

# LESSONS FROM THE GREATNESS OF JOTHAM

*2 Chronicle 27:6*

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Jotham, son of Uzziah, began to reign when he was twenty-five years old and ruled for sixteen years (27:1). He was coregent with his father after Uzziah was smitten with leprosy for invading the temple precincts. Jotham would be considered a good king, although his son Ahaz was a bad king. In fact, from Jotham, the eleventh king of Judah, to Zedekiah, the twentieth and last king of Judah, only Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah could be called good kings. That's three kings out of ten. The Lord kept David's lamp burning in Jerusalem all those years, but there came a time when He had to bring in the nation of Babylon and punish His people for their sins.

Like his father, Uzziah, Jotham was both a builder and a warrior. He repaired the walls of Jerusalem and the Upper Gate of the temple. He also built cities in the Judean mountains and fortresses and towers in the wooded areas. His army confronted the armies of Israel and Syria, and he won a great victory over the Ammonites and put them under a very heavy annual tribute-nearly four tons of silver and 62,000 bushels each of wheat and barley (27:5). *"So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God" (27:6, NKJV)*. We wonder how much better he would have accomplished had he lived longer.

In Hebrew history we frequently find a godly father begetting an ungodly son and an ungodly father raising a godly son. Good king Jehoshaphat begat bad king Jehoram, but godly King Joash gave the nation a godly son (Amaziah), grandson (Uzziah), and great-grandson (Jotham). However, Jotham's son Ahaz was not a good king or a godly man, yet he begat good King Hezekiah, who in turn was the father of Manasseh, perhaps the most wicked king of the lot and he had a reign of fifty-five years! Ezekiel the Prophet in Babylon dealt with this interesting phenomenon in chapter 18 of his prophecy. God is sovereign in His gifts to individuals and nations. The Lord was long-suffering toward His people during those difficult and evil days, and He was faithful to keep His promises to David. But time was running out. After Ahaz died, only Hezekiah and Josiah would honour the Word of God and seek to obey His will. Yet, in spite of the sins and failings of the people, the Lord maintained a godly remnant in the nation, and from that godly remnant the Messiah would eventually be born.

## WHAT IS PLANNING

Planning simply means devising the process to follow.

- **STEPS IN PLANNING**

1. **SITTING - LUKE 14:28**

What does it mean to "*carry the cross*"? It means daily identification with Christ in shame, suffering, and surrender to God's will. It means death to self, to our own plans and ambitions, and a willingness to serve Him as He directs (**John 12:23-28**). A "*cross*" is something we willingly accept from God as part of His will for our lives. The Christian who called his noisy neighbours the "*cross*" he had to bear certainly did not understand the meaning of dying to self.

Jesus gave three parables to explain why He makes such costly demands on His followers: the man building a tower, the king fighting a war, and the salt losing its flavour. The usual interpretation is that believers are represented by the man building the tower and the king fighting the war, and we had better "*count the cost*" before we start, lest we start and not be able to finish

2. **THINKING MRK14:36**

Peter seemed to have a difficult time applying Jesus' commands to himself. The other men might forsake Jesus, but Peter would stand true and, if necessary, go with Him to prison and to death. Of course, the other disciples echoed Peter's boast; so, he was not the only self-confident one in the group. In the end, all of them failed. When about to experience great suffering, most people want to have someone with them, to help share the burden.

Often in my pastoral ministry, I have sat with people at the hospital, waiting for the surgeon to come with a report. Being perfectly human, Jesus wanted companionship as He faced the cross, and He selected Peter, James, and John, the same men who had accompanied Him to the home of Jairus (**Mark 5:37**) and to the Mount of Transfiguration (**Mark 9:2**).

These three experiences parallel **Phil 3:10**: "*That I may know Him (Mount of Transfiguration), and the power of His resurrection [home of Jairus], and the fellowship of His suffering [Garden of Gethsemane].*"

Our Lord's struggle in the Garden can be understood only in the light of what would happen to Him on the cross: He would be made sin for us (**2 Cor 5:21**) and bear the curse of the Law (**Gal 3:13**). It was not the physical suffering that almost overwhelmed Him with "*anguish and sorrow*," but the contemplation of being forsaken by His Father (**Mark 15:34**). This was "*the cup*" that He would drink (**John 18:11**). According to **Heb 5:7-9**, He asked to be saved, not "*from death*" but out of death, that is, raised from the dead; and the Father granted His request.

### 3. WRITING – HABAKUK 2:4

The prophet saw himself as a watchman on the walls of Jerusalem, waiting for a message from God that he could share with the people. In ancient days, the watchmen were responsible to warn the city of approaching danger, and if they weren't faithful, their hands would be stained with the blood of the people who died (**Ezek 3:17-21; 33:1-3**). It was a serious responsibility.

You get the impression that Habakkuk was fearful of what the Lord might say to him because of His servant's *"complaint."*

The revelation God gave was for a future time and about a future time. While the immediate application was to the end of the Babylonian Captivity, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews interpreted it to refer also to the return of Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, he changed "it" to "He" and applied it to our Lord. But the Lord graciously answered Habakkuk and gave him the vision he needed to turn his worrying into worshiping. This vision included not only the words in **Hab 2**, but also the revelation of God's glory recorded in **3:3-15**.

When you behold the glory of God and believe the Word of God, it gives you faith to accept the will of God. *"For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry"* (**Heb 10:37**). Along with the scoffers Peter wrote about, some readers might ask, *"Where is the promise of His coming?"* (**2 Peter 3:3ff**) and God's reply is, *"Wait for it! It will surely come!"* A discouraged Jew in Babylonian exile might ask, *"Will the Lord come and deliver us?"* and the answer is, *"Yes! Wait for him!"*

### CONCLUSION

God is sovereign in His gifts to individuals and nations.

So Jotham became mighty, because *"he prepared his ways before the Lord his God"* (**27:6, NKJV**). We wonder how much better he would have accomplished had he lived longer.