

CHAPTER 17

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 17

This chapter relates the accession of Jehoshaphat to the throne, his settlement on it, his piety, and reformation in religion, (^{<4170>}2 Chronicles 17:1-6), his care to instruct the people in the law of God, (^{<4170>}2 Chronicles 17:7-9), the respect shown him by neighbouring nations, (^{<4170>}2 Chronicles 17:10,11), the fortified places of his kingdom, his numerous forces and mighty men at the head of them, (^{<4172>}2 Chronicles 17:12-19).

Ver. 1. *And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead*, etc.] In the stead of Asa his father:

and strengthened himself against Israel; the ten tribes, by fortifying his cities, building castles, raising and keeping a large standing army, as the latter part of this chapter shows, and the next verse.

Ver. 2. *And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah*, etc.] A considerable number of soldiers, to defend them should they be attacked:

and set garrisons in the land of Judah: on the frontiers and borders of it, to protect it:

and in the cities of Ephraim; soldiers to keep garrison there:

which Asa his father had taken; (see ^{<4458>}2 Chronicles 15:8).

Ver. 3. *And the Lord was with Jehoshaphat*, etc.] Guiding and directing, prospering and succeeding him in all things; he had, no doubt, his gracious presence in spiritual things, as well as his powerful and directing presence in things civil; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord was for his help;”

because he walked in the first ways of his father David; which were his best; some of his last ways not being good, as in the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba, and his numbering of the people; Jehoshaphat followed him in the one, but not in the other: or, “in the ways of David and his father, the first”; the first of them both; for the latter ways of his father Asa were not

so good as his first, as the preceding chapter shows; and the Septuagint version leaves out the word “David”, and so restrains it to his own father:

and sought not unto Baalim; as did Ahab king of Israel, who now reigned there; (~~1153~~ 1 Kings 15:24 16:32).

Ver. 4. *But sought to the Lord God of his fathers*, etc.] Prayed to him, worshipped and served him:

and walked in his commandments; observed and kept them, moral, ceremonial, and judicial:

and not after the doings of Israel: who worshipped the golden calves at Dan and Bethel.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the Lord stablished the kingdom in his hand*, etc.] Piety is the best prop of government; the throne is best supported and established by truth, righteousness, and mercy; by the exercise of these Jehoshaphat was settled in his kingdom, and had a place in the hearts of his people:

and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; being well affected to him, as well as it was usual so to do at a prince’s accession to the throne, (see ~~1917~~ 1 Samuel 10:27)

and he had riches and honour in abundance; through the presents his subjects brought him, and the respect they showed him.

Ver. 6. *And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord*, etc.] It was engaged in them, was bent and set upon them; he walked in them with great pleasure and cheerfulness, being inspired with zeal and courage; he was fearless and intrepid, and regarded not any opposition he might have, or expect to have, in the work of reformation in which he was concerned:

moreover, he took away the high places; such as were dedicated to idols, but not those in which the true God was worshipped, (~~403~~ 2 Chronicles 20:33)

and groves out of Judah; where idols were placed; for though these had been removed by Asa, yet had been renewed in the latter part of his days, when more negligent of religion.

Ver. 7. *Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes*, etc.] That dwelt in the several parts of the kingdom; or he sent them, being with him,

some of the principal men of his court; for **I** may be a sign of the accusative case, as it sometimes is:

even to Benhail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and to Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; to see that they were taught, and oblige them to attend to the instructions that should be given them, and not mutiny and rebel against their teachers; and to let them know what was the king's pleasure on this head, and to back with their authority the priests and Levites, whose proper work it was to instruct, and who therefore were sent with them, as follows.

Ver. 8. *And with them he sent Levites,* etc.] With the five princes he sent nine Levites:

even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tobadonijah, Levites; of whom we nowhere else read; no doubt they were principal persons, and fit for the work they were sent about:

and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests; whose lips were to keep knowledge, and at whose mouth the law was to be sought, (³⁰⁰⁷Malachi 2:7).

