

## 2 CHRONICLES 27

### REVIEW

Last week we our study of chapter 26 brought us to the end of king Uzziah's life. Uzziah was a man who for the large part of his life was a godly man. The Holy Spirit tells us that he *set himself to seek God*. The Holy Spirit also tells us that Uzziah actively opposed the Philistines — no small detail. The Philistines were a people group that was not indigenous to the land of Canaan. They were originally from the Aegean Sea and the area of modern day Greece and Turkey. They settled in the coastal plains and low hill country of SW Israel. Ramases III of Egypt recorded that their numbers in Canaan were insignificant **UNTIL** the Children of Israel came in to the land after their exodus from Egypt. The moment they began **to possess** the land **promised** by God to Abraham the Philistines suddenly come POURING in. They become the perennial nemesis of Israel, opposing the true and living God and His plans and purposes in and through Israel — through whom God would bring the Savior of the world.

We're told in **Verse 5** and **Verse 7** that God helped Uzziah; strengthened him. In **Verse 15** we were told that *he was marvelously helped*. What an awesome description of grace. Grace is the unmerited favor of God in our lives. It is God doing for us that which we could never earn; and that which we do not deserve. The author wrote that *his fame spread far, for he was marvelously helped*. It is a great lesson for us — When we are living in grace; *marvelously helped* by the Lord, people see it. The chief end of being *marvelously helped* is for people to see our **marvelous helper!** They see that the greatest thing about our life is Jesus!

***16But when he was strong, he grew proud, to his destruction. For he was unfaithful to the Lord his God and entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense.***

How does the man who set himself to seek God, who was zealous for God, end up like this? The answer is this — the grace of God never truly humbled Uzziah. He was zealous to serve God. He was

marvelously helped by God in it — and wrongly concluded that he must be something special in the plans and purposes of God. He went so far as to confuse God's grace with God's permission. Follow me here — In his zeal for God he actively opposed the enemies of God (the Philistines) and he was marvelously helped by God. In zeal for God, for the people of God, and for the city of God, he strengthened the defenses of Jerusalem and engineered amazing military machines, and he was marvelously helped by God.

I think his decision to go in and burn incense to the Lord was born from the same zeal for God that was expressed in his military campaigns and his engineering feats. Because God had blessed him so much, and in so many ways, he thought he could do whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted. Instead of being utterly humbled by the marvelous help of God — he ended up thinking that the authority of God's Word didn't apply to him.

**HERE'S THE PICTURE** — Being marvelously helped by God does not diminish the authority of God's word in our lives. Being marvelously helped by God does not give you and I the right to barge in on ministries that God has never given to us.

Even as Uzziah is moving from a wrong view of grace — God still wanted to marvelously help Uzziah! He sent 81 priests to stop him. Uzziah would not listen to the Authoritative Word of God that forbade him to enter the temple and offer incense. He would not listen to the rebuke and warning of 81 priests. The only thing that got him out of the temple was the discipline of God! In **overstepping the boundary** set in the authoritative Word of God, he found his **freedom more restricted** than ever before. God struck him with leprosy and he was never able to enter the temple again for the rest of his life.

We closed by noting that it was in the year that king Uzziah died that Isaiah had that amazing vision recorded in Isaiah 6 — in which he saw God seated upon His throne in glory!

## CHAPTER 27

**<sup>1</sup>Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign,**

Before this Jotham reigned as co-regent alongside of his father for about 11 years because of his father's leprosy.

**and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. <sup>2</sup>And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord according to all that his father Uzziah had done, except he did not enter the temple of the Lord.**

There are a couple of ways for us to look at this. One is that it **doesn't mean** that he never went up to the temple to worship — it only means that he never went in to the holy place to burn incense as his dad tried to do. Some look at the passage as meaning that he stayed away from temple worship entirely. They take it to mean that even though Jotham loved the Lord, he stayed away from the temple because of what happened to his dad there.

I'm not sure I buy the latter view **because** the next sentence in the begins with the conjunction "BUT" — and then talks about the spiritual corruption of the rest of the nation. More on that in a bit. I believe that there are important things for us for to consider in light of either view.

