

2 Chronicles

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- [0 : 00] As the Lord should be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the second book of Chronicles chapter 27.
- And the sixth verse, so Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.
- Chapter 27, second book of Chronicles, and the sixth verse. The word of God does not tell us much about Jotham in the text, who was one of Judah's good kings.
- But if the Spirit of God had told us no more, it would be enough for us to conclude that Jotham was indeed numbered with the people of God.
- So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God. I want as the Lord should help me to look at the subject from two viewpoints.
- [1 : 32] And I will also look as grace is given at the setting of it. For there is much in it that is instructive. And I might, in opening up the subject, show what it really means for a man to prepare his ways before the Lord his God.
- You find in the opening word in the chapter where the subject is, Jotham was twenty and five years old when he began to reign.
- And he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. There is one thing here I would like you to think about.
- And that is, you find that with these kings of Judah, who were good kings, that as a rule the Spirit of God mentions their mother, records their mother's name.
- And you might, speaking with great reverence, read between the lines. And you might think that the mothers had something to do with the sons being the good kings that they were afterwards made before God.
- [3 : 01] And that the mothers were gracious mothers and sought to train up their children in the way wherein they should go. And so, the Spirit of God does indeed record their names.
- And there must be a deep down reason for it to be recorded in the sacred pages to be read hundreds of years afterwards.
- And so it says concerning Jotham, his mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok. And now it says, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did.
- Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord, and the people did yet corruptly. And now here, there are one or two lessons I want you dear young people to think about.
- Jotham was favored inasmuch as he had a godly father, Uzziah. And it is evident that Jotham laid to heart how his godly father had lived.
- [4 : 22] He also laid to heart a very serious mistake that Uzziah made when he sought to go into the house of the Lord to conduct the worship there, which God ordained for the priests alone to do.

Oh, it does seem astonishing that Uzziah, being one who did that which was right before the Lord, as it tells us, And he was indeed one who was taught of God, and yet he was left to fall a prey to what he was by nature, and in his pride and lifting up, he made such a serious error of judgment as to seek to usurp the position God had ordained for the priests alone to fill.

And you may say, I wonder how it was that he came to make such a very solemn mistake. The word of God tells us how it was, and you might lay it to heart too.

And now it says, concerning Uzziah, and his name spread far abroad, for he was marvelously helped, helped of God, till he was strong.

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction. The margin is, lifted up so that he did corruptly, for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

[6 : 02] And Azariah the priest went in after him, and do listen, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men. And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense.

Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honor from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense.

And while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead, before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar.

And Azariah the chief priests, and all the priests looked upon him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence.

He had himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him. He reaped a lot in accordance with the seed he had sown in that error of judgment.

[7 : 19] And he was a leper until the day of his death, and could no longer reign on Judah's throne. And Jotham had to be his understudy, as it were, a regent, and reign on the throne, till his father died, and he could become Judah's king in his place.

And now what is to be learned from that? In the day of prosperity, you need to be on your watchtower. If God in his good providence should make you strong, and you increase in goods, you must not settle down and become lifted up in your heart regarding it.

And the great I receive adulation from it, and you feel like Nebuchadnezzar, is not this great Babylon which I have built?

Because the word of God tells us, pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. And now I have no doubt whatever that Jotham never forgot that incident coming into his father's life, because he was quite a young man when it happened.

And he learned a lesson from it, so that the word of God says concerning Jotham, how be it, he entered not into the temple of the Lord.

[8 : 51] And now there is another thing about Jotham, and you might also learn a lesson from it. And that is, he had the help, at least the help was to be had, and I have no doubt he sought it and obtained it, the help of the prophets of the Lord.

For you find that in Jotham's day, and Uzziah, his father before him, there was Isaiah, and Hosea, and Micah, all prophets of the Lord.

And I have no doubt whatever, that they exercised a good influence upon Jotham. And you can well picture in your minds that Jotham sometimes went to see them, and to discuss matters to do with Judah's kingdom with them, and to obtain their counsel as to what to do, to do that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

And you dear young people, who were brought up in our causes of truth, and who listened to the servants of God week in, week out, wherever you worship, you must prize that privilege.

