy he was in the affections of his people ( 2Ch 17:5): All Judah brought him presents, in acknowledgment of his kindness in sending preachers among them. The more there is of true religion among a people the more there will be of conscientious loyalty. A government that answers the end of government will be supported. The effect of the favour both of God and his kingdom was that he had riches and honour in abundance. It is undoubtedly true, though few will believe it, that religion and piety are the best friends to outward prosperity. And, observe, it follows immediately, His heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord. Riches and honour in abundance prove to many a clog and a hindrance in the ways of the Lord, an occasion of pride, security, and sensuality; but they had a quite contrary effect upon Jehoshaphat: his abundance was oil to the wheels of his obedience, and the more he had of the wealth of this world the more was his heart lifted up in the ways of the Lord.

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### James Smith - JEHOSEPHAT, THE BACKSLIDER - 2 CHRONICLES 17; 18

"The whole Cross is more easily carried than the half. It is the man who tries to make the best of both worlds who makes nothing of either."—Drummond.

Of how many of God's people it may be said, as was said of the Galatians, "Ye did run well: who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" Although there are always about us hindrances in abundance, that is no reason why those gifted with the wings of faith should be hindered in their spiritual life. Jehoshaphat, like Asa, began well, but his bright morning soon became clouded with the sorrows of failure. His character affords us both encouragement and warning. We see him—

#### I. Highly Honoured.

"The Lord was with him" (chap. 17:3). The presence of God with us is an absolute guarantee of success and sufficiency. The reason why God companied with him was "because he walked in the first ways of his father David." The first ways of David, and of his father Asa, were their best days, when their hearts were simple and perfect toward the Lord. He did not make their sins an excuse for not following after the righteousness of God. The blemishes of others are often made a stumbling-block to their virtues. Christ is the only perfect example.

#### II. Greatly Encouraged.

"His heart was encouraged in the ways of the Lord" (v. 6, margin). When Uzziah was made strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction (chap. 26:16). When pride lifts the heart, it is lifted out of the ways of the Lord into the way that leads to defeat and death. It is while we are in the ways of the Lord that we may confidently expect His uplifting. The Lord is not going to encourage that man whose manner of life is opposed to His will. "Delight thyself in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psa. 37:4).

### III. Unequally Yoked.

“Now Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab” (2Ch 18:1). Now, when he “had riches and honour in abundance.” Ahab was well known as an enemy to Jehovah. “He did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings that were before him” (1 Kings 16:33). After the friendship was formed there came, of course, the fellowship. “He went down to Ahab to Samaria.” The ungodly Ahabs are ever ready enough to have the servants of God to come down to their level. Nehemiah joined no affinity with Tobiah and Sanballat. His answer to them was, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.” Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers. What fellowship hath light with darkness? The darkness may need the light badly, but the light can have no fellowship with the darkness. While Christ lived on earth He was constantly walking amidst the dense darkness of human sin and guilt, but He had no fellowship with it. No more can ye.

### IV. Wholly Surrendered.

Not to God, but to the scheming, unprincipled Ahab. How are the mighty fallen? “Wilt thou go with me,” said Ahab, and Jehoshaphat answered him, “I am as thou art” (2Ch 18:3). Compromising has resulted in a voluntary captivity. Yet, at bottom, this answer is false, for the man who has known the power and fellowship of God can never be as that man who has ever been a stranger to God. We sell our liberty in Christ whenever we become the bondslaves of any man, or the tool of prejudice or fashion. The fear of man bringeth a snare. As long as Jehoshaphat was pledged to help Ahab, he was useless to help the cause of God. One is your Master, even Christ. Say to Him, “I am as Thou art” (2 Chron. 18:3).

### V. Secretly Dissatisfied.

When Jehoshaphat proposed that inquiry should be made at the Word of the Lord, Ahab at once “gathered together of prophets four hundred men” (2Ch 18:5). These unsent prophets were quite unanimous that it was the mind of Jehovah (whom they knew nothing about) that they should “go up.” To the king of Judah the testimony of those four hundred prophets sounded so formal and hollow that he knew there was no message from God in it. Neither numbers nor unanimity can constitute the authority of God. Ahab’s prophets were ordained to preach “smooth things,” and they did it. Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not a prophet of the Lord besides that we may inquire of him?” (2Ch 18:6). Four hundred worldly, men-pleasing preachers may be enough to keep an ecclesiastical machine going, but they are not enough to meet the needs of one single anxious soul who desires to know the mind and will of God. Words are not enough to bring settled conviction into the soul. The Christian who is satisfied with a formal powerless ministry has gone farther away from God than Jehoshaphat.

### VI. Shamefully Exposed.

“The captain of the chariots compassed him about, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the Lord helped him” (2Ch 18:30, 31). The king of Israel disguised himself, but an arrow shot at a venture found him out. Jehoshaphat confessed and was saved. Be sure your sin will find you out. But what a sorry part the king of Judah plays in this affair! What a picture of abject helplessness in the face of the enemy—he is utterly demoralised. Who is so powerless in the presence of temptation or opposition as the backslider? Yet, when their sin and folly is acknowledged before God, how ready He is to stretch forth His hand and help. Unbelief makes cowards of us all (v. 32).

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### [A Devoted Heart](#)

He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. — 2 Chronicles 20:32

Today’s Scripture & Insight: 2 Chronicles 17:1-11

A successful Christian businessman shared his story with us at church. He was candid about his struggles with faith and abundant wealth. He declared, “Wealth scares me!”

He quoted Jesus’ statement, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Luke 18:25 niv). He cited Luke 16:19-31 about the rich man and Lazarus and how in this story it was the rich man who went to hell. The parable of the “rich fool” (Luke 12:16-21) disturbed him.

“But,” the businessman stated, “I’ve learned a lesson from Solomon’s verdict on the abundance of wealth. It’s all ‘meaningless’ ” (Eccl. 2:11 niv). He determined not to let wealth get in the way of his devotion to God. Rather, he wanted to serve God with his assets and help the needy.

