

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 17

Jehoshaphat Reigns in Judah

Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place and strengthened himself against Israel. 2 He placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim that Asa his father had captured. 3 The LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the practices of Israel. 5 Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand. And all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had great riches and honor. 6 His heart was courageous in the ways of the LORD. And furthermore, he took the high places and the Asherim out of Judah. 7 In the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; 8 and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; and with these Levites, the priests Elishama and Jehoram. 9 And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the LORD with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people. 10 And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver for tribute, and the Arabians also brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats. 12 And Jehoshaphat grew steadily greater. He built in Judah fortresses and store cities, 13 and he had large supplies in the cities of Judah. He had soldiers, mighty men of valor, in Jerusalem. 14 This was the muster of them by fathers' houses: Of Judah, the commanders of thousands: Adnah the commander, with 300,000 mighty men of valor; 15 and next to him Jehohanan the commander, with 280,000; 16 and next to him Amasiah the son of Zichri, a volunteer for the service of the LORD, with 200,000 mighty men of valor. 17 Of Benjamin: Eliada, a mighty man of valor, with 200,000 men armed with bow and shield; 18 and next to him Jehozabad with 180,000 armed for war. 19 These were in the service of the king, besides those whom the king had placed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

17:1–21:3 The Chronicler's account of Jehoshaphat's reign is more than twice as long as that in Kings, where the interest in Ahab and Elijah overshadows the space allotted to Jehoshaphat (1Ki 22:1–46). The Chronicler has also used Jehoshaphat's reign to emphasize immediate retribution. This theme is specifically announced in 19:10 and is illustrated in the blessing of Jehoshaphat's obedient faith and in the reproof for his wrongdoing (19:2–3; 20:35–37). Jehoshaphat reigned 872–848 B.C., from 872 to 869 likely as co-regent with his father Asa (see 20:31 and note). The details of his reign may not be in chronological order; the teaching mission of 17:7–9 may have been part of the reforms noted in 19:4–11. (CSB)

Chs 17–20 Theological points of chs 14–16 continue in the expanded story of Jehoshaphat. The Chronicler's account of Jehoshaphat's reign is based on the pattern established by the account of Asa's reign. Both kings are for the most part pious. Both interact with different prophets (Asa, with Azariah and Hanani; Jehoshaphat, with Jehu, Jahaziel, and Eliezer) and are rebuked for foreign entanglements (16:7–9; 19:1–3; 20:35–37). (TLSB)

Ch 17 The Lord established Jehoshaphat as king because he was faithful to God and His commands (vv 1–6). Jehoshaphat not only abolished idolatry but also introduced a program of mass education in God’s Law (vv 7–9). God’s blessings were evident as Jehoshaphat grew strong and prosperous at home and abroad (vv 10–19). Cf 1Ki 15:24. (TLSB)

17:2 *land of Judah ... towns of Ephraim.* Abijah (13:19), Asa (15:8) and now Jehoshaphat had managed to hold these cities; they would be lost under Amaziah (25:17–24). (CSB)

17:3–4, 6 Despite his alliance with the north (ch 18), Jehoshaphat remained loyal to the Lord. (TLSB)

17:3 *The LORD was with Jehoshaphat.* No one has the right to demand God’s gracious presence. But God blessed Jehoshaphat with “riches and honor” (v 5). (TLSB)

17:5 *tribute.* Jehoshaphat is the recipient of wealth and honor from Judah, a theme expanded in vv 10–12a. Similar notes are made of David (1Ch 29:2–5, 28), Solomon (2Ch 9:13–28), Uzziah (2Ch 26:8, 15), and Hezekiah (2Ch 32:27). (TLSB)

17:6 *courageous in the ways of the LORD.* Zealous in applying God’s teachings by enforcing His Law and encouraging faith in His promised blessings through the covenant, Jehoshaphat showed himself to be the ideal king of Dt 17:18–20. (TLSB)

took the high places. Just as his father Asa had attempted to remove the high places, only to have them be restored (14:5; 15:17), so also Jehoshaphat removed them initially, only to have them revive and persist (20:33; cf. 1Ki 22:43). (CSB)

17:7–9 This incident may be part of the reform more fully detailed in 19:4–11. In the theocracy, the law of the Lord was supposed to be an integral part of the law of the land; the king and his officials, as well as the priests and prophets, were representatives of the Lord’s kingship over his people. (CSB)

17:7 *third year.* Perhaps the first year of his sole reign after a co-regency of three years with his father Asa. (CSB)

officials. Jehoshaphat delegated teaching authority to five princes or officials, nine Levites, and two priests. (Obadiah and Zechariah were common names. The prophets so named are from a later era. Though the teaching duty of temple personnel is often mentioned in the OT (Lv 10:11; Dt 33:10; 2Ch 15:3; Jer 18:18; Hos 4:6; Mal 2:7), it is unusual for laity to be listed with Levites and priests as teachers. (TLSB)

17:9 *Book of the Law of the LORD.* Cf 34:14. The Books of Moses. After the return from the Babylonian exile, it was read at assemblies of the people (Ne 8:2–8; 9:3). The teaching priests (cf 15:3) were assisted by Levites. (TLSB)

17:10–12a The riches and honor given to Jehoshaphat were far greater than those from Judah alone (cf v 5). His strength was that of an international power. (TLSB)

17:10 *fear of the LORD.* Here it explains why the surrounding nations “made no war against Jehoshaphat.” (TLSB)

17:11 The Lord let Jehoshaphat’s might grow to such proportions that the Philistines and the Arabians feared even to initiate the kind of invasion that Jehoshaphat’s father, Asa, had repulsed (14:9–15). Peace among nations depends on God. (TLSB)

17:12b–19 Two types of military appear to be described here: a standing, or professional, army and a militia. Their units and numbers, totaling 1,160,000, are listed in vv 14–18. (TLSB)

17:14–18 300,000... 280,000... 200,000... 200,000... 180,000. Or “300 units ... 280 units ... 200 units ... 200 units ... 180 units.” (CSB)

17:16 *volunteer for the service of the LORD*. How he served is not explained. (TLSB)

Ch 17 The Lord strengthens faithful Jehoshaphat so that the fear of the Lord falls upon the nations. As the Lord strengthens you, use that strength to honor His name. The Lord still has the nations in mind as He works in our lives. He desires salvation and peace for all people, as taught in His Word. • Lord, provide us with strength in all realms of our lives, that we may in every way give testimony to Your generosity. Amen (TLSB)