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Israel and Judah: 29. Athaliah and Joash of Judah

by David Sielaff, April 2018

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Israel and Judah: 29

Athaliah and
Joash
of Judah

THE SITUATION: Athaliah was the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, who ruled just one year, recently assassinated by King Jehu of Israel along with several of Ahaziah's relatives who traveled to Israel to visit their king. In Jerusalem Athaliah takes control of the throne and consolidates her power. She was the only female to rule in Jerusalem, although she is not counted as one of the Kings of Judah. We begin with the aftermath in Jerusalem of Athaliah's seizing power. Then we soon learn of another king of Judah, who was known by two names: Jehoash/Joash.

In this episode of "Israel and Judah" an evil queen tries to destroy the line of David. Athaliah was the daughter of King Ahab and Jezebel of Israel. Athaliah's parents arranged for her to marry the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. He had two names, Jehoram/Joram. Joram became king of Judah and reigned eight years.

The eldest son of Joram and Athaliah was Ahaziah/Jehoahaz. He reigned just one year and was killed by Jehu, king of Israel, along with several other male relatives and heirs to the throne. Jehu also wiped out all the male descendants of Ahab and Jezebel of the dynasty of Omri, from which Athaliah descended. She determined to retain power in Jerusalem that she had when her husband Joram was sick and while Ahaziah went to war with the king of Israel (killed by Jehu) against Syria.^a Jehu also destroyed the worship of Baal in the northern kingdom of Israel. Athaliah supported Baal worship in Judah.

[Remember, all biblical references and quotes are from the *Concordant Literal Old Testament*, and words in *italics* in the Chronicles sections of side-by-side texts indicate differences from the texts in Kings.]

TEXT: Athaliah Seizes Power but a Young King of Judah Is Hidden

2 Kings 11:1–12

¹ As for Ahaziah's mother Athaliah, when she saw that her son was dead, she set out and destroyed

2 Chronicles 22:10–23:11

¹⁰ As for Ahaziah's mother Athaliah, when she saw that her son was dead, she set out and destroyed

^a See "[Israel and Judah 28. The Reign of King Jehu of Israel.](#)"

all the royal seed.

² Yet king Joram's daughter Jehosheba, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the midst of the king's sons who were to be put to death; and she put him and his wetnurse into the chamber of couches. Thus she

concealed him from the face of Athaliah; and he was not put to death. ³ He stayed with her at the House of Yahweh in hiding for six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land.

⁴ In the seventh year Jehoiada the priest sent word and took the chief officers of hundreds of the Carite and of the runners [guards] and had them brought to him in the House of Yahweh.

He contracted a covenant with them and adjured them at the House of Yahweh; then he showed them the king's son. ⁵ He instructed them, saying,

“This is the instruction of what you are to do: One third of you who are coming on duty on this sabbath shall be keeping charge of the king's house, ⁶ another third shall be at the Foundation Gateway and the other third at the gateway behind the runners [guards]. You will keep charge of the House alternately.

⁷ **The two companies of yours that are all going forth off duty this sabbath, they will**

keep charge of the House of Yahweh on behalf of the king.

⁸ **You will encompass round about on the king, each man with his gear [weapons] in his hand. Anyone entering within the ranks shall be put to death. And stay with the king when he goes forth and when he comes in.”**

⁹ The chief officers of hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest had instructed. Each one took his men, those coming on duty in this sabbath with those going forth off duty this sabbath;

all the royal seed *of the house of Judah*.

¹¹ Yet the king's daughter Jehosheba took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the midst of the king's sons who were to be put to death; and she put him and his wetnurse into the chamber of couches. Thus *Jehosheba daughter of king Jehoram and wife of Jehoiada the priest, since she was Ahaziah's sister, concealed him* from the face of Athaliah so that *she did not* put him to death. ¹² He stayed with *them* at the House of Elohim in hiding for six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land.

¹ In the seventh year Jehoiada showed himself steadfast and took the chief officers of hundreds into

a covenant with him, namely Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri. ² They went around throughout Judah and gathered together the Levites from all the cities of Judah and the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel who then came to Jerusalem.