Throughout the centuries, God has blessed some people materially. We read of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 17:5, “The Lord established the kingdom . . . so that he had great wealth and honor.” He did not become proud or bully others with his wealth. Instead, “his heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord” (v. 6). Also, “he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from

them; he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord” (20:32).

The Lord is not against wealth for He has blessed some with it—but He’s definitely against the unethical acquisition and wrong use of it. He is worthy of devotion from all His followers. By: Lawrence Darmani (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Giving thanks to God often helps us learn contentment with what we do have. What are you thankful for?

Wealth or no wealth, devoted hearts please the Lord.

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#### **QUESTION - [Who was King Jehoshaphat in the Bible?](#)**

**ANSWER** - King Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of Judah under the divided monarchy, the son of [Asa](#). We are first introduced to him in 1 Kings 15:24 but are told nothing more than that he succeeded Asa. Later, 1 Kings 22:42 tells us that he was 35 years old when he began his reign and that he reigned 25 years (from 873 to 848 BC). 1 Kings 22 gives a brief account of his reign with 2 Chronicles 17–22 giving a more comprehensive account.

Spiritually, Jehoshaphat began his reign in a positive way. 2 Chronicles 17:3–6 gives this commendation: “The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the ways of his father David before him. He did not consult the Baals but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel. The Lord established the kingdom under his control; and all Judah brought gifts to Jehoshaphat, so that he had great wealth and honor. His heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord; furthermore, he removed the high places and the Asherah poles from Judah.” In addition, Jehoshaphat sent men throughout the kingdom to teach the people the Law of God (2 Chronicles 17:7–9).

Militarily, Jehoshaphat fortified his defenses, primarily against the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Chronicles 17:1–3). The surrounding nations feared Judah and brought tribute (2 Chronicles 17:10–19).

After making peace with Israel, Jehoshaphat apparently tried to reach out to [Ahab](#), the king of Israel. Ahab was one of the wickedest kings of Israel, and Jehoshaphat could not have been ignorant of his character. 1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 18 relate the following account: Ahab asks Jehoshaphat to help him attack Syria. Jehoshaphat wisely requests that they consult the LORD on the matter. Ahab gathers 400 of his prophets who encourage the attack. Jehoshaphat recognizes that these are not genuine prophets of the LORD, and the exchange that follows between Jehoshaphat and Ahab is almost comical: “But Jehoshaphat asked, ‘Is there no longer a prophet of the Lord here whom we can inquire of?’ The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, ‘There is still one prophet through whom we can inquire of the Lord, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah.’”

So, Micaiah is summoned, and the question is posed. Micaiah responds with high irony: “Attack and be victorious, . . . for the Lord will give it into the king’s hand.” This answer exasperates King Ahab: “How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord?” Micaiah then tells Ahab the hard truth: “I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, ‘These people have no master’” (1 Kings 22:15–18).

In spite of what seems to be an acknowledgement that Micaiah speaks for the LORD, Jehoshaphat joins Ahab in the attack. Ahab is killed, and Jehoshaphat narrowly escapes. When Jehoshaphat returns home, he is reprimanded by a prophet of the Lord for his collaboration with Ahab: “Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him and said to the king, ‘Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord? Because of this, the wrath of the Lord is on you. There is, however, some good in you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God’” (2 Chronicles 19:2–3).

Jehoshaphat continues to make reforms, appointing judges throughout the land to handle disputes and charging them to make righteous judgments and to fear the Lord (2 Chronicles 19:4–11).

In 2 Chronicles 20, an alliance of nations decides to march against Judah. Jehoshaphat seeks the Lord and asks all Judah to fast (verse 3). Through a man named Jahaziel, the Lord tells Jehoshaphat that He will deliver Judah without a fight (verses 14–17). Jehoshaphat goes out to battle with singers leading the way, singing praise to the Lord. The alliance of nations turn against each other and begin to kill each other (verses 22–23). The men of Judah spend three days collecting the spoils of war that were abandoned by their enemies (verse 25).

Although Jehoshaphat started his reign by removing the idolatrous high places, at the end of his reign, there were still high places that had not been taken away (1 Kings 22 and 2 Chronicles 20). Jehoshaphat started well, but his diligence flagged, and the idol-worship returned. First Kings 22:41–50 and 2 Chronicles 20:35–37 record a joint ship-building venture that Jehoshaphat attempted with the wicked king Ahaziah of Israel. Jehoshaphat, who had already been chastised for an alliance with Ahab, is once again confronted by a prophet with a warning. It seems that Jehoshaphat heeded the warning and did not allow Ahaziah’s men to sail with



the Judeans, but the judgment still came to pass: the fleet was wrecked, and Jehoshaphat's foolish investment with Ahaziah proved futile.

Jehoshaphat is still considered a good and godly king, but his reign ended rather badly. He kept trying to build an alliance with Israel, even though the kings of Israel were obviously wicked. Jehoshaphat worshiped the Lord and led his people in seeking the Lord, but the hearts of the people were never fully changed. They reverted to pagan practices. King Jehoshaphat was unable to pass his faith on to his son [Jehoram](#) who reigned after him. Jehoram started by killing all of his brothers, and he then made an alliance with Israel by marrying the daughter of Ahab (2 Chronicles 21:4–6). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 17:2 He placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had captured.**

- placed forces (KJV): 2Ch 11:11,12
- in the cities (KJV): 2Ch 15:8

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 13:19+ Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured from him several cities, Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages and Ephron with its villages.

2 Chronicles 15:8+ Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from **the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim** He then restored the altar of the LORD which was in front of the porch of the LORD.



**He placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had captured** - Jehoshaphat readied the nation for war if the northern tribes would attack. In 2 Chronicles 15:8 we saw that King Asa had extended his control northward to the hill country of Ephraim.