Ver. 9. *And they taught in Judah,* etc.] The people their duty to God and man:

and had the book of the law of the Lord with them; as the rule of their instruction, and the people's obedience; out of this they taught them, and by it confirmed what they taught, and enforced it with the divine authority:

and went about throughout all the cities of Judah; not only their own cities, the Levitical ones, but all others:

and taught the people; the law of the Lord, the fear and worship of God.

Ver. 10. *And the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah,* etc.] Upon the ten tribes, and on foreign nations about them, as Moabites, Edomites, Syrians, Egyptians, Arabs, and Philistines; this fear, as it came from the Lord, so might be raised and increased by observing, that religion was revived in them; for they might perceive, by former observations made, that the more religious these people were, the more prosperous and formidable they were:

so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat; to interrupt him in the work of reformation he was so intent upon.

Ver. 11. *Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and tribute silver*, etc.] Perhaps those of Gerar, and the parts adjacent, Asa took and spoiled, and made tributary, (^{<4444>}2 Chronicles 14:14),

and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats; with which their country abounded; and these might be the Scenite Arabs, who fearing lest Jehoshaphat should fall upon them, and take away their flocks as his father had done, (^{<4445>}2 Chronicles 14:15), brought these presents to him.

Ver. 12. *And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly*, etc.] In wealth and riches, power and authority, in his forces and fortifications:

and he built in Judah castles, and cities of stores; castles for the defence of his kingdom, and store cities to lay up corn, and wine, and all provisions, in case of an invasion, or against a time of war.

Ver. 13. *And he had much business in the cities of Judah*, etc.] Partly in fortifying them, and partly in reforming the inhabitants of them:

and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem; or by or near unto it, so the particle is rendered, (^{<4653>}Joshua 5:13), they encamped in places adjacent to it; for such a number of men as follows, even 1,160,000, could never be contained in Jerusalem, but must be disposed of in the territories of it; nor did they wait on the king together; but in course, (see ^{<4479>}2 Chronicles 17:19), by which it appears there is no need to suppose any mistake of the transcriber, in any or all of the following sums, as has been suggested^{f69}.

Ver. 14. *And these are the numbers of them, according to the house of their fathers*, etc.] Both of the tribe of Judah and of Benjamin: and first

of Judah, the captains of thousands; some had 1000 men under them, and some one hundred:

Adnah the chief; he was the principal commander or general of them:

and with him mighty men of valour, three hundred thousand; such a number was under his command.

Ver. 15. *And next to him was Jehohanan the captain*, etc.] Being of the same rank as to office, but having a lesser number of men under him; and it may respect not any kind of subordination, only nearness of place, as the Targum,

“he that encamped next to him”

and with him two hundred and fourscore thousand; which number was but 20,000 less than the former.

Ver. 16. *And next him was Amasiah the son of Zichri*, etc.] He encamped next to him, as the Targum:

who willingly offered himself unto the Lord; to fight the Lord’s battles, and without any stipend, as some think; or, as Kimchi, he offered gold and silver to the treasures of the house of the Lord:

and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valour; the number was 80,000 less than the former; the whole of Judah amounted to 780,000 men.

Ver. 17. *And of Benjamin, Eliada, a mighty man of valour*, etc.] Was the chief commander:

and with armed men with bow and shield two hundred thousand; which were the armour of the tribe of Benjamin they were best skilled in, (^{<1448>}2 Chronicles 14:8).

Ver. 18. *And next to him, was Jehozabad*, etc.] According to the Targum he encamped next him:

and with him one hundred and fourscore thousand ready prepared for war; being able bodied men, well disciplined, valiant, and well armed; these numbers of Judah and Benjamin put together amount to 1,160,000 men, whereas Asa only brought into the field 580,000; but it should be considered there had been a long time of peace, many had come off from the ten tribes to Judah, and the promise of multiplying the seed of Abraham was eminently fulfilled.

Ver. 19. *These waited on the king*, etc.] Not this vast number of men at one time, but in course, as David’s military men waited on him, (^{<1370>}1 Chronicles 27:1-15) or each of these captains, with a proper number of

men under them detached from the body; and they were all ready to obey the king's orders whenever he should have occasion for them:

besides those whom the king put into the fenced cities throughout Judah; and all together, the militia of the kingdom was very numerous and formidable.