

## **II CHRONICLES**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Chronicles chapter 26 as we continue our study through the Word of God. If you remember from our last study, Amaziah was the king in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and he obeyed the Lord in his battle against Edom and was victorious. Then Amaziah felt he could take on Israel, being mad at them because the mercenaries he hired from the Northern Kingdom of Israel to help him against Edom, the ones that the Lord told him not to use and he sent home, attacked some of his cities on the way home and took much plunder from them. So he wants to get back at them.

The king in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Joash, warned him to stay home and not get into a fight he could not win, but he did not listen and he ended up being defeated. In fact, Joash took him captive to Samaria where he remained for 15 years, until the death of Joash, the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. And upon his return he may have co-reigned with his son for a time. And as we concluded last time we saw the death of Amaziah, or really the assassination of this man by his own people because he walked away from the Lord.

Tonight we are going to backtrack because his son, Uzziah will take over the throne and kind of co-reign during those 15 years his father was captive in Samaria. With that said, let's begin reading in II Chronicles chapter 26, beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**II CHRONICLES 26****VERSES 1-5**

1. In II Kings chapter 14 we see that his given name was Azariah, which means “Jehovah has helped.” And here in II Chronicles chapter 26 we see his throne name you might say, Uzziah and his name means “Jehovah is strength.” Both great names and Uzziah was a good king, not a great king, but he did what was right before the Lord. We do not see any spiritual reforms with Uzziah. And yet the people saw something good in him and made him king. Of this Dilday tells us, “Following the tragic events that brought King Amaziah’s reign to an end, Jerusalem was in disarray, a major section of its protective wall destroyed, its temple and palace emptied of their treasures, and some of its inhabitants taken away to Israel as hostages.”

2. Now, after the death of his father, Uzziah began to re-capture the cities that were lost to the enemy, and to restore them or build them up. He rebuilt Elath, which was located on the eastern arm of the Red Sea. Elath was technically in Edomite territory but many times was under the control of Judah. Amaziah must have lost this area to the Edomites and now we see Uzziah gain it back. As you can see, the nation was enjoying a time of prosperity, not because Uzziah was doing good works, but because he placed God before everything else in his life.

3. Look at II Chronicles 26:5 for a minute, the last part of that verse. It says, “**... as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper.**” How true that is. You see, that principle is not only seen in the Old Testament, but it is woven through the pages of the New Testament as well. In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus is speaking about those things that are most important to us, what we treasure the most, because that shows where our heart is at. Is God first in your life, or is He somewhere else down the line of your priorities? If He is not first, then we tend to worry about our problems like food, clothing, shelter and-so-on. But Jesus is telling us to get our priorities right. He says in Matthew 6:33, “**But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**”

When we put God first, have our priorities right, we are truly blessed, not always physically, but spiritually. He will supply our needs. On the other hand if you worry about your difficulties, what is going to happen? Guess what, that will not help the situation one bit. In fact, it will only depress you. Look to the one who can truly help and give us peace. Look to the one who can truly give us the victory's in our lives and make us to prosper. It is as Paul said in Philippians 4:19, “**And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**” May we believe it and apply it to our lives! Seek the Lord, walk with the Lord, love the Lord, and He'll bless you in ways you never dreamed possible.

VERSES 6-8

1. Here we see the blessings that God gave to the Southern Kingdom of Judah. They are now defeating the enemies around them. We see these Philistine cities along the Mediterranean Sea now being taken by Uzziah and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, both Gath and Ashdod, major Philistine cities! And even Jabneh, which was not a major city, but it too was taken by Judah! We also see that the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah and his fame spread throughout the land. Again, this was the result of his walk with the Lord and not the might of his army!

2. I believe God gives us the victory over the enemies when we take heed to what His Word has to say. The flesh, our enemy, is only defeated through Christ. When you stumble, when you fall, and all of us will, take a good look at where you had your eyes focused. Chances are they were not focused upon the Lord and His Word. To correct that, get your eyes focused off of you, and place them back on the Lord.