**Walton - cities of Ephraim** - (SEE MAP ABOVE) It seems a natural continuation of this policy for Jehoshaphat to fortify these



unspecified cities. There is also no specific mention of the number of troops stationed here. We know from the Lachish letters of a later period that regular correspondence was maintained with these types of outposts and that fire signals were used as an early warning system. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 437](#))

**NIV Study Bible** ([BORROW](#)) on the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim- Abijah (2Ch 13:19), Asa (2Ch 15:8) and now Jehoshaphat had managed to hold these cities; they would be lost under Amaziah (2Ch 25:17-24).

**Frederick Mabie:** While Jehoshaphat's military efforts in the tribal area of Ephraim might be seen as provocative, the relationship between the northern kingdom and southern kingdom is characterized as one of peace solidified via a political marriage alliance.

**2 Chronicles 17:3 The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals,**

- the Lord (KJV): 2Ch 15:2,9 Ge 39:2,3,21 Ex 3:12 4:12 Jos 1:5,9 Judges 2:18 6:12 2Sa 5:10 1Ch 22:18 Ps 46:7,11 Isa 8:10 41:10 Mt 1:23 18:20 Mt 28:20 2Ti 4:22
- he walked (KJV): 2Sa 8:15 1Ki 11:6 15:3,4 2Ki 14:3 16:2 18:3 22:2 Ps 132:1-5
- his father David (KJV): or, his father, and of David, 2Ch 14:2-5,11 15:8-13
- sought (KJV): Judges 2:11 8:33 Jer 2:23

**The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the example of his father David's earlier days and did not seek the Baals** - Note the passage did not seek the Baals. This implies that others did consult the idols! Recall that "baal," can mean "lord" or "husband," and thus corresponded with the picture of idolatry as spiritual adultery (See Israel the Wife of Jehovah).

**Walton** says **seek the Baals** refers "to asking the deity for oracles. This would usually occur at a shrine dedicated to the deity, and the oracle would be mediated by the priests of that deity. In the ancient world oracular answers were often given by diviners, who would read favorable or unfavorable answers in the entrails of a sacrificed animal. Even while the Israelites fully acknowledged Yahweh as their national patron deity, some were inclined to continue to associate Baal with fertility and to consult him regarding agricultural issues. Also on daily issues such as sickness and health, they sometimes chose to look for information from Baal rather than from Yahweh (see 2 Kings 1:2). ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 438](#))

THOUGHT - Who do we consult on daily issues of life? God or the "baals" of this world? Do we go to google or to God? Of course google can be helpful, but we should never replace consulting with the God especially on substantial life issues.

**Utley** on the **baals** - Ba'al was the male fertility god of the Canaanite pantheon. This worship could be expressed as a singular (cf. 1 Kgs. 16:31) or a plural, as here (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:18). This fertility god was worshiped by imitation magic at local high places (i.e., ritual sex). Every town and village had their own high place.

**Baals** ([01168](#)) **ba'al** (See this entry for **detailed discussion of baal and related words**) refers to the pagan god who was called by the name "Baal". Elijah contended with and exterminated the prophets of Baal (1 Ki 18:18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 40). "Baal" was the Canaanite name for the Syrian god Hadad, god of storms and wars. The plural "Baals" (be'ālīm) suggests the many local varieties of the worship of Baal (cf. Baal Peor, Num. 25:3; Baal Gad, Josh. 11:17; Baal-Berith, Judges 9:4; Baal-Zebub, 2 Kings 1:2). In Canaan the goddess Ashtoreth was the consort of Baal, known in Syria as 'Athtart and in Babylonia as Ishtar. Ashtoreth was the goddess of fertility. Baal worship involved the most debasing immorality imaginable. One of the more incredible mentions of Baal is Jehu's eradication of them from the northern kingdom (see 2 Ki 10:18-28). Before God would use Gideon to deliver His people from the Moabites, He first had him tear down his father's backyard altar to Baal (Jdg 6:25, 28, 30-31 [note](#)). As a result Gideon was named Jerrubball ("Let **Baal** contend against him" - Jdg 6:32 [note](#)). Under Gideon Israel was set free from Moabite oppression, but apparently they people were not set free from the "seed" of Baal worship in their hearts for "Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot (SPIRITUAL ADULTERY!) with the **Baals**, and made **Baal**-berith their god" (Jdg 8:33 [note](#))! Wow! Our hearts are more deceitful than all else and are desperately sick (Jer 17:9)! In 1 Sa 7:4 we see that "Israel removed the **Baals** and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone" but they must have backslide because we see their cry in 1 Sam 12:10! Little children, **guard** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves from idols. (1 John 5:21+)

**Note Baal most often found in times of the Kings and Chronicles!** Num. 22:41; Jos. 13:17; Jdg. 2:11; Jdg. 2:13; Jdg. 3:7; Jdg. 6:25; Jdg. 6:28; Jdg. 6:30; Jdg. 6:31; Jdg. 6:32; Jdg. 8:33; Jdg. 10:6; Jdg. 10:10; 1 Sam.

7:4; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Ki. 16:31; 1 Ki. 16:32; 1 Ki. 18:18; 1 Ki. 18:19; 1 Ki. 18:21; 1 Ki. 18:22; 1 Ki. 18:25; 1 Ki. 18:26; 1 Ki. 18:40; 1 Ki. 19:18; 1 Ki. 22:53; 2 Ki. 3:2; 2 Ki. 10:18; 2 Ki. 10:19; 2 Ki. 10:20; 2 Ki. 10:21; 2 Ki. 10:22; 2 Ki. 10:23; 2 Ki. 10:25; 2 Ki. 10:26; 2 Ki. 10:27; 2 Ki. 10:28; 2 Ki. 11:18; 2 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 21:3; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 23:5; 2 Chr. 17:3; 2 Chr. 23:17; 2 Chr. 24:7; 2 Chr. 28:2; 2 Chr. 33:3; 2 Chr. 34:4; Jer. 2:8; Jer. 2:23; Jer. 7:9; Jer. 9:14; Jer. 11:13; Jer. 11:17; Jer. 12:16; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 23:13; Jer. 23:27; Jer. 32:29; Jer. 32:35; Hos. 2:8; Hos. 2:13; Hos. 2:17; Hos. 11:2; Hos. 13:1; Zeph. 1:4

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**Bob Utley has summary of why the LORD was with Jehoshaphat** There are several reasons given.