³ *The entire assembly contracted a covenant with the king at the House of Elohim.*

Then he said to them:

“*Here is the king's son! He shall reign just as Yahweh has promised concerning the sons of David.*”

⁴ ***This is the instruction of what you are to do: One third of you, priests and Levites, as you come on duty on this sabbath, shall be gatekeepers at the thresholds, ⁵ another third at the king's house, and the other third at the Foundation Gateway. All of the people shall be in the courts of the House of Yahweh.***

⁶ ***Let not one enter the House of Yahweh except the priests and the ministering Levites. They may enter because they are holy; as for all of the people, they should keep Yahweh's charge.***

⁷ ***The Levites will encompass round about the king, each man with his gear [weapons] in his hand. Anyone entering the House shall be put to death. And stay with the king when he comes in and when he goes forth.”***

⁸ *The Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest had instructed. Each one took his men, those coming on duty in this sabbath with those going forth off duty this sabbath;*

and they came to Jehoiada the priest.

¹⁰ Then the priest gave the chief officers of hundreds the spears and the cuirasses that had been king David's and that were now in the House of Yahweh. ¹¹ The runners [guards], each man with his gear [weapons] in his hand, were standing from the right flank of the House to the left flank of the House, by the altar and by the House, round about on behalf of the king.

¹² Then he brought forth the king's son; he put the insignia [crown] on him and gave him the testimony. They proclaimed him king and anointed him. They smote the palm and said, **"May the king live!"**

for Jehoiada the priest *had not released the outgoing apportionments from duty.*

⁹ Then *Jehoiada* the priest gave the chief officers of hundreds the spears, *the shields* and the cuirasses that had been king David's and that were now in the House of Elohim. ¹⁰ *And he made the entire force stand*, each man with his *javelin* in his hand, from the right flank of the House to the left flank of the House, by the altar and by the House, round about on behalf of the king.

¹¹ Then they brought forth the king's son; they put the insignia [crown] on him and gave him the testimony. They proclaimed him king, and *Jehoiada and his sons* anointed him and said, **"May the king live!"** [end text]

2 Kings 11:1 and 2 Chronicles 22:10. With Ahaziah's death, 2 Chronicles 22:9 says, **"... there was no one of the house of Ahaziah to retain vigor for the kingship."** Once she heard the news, Athaliah, the Queen mother acted immediately.

Athaliah ordered the murder of all her own nephews and grandsons! Who knows why she thought this would benefit her, Judah, or even the northern kingdom of Israel. For whatever reason, she ordered it done, and her orders were followed. By doing so, she surprisingly would have put a final doom to the lineage of her own father Ahab, exactly as prophesied by Elijah and fulfilled mostly by Jehu.^b

Did she have some plan in mind to merge the northern and southern kingdoms? We are not told in the texts. The Jewish historian Josephus understood her intent this way:

"... she endeavored that none of the house of David might be left alive, but that the whole family might be exterminated, that no king might arise out of it afterward; and, as she thought, she had actually done it ..."

• *Antiquities of the Jews 9:140–141*

Perhaps she thought she was striking a blow against YHWH and setting the stage for reunification of Israel under one king. Whatever the case, she was as bloodthirsty a killer as her mother Jezebel and father Ahab. She seemed to have no trouble finding people to carry out her orders to murder heirs to the throne. Perhaps her retainers and guards that came with her from Israel performed the deed. We do not know how many were killed, but it may have been several dozen.

Athaliah followed the practice of her husband, Jehoram/Joram, when he killed potential rivals to the throne of Judah: **"When Jehoram rose up over the kingdom of his father, he reinforced his position and killed all his brothers with the sword, as well as some of the chief officials of Israel"** (2 Chronicles 21:4). Jehu, king of Israel, killed Joram's successor King Ahaziah of Judah and 42 of his brethren (2 Kings 10:12–14; 2 Chronicles 22:8–9). Athaliah's killing of children seems eerily similar to King Herod's murder of all sons under 2 years old in Bethlehem after Jesus was born. Herod tried to prevent a Davidic king from ruling. Jesus was protected and hidden from Herod by God just as earlier Joash was protected in God's house, in verses 3 and 12 below.