John makes that point; he drives it home in I John 5:1-5 as he tells us, **“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”**

Here is the key to victory, obedience, walking with the Lord. Our victory is not found in our strength, but His! And this word **“faith”** is interesting. What does the word **“faith”** mean here? Spurgeon tells us what this word means. He wrote, “Look at any Greek Lexicon you like, and you will find that the word [faith or believe] does not merely mean to believe, but to trust, to confide in, to commit to, entrust with, and so forth. The very marrow of the meaning of faith is confidence in, believing upon.” You see, our victory is found in Christ, not ourselves. If you are lacking victory in your life, I would encourage you to abide in Him, draw close to Him and stand on the promises of God that He has given to us in His Word, and then walk by faith!

#### VERSES 9-10

1. Here we see Uzziah begin these massive building projects and agricultural projects. He built towers in the city of Jerusalem and in the desert or in the arid southern area of Judah, as well as digging wells for his livestock, which were prospering also. Now did he really build a tower in the desert areas? It seems that he did for Payne makes these comments on what they have found in the desert areas. He wrote, “The reality of Uzziah’s ‘towers of the desert’ (of arid southern Judah) has been validated by the discovery of an eighth-century tower at Qumran.”

2. We are told that Uzziah “**. . . loved the soil.**” I think what that means is that he loved the land of Judah and took care of this land that God had given to them. Even today we see the land, the soil, an important part of the Jewish people. When the Turks were in the land they destroyed it. They cut down many of the trees, which exposed the top soil, and the top soil was washed away. The land was left barren, full of rocks, with areas of swamp land, and unfit to live in.

Then, on May 14, 1948 Israel became a nation once again and the Jews entered their land once again, planting millions of trees over the years. They planted specific trees to benefit the various problems that each area had. For instance the swamp area had trees planted that would help to drain those mosquito infested swamps. They planted trees that would break apart the rocks and make new top soil once again. And now the land is once again fertile and fruitful.

In fact it is the third largest exporter of fruits and vegetables in the world. God has also increased the rain in the area, bringing back the former and latter rains. It is as Zechariah said, “**But now I will not treat the remnant of this people as in the former days,’ says the LORD of hosts. ‘For the seed shall be prosperous, The vine shall give its fruit, The ground shall give her increase, And the heavens shall give their dew; I will cause the remnant of this people To possess all these. And it shall come to pass That just as you were a curse among the nations, O house of Judah and house of Israel, So I will save you, and you shall be a blessing. Do not fear, Let your hands be strong.’**” Zechariah 8:11-13. The land has truly blossomed once again just as God has promised. Yes God has done this, but the Jews love the soil, they love the land that God has given to them!

3. How does that even relate to us? Do we love the soil that God has given to us? And I am not necessarily talking about physical dirt, but the things He has entrusted to us, like family, friends, jobs and-so-on. Do we have such a love for what God has given to us that others see it, even if the situation may be difficult, they see the love we have for the things that God has given to us? They should!

### VERSES 11-15

1. First of all notice the size of his army. He had 2,600 captains, not including his soldiers, which were another 307,500. Not a bad army but that is not where the victory came from; it was from the Lord who enabled them to win these battles.
2. Not only that but he invented weapons for war! Clarke, in quoting a Targum [Aramaic explanatory translations or paraphrasing of the Hebrew Scriptures] regarding this verse here in II Chronicles 26:15, wrote, “He made in Jerusalem ingenious instruments, and little hollow towers, to stand upon the towers and upon the bastions, for the shooting of arrows, and projecting of great stones.”
3. Now Uzziah was able to achieve success in three areas. The first was seen in verses 6-8, which spoke about his victory in war or victories over his enemies. The second was seen in verses 9-10, which spoke of his massive building projects and his push in the area of agriculture, making the land fruitful once again. And thirdly we see in verses 11-15, the strength of his army and his ability to develop weapons of war to put down the enemy.