1. He followed the example of early David, 2 Chr. 17:3 (i.e., the Davidic covenant of 2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17 is the theological key, cf. 2 Kgs. 2:2; 2 Chr. 34:2).
  2. He did not practice fertility worship, 2 Chr. 17:3.
  3. He sought the God of David, 2 Chr. 17:4 (see note at 2 Chr. 7:14).
  4. He obeyed YHWH's commandments, 2 Chr. 17:4 (see Special Topic: Keep).
  5. He did not act like the northern tribes, 2 Chr. 17:4.
  6. He took pride in the ways of the Lord, 2 Chr. 17:6 (lit. "his heart was high in the ways of YHWH").
  7. He removed the high places, 2 Chr. 17:6.
  8. He sent
    1. five officials
    2. nine Levites (cf. 2 Chr. 35:3)
    3. two priests into the cities of Judah to teach the Law of Moses, 2 Chr. 17:7-9 (cf. Deut. 6:4-9; 33:10).
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## Is Fear Healthy?

The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom. —Proverbs 15:33

During a severe thunderstorm, a mother tucked her child into bed and turned off the light. Frightened by the tempest, he asked, "Mommy, will you sleep with me?" Hugging him, she replied, "I can't, dear. I have to sleep with Daddy." Stepping out of the room, she heard, "That big sissy!"

Fear is real. But it's not always negative. In 2 Chronicles 17:3-10, we read about a healthy, positive fear that prevented neighboring countries from going to war against Judah. What had caused this fear? We are told that "the fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat" (v.10).

A respectful fear of the Lord was also what King Jehoshaphat desired for his own people. So he made it a priority that they be taught God's Word. He knew that if the people were in awe of the Almighty, they would humble themselves and obey Him. Doing what was right would bring prosperity to Judah and respect from neighboring countries.

Proverbs 15:33 declares, "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom." Those who fear Him act with wisdom; they walk faithfully before Him as they obey His commands. —Albert Lee (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God dwells in light and holiness,  
In splendor and in might;  
And godly fear of His great power  
Can help us do what's right.  
—D. De Haan

The right kind of fear will keep us from doing wrong.

**2 Chronicles 17:4 but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did.**

NET 2 Chronicles 17:4 but instead sought the God of his ancestors and obeyed his commands, unlike the Israelites.

CSB 2 Chronicles 17:4 but sought the God of his father and walked by His commands, not according to the practices of Israel.

ESV 2 Chronicles 17:4 but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel.

NIV 2 Chronicles 17:4 but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel.

NLT 2 Chronicles 17:4 He sought his father's God and obeyed his commands instead of following the evil practices of the kingdom of Israel.

- walked (KJV): Lu 1:6 1Th 2:12 4:1
- not after (KJV): 1Ki 12:28,30,33 13:33,34 16:31-33 2Ki 8:18 17:19 Jer 3:7,8 Ho 4:15

## JEHOSHAPHAT'S OBEDIENCE

**but sought the God of his father, followed His commandments, and did not act as Israel did** - The NLT has "instead of following the evil practices of the kingdom of Israel," so this refers use of "Israel" refers to the Northern Kingdom. Note the threefold description - sought God, kept His commandments and did not do evil.

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### A Father To Follow

[Jehoshaphat] sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments. —2 Chronicles 17:4

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 17:1-10

When I think of my father, I think of this saying: "He didn't tell me how to live; he lived, and he let me watch him do it." During my youth, I watched my dad walk with God. He participated in Sunday morning church services, taught an adult Bible-study class, helped with counting the offering, and served as a deacon. Outside of church, he faithfully defended the gospel and read his Bible. I saw him express his love for the Lord through outward actions.

Asa, king of Judah, modeled devotion to God for a season in his life (2 Ch 14:2). He removed the idols from his kingdom, restored the altar of the Lord, and led the people into a covenant with God (2Ch 15:8-12). Asa's son Jehoshaphat carried on this legacy by seeking "the God of his father and walk[ing] in His commandments" (2Ch 17:4). Jehoshaphat purged the land of idol worship (2Ch 17:6) and sent out priests and Levites to teach God's law in all of the cities of Judah (2Ch 17:7-9).

Jehoshaphat's reign resembled that of his father; he faithfully honored Asa's godly example. Yet even more important, Jehoshaphat's "heart took delight in the ways of the Lord" (2Ch 17:6). Today, if you're looking for a father to follow, remember your heavenly Father and take delight in His ways. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

We magnify our Father God  
With songs of thoughtful praise;  
As grateful children we confess  
How perfect are His ways.  
—Ball

We honor God's name when we call Him our Father and live like His Son.

**2 Chronicles 17:5 So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor.**

- the Lord (KJV): 2Sa 7:25,26 1Ki 9:4,5 Ps 127:1 132:12 1Pe 5:10
- brought (KJV): Heb. gave
- presents (KJV): 2Ch 32:23 1Sa 10:27 1Ki 4:21 10:25 Ps 68:29 72:10 76:11 Mt 2:11
- he had riches (KJV): 2Ch 1:15 9:27 18:1 32:27-29 Ge 13:2 26:13,14 De 8:13,14 1Ki 10:27 Job 42:12 Mt 6:33

**So the LORD established the kingdom in his control, and all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor.**

**Raymond Dillard:** Wealth, honor, and fame are part of the repertoire of themes which show divine favor in Chronicles. Not only do David and Solomon enjoy these tokens of God's pleasure (1 Chr 29:2–5, 28; 2 Chr 9:13–27), but so do Jehoshaphat (17:5; 18:1), Uzziah (26:8, 15), and Hezekiah (32:27). (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**Utley** notes "YHWH blessed Jehoshaphat by (1) establishing his kingdom, 2 Chr. 17:5, (2) all Judah bringing tribute, 2 Chr. 17:5, (2a) expected gifts to a new king (2b) taxes, cf. 1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Kgs. 10:25 (3) great riches and honor, 2 Chr. 17:5 (4) protection from attack by the surrounding nations because of their dread of YHWH, 2 Chr. 17:10 (5) gifts brought by Philistines, 2 Chr. 17:11 (6) animals brought by Arabians, 2 Chr. 17:11 (Josephus, Antiq. 8.15.1., says they brought more every year) (7) he grew greater and greater, 2 Chr. 17:12 - built cities, large army