Verses 2 and 11. One son is rescued. A niece of Athaliah, Jehosheba, a sister of the dead King Ahaziah secreted her nephew Joash away before the murders began. The phrase **"the chamber of couches"** would not be a bedroom (it would have been searched); it may have been a room where bedding was stored.^c

The boy was one year old. Jehosheba was also the wife of Jehoiada the priest of the Temple of YHWH in

^b "Athaliah," John McClintock and James Strong, eds., *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

^c Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, vol. 8, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995), 297, n110.

Jerusalem. (Josephus says Jehoiada was the high priest, *Antiquities of the Jews* 9:141). Many commentators think Jehosheba was Joram's daughter by a different mother. Athaliah was not her mother. The queen would know that her daughter had a son and would have made sure of his death.

Verses 3 and 12. Initially Jehosheba gave Joash to the wetnurse and later transferred them to **“the House of YHWH”** (or Elohim, meaning the Temple) to live with her and her husband Jehoiada the priest. Apparently Athaliah never went to the Temple of YHWH (she worshipped Baal) and the child lived there for six years in the Temple environs. Neither did her associates visit the Temple of YHWH, or the child might have been discovered.

2 Kings 11:4a. The word “Carite” may refer to a group of former Gentile converts who worship YHWH and became Israelites. The clan's members were originally bodyguards of King David who later helped guard the Temple. The term also occurs in 2 Kings 11:19.

In the 7th year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada (his name means “YHWH knows”) risked everything when he took the Carites into his confidence, telling them that a Davidic heir to the throne was alive. He bound them to silence, made a covenant with them, and began to plan the unveiling of the rightful King of Judah. **“He showed them the king's son”!** He trusted them.

2 Chronicles 23:1–2. Jehoiada worked up his courage to trust God, act, and trust others about the secret heir to the throne of David. He acted openly, and did no secret murder. These two verses have more information than in Second Kings. The Carites are not mentioned. However, the five important leaders named were probably Carites. Jehoiada risked his life, the life of his wife, the life of Joash, and the lives of most of the priests and Levites in the Temple of YHWH.

Joash was not a Levite, yet he grew up in the House of YHWH. He lived “in the Temple” but this probably meant in the environs outside of the Holy Place and Holy of Holies (only the High Priest went in that room on the Day of Atonement). There must have been living quarters in the larger sanctuary.

The five leaders gathered the Levites and the elders **“of the fathers' houses of Israel.”** Did this mean just in the Kingdom of Judah? Or, were there leaders from all the twelve tribes? We cannot know. They were gathered to witness ... what? Perhaps they were not told why they were being gathered, otherwise too many people would have known, and word could have gotten to Athaliah.

2 Kings 11:4b and 2 Chronicles 23:3. In a different sequence than in 2 Kings, in 2 Chronicles 23:4 Jehoiada presents the king's son to the assembled Levites and elders, reminding them that YHWH's promise to David was still fulfilled in Judah. Jehoiada says, **“He shall reign just as Yahweh has promised concerning the sons of David.”** This was promised in 2 Samuel 7:12, 16; 1 Kings 2:4, 9:5; 1 Chronicles 9:9–27; 2 Chronicles 6:16, 7:18, 21:7; Psalm 89:29, 36.

2 Kings 11:5 and 2 Chronicles 23:4. They intend to reveal the king to the people of Jerusalem and Judah. All the priests and Levites and the elders were assigned to various stations to best protect the life of the young boy. They organize for combat. This was a growing conspiracy against the reign of Queen Athaliah.

One third of the guards went to “the king's house” which was likely the palace.

Verses 6 and 5. A second third of the men guarded the gates, the final third were at the House of YHWH.

Verses 7 to 8 and 6 to 7. Each verse says something slightly different, but both have the same object in mind: to protect the king (as the boy is now referred to). The boy is definitely inside the House of YHWH, likely in the courtyard just near the altar or near the entrance to the Holy Place. They were to attack and kill anyone who tried to enter. Jehoiada clearly expected opposition and an attack as soon as the announcement was made to crown Joash as king. The boy was to have a bodyguard wherever he went.