You should say thank you to God for it, for who can tell but what the Lord will be gracious unto you as you are found where the gospel is preached and listening to it.

[10 : 22] It may be the day will dawn when your ear will be unstopped, and you will be attentive to the gospel and seek to realize the blessing of it being made good tidings of great joy in your soul's experience.

And now, there is just one more thought about Jotham. Then I want to open up the subject as grace is given as my mind runs. And now it says here, this is sad reading, although Jotham made such a good beginning in his reign, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, it says, and the people did yet corruptly.

The people over whom he reigned, the great majority that is, were not much influenced by the fact that Jotham as Judas king sought to do that which was right before God.

And now, I want you to remember that made it all the harder for Jotham to do it. Because it is hard to go against the stream in seeking to do that which is right before God.

When the people are with you and seek to do that which is right also, then you can move on in sweet agreement. But it was not so with Jotham, although he sought to do and did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

[11 : 58] The people did not follow, alas, his good example. And now, in our text, it gives us the why and wherefore that Jotham became mighty.

So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord is God. And now, what does that really mean?

What does it mean for a sinner born again? None other will be concerned to do it. A sinner born again to prepare his ways before the Lord is God.

I thought of it like this as I pondered this subject, hoping I might be helped to say something that would be helpful to you. There is a little incident I like to look at as you read in the book of Numbers where you find in the journeyings of the children of Israel there is an incident like this.

And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.

[13 : 21] Come thou with us, and we will do thee good. For the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. Israel. And now that was an invitation given by Moses.

And there is a line of truth in it I just want to comment on because it leads us into the pit of our subject as it were.

It can be said of you and the preacher too. We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you. And now life is a journey.

And every day that dawns as you awake, you can begin to think about it. We are journeying. And every day that dawns brings you one day nearer to your journey's end, either to heaven or hell.

And now when you go out, you dear young people, the children listen especially, when you go out in your everyday life to journey, especially nowadays, as you go along the road to wherever your destination is, the place you desire to be found at eventually, you find as you journey along there are all kinds of notices, warnings.

[14 : 52] And you find it may be there is one that says school, or there is another that says beware, and it warns you that danger is in that area.

Another may say halt, and you must halt, otherwise you will be in trouble with the law. Sometimes you come to where it says crossroads, and there you need to prepare your ways, and make sure in crossing over that all is well, and it is safe for you to do it.

Sometimes you see major road ahead, sometimes you see this, trespassers will be prosecuted, means you know it will be well to heed it.

You prepare your ways by taking heed to the warnings that are given, whatever their nature, the warnings may be, you must prepare your ways, and heed what the warning is.

There is a warning like this, I thought of it as being so applicable to things nowadays. In passing a pond, I saw this notice, this water is not fit for drinking purposes, and now, you dear young people, I am not fitting any caps on, but if I could see you sometimes, it may be, see sometimes the books you are reading, maybe they have pretty covers, but if I observe the title and what the inner pages set forth, I might say to you, this water is not fit for drinking purposes, it will not do your soul any good, it will poison your mind, and it will affect you, it may be, as long as you live, and many other things, things that you may listen to on the radio, and things that you may see in television, this water is not fit for drinking purposes, it will not help to make you prepare your ways before the

[17 : 10] Lord, it will not fit you for an eternal state, it will hinder you advancing sin even, in a time state, do remember it, and suffer a word of exhortation, and now that is the principle whereby a sinner born again prepares his ways before the Lord is God, he seeks to give heed, thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee, wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word, and the psalmist said, thy word is a lamp unto my feet, a light unto my path, and that is only just a little outline, a very simple one, of what it really means to prepare your ways, if you are concerned to do it, before the Lord, the word of God gives you warnings, in every matter wherein you need, to be warned, the sacred pages are full of counsel, and it is that which God is the altar of,