**2 Chronicles 17:6 He took great pride in the ways of the LORD and again removed the high places and the Asherim from Judah.**

- his heart (KJV): De 28:47 Job 22:26
- lifted up (KJV): that is, was encouraged
- in the ways (KJV): Ps 18:21,22 119:1 138:5 Ho 14:9 Ac 13:10
- he took away (KJV): 2Ch 14:3 15:17 19:3 20:33 31:1 34:3-7 1Ki 22:43

#### **Related Passage:**

1 Kings 22:43 He walked in all the way of Asa his father; he did not turn aside from it, doing right in the sight of the LORD. However, the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.

### **REMOVAL OF DEPRAVED FALSE WORSHIP**

**He took great pride in the ways of the LORD** literally "his heart was lifted up," which was positive and not negative like most of the mentions of this phrase (cf. Deut. 8:14; 2 Chr. 26:16; Ps. 131:1)

**THOUGHT** - Oh, that the Spirit would give each of us reading these notes a spirit of pride in the ways of the LORD. In Jesus' Name and for His honor. Amen

**and again removed the high places ([bamah](#)) and the Asherim ([Asherah](#)) from Judah** - Asa had made an attempt to rid the land of the high places, but apparently the people kept reopening them (cf. 2 Chr. 15:17; 20:33) thus the phrase again removed (Hezekiah 2 Kgs. 18:4 and Josiah 2 Kgs. 23:4-8 also removed the high places). Sadly despite Asa's and Jehoshaphat's efforts to remove the high places they reappeared (2Ch 20:33).

Asherah poles were Canaanite fertility symbols which played an important role in the people's depraved nature religion and were probably images of Asherah, Baal's mother and El's consort, and may have served as incense stands in Baal worship. It is in the period of the divided monarchy that the Asherah cult flourished both in Israel and Judah, though its existence before is documented by the command in Exodus 34:13, the prohibition of Deut. 16:21, and the incident at the threshold of Gideon's life of service to God, Judges 6:25ff. [See below to note](#) that most uses of the word **Asherim** ([Asherah](#)) were in the depraved times of the Judges and the following times of the Kings and Chronicles.

**Believer's Study Bible** - v. 6-9) The heart desire of Jehoshaphat was to follow after the Lord (cf. vv. 3-5). His desire was so pronounced that the unusual expression "his heart took delight in the ways of the Lord" is used to describe it. He recognized the need for constant vigil against idolatry. Even during the reign and revival in the days of Asa, idolatry continued to recur in Judah (cf. 15:1, note). In order to accomplish his spiritual warfare against idolatry, Jehoshaphat removed high places and idols and sent out prophets and Levites to teach the leaders of Judah in "the Law of the Lord" (vv. 7-9). The expression "the Book of the Law of the Lord" probably refers to the Pentateuch, or Torah (cf. 34:14; 1 Chr. 29:29, note; Ps. 119).

**Ryrie** - Like his father, Asa, Jehoshaphat removed the high places but not totally (cf. 1 Kings 22:43).

**Iain Duguid:** The interplay of human and divine action is seen in the statement that "The Lord established the kingdom in his hand" (2 Chron. 17:5), balancing the opening statement that Jehoshaphat "strengthened himself" (v. 1). It is God's "kingdom," and the Lord placed it "in the hand of the sons of David" (13:8)—until God later gave it "into [the] hand" of the "king of the Chaldeans" (36:17). The statement that "His heart was courageous" (lit., "His heart was high") elsewhere describes negatively the pride and arrogance of

Uzziah and Hezekiah after they had become strong and enjoyed benefits (26:16; 32:25, 26; cf. Ps. 131:1; Prov. 16:5). What stands out uniquely regarding Jehoshaphat is that after he received "great riches and honor," his "pride" was "in the ways of the Lord" as he removed the "high places"

On the Asherim see [FERTILITY WORSHIP OF THE ANE](#)

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**High places** (01116) [bamah](#) Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je 7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - [NET Note](#) = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp Isa 58:14) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in Ps 78:58 = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Chr 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and [Josiah](#) (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about [Josiah](#) 300 years earlier = 1Ki 13:2) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son [Manasseh](#) rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them!

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high places** in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

One of the most incredible (and saddest) verses in the OT (in my opinion) is "Then Solomon built **a high place** for [Chemosh](#) the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon." (1Ki 11:7, cp 1Ki 3:3 = Solomon had "half a heart" for God!) This was too much for Jehovah and He declared that the 12 tribes would be split as a result of Solomon's sin! Sin is costly. You may think you are getting away with it, but you are not! You may think you are the wisest man in the world (like Solomon) but you are really the most foolish (as Solomon was)! There was one high place that was not idolatrous (at least not at the outset) - "Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness." (2Chr 1:3, cp 1Chr 16:39-40, 21:29).

**Asherim** (0842) [Asherah](#) refers to "poles" representing and/or associated with the goddess Asherah - these poles could be cut down and burned (Jdg. 6:25-26). They were made (1Ki 14:15) and set up (1Ki 14:23) after being carved (2Ki 21:7). In many cases, Asherah clearly refers to the deity and not to an image or symbol (Judg. 3:7, 1 Ki. 18:19 and 2 Ki. 23:4). **W E Vine** - *ashērâ* refers to a cultic object representing the presence of the Canaanite goddess Asherah. When the people of Israel entered Palestine, they were to have nothing to do with the idolatrous religions of its inhabitants.