Verses 9 and 8. The plan was put into effect and all the players were in place. To observers it must have seemed as if a shift change was taking place, which accounted for all the extra people around and in the Temple.

Verses 10 and 9. The weapons and armor of David from inside the Temple, **“the House of YHWH/Elohim”** were given to the five leaders (named in 2 Chronicles 23:1) to distribute to those guarding the Temple and the young king. David's remaining heir was to be protected by David's own weapons.

Verses 11 and 10. The weapons of each guard were visible and in hand. The Temple became a fortress.

Verses 12 and 11. Jehoiada brought the king's son out to the men and guards. Six things were done:

- (1) The people crowned Joash as king.
- (2) They gave him the testimony.^d
- (3) They proclaimed him king.
- (4) Jehoiada and his sons anointed him with oil as another mark of kingship.
- (5) **"They smote the palm"** which may mean they clapped or applauded as we do today (Psalm 47:1).
- (6) Finally, they shouted **"May the king live!"** The King James Version has, **"God save the King!"** Most modern translations have **"Long live the King!"**

Queen Athaliah heard all the noise, tumult, and rejoicing coming from the Temple ...

TEXT: The Overthrow of Queen Athaliah

2 Kings 11:13–20

¹³ When Athaliah heard the voice of the runners [guards] and the people, she came out to the people at the House of Yahweh.

¹⁴ Then she saw there the king standing by the column according to the custom. The chiefs with the bugles were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing bugles.

Athaliah tore her garments and called out, **"Conspiracy, conspiracy!"**

¹⁵ Jehoiada the priest instructed the chief officers of hundreds, the officers of the armed unit, and said to them,

"Bring her forth, out from inside the ranks. Anyone coming after her shall be put to death with the sword."

For the priest thought, She must not be put to death in the House of Yahweh. ¹⁶ So they laid hands on her when she came by way of the horses' entry to the king's house; and she was put to death there.

¹⁷ Then Jehoiada contracted the covenant between Yahweh and the king and the people that they would be Yahweh's people; and also between the king and the people.

¹⁸ Then all the people of the land came to the house of Baal and tore it down. They broke his altars and his images for good; and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

Jehoiada the priest posted supervisors over the House of Yahweh.

2 Chronicles 23:12–21

¹² When Athaliah heard the voice of the *people and the runners [guards] praising the king*, she came out to the people at the House of Yahweh.

¹³ Then she saw there the king standing by *his* column at the entry. The chiefs with the bugles were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing bugles, and the singers with instruments of song, knowledgeable in leading the praise. Athaliah tore her garments and shouted, **"Conspiracy, conspiracy!"**

¹⁴ Jehoiada the priest instructed the chief officials of hundreds, the officers of the armed unit, and said to them,

"Bring her forth, out from inside the ranks. Anyone coming after her shall be put to death with the sword."

For the priest thought, You must not put *her* to death in the House of Yahweh. ¹⁵ So they laid hands on her when she came to the entry of the Horse Gate to the king's house; and they put her to death there.

¹⁶ Then Jehoiada contracted *a* covenant between himself and all the people and the king that they would be Yahweh's people.

¹⁷ Then all the people came to the house of Baal and tore it down. They broke his altars and his images; and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

¹⁸ Jehoiada posted supervisors over the House of Yahweh *into the hand of the Levitical*

^d This was perhaps an amulet of authority, or even a small version of the Commandments Moses said was placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:16). It was called a "testimony," the same Hebrew word. Read Dr. Martin's article, "[The Ten Commandments were Pocket Size](#)" from his book [101 Bible Secrets That Christians Do Not Know](#), online free.

priests whom David had apportioned over the House of Yahweh to coffer up ascent approaches to Yahweh, as written| in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with song by the hands of David. ¹⁹ He made the gatekeepers stand at the gateways of the House of Yahweh so that not one who was unclean in any way might enter.

¹⁹ He took the chief officers of hundreds, the Carite, the runners [guards] and all the people of the land that they might bring the king down from the House of Yahweh. They came by way of the gate of the runners [guards] to the king's house; and he took his seat on the throne of the kings.