Again, what does that have to do with us today? I believe that these same things can be found in our lives as we walk with the Lord. Think about it, we can be victorious in our battles as I John 4:4 tells us, **“You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.”**

We can bear much fruit as we walk with the Lord as Jesus said in John 15:2, **“Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”**

And the third thing is that our weapons of war are not carnal, but mighty in God, they are spiritual weapons as Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:13-18a, **“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit . . .”** Walking with the Lord was the thing that enabled Uzziah to be victorious in his life and the same is true for us if we would only believe and apply these things to our lives!



4. Uzziah is doing great and you read about all his success and all you can see are good things happening, it would seem like nothing can stop him. Well, that is not exactly true, because with all the good he did, there is a word that will change everything, “**But**” and that is never a good thing. You see, the one thing that changed Uzziah and not for good was his success! And this truly was a sad commentary on Uzziah’s life. When he was weak, *then* he was strong! But, when he was strong, *then* he was weak. We are going to see that his success went to his head and made him think more highly of himself than he should have. It is a warning to all of us as we will see!

#### VERSE 16-21

1. You see, whenever God uses the word “**But**” and applies it to us, that is not a good thing. Uzziah got a little too big for his own good. He was a king and not a priest and thus he could not go into the Temple and offer incense to the Lord, only the priest could. But, because of his big head, he thought he could approach God any way he wanted. Of this Selman wrote, “Uzziah’s problem was that he was not content with the authority God had given him and wanted to add more priestly functions to his royal power. Absolute power, however, has no place in God’s kingdom.” May we learn to be content in what God has given to us and not transgress what God has said!

2. And again, notice that when he was strong was when he was really weak. Paul wrote these words in II Corinthians 12:7-10 regarding this issue of strength and weakness. He wrote, **“And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”** True strength is not found in us or what we have, but in the Lord! May we not forget that!

Of this Morgan wrote, “The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are created by prosperity. More men are blasted by it than by adversity. . . . Prosperity always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” And Meyer adds this, “God cannot trust some of us with prosperity and success, because our nature could not stand them. We must tug at the oar, instead of spreading the sail, because we have not enough ballast.” This is a powerful and sometimes a very difficult lesson for us to learn.

3. Now notice how gracious and merciful the Lord is here. He sends Azariah the priest to warn Uzziah not to do this thing, but Uzziah gets mad at the priest. And while he is in this fit of anger God struck him with leprosy and he was banished from the city and had to co-reign with his son Jotham. He was a leper until the day of his death! And Jotham probably co-reigned with his father for some 10 years until he became the sole king in Judah.

4. Think about this. Many today try and do what Uzziah did, approach God any way they want. But there is only one High Priest, only one bridge builder between God and man, and that is Jesus Christ. You can't approach God through any other means. You see, you have a case of spiritual leprosy outside of Christ, and thus, like Uzziah, you will be banished from the kingdom, the kingdom of God. The only cure for this disease is found in Jesus Christ, as His blood cleanses us from all our sins!

VERSES 22-23

1. For Uzziah we saw him go from power to pride to his downfall. You see, his strength was his weakness. It is as Proverbs 16:18-19 says, **“Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.”** And in Proverbs 18:12 we read, **“Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.”** You see, it is when we are weak that our eyes are focused on the Lord, but many times when we are strong our eyes are focused on self and not the Lord. Let us not forget that lesson for if we do, we will reap the consequences of our actions and learn first hand what pride can do in our lives. God does have a way to humble us and to give us the right perspective of ourselves.

2. We have seen at the end of these kings lives, many times, they did not continue in their walk with the Lord, they did not finish well. What a lesson for us. Spurgeon had these words to say regarding this issue. He wrote, “I have lived long enough to observe that the greatest faults that are ever committed by professedly Christian men are not committed by young people. Most painful is it, to me to remember that the worst cases of backsliding and apostasy that I have ever seen, in this church, have been by old men and middle-aged men, - not by young people; for, somehow or other, the young people, if they are truly taught of God, know their weakness, and so they cry to God for help; but it often happens that more experienced people begin to think that they are not likely to fall into the faults and follies of the young; and I care not how old a man may be – even if seven centuries had passed over his head:, - if he began to trust in himself, he would be a fool, and soon he would have a grievous fall.”