**Asherah - 40v** - Exod. 34:13; Deut. 7:5; Deut. 12:3; Deut. 16:21; Jdg. 3:7; Jdg. 6:25; Jdg. 6:26; Jdg. 6:28; Jdg. 6:30; 1 Ki. 14:15; 1 Ki. 14:23; 1 Ki. 15:13; 1 Ki. 16:33; 1 Ki. 18:19; 2 Ki. 13:6; 2 Ki. 17:10; 2 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 18:4; 2 Ki. 21:3; 2 Ki. 21:7; 2 Ki. 23:4; 2 Ki. 23:6; 2 Ki. 23:7; 2 Ki. 23:14; 2 Ki. 23:15; 2 Chr. 14:3; 2 Chr. 15:16; 2 Chr. 17:6; 2 Chr. 19:3; 2 Chr. 24:18; 2 Chr. 31:1; 2 Chr. 33:3; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 34:3; 2 Chr. 34:4; 2 Chr. 34:7; Isa. 17:8; Isa. 27:9; Jer. 17:2; Mic. 5:14

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**F B Meyer - Sursum corda! Lift up your hearts!** How beautiful is this ejaculation in the Communion Service of the Church of England, and the response, "We lift them up unto the Lord." I never hear it without the thrill of a holy impulse passing through me. It is possible, and it is meet and right, to lift up our hearts from the sordid cases and pressing responsibilities of daily life, into the calm, serene presence of God our Father.

Lift up your heart to God, as a child its face to be kissed. Lift it up free from mistrust and sinful stain, and unkind feeling toward any. Lift it up in holy joy and inspiration. Lift it up as a censer filled with the hot coals, from which sweet fragrance exhales. And God will bend down to lift it higher, and fill it with His peace and joy and purity.

In hours of depression look up, be lifted. Sursum corda! When the foe is pressing you most severely, look up, your redemption draweth nigh. When the river has to be crossed, when the last farewell must be said, when the flesh fails, let your mind and heart

thither ascend, and there continually dwell where Jesus has entered as your Forerunner.

If you would lift up your heart, you must be in the ways of the Lord, as the good Jehoshaphat. You must seek the Lord God, and walk in His commandments. You must take away the high places and groves of idolatry and impurity. Beware of the world's birdlime! Shake yourself from the bands and bonds that would detain you. Oh, heart of mine, why is thy flight so low? Lift thyself up and sit down with Christ in the heavenly places! "Unto Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. Let not mine enemies triumph over me!"

**2 Chronicles 17:7 Then in the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah;**

- he sent (KJV): In these verse we have an account of a remarkable itinerant ministry established by Jehoshaphat, in which three classes of men were employed: 1. the Princes; 2. the Levites; 3. the Priests. We may presume that the Princes instructed the people in the nature of the civil law and constitution of the kingdom; that the Levites instructed them in every thing that appertained to the temple service, and ritual law; and that the Priests instructed them in the nature and design of their religion. Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to God, to the king, and to each other; they therefore became as one man; and against a people thus united, on such principles, no enemy could be successful. De 4:5 Ps 34:11 51:13 Ec 1:12 12:9,10 Isa 49:23
- to teach (KJV): 2Ch 15:3 30:22 35:3 De 33:10 Ne 8:7,8,13,14 9:3 Mt 4:23 Mk 4:2 Lu 4:43,44 Ac 1:1

### TAUGHT THE LAW IN THE LAND

**Then in the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah;**

**Iain Duguid:** Early in his reign, Jehoshaphat initiated a broad program of teaching, involving lay officials (who would represent royal authority), Levites, and priests in an itinerant task "through all the cities of Judah."

**Adam Clarke:** We may presume that the princes instructed the people in the nature of the civil law and constitution of the kingdom; the Levites instructed them in everything that appertained to the temple service, and ritual law; and the priest instructed them in the nature and design of the religion they professed. Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to God, to the king, and to each other. They became, therefore, as one man; and against a people thus united, on such principles, no enemy could be successful.

**Andrew Hill:** The curriculum consists of the "Book of the Law," presumably some form of the Pentateuch – perhaps more specifically the Covenant Code (Ex. 19-24) or even what we now know as the book of Deuteronomy. . . The verb "to teach" (Imd; 2 Chron. 17:8, 9) is a common word for instruction in the Old Testament (cf. Deut. 4:10; 5:1). It implies that education is a process of assimilation, not the dumping of information. The teacher stimulates the learner to imitate the desired action or behavioral response by word and example. The program appears to have been one of unrestricted access to religious education, as the "people" of Judah are the target audience of this "tuition-free" instruction (2 Chron. 17:9). (The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

**Geoffrey Kirkland:** The priorities in the teaching: 1. Instruct the MIND — teach/instruct/impart/preach/proclaim 2. Engage the PEOPLE — all the cities, in Judah, of Judah 3. Know the WORD — had the Law WITH THEM\*\* 4. Teach the WORD — they taught... they taught... they were teaching... 5. Keep the MISSION — they \*went\* throughout ALL the cities 6. Maintain the PRIORITY — they were teaching the people (didn't get sidetracked or distracted)

**Frederick Mabie:** It is noteworthy that these individuals go out to teach God's Word (in analogy to the going forth built into the Great Commission; cf. Mt 28:19-20), rather than expecting the people to come to them.

**Ron Daniel** - Jehoshaphat knew that the Word of God was vitally important to his nation. And so he sent officials and Levites to teach the people the book of the law of the Lord.