**FIRST** — We should always be warned by sins that we observe. Remember at the close of last week's study we said that Isaiah's early chapters were filled with WOE to these people and WOE to those people. But then he saw the Lord and all he could say was WOE is me. Sin in other people's lives should make us first consider our own hearts — and stand in awe of the grace and mercy of God in our own lives.

**QUOTE: Spurgeon** — *"He regarded his father's sin rather as a beacon to warn him away from that rock on which Uzziah's life had been wrecked."*

**QUOTE: Spurgeon** — *“It is a great mercy for us when we have seen others sin, if we use their shipwrecks as beacons for ourselves. What fascination should there be in sin?”*

**SECOND** — Parents have a tremendous responsibility before the Lord. Kids learn from their parents both good and bad. Most behavior is caught more than that taught. Kids are very careful observers. I want my kids to have good table manners — but they eat like me. But kids are not just careful observers about trivial things — they’re very careful observers when it comes to the spiritual life of mom and dad. By watching mom and dad they should be able to say, *“I wanna know mom’s God. I wanna know dad’s God. They should be able to say, I see when they pray — I see **that** they pray — I see that it’s not phony or churchy — I see that Jesus is real in their lives.”*

But the same thing applies to carnal behavior. Kids observe mom and dad criticizing pastors. Listen — There might be things that you don’t really don’t like about a pastor or leader, but your children should KNOW that you LOVE them. Even if you change churches your kids should not hear you being critical of the church. Sadly, in 28+ years of full time ministry, that has been the exception rather than the rule.

By watching mom and dad they learn sinful responses to sin. Mom and/or dad have a sin issue. Church leadership lovingly addresses the sin, seeks to correct the sin (discipleship involves discipline). Mom and/or dad deflect — turn the attention away from their sin and criticize the church and its leadership for even thinking they have the right to address the sin; or turn the attention away from their sin by criticizing the way the situation was handled or the tone of someone’s voice. That would be like Uzziah blaming the 81 priests for his leprosy. The kids then watch mom and dad continue to be involved at church with a wrong heart. They watch and listen as mom and dad share their critical views of church and church leadership over lunch **after church**. The kids learn to be critical of church; critical of church leadership. Sadly — mom and dad never informed their kids that there was a reason they had to be

disciplined. That's why there are a lot of kids who have little or no desire for church. They end up nowhere in relationship with Jesus and they blame church for it. *"I saw what happened to mom and dad. They got burned at church, so I'm not going to church."*

### **But the people still followed corrupt practices.**

The word *STILL* refers back to the reign of Uzziah.

*2 Kings 15:4 Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places.*

REMEMBER — the word **BUT** is used for contrast. While the people at large were corrupted, Jotham was not. This tells us even more about Jotham's love for the Lord. He not only saw his dad's sin and stayed away from it; the Holy Spirit says nothing about Jotham joining in with the idolatry that was going on around him!

**<sup>3</sup>He built the upper gate of the house of the Lord and did much building on the wall of Ophel. <sup>4</sup>Moreover, he built cities in the hill country of Judah, and forts and towers on the wooded hills. <sup>5</sup>He fought with the king of the Ammonites and prevailed against them. And the Ammonites gave him that year 100 talents of silver, and 10,000 cors of wheat and 10,000 of barley. The Ammonites paid him the same amount in the second and the third years. <sup>6</sup>So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God.**

HOW did Jotham manage to have a right heart before the Lord, not be bitter at God in light of the way his father's life ended. How did Jotham remain separate from the spiritual corruption around him? The Holy Spirit tells us that *he ordered his ways before the Lord his God*. That would have involved prayer and the Scriptures.

FIRST — It meant that he took his **troubles** to the Lord! The things that troubled him about the way his dad's life ended — the incident in the temple — the leprosy — he took them to the Lord. *Lord, my father's ending was troubling to me? I need you to sort me out on the*

*things that role around in my heart. I want you to order that part of my life. He took the things that troubled him about the moral and spiritual corruption in his kingdom before the Lord. Lord — show me how you want me to rule — and more than that — how you want me to live in the midst of this corruption.*

SECOND — It meant that he was willing to prayerfully lay the affairs of his heart and life before the straight edge of Scripture. It's been said that you can't know if a line is straight unless you have a straight edge. That straight edge is the Word of God. Jotham essentially said, *"Here's my life. I'm thinking of doing this, and then going there, and then saying that. How does this line up with YOU and Your Word. If it doesn't — I need to order my life differently.*

This reminds me of what Paul wrote to in his letter to the Philippians.

