

The Reign of King Jotham
2 Kings 15:32-38; 2 Chron. 26:21; 27:1-9

Introduction:

1. The prophets Isaiah, Hosea and Amos prophesied during the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah in Judah.
2. They reigned over a period of 113 years. Although there were many military conquests during this time the kingdom of Judah struggled to maintain power among the surrounding nations.
3. Assyria was a looming threat in the region. The Ammonites seemed to be a perpetual problem and Judah's relationship with Israel was not always cordial.
4. In spite of some religious reforms, especially under Hezekiah, they appear to be too little too late. Judah is sliding toward a future in Babylonian captivity.
5. Jotham's reign is summarily described by the Chroniclers in this way: Read 2 Chron. 27:1-9.
6. There are several observations I would make with you about Jotham and his reign.

Discussion:

- I. Note that his relationship with the Lord is mentioned before his building and military accomplishments.
 - A. This is the pattern also in the book of Kings.
 1. The actual writers of the books of Kings and the Chronicles remain a mystery.
 2. We cannot help but consider that whoever they were they considered a king's relationship to God as a matter of top priority. It might be argued that they were inspired by God and thus the priority on one's relationship with Him was considered by Him as top priority rather than building and military victories.
 3. It matters not. What is written here reflects certain values. While building, and military accomplishments are important they pale in significance to a king's relationship to God.
 - B. A few weeks ago we studied a lesson on leadership in which the point was made that "character trumps competence." I think that principle is reflected again here.
 1. Are these values that we reflect as we select leaders? Politically? Militarily? Religiously?
 2. It is interesting to me that as Paul discusses the office of overseer it is character traits that he identifies as critical. Not financial success. Not business acumen. Not worldly acclaim. Not popularity.
 3. Are the qualities that God looks for in leaders different than ours?
 - C. And perhaps more importantly what are our personal values?
 1. If an inspired Chronicler summarized your life right now how would he do it?
 2. Surely he would evaluate your relationship with the Lord as first priority.
 3. Would he say, "He served the Lord with a whole heart." And only then define you by

your accomplishments vocationally.

4. If you were to write your own obituary what would you say in summation of your life? What would you mention first? Would your relationship with the Lord even be mentioned?

II. Jotham learned from the mistake of his father (27:2b).

- A. The Lord had made Uzziah, Jotham's father, strong. Uzziah was proud and so entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense. He was struck with leprosy.
- B. Jotham had served under his leadership and had acted in the king's judging the people of the land (2 Chron. 26:21).
- C. The Chronicler says, "Jotham did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Uzziah his father had done; however he did not enter the temple of the Lord."
- D. Ladies and gentlemen you can learn much from the mistakes of others. It is a fool who observes the mistakes of others and then chooses that same path for themselves. See Prov. 1:20-27.

III. Jotham became mighty because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God (27:6).

- A. His father Uzziah is said to have prospered "as long as he sought the Lord" (2 Chron. 26:5).
- B. You cannot order your ways before the Lord without listening to what the Lord says.
 1. Uzziah listened to the prophet Zechariah.
 2. Jotham listened to him or some other. Perhaps Isaiah, Hosea, Amos?
- C. Requires not just hearing but disciplining yourself according to the way of the Lord.

IV. The people continued to act corruptly (27:2d). Two things here . . .

- A. People need to follow good leadership.
 1. Jotham was doing the right thing.
 2. He was ordering his ways before the Lord.
 3. He had learned from the mistake of his father.
 4. Evidently listening to the voice of the prophets and disciplining his life accordingly.
 5. However, the people were to following his good leadership. I suppose their values were different than his after all he is 25-41 years old during his reign, just a young man.
- B. Good leaders need to do everything they can to lead in the way of the Lord.
 1. They need to stand firm in the way of the Lord.
 2. Even insist that others do the same.
 3. They need to use all the power they can muster to persuade others of the necessity of ordering ones ways before the Lord.
 4. If good people who are ordering their own ways do not persuade others to do the same the nation deteriorates.
- C. What were the people doing? 2 Kings 15:35 answers: "The high places were not taken

away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.”

1. Hear the scathing rebuke of Isaiah (1:1ff).

2. Listen as God through Hosea calls them adulterers and condemns them for rejecting knowledge (4:4-6).

D. These are not condemning judgments on foreign nations, but on the people of God.

Conclusion:

1. Far be it from us to be like Israel and Judah.

2. Surely we will not act corruptly.

3. Surely we will not diminish our relationship with God while exalting other accomplishments.

4. Surely we can learn from the mistakes of others and order our steps before the Lord our God.