**2 Chronicles 17:8 and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah and Tobadonijah, the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests.**

- priests (KJV): Ezr 7:1-6 Mal 2:7



and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nathaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah and Tobadonijah, the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests

**2 Chronicles 17:9 They taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the LORD with them; and they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.**

- they taught (KJV): 2Ch 35:3 Ne 8:7
- the book (KJV): De 6:6-9 31:11-13 Jos 1:7,8 Isa 8:20 Mt 15:2-9 28:19,20 Lu 4:17-19 Joh 5:39,46 Ac 13:15 15:21 28:23 Ro 3:2 1Pe 4:11
- throughout (KJV): Mt 10:23 11:1 Ac 8:40

**They taught in Judah, having the book of the law of the LORD with them; and they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught among the people.**

**G Campbell Morgan** - With the accession of Jehoshaphat to the throne of Judah, a period of very definite reformation commenced within the kingdom. In this chapter we have, first, the account of his own relationship to God, and the resulting blessing that came to him. Then follows this most interesting account of how he made known the law of Jehovah anew throughout the land. The method adopted was what in these modern times we might describe as the holding of Special Missions throughout the cities of Judah, for the specific purpose of proclaiming and interpreting "the book of the law of Jehovah." Those who went forth to this work were priests, Levites, and representatives of the princes. Thus Jehoshaphat put into practice himself and, by these special methods, provoke his people to put into practice, the principle which Azariah had declared to his father. Coincident with this activity within the kingdom, a remarkable fear of Jehovah fell upon their enemies round about, so that they ceased to make war upon Jehoshaphat. Thus God was with the man who was with Him. The result was that there was opportunity for strengthening the kingdom within, by the building of castles and cities, by commerce, and by the carrying out of many works. This story has a present value. No better service can be rendered to the nation than that of proclaiming the Word of Jehovah to the people, in cities, towns, villages, and hamlets. By such proclamation the heart of the people may be turned to Jehovah, and so He be enabled to do for them all that is in His heart.

**2 Chronicles 17:10 Now the dread of the LORD was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.**

- the fear (KJV): 2Ch 14:14 Ge 35:5 Ex 15:14-16 Jos 2:9-11
- fell (KJV): Heb. was
- so that (KJV): 2Ch 16:9 Ex 34:24 Pr 16:7

#### **Related Passages:**

1 Chronicles 14:17 Then the fame of David went out into all the lands; and the LORD brought the fear of him on all the nations.

2 Chronicles 14:14 They destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and they despoiled all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.

### **DREAD OF THE LORD**

Now the **dread** of the LORD was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat - **Dread** means fear, which can be a good thing when it is reverential. In this context the pagans did not have a reverential fear but a shaking fear of Jehovah. The result was they were afraid to attack Judah. This is a manifestation of the protective hand of Jehovah in response to Jehoshaphat's efforts of spiritual renewal.

**Iain Duguid:** A sign of blessing is the response of the "kingdoms of the lands that were around" (cf. 1 Chron. 29:30). When others see physical signs that God is with his people, the "fear of the Lord" is often the response. While commonly following military victory (2 Chron. 14:14; 20:29; 1 Chron. 14:17; cf. Josh. 2:8-11), such response may also flow from blessings that accompany walking in God's commandments (2 Chron. 7:4; cf. Deut. 4:5-8; Matt. 5:16). Here "tribute" is brought that reflects the life of the peoples: "presents and silver" from the coastal Philistines and "rams and goats" from the Arabian herdsmen to the south (cf. 2 Chron. 26:6-8;



contrast 21:16–17). Like David (1 Chron. 11:9), Jehoshaphat grows in prominence.

**Frederick Mabie:** The tribute brought from Philistines and Arabs, together with statements of military fortifications, implies that the southern kingdom now has hegemony over the caravan routes across the Arabah and Negev to the Coastal highway. This control provides a lucrative source of tax and tribute income for the southern kingdom during Jehoshaphat's administration. This economic and political stability in turn allows for further military strengthening, building projects, and governmental expansion (see 17:12-19). The Arabs noted here are likely semi-nomadic tribes in the desert regions to the south of the Judean Negev and portions of the Sinaitic and (perhaps) Arabian Peninsulas.

**Ron Daniel** -10-11 The Nations Fear Judah. In the book of Deuteronomy, God made a promise to the Jews. If they were careful to keep the commandments, loved the Lord, and walked in His ways, then...Deut. 11:25 *"No man will be able to stand before you; the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land..."* God is keeping His word because Judah was keeping the Word.

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**Matthew Henry Notes: 2Ch 17:10-19 We have here a further account of Jehoshaphat's great prosperity and the flourishing state of his kingdom.**

### **I. He had good interest in the neighbouring princes and nations**

Though he was not perhaps so great a soldier as David (which might have made him their terror), nor so great a scholar as Solomon (which might have made him their oracle), yet the fear of the Lord fell so upon them (that is, God so influenced and governed their spirits) that they had all a reverence for him, 2Ch 17:10. And,

1. None of them made war against him. God's good providence so ordered it that, while the princes and priests were instructing and reforming the country, none of his neighbours gave him any molestations, to take him off from that good work. Thus when Jacob and his sons were going to worship at Bethel the terror of God was upon the neighbouring cities, that they did not pursue after them, Gen. 35:5, and see Ex. 34:24.
2. Many of them brought presents to him (2Ch 17:11), to secure his friendship. Perhaps these were a tribute imposed upon them by Asa, who made himself master of the cities of the Philistines, and the tents of the Arabians, 2Ch 14:14, 15. With the 7700 rams, and the same number of he-goats, which the Arabians brought, there was probably a proportionable number of ewes and lambs, she-goats and kids.

### **II. He had a very considerable stores laid up in the cities of Judah.**

He pulled down his barns, and built larger (2Ch 17:12), castles and cities of store, for arms and victuals. He was a man of business, and aimed at the public good in all his undertakings, either to preserve the peace or prepare for war.

