

Who was King Jotham in the Bible?

Jotham became king of Judah at age twenty-five and reigned for sixteen years, from 750 to 735 BC (2 Kings 15:33; 2 Chronicles 27:1). “He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the Lord. The people, however, continued their corrupt practices” (2 Chronicles 27:2; see also 2 Kings 15:34-35). King Uzziah had been faithful to the Lord but then became prideful and attempted to burn incense on the altar of the Lord, something only priests were permitted to do (2 Chronicles 26:16-20). As a result, God afflicted Uzziah with leprosy. Uzziah lived out the rest of his days in a separate house, while his son Jotham oversaw the palace and governed the people (2 Chronicles 26:21). Jotham did not repeat his father’s mistake of presumptuously entering the temple.

“Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the Lord his God” (2 Chronicles 27:6). He rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple and also did work on the wall at the hill of Ophel and built towns, forts, and towers (2 Chronicles 27:3-4). However, King Jotham failed to remove the high places so the people continued to make sacrifices there (2 Kings 15:35). Jotham waged a successful war against the Ammonites, resulting in their paying him tribute for three years (2 Chronicles 27:5). During Jotham’s reign “the Lord began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah” (2 Kings 15:37). During the reign of Jotham’s son Ahaz, the Arameans would march against Judah, resulting in defeat and heavy casualties for Judah (2 Chronicles 28:5). Initial defeat was followed by Ahaz seeking help from the Assyrians and ultimately looting and shutting up God’s temple and creating more high places (2 Kings 16:5-18; 2 Chronicles 28:5-25).

Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah all prophesied during Jotham’s reign (Isaiah 1:1; Hosea 1:1; Micah 1:1). Also, the genealogies in 1 Chronicles 1-5 were recorded during Jotham’s

reign (1 Chronicles 5:17).

Despite Jotham's godly example, his son Ahaz proved to be a wicked king. Even so, both Jotham and Ahaz are ancestors of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:9). God is able to use all people to accomplish His good purposes.