



Daily Verse and Comment

[2 Kings 15:34-35](#)

(34) And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. (35) 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.

New King James Version

Jotham was the fourth successive king of Judah who "did what was right in the sight of the LORD," but during whose reign "the high places were not removed." He had the shortest reign of the four—16 years—and died at a mere 41 years of age. Though he, too, failed to remove the high places, unlike his fathers, he remained true to [God](#) during his short reign and life.

[II Chronicles 27:2](#) adds, "And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still the people acted corruptly."

[II Chronicles 27:6](#) provides another significant description: "So Jotham became mighty, *because he prepared [or established] his ways before the LORD his God*" (emphasis ours throughout; cf. [Proverbs 4:26](#); [16:3](#); [24:3](#)). Jotham was well aware of the presumptuous mistake of his father Uzziah, and it must have weighed on him as he contemplated the direction of his own life. God prospered him because he considered his ways to ensure they conformed to God's standard. God was no stranger in his thoughts.

Notice also the phrase "the LORD *his* God." The relationship was a personal one; God was not simply a Being about whom Jotham had heard stories. No, he was dedicated to God and remained committed throughout his life. However, like his fathers, though he did not personally worship on the pagan high places, he tolerated them—and that tolerance had some unintended consequences for his progeny.

Jotham's son, Ahaz, was truly a bad king. He

did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David had done. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. ([II Kings 16:2-4](#))

Apparently, Jotham's good example was not enough, as Ahaz latched onto what had been left undone and ran with it. The high places had been a feature in Judah for about 150 years when Ahaz assumed the throne and so were a part of his environment, even though his father did not worship at them. But Jotham's tolerance of them was probably a contributing factor to his son's path into idolatry and beyond to the abhorrent practice of child sacrifice.

In looking at the record of Jotham's life, we can see that while he was fastidious in his own relationship with God, he apparently put little effort into improving matters spiritually for the people. While he did not personally regress as his fathers had, he did not get the nation back on track regarding the true worship of God. He held steady in his own life but did not dirty his hands attempting to clean up the spiritual morass he had inherited.

The histories of Israel's kings and judges show that successful spiritual revivals typically begin with tearing down the idols *first*, which sets the stage for the people to turn back to God. The same dual action appears throughout Scripture: Getting rid of something bad is combined with replacing it with something good. When we are converted, we have to remove the false *and* take in the truth. In addition, one of the prophecies about [Jesus Christ](#) says that He would "know to refuse the evil *and* choose the good" ([Isaiah 7:15-16](#)).

Because our Creator is a God of purity, the best results always come from paying attention to both aspects—otherwise, the result is a mixture of good and evil, which always falls short of the mark. Even if one holds onto the

good, ignoring the evil (as opposed to excising it) allows it to grow and fester like cancer, ready to break out and cause harm.

Jotham stands as the best of the four successive kings who failed to remove the high places, and considering the overall state of the nation, perhaps he did the best he could. Unlike Hezekiah, he did not lead a spiritual revival, but neither did he personally let down. Nevertheless, the net effect of these four kings' reluctance to rid Judah of the high places was to allow an evil to endure that later resulted in the kingdom's destruction and captivity.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[The High Places \(Part Five\)](#)

Related Topics:

[Ahaz](#)

[Building a Relationship with God](#)

[Burning Incense on the High Places](#)

[Child Sacrifice](#)

[Idolatry leads to Captivity](#)

[Jotham](#)

[Negligence to Remove high Places](#)

[The High Places](#)

[Toleration of Paganism](#)

[Uzziah's Presumptuousness](#)