

**2Chronicles 17:1 ¶ And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel.**

**2Chronicles 17:2 And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken.**

After the death of King Asa, his son Jehoshaphat became king. He took action to strengthen himself against possible attack from Israel. (Ahab and Jezebel were ruling in Israel at this time.) He put troops in all the fenced cities of Judah and added military posts throughout Judah and in the cities of Ephraim that Asa had possessed.

**2Chronicles 17:3 And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim;**

**2Chronicles 17:4 But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.**

**2Chronicles 17:5 Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance.**

It is noted that the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in “the first ways” of his father David; he did not worship false gods. David was the standard by which all others in his line were measured. We must remember that he was noted to be a man after God’s own heart.

*1 Samuel 13:13–14 “And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.”*

*Acts 13:22 “And when he had removed him [Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.”*

Jehoshaphat chose to follow his example by seeking to live in obedience to God’s commandments. He did not rebel against God as did the tribes of the Northern Kingdom.

“The first ways of his father David” may refer to the time before his sin with Bathsheba.

The LORD confirmed the kingdom under Jehoshaphat’s rule because of his strong commitment to living in obedience to His commands. The people of Judah blessed the king with presents, and he enjoyed riches and honor in abundance.

JFB offers this insight regarding the presents from the people: “This was

customary with the people generally at the beginning of a reign (1 Samuel 10:27), and with the nobles and high functionaries yearly afterwards. They were given in the form of voluntary offerings, to avoid the odious idea of a tax or tribute.”

**2Chronicles 17:6** And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

**2Chronicles 17:7** Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, *even* to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

**2Chronicles 17:8** And with them *he sent* Levites, *even* Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests.

**2Chronicles 17:9** And they taught in Judah, and *had* the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

King Jehoshaphat was proud to walk in the ways of the LORD and took away the high places and groves as evidence of his commitment. There is a discrepancy between this account and the account in 1Kings.

*1 Kings 22:41–43 “And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel....And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD: nevertheless the high places were not taken away; for the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places.”*

Clarke offered this explanation in his commentary on 1Kings: “In 2 Chronicles 17:6, it is expressly said, that he did take way the high places. Allowing that the text is right in 2 Chronicles the two places may be easily recognized. There were two kinds of high places in the land:

1. Those used for idolatrous purposes.
2. Those that were consecrated to God, and were used before the temple was built.

The former he did take away, the latter he did not.”

In the third year of his reign he sent out some of his leading men along with some of the top Levites and priests to teach God’s law to all the people throughout Judah.

This king knew that more was needed than just his example for the people to commit their lives to following the LORD. He knew that they needed to understand that it was God’s word that directed Him and established the foundation of truth for what is right and wrong.

**2Chronicles 17:10** ¶ And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

**2Chronicles 17:11** Also *some* of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents,

**and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats.**  
**2Chronicles 17:12 And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store.**

The Chronicler notes that “the fear of the LORD” fell upon all the kingdoms around Judah so that they avoided making war. I think that there must be more to this story. Something had to provoke that fear, possibly something supernatural. That fear led the Philistines to bring presents and silver as tribute to the king. The Arabians also gifted him with flocks—7700 rams and 7700 he goats.

Jehoshaphat grew quite powerful in the land, and he built other castles and storage cities in Judah.

**2Chronicles 17:13 And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem.**

**2Chronicles 17:14 And these *are* the numbers of them according to the house of their fathers: Of Judah, the captains of thousands; Adnah the chief, and with him mighty men of valour three hundred thousand.**

**2Chronicles 17:15 And next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand.**

**2Chronicles 17:16 And next him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself unto the LORD; and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour.**

**2Chronicles 17:17 And of Benjamin; Eliada a mighty man of valour, and with him armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand.**

**2Chronicles 17:18 And next him *was* Jehozabad, and with him an hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for the war.**

**2Chronicles 17:19 These waited on the king, beside *those* whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah.**

Business thrived in the cities of Judah. His strongest men of war were stationed in Jerusalem. This military force consisted of the following:

- Adnah, the chief military commander, captain over 300,000 mighty warriors of Judah
- Johohanan, 2<sup>nd</sup> in command, captain over 280,000 warriors of Judah
- Amasiah, son of Zichri, 3<sup>rd</sup> in command, captain over 200,000 warriors of Judah. It is noted of this man that he “willingly offered himself” as a servant of the LORD. The Hebrew indicates that he volunteered and possibly served as a freewill offering to the LORD.
- Eliada, top leader in Benjamin, captain over 200,000 warriors that were skilled archers armed with shields
- Jehozabad, captain over 180,000 warriors prepared for war

These all comprised the troops that served the king in and around Jerusalem along with the rest of the troops stationed throughout the fenced cities of Judah.

Another insight from JFB: "The army of Jehoshaphat, commanded by five great generals and consisting of five unequal divisions, comprised one million one hundred and sixty thousand men, without including those who garrisoned the fortresses. No monarch, since the time of Solomon, equalled Jehoshaphat in the extent of his revenue, in the strength of his fortifications, and in the number of his troops."