²⁰ All the people of the land rejoiced; the city itself was quiet since they had put Athaliah to death with the sword in the king's house.

²⁰ He took the chief officers of hundreds, the nobles, and the rulers of the people and all the people of the land, and *he brought* the king down from the House of Yahweh. They came *in through the Upper Gate* to the king's house; and they *seated the king* on the royal throne.

²¹ All the people of the land rejoiced; the city itself was quiet, since they had put Athaliah to death with the sword. [end text]

2 Kings 11:13 and 2 Chronicles 23:12. The palace was south of the Temple, but within earshot of the shouting and praise of the new king. Alathiah did not immediately understand what was happening. Peter Lang observes the crowds of people were in the Sanctuary environs for a reason:

“Besides the armed force, the priests, and the Levites, a multitude of people was also present (ver. 14), which denotes that the coronation took place on a feast-day, when the people collected in Jerusalem from all parts of the country. The acclamations of the people are in the same words as in 1 Kings 1:25.”^e

Verses 14 and 13. Athaliah saw a young child with a crown by a pillar and quickly assessed the situation. Everything she worked for was now threatened — and so was her life. She shouted **“Conspiracy, conspiracy!”** hoping for someone to defend her and her rule.^f None came to her aid. She was trapped. **“In a quite ironic scene, Athaliah the usurper learns of her own usurpation and cries ‘treason’”** (Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings*, 299). Again, multitudes of people were acclaiming the young king, as **“all the people of the land were rejoicing.”**

Verses 15 and 14. Jehoiada orders the chief officers to seize her and kill any who try to protect or rescue her. Certainly she traveled with a bodyguard, but the texts do not mention any action her guards took to protect their queen.^g Jehoiada orders his men not to execute her in the Temple environs.

Verses 16 and 15. They took her near the Horse Gate of the palace and executed her immediately.

Verses 17 and 16. The covenant was renewed between (1) YHWH, the newly revealed Davidic king, and the people of Judah (2 Sam 7:1–17) and (2) between the king and YHWH's people. It seems that Jehoiada covered all aspects of covenant oath taking and fealty properly. This was to ensure that the people saw the young king swear to worship YHWH and Him alone.

Unfortunately, with the passage of time oaths are often forgotten, especially by following generations.

Verses 18 and 17 to 19. The people took action against the **“house of Baal,”** apparently hated because it was dedicated to a pagan god within the city of Jerusalem. They dismantled it stone by stone, killed Baal's priest named Mattan before the altars to Baal, and broke the altar and images of Baal. Human sacrifice was a feature of Baal worship used to control the people of Jerusalem. Baal worship came not only from Israel through Jezebel, it was long a part of Judah's own rebellion against YHWH (1 Kings 14:22–24). Only two

^e John Peter Lange et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: 2 Kings* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008), 123.

^f Most but not all English translations have Athaliah shouting **“Treason, treason!”**

^g Josephus says she had troops with her, but she went alone into the Temple environs. The troops with her were denied entrance, and they chose not to fight the armed men guarding the entrance (*Antiquities of the Jews* 9:150–151).

people were killed in this transfer of power, Queen Athaliah and Mattan, the priest of Baal. Athaliah's revolution ended. **"By me kings reign, And chancellors make statutes of righteousness"** (Proverbs 8:15).

Jehoiada increased security at the Temple of YHWH perhaps to protect against retaliation by Athaliah's allies who helped her seize and maintain power for 6+ years, and from Baal worshippers who did not like the destruction of the temple of Baal.

Verses 19 and 20. The young Davidic king was led from the Temple to the palace.

Verses 20 and 21. The city rejoiced that Athaliah was dead. One can only wonder on the terrible details of her reign. The article "Joash" sums up this episode^h:

"Narrative interest in the Kings account of the coup centers on the legitimacy of Joash as Ahaziah's son and the only survivor of Athaliah's purge, and on the necessary and authoritative restoration of the Davidic dynasty.