God spake all these words, and good it will be, if you can find it in your hearts, to live inside the covers of the word of God, and if you can sometimes try to pray, like I used to sing at school, 65 years ago, and more, make me to walk in thy commands, for tis a delightful road, nor let my head or heart or hands offend against my God, and now I want to show you, some ways wherein you do need, that they should be prepared before the Lord, with whom you have to do, and I would like to feel that many of you dear young people, and I know many of the old people who were here before God, are concerned to do it, I would like to feel that many of you dear young people are concerned to prepare your ways before the Lord, you want to be helped to do that which is right, but you do want to know sometimes what is really right to do, and now how desirable it is to live inside this word, so Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God, and now think of it first of all as you set out on life's journey, as you turn your back on school life, college life, university life, and philosophy in life, you need the guidance of God that you may be directed to prepare your ways, that your ways may be established as the margin reading is, he established his ways before the

Lord, it really means you want to know the blessing of the Lord is resting on you and the way that you go, and now think of Lot and his wife, what a sorry picture, the word of God records concerning Lot and his wife, I'm thinking of that time when he dwelt with Abraham and it says that the land became too great to contain them both together.

And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my heard men and thy heard men, for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee?

Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right. If thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

[21 : 28] And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zorah.

And now, what do we read? Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent towards Sodom.

But the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly. And Lot, being a good man, was not concerned at that time to prepare his ways before the Lord his God, because he would have thought of the influence it would have upon his own family circle to live in the vicinity of a wicked city like Sodom was at that time.

And what happened ultimately? I'll not take up time to go into the details, because you all know, ultimately, you find, it tells us, that Lot dwelt in Sodom.

He moved into the city itself, and the Lord ultimately burnt him out of it. And thus he learned how unwise it was in his going to dwell there, and that he did not of a truth prepare his ways before the Lord is God.

[23 : 07] Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.

He that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. And then you do need to be helped to do this, prepare your ways before the Lord, your God, informing friendships.

If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. And there is a great word in the book of Proverbs, He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.

Yes, you need to watch your steps as you form friendships. And especially as you come together to form a friendship that will ultimately issue in you journeying on through life together under your own home roof as husband and wife can two walk together except they be agreed.

And the word of God says, be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. As I thought of this viewpoint of the subject, I went back over my Union Chapel life as the pastor, I mean, and I really was amazed to think of the number of dear young people I have been helped to join together as husband and wife in the marriage service, and how the blessing of God has rested upon them, and that the great majority of the services I have taken of that kind under Union Chapel roof have all worked out well.

[25 : 09] And there has been this concern evident that they desire to prepare their ways before the Lord in setting out in home life, and they desire to have Christ dwelling under their home roof as the head of the home.

Yes, and how good that is. It is one of the happiest pictures you can see beneath the sun to see those who are joined together in love as husband and wife and joined together by God to walk in agreement after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit, and desiring to prepare their ways before the Lord their God.

It is a beautiful sight to look on. Yes, and the blessing of God will follow such unions, and it will be for time and eternity too.

Then you need to heed this injunction to prepare your ways before the Lord as you go forward in the matters of life so that you must not make unlawful alliances.

I am thinking now of business life. Sometimes you might be tempted to have help from one outside who does not feel as you do about the things of God, yet he is able to give you the help in LSD that you require, and you might be tempted to fall a prey, to accept that aid which he can give, but you must not think about any alliance like that.

[26 : 57] Think of good king Jehoshaphat, one of Judah's kings again, and he joined with godless Ahaziah to make a navy to set out to get gold, but what happened to it?

The ships of Jehoshaphat were wrecked to Ezeon Giber, and they never brought the cargo of gold along, no, and Jehoshaphat was rebuked by the godly prophet for making such a worldly alliance.

You see, Jehoshaphat then was caught in a snare to follow what he thought was a good policy. You must only follow what is a good principle, not policy.

Remember our Union Chapel motto, perish policy or cunning. Perish all that fears the light, whether losing, whether winning, trust in God, and do the right, and remember, right, is might.

Hitler thought might is right, but he made a great mistake, and he brought ruin on the land he lived in, and on his own head.

[28 : 19] Right is might. Do remember that, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and that will stand for time and eternity too.