3. I think another important lesson here also relates to strength. You see, Uzziah was a strong, a powerful leader who did many great things for the nation. They were victorious in war. They had fortified and built up their cities. They had planted many crops and worked the land. They were inventing many superior weapons to fight against the enemy with. Thus, the people looked to Uzziah for their strength instead of the Lord.

It is amazing how easy we can block the Lord out of our life. A great example of this is what we can do with the sun. The sun has a diameter of some 865,000 miles and yet if I hold my hand up to it I can block it out completely. Many times we do that with the Lord. We hold others up, look to them for our strength, and like our hand, we can block out the Son of God completely.

Even the prophet Isaiah was caught up in this. If you remember in Isaiah 6:1 where we read, **“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple.”** It was only after the death of king Uzziah that Isaiah once again saw the Lord. He saw who was really on the throne, he saw who the true king was, and it was not Uzziah.

And folk’s, let’s not forget this. God’s programs did not depend; they did not end with the death of Uzziah. And many times when a great man or woman of God dies, we think that the work of God comes to a screeching halt. That is **WRONG!** A great example of that is seen in the life and death of Moses. Think about it, when this spiritual giant died, this great prophet of God passed off the scene; surely the work of God would stop or at least be slowed down, right? **WRONG AGAIN!**

God uses us as His instruments from which He can work through and when we are gone, someone else will be raised up to continue the work of God. Notice how God deals with the death of Moses in Joshua 1:2-3 where we read, **“Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them; the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses.”** Moses is not exalted and the work of God continues on. God does not miss a beat. Thus, never think more highly of yourself or place anyone else on the throne besides the Lord. Don't let something or someone small and insignificant block out your vision of Heaven so you can't see the Lord!

## **II CHRONICLES 27**

### **VERSES 1-2**

1. Jotham was also a good king except he did not enter the Temple of the Lord. Why would the Lord even mention that here, is it such a big deal? I believe it is and I will tell you why in a minute. But why in the world was he so reluctant to enter the house of worship? Most likely he saw what happened to his father Uzziah, and because of that he did not want to have anything to do with the Temple. The problem was that Uzziah's leprosy was due to his disobedience to God and so the fear that Jotham had was unsubstantiated.

Now it could be that his refusal to enter the place of worship may have set the stage for his son Ahaz to plunge the nation into a spiritual nose dive in which they will never fully recover from. They, like the Northern Kingdom of Israel, were moving closer and closer to God's judgment and their captivity. Right now the Northern Kingdom of Israel is less than 30 years from their captivity by the Assyrians.

2. Now how does this relate to us? Tragically we see this happen even today. Kids see what has happened to their parents in church, and because of that they isolate themselves from any kind of fellowship in a local church. And many just stay at home, they don't get involved. J. Vernon McGee had this to say regarding this situation of Jotham not going into the Temple of God and how that relates to us. He wrote,

Something very strange and interesting is said about this man: "he entered not into the temple of the LORD." There is a background for this. When his father went into the temple, he was made a leper. But, of course, he went the wrong way - he intruded into the holy place. This boy Jotham did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but he stayed away from the temple. You can't help but feel sympathetic toward him, but he set a very bad example for the nation. As a result "the people did yet corruptly." They did not turn to God. Here is a man with a tremendous opportunity to lead his people back to God, but he had this hang-up - perhaps a root of bitterness. His father was made a leper in the temple, and he didn't want to go into that temple.

There are a great many people today who do just that sort of thing. They are kept away from God's house by prejudice. I have seen a number of folk who had dropped out of God's service because of prejudice, or an unfortunate incident which had happened years before or had involved a loved one. When I was a young man, I got acquainted with the son of a great Baptist preacher from Texas. He was really living it up in Pasadena when I met him. We used to play handball and volleyball together back in those days. When I tried to talk with him, he said, "Now listen, don't talk to me about religion. I know as much about it as you do." Then he told me how a group of deacons of the church had mistreated his father. He said, "I will never again darken the door of a church." I think he was wrong and I told him that. But very candidly, there was a background for it. That is the way it was with Jotham. There was an understandable background for his action.