The Chronicles account emphasizes the roles of the priest and the Levites in leading a popular uprising. While the identity of Joash as the king's son is suspect, these events are comprehensible as typical political struggles in monarchic states and as fallout from Jehu's revolt that ended the Omride dynasty in the north."

TEXT: Temple Repaired in Jerusalem by the Young King Jehoash/Joash

2 Kings 11:21–12:16

²¹ Jehoash was seven years old when he became king. ¹ In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king. He reigned forty years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.

² Jehoash did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh all the days in which Jehoiada the priest directed him. ³ But they did not take away the high-places; the people were continually sacrificing and fuming incense on the high-places.

⁴ Jehoash said to the priests,

"All the silver of the holy donations that is brought to the House of Yahweh, the silver set apart for each man, his appraisal silver of souls, all the silver that comes up on a man's heart to bring it to the House of Yahweh, ⁵ let the priest take, each of them from his parish-ioner, and let them repair any gap in the House wherever any gap may be found there."

⁶ Now it came to be that by the twenty-third year of king Jehoash, the priests had not yet repaired any gap in the House.

⁷ So king Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said to them,

"For what reason

2 Chronicles 24:1–14

¹ Joash was seven years old when he became king.

He reigned forty years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

² Joash did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

³ *Jehoiada had him marry two wives, and he begot sons and daughters.* ⁴ *It was afterward that it lay on the heart of Joash to renew the House of Yahweh.* ⁵ *So he [Joash] convened the priests and the Levites and said to them,*

"Go forth to the cities of Judah and collect together from all Israel the money to repair the House of your Elohim from the year by year quota. And you should act quickly in the matter."

Yet the Levites did not act quickly.

⁶ So *the* king called Jehoiada the head priest and said to him,

"For what reason

^h McClintock and Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

are you not repairing any gap in the House? Now you must not take silver from your parishioners any more; but for any gap in the House should you grant it.”

⁸ The priests consented to take by no means any silver from the people and not to repair any gap in the House. ⁹ Now Jehoiada the priest took one coffer and pierced a hole in its lid and set it beside the jamb at the right as one entered the House of Yahweh. And there the priests who guarded the threshold put all the silver that was brought into the House of Yahweh.

¹⁰ It came to be whenever they saw that the silver was abundant in the coffer,

the king's scribe came up with the great priest; and they would pouch and count the silver that was found at the House of Yahweh.

¹¹ Then they would render the silver that was weighed out over to the hands of those doing the work who had been given supervision of the House of Yahweh. And they brought it forth to the carpenters and builders who were working in the House of Yahweh, ¹² to the wall builders and the stone hewers, and to buy timbers and hewn stones for repairing any gap in the House of Yahweh, and for all that went forth for repair on the House.

¹³ Indeed, from the silver brought into the House of Yahweh, no basins of silver were made, no snippers, sprinkling bowls or bugles, nor any other article of gold or article of silver for the House of Yahweh; ¹⁴ for they gave it to those doing the work, and with it they repaired the House of Yahweh.

¹⁵ They would not require an accounting from the

have you not required on the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the tax imposed by Moses the servant of Yahweh and by the assembly of Israel for the tent of the testimony?

⁷ *For Athaliah was a wicked woman, and her sons themselves had breached the House of Elohim and had even used all the holy things of the House of Yahweh for the Baalim.*”

⁸ *Now the king commanded that they prepare one coffer and place it outside the gateway of the House of Yahweh.*

⁹ *Then they issued a proclamation in Judah and in Jerusalem to bring to Yahweh the tax imposed on Israel in the wilderness by Moses the servant of Elohim.* ¹⁰ *All the chiefs and all the people paid up; they brought it and dropped it into the coffer until it was full.* ¹¹ *Now it came about at the proper time, one had the coffer brought in to the king's supervisor by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was abundant money, then the king's scribe and the head priest's supervisor came and emptied out the coffer, lifted it up and returned it to its place. Thus they did day by day, so that they gathered money in abundance.*

¹² *The king and Jehoiada the priests gave it to those overseeing the work of servicing the House of Yahweh; they were hiring*

stone hewers and craftsmen in wood to renew