Yes. So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord. There is just another thought here of preparing these ways, and that is regarding the worship of God.

And now, as you make a move at any time, and you may be called upon to do that as the future unfolds before you, you must remember this word of God.

Them that honor me, I will honor. They that despise me should be lightly esteemed. And for any worldly advantage, you must not set aside the worship of God to obtain it.

Wherever you dwell, if you prepare your ways before the Lord, you must be found in a sphere where you can gather together with those who worship God, and you be found amongst them, seeking his divine aid, and witnessing for him and his truth.

[29 : 39] Do remember that. Go not in any way that you cannot ask the Lord to bless you in it. So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.

and now there is one way which excels all others wherein you can prepare all your ways before the Lord. And now that is to do what Job was helped to do.

And Job says, I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause. The way of prayer, dear friends, dear young friends, dear children, this is the way, walk in it, in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your request be made known unto God.

The way of prayer, all to go along it, that will help you then to prepare your ways. You will do all that you do, desiring the blessing of God to be upon it.

you will want in the beginning God. Yes. But I just want to look at this subject from another viewpoint. So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord is God.

[31 : 09] I want to look at this word mighty. It is rather an unusual word, and it means that the blessing of God rested on Jotham in Judah's kingdom and you can find in the little chapter wherein it is recorded how he spread out and built cities and castles and towers and how he strengthened the defenses and how God gave him favor as he went out to war with Judah's enemies.

He became mighty from that viewpoint. But then it is not so much that he became mighty before man.

As I understand it, Jotham was given grace to be mighty before God. What I mean is he was mighty in prayer.

As he prepared his ways before the Lord is God, he must have gone aside often into secret places to seek wisdom from above and divine aid to do what he purposed in his heart to do and to seek the help of God in doing it.

And he became mighty in prayer and yet that might was not his own. that God granted to him.

[32 : 43] And oh, the time would not suffice to tell how much you read in the word of God where wrestling prayer can wonders do, bring relief in deepest traits.

Prayer can force a passage through iron bars and brazen gates. Mighty in prayer. And now think of Peter as you read in the Acts of the Apostles.

He was in prison and it looked as though his work was coming to an end. But it says, prayer without ceasing was made by the church of God for him.

And that prayer was mighty in its influence because it did indeed have power with God. And God sent an angel and awakened Peter in the prison and led him out of it where the doors opened of their own accord.

Yet they were locked, fastened. Here you see what prayer can do. Even at which end it can give deliverance when it almost seems impossible there can be a way made.

[34 : 00] The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Mighty in prayer. And it means this.

Jotham being the mighty man he was made before God and man was mighty in his influence. And do you realize you dear young people that each of you exerts an influence in your everyday life.

Although as yet it may be your school life, your grammar school life, university life, it may be, but you exert an influence in what you say and what you do and where you go.

And now how good it would be if wherever your lot is cast, you could exert an influence on God's behalf.

So that men might look on you in doing it and see that you have been with Jesus. Oh that is a great life to be enabled to live.

[35 : 11] And then Jotham was also made mighty to face difficulties because you can find in the chapter that it tells us he fought with the king of the Ammonites and prevailed against them.

Oh you see Jotham not only fought with weapons of war, but he fought before God as well as man. He fought with the weapon of prayer.

Yes, he desired that God should be on his side in that which he went forth to do against Judah's enemies. then I might say also there is a being made mighty to face difficulties and to plead for God's cause.

And now I think now of Martin Luther when there came into his life a time of testing and when he had to appear before the great ones in the land in which he lived to plead the cause of God.

And he was likely to be in much trouble in doing it, but he was mighty in prayer and at length as he went on his way to plead for God and for what was sound doctrine, he was journeying to a city called Worms.

[36 : 36] And he said as he went along, so he felt before God, were there as many devils in the city of Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses.

I will go and God shall be my help. And now that is what it means to be mighty in times of trouble. And you may have learned in your history books, if they are not cooked too much at school, that Mary Queen of Scots feared the prayers of John Knox more than armies of men sent against her.

mighty prayers are those. And when you see poor sinners born again who are being persecuted it may be oppressed and downtrodden, yet they go in a secret place to tell all the truth about it before God with whom they have to do, and he undertakes their cause.