***Philippians 1:9-11*** *And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup>so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

The way that we love needs to be ordered by God.

***<sup>9</sup>And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment***

Knowledge alone puffs up — makes us proud. But love builds up (1 Corinthians 8:1). Knowledge should serve love. The world that is organizing itself without God and against God is desperate for love; talks much about love; but doesn't know what it is. That's why it portrays and defines love the way it does. The Scriptures are the straight edge by which we understand Love. It tells us the source and origin of love

***1 John 4:16*** *God is love*

***1 John 5:7*** *Love is from God*

The Scriptures **define** love

*1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup>Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Then we see how love behaves as in the Gospels we see God, who is love — come into human flesh and we see that love is sacrificial, selfless, generous. So the Scriptures become the way by which we can have our attitudes and actions “set in order” — so that by the power of the Holy Spirit we are transformed by the renewing of our minds — conformed to the image of Christ — and we more and more think and act sacrificially, selflessly, generously, patiently, kindly.

Husbands need their actions and attitudes towards their wives “*ordered before the Lord.*” Pastors need their vision and their serving “*ordered before the Lord.*”

We need our desires and ambitions and plans “ordered by the Lord”

*<sup>10</sup>so that you may approve what is excellent,*

The word **approve** = to approve after testing (used in approving someone to practice medicine after examination). *Approve what is excellent* means that God has a BEST for you. By the way — the devil will use a good thing to keep you from that which is EXCELLENT.

This is essentially what it means when it says that Jotham “ordered his ways before the Lord.” *Lord — is this the excellent thing for my life?* Excellent is not a matter of “it feels excellent.” We always want the Lord to order it — put it to the test of God’s word. Sometimes there are clear cut, chapter-verse answers. Sometimes there aren’t i.e — Buying a car — buying a house — moving — choosing a

college — continuing a godly relationship). It's then that we take the great truths of the Word and lay them over those matters so that we might order them before the Lord.

God wants to fully and perfectly enjoy us — and He wants us to perfectly and fully know Him. Is that particular decision going to foster, serve and enhance that — or will it diminish it; will that course of action serve in my knowing Him, my being conformed to Him, my being useful in serving Him with my time, talents and treasures?

Even as there was a definite outcome in Jotham ordering his way before the Lord (<sup>6</sup>*So Jotham became mighty, because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God*) Paul says

*And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, <sup>10</sup>so that you may approve what is excellent, **and so be pure and blameless (KJV = sincere) for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup>filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.***

**and so be pure and blameless** — The *KJV = sincere*. That English word comes from the Latin *Sine Cera*; without wax.

<sup>11</sup>**filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ** — Jesus isn't walking on the factory floor inspecting the work. He is walking through His garden enjoying the fruit. I grew up in Anaheim. In 1959 you could smell citrus everywhere — all the time! Today there's lots of buildings — bigger economy — but no fragrance.

WHY would I want to order my ways before the Lord?

**Genesis 17:1** *When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless,*

This was not God's terms for Abraham to be righteous before Him. Abraham was already justified in the sight of God by faith.



*Genesis 15:6 And he believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness.*

HERE'S THE POINT — God wants us to live as though He's actually watching! Not so we would try to be accepted by Him — but because He's already accepted me in Jesus.

**RELIGION:** I obey, therefore I'm accepted.

**THE GOSPEL:** I'm accepted, therefore I obey.

**RELIGION:** Motivation is based on fear and insecurity.

**THE GOSPEL:** Motivation is based on grateful joy.

I want my ways to be *ordered before the Lord* because my ways aren't always God's ways; because there's a way that seems right to a man, but the end of it is death; because **all** of His ways are right. And when my ways are ordered before the Lord — the result is God's glory and my joy!