### **III. He had the militia in good order.**

It was never in better since David modelled it. Five lord-lieutenants (if I may so call them) are here named, with the numbers of those under their command (the serviceable men, that were fit for war in their respective districts), three in Judah, and two in Benjamin. It is said of one of these great commanders, Amasiah, that he willingly offered himself unto the Lord (2Ch 17:16), not only to the king, to serve him in this post, but to the Lord, to glorify him in it. He was the most eminent among them for religion, he accepted the place, not for the honour, or power, or profit of it, but for conscience' sake towards God, that he might serve his country,. It was usual for great generals then to offer of their spoils to the Lord, 1 Chr. 26:26. But this good man offered himself first to the Lord, and then his dedicated things. The number of the soldiers under these five generals amounts to 1,160,000 men, a vast number for so small a compass of ground as Judah's and Benjamin's lot to furnish out and maintain. Abijah could bring into the field but 400,000 (2Ch 13:3), Asa not 600,000 (2Ch 14:8), yet Jehoshaphat has at command almost 1,200,000. But it must be considered,

1. That God had promised to make the seed of Abraham like the sand of the sea for number.
2. There had now been a long peace.
3. We may suppose that the city of Jerusalem was very much enlarged.
4. Many had come over to them from the kingdom of Israel (2Ch 15:19), which would increase the numbers of the people.
5. Jehoshaphat was under a special blessing of God, which made his affairs to prosper greatly. The armies, we may suppose, were dispersed all the country over, and each man resided for the most part on his own estate; but they appeared often, to be mustered and trained, and were ready at call whenever there was occasion. The commanders waited on the king (2Ch 17:19) as officers of his court, privy-counsellors, and ministers of state.

But, lastly, observe, It was not this formidable army that struck a terror upon the neighbouring nations, that restrained them from attempting any thing against Israel, or obliged them to pay tribute, but the fear of God which fell upon them when Jehoshaphat reformed his country and set up a preaching ministry in it, 2Ch 17:10. The ordinances of God are more the strength and safety of a kingdom than its military force-its men of God more than its men of war.

**2 Chronicles 17:11 Some of the Philistines brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat; the Arabians also brought him flocks, 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats.**

- brought (KJV): 2Ch 17:5 9:14 26:8 2Sa 8:2 2Ki 3:4

## NATIONS BRING TRIBUTE TO JUDAH

**Some of the [Philistines](#) brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat; the Arabians ([note](#)) also brought him flocks, 7,700 rams and 7,700 male goats** - This was another evidence of the blessing of Jehovah on Jehoshaphat because of his faithfulness to seek the LORD. The Arabians were the peoples who inhabited the fringes of the Syrian desert, extending also into the Negev and the Arabian peninsula.

**Walton** - Arabs begin to be mentioned in Assyrian royal inscriptions at about this time (for instance, they were one of the allies in the [Battle of Qarqar](#)) ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 438](#))

**2 Chronicles 17:12 So Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater, and he built fortresses and store cities in Judah.**

- waxed great (KJV): 2Ch 18:1 1Ch 29:25
- in Judah (KJV): 2Ch 8:2-6 11:5-12 14:6,7 26:6-9 27:4 32:5,27-29
- castles (KJV): or, palaces

## GROWTH OF JEHOSEPHAT'S POWER AND PRESTIGE

**So Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater, and he built fortresses and store cities in Judah** - The building projects bolstered Judah's military prowess and the store cities assured supplies for military and the people, presumably when harvests were less productive. Jehoshaphat was forward thinking in these areas.

**Walton** - Archaeological evidence of a line of fortresses in the Jordan Valley and adjacent to the Dead Sea may be associated with his reign. Supply centers were meant to stockpile food and other necessities in case of siege or famine. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 438](#))

**2 Chronicles 17:13 He had large supplies in the cities of Judah, and warriors, valiant men, in Jerusalem.**

- much business (KJV): 2Ch 26:10-15 1Ch 27:25-31

**He had large supplies in the cities of Judah, and warriors, valiant men ([gibbor](#)), in Jerusalem**

**2 Chronicles 17:14 This was their muster according to their fathers' households: of Judah, commanders of thousands, Adnah was the commander, and with him 300,000 valiant warriors;**

- the numbers (KJV): Ge 12:2 13:16 15:5
- to the house (KJV): Nu 1:2,18
- three hundred (KJV): 2Ch 11:1 13:3 14:8 26:13

This was their muster according to their fathers' households: of Judah, commanders of thousands, [Adnah](#) was the commander, and with him 300,000 valiant warriors ([gibbor](#)) - This is the first listing of considerable numbers of warriors, evidence of God's blessing of Jehoshaphat and Judah.

**Walton** - The conscript army of Jehoshaphat is exactly twice as large as that of his father Asa, well over one million men (see 2 Chron 14:7). For discussion of army sizes see comment on 13:2–20. Its divisions into clans follows the pattern found in other levies (1 Chron 27:1). Looking beyond the large numbers, the style of listing the contingents suggests a form of regimentation and a careful report reflecting proper protocol with regard to rank and organization. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 438](#))

**2 Chronicles 17:15 and next to him was Johanan the commander, and with him 280,000;**

- next to him (KJV): Heb. at this hand, 2Ch 17:15

and next to him was [Johanan](#) the commander, and with him 280,000;

**2 Chronicles 17:16 and next to him Amasiah the son of Zichri, who volunteered for the LORD, and with him 200,000 valiant warriors;**

willingly (KJV): Judges 5:2,9 1Ch 29:9,14,17 Ps 110:3 2Co 8:3-5,12

and next to him [Amasiah](#) the son of [Zichri](#), who volunteered for the LORD, and with him 200,000 valiant warriors ([gibbor](#))

**2 Chronicles 17:17 and of Benjamin, Eliada a valiant warrior, and with him 200,000 armed with bow and shield;**

- armed men (KJV): 2Ch 14:8 2Sa 1:21,22

and of Benjamin, [Eliada](#) a valiant warrior ([gibbor](#)), and with him 200,000 armed with bow and shield

**2 Chronicles 17:18 and next to him Jehozabad, and with him 180,000 equipped for war.**

and next to him [Jehozabad](#), and with him 180,000 equipped for war.

**2 Chronicles 17:19 These are they who served the king, apart from those whom the king put in the fortified cities through all Judah.**

- put in (KJV): 2Ch 17:2,12 11:12,23

These are they who served the king, apart from those whom the king put in the fortified cities through all Judah- Jehoshaphat had a mighty military force which undoubtedly contributed to the dread of the surrounding nations in 2Ch 17:10.

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