He maintains the right of the afflicted, yes, mighty in times of trouble. And I thought too of William of Orange when he was at war against Spain which at that time was one of the greatest kingdoms on the earth.

And William of Orange with his little kingdom, alas, it seemed so hopeless in embarking on such a war, but William of Orange said this, before we took up this cause we entered into a close alliance with the king of kings and William of Orange and his people triumphed over the might of Spain because they fought before God and God fought on their behalf.

[38 : 33] I say that with great reverence. And you find often in the word of God it says that God fought for Israel and so he does. But I must soon come to the Amen.

So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God. And now coming toward the Amen as I said I was thinking about this subject meditating taking on it and a little incident came into my mind of about 40 years ago.

You remember many of you what my afternoon text was. The Lord will appear. And now round about 40 years ago England was in a very sad state.

There was a railway strike, a general railway strike I mean. So all the railways were just idle except one or two trains that other folks run.

But there was no real railway traffic running. And things in England were at a great pass and a standstill. And it was in the earlier days of my ministry.

[40 : 01] And as I went to rest on the Saturday night I began to think like I usually do about our circumstances. And I thought as I tossed on my bed here I am I have nothing at all put by.

I have got the rent to find and housekeeping ways and means. And I have got to take a journey if I can on Monday. And I want that means to pay for the railway ticket if the railways should be working for me to do it.

And I reckoned up how much I wanted to do it all and I wanted five pounds fifteen shillings. Well I went to sleep and on the Sabbath morn I suddenly awoke and a voice said in my ear at least it was to me a voice not that anyone was there to speak the Lord will appear and I sat up and I said oh I am glad to hear it Lord it is just what I want thee to be pleased to do for me before Monday morning and so I arose and went through the day with my services and I want you to follow this along the pastors fund at that time was nothing like it is nowadays but at the end of the day when that was handed over to me it was 36 shillings 1 pound 16 the cause was nothing like as big then as regards numbers as it is by the grace of God nowadays and I was preaching at night at

Frittenden and in those days at Frittenden you had to have whatever was put in a box for the minister at the door and so I was helped to go over there and preach and felt very much help to preach too I can tell you what the text was it comes to my mind why art thou cast down oh my soul why art thou disquieted within me hope thou in God for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance and my God after the service the dear old deacon came to me with his hands so full and he said oh my dear friend I'm sure you're in great need and the Lord is indeed appearing for you he said I've never known in all my years in this cause of truth so much put in the box for the minister as there is at this evening time and I said well how much is there and he said oh there is 37 shillings and it is all for you so I took it and was cheered but in my subconscious mind

I reckoned that up and of course it was only 3 pounds 13 and I wanted 5 pounds 15 and I was still troubled as I went out of the course but as I got outside there was a good man there who was on a holiday in that area and he spoke to me about the sermon and the help it had been and put a piece of paper in my hand which I put in my pocket and afterwards I looked to see what it was and it was a cheque for 2 pounds 2 and that made up the 5 pounds 15 and so I did see how that word was fulfilled the Lord will appear and then I was told as I was just on my way to go home that the railway strike was over and I journeyed off the next day to preach where I was engaged to preach the rent was paid the housekeeping was found also and this is the way in which you have to live as grace is given casting all your care upon him for he careth for you

[44 : 45] I have diverged a little from the subject yet not so much it may be after all because it was our great concern in our home life to prepare our ways before the Lord our God and often we were brought into extremities but the Lord did appear in his own time his own way so that now I am near in the end of life's journey I can assure you dear young people the word of God is sure they shall not be ashamed that wait for me and there is a word here which I can say amen to and I hope you dear young people will live long enough to look back over life's journey and say amen to it also and behold this day

I am going the way of all the earth and ye know in all your hearts and all your souls that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you all are come to pass on to you and not one hath failed thereof fear him ye saints and you will then have nothing else to fear make you his service your delight your want shall be his care the blessing of the Lord be upon you amen