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru The Bible Vol. II, p. 457



Will you get hurt in church? I hate to say it, but you will. Someone might say something that offends you and you put up the wall, you isolate yourself and you are feeding into what the Devil wants, he wants you all by yourself, out of fellowship! But in doing that you are really transgressing what God has said. You see, God has given to each of us gifts to be used for the betterment of the body. By not using those gifts in the body, you are robbing the body. Yes God can and will raise up others to fill your void, but how sad not to use that which God has given to you. Paul, in Hebrews 10:24-25 put it this way, **“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”**

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts these verses, **“And let us consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love and helpful deeds and noble activities, Not forsaking or neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching.”**

And The Living Bible puts it like this, **“In response to all he has done for us, let us outdo each other in being helpful and kind to each other and in doing good. Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near.”**

You see, don't neglect what God has called you to do. It may not be easy. You may have seen family or friends hurt in church or maybe yourself, but you have to give it to God and you have to move on or again, the enemy will have you just where he wants you, all alone!

3. Also notice that Jotham loved the Lord even though he did not enter the Temple of God and yet, the people still did what they wanted, they acted corruptly! Maybe Jotham did okay without going to Temple to worship the Lord, but the people could not, it affected them! Again, I wonder how often parents blow off church and guess what, their children are watching and taking note and maybe what won't affect them, will affect their children! Be careful.

#### VERSES 3-6

1. Ophel was where the old city of David was located, farther down the slope of Mount Moriah. And he also built the Upper Gate of the house of the Lord. It was this Upper Gate that connected the Temple to the royal palace. That is interesting to me since he did not go to the Temple to worship God but he did understand that connection that needed to be made from the royal house to the house of God! Yes, his father Uzziah misunderstood that link and he tried to carry out the priestly duties and was judged because of it, he was a leper!

For Jotham, he understood that he was a king and not a priest and yet he wanted that link between the palace and the Temple! It seems like he was struggling in this area, wanting to go to the Temple but afraid to go because of what happened to his father, and again, that was a fear that was not right. Uzziah was judged because of his sin not because of his worship of the Lord!

2. And we see Jotham building communities up, fighting against enemies and winning and it all boils down to this, the reason for his success. In verse 6 we are told, “**So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.**”

You see, Jotham did seek the Lord, he looked to the Lord for guidance, but he never really had a heart of worship. In fact, Spurgeon says this of Jotham, “Jotham must have been a man of prayer. He could not have prepared his ways thus anywhere except at the mercy-seat. He must have been in the habit of taking his daily troubles to his God, and of seeking guidance from him in his daily difficulties, and of blessing him for his daily mercies. He must have been in constant communion with his God, or else he could not have ordered his ways aright before him.”

How often do we wonder why our days are so messed up? I wonder if it is because we have not sought the Lord in everything, if we have not brought it to God before we even begin the day! You see, I believe that Jotham did and that is what made him so successful, so mighty, not in his strength but the Lord’s!

Also, Morgan picks up on this issue with Jotham. He wrote, “While there was no definite national reform during his reign, he seems to have gone quietly forward along true lines, and his strength is attributed to the fact that he ordered his ways before Jehovah his God.”

May we not be influenced by what others do or say but may we stay focused on the Lord and what He would have us do in any given situation! Remember what we read in Ephesians 6:10-11, “**Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**”

Like I have said, this is the key for our Christian life. You see, our strength does not come from our power, our might, our ability but it is from the Lord, it is found in the Lord! And as Paul speaks of the armor of God keep in mind that he was chained to Roman soldiers and as he saw these men day in and day out the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to make a comparison of the Roman soldier versus the soldier of the Lord who was going to battle against the enemies of God, and thus, he penned these words for us.

Paul tells us to “**put on the whole armor of God**” not just part of it, not just what you want to put on, but all of it because the enemy is going to use all the resources that are at his disposal to fight against us. Too often Christians are like the Iraqi man who was captured during Desert Storm and he was found wearing a Cub’s tee shirt, jeans, and sandals on his feet. He was an American that went to visit family in Iraq and then the war broke out and he was drafted but not given the equipment he needed to do battle. We have no excuse; God has given to us all the armor that we need. If we are not prepared, when the Devil comes with his scheming we will not be able to stand against his onslaught!

And the reality is, we can't blame anyone but ourselves because we have not **“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”** We need to stand firm against his attacks and the idea is to hold a critical position while under attack! May we be like Jotham in that we are mighty because we have prepared our way before the Lord our God!

#### VERSES 7-9

1. In II Kings 15:34-38 we have a little more information on Jotham. We are told, **“And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. However the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. He built the Upper Gate of the house of the Lord. Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In those days the Lord began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. So Jotham rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.”**

Now here is the question. “Why did the Lord send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah king of Israel into the land of Judah, invading them?” It seemed that Jotham was a good king and he was, that is what the Lord has told us. So what is going on here? Why did God allow this if Jotham was a good king?

Remember what we were told in II Chronicles 27:2, in spite of Jotham being a good king we are told, **“But still the people acted corruptly.”** The word **“corruptly”** speaks of decaying, destroying, turning to ruins. It is not a good thing. Instead of growing in the Lord they were falling apart, they were involved in wicked things and thus, God was trying to awaken them, make sure that they looked to Him, it was a chastening from the Lord and the desire here is that they would turn to the Lord.

Yes, Jotham prepared his heart before the Lord but the nation as a whole was moving away from the Lord! The high places were not removed and again, with this compromise it would eventually led them into idolatry! And Russell Dilday adds this, “During Jotham’s reign, the combined forces of King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel began their invasion of Judah, but the full impact of these military assaults was not felt until Jotham’s son became king.”

Jotham’s son, Ahaz, was not going to be a good king. He was not going to follow in the footsteps of his father and thus, he would be judged for his actions. We are told of what he did in II Chronicles 28:2-4 that he did not walk in the ways of David, **“For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.”** And we will get into this more next time as we move into II Chronicles chapter 28 and look at the life of Ahaz.

2. As I close this evening I want to leave you with this to think about. Jotham was a good king but not a great king. You see, he could have been a great king; there was no reason why that should escape his grasp. Then what was the reason he did not reach his full potential? I believe it was because he did not have a heart for worship, Temple worship. He stayed away even though the door was open for him to go to the Temple to worship the Lord. Yes, he prayed, but there was not that worship that God desires from him.

Once again, I believe we, as believers will not reach our full potential, we will not be what the Lord would have us to be or what He desires us to be if we consistently forsake the assembling of ourselves together as a body of believers.

Now some may say that I am being legalistic here and I need to lighten up. I disagree. Think about this for a minute. Those of you who are married, do you have a law in your house about your spouse coming home every evening, are you that legalistic? No, none of you do but guess what, your spouse does come home, not because there is a law that says he or she has to but because of love.

That is in our relationship with the Lord. We don't have to go to church and worship the Lord, we get to and we come out of love, our love for Him! Don't let the law mess up your love for the Lord and don't negate the fact that God has called us to come together to love Him and to stir up believers in the work of God! Jotham let fear keep him from this kind of relationship with God and it affected those around him! Here is a young man who could have been a great king, but a fear prevented him from being a great king and doing great things for God. May we learn the lesson!

Let me leave you with these words from Paul in I Corinthians 1:9, where he says, **“God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”** The Amplified Bible puts it like this, **“God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on); by Him you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”** And lastly, The Living Bible says, **“God will surely do this for you, for he always does just what he says, and he is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his Son, even Christ our Lord.”**

May we not lose sight of that, our sufficiency is in Christ and His love for us is so great that He is not willing to leave us like we are but to make us more like Him! Thank God He is not done with us! And may we love to have fellowship with Him as a body of believers and on our own, for God inhabits the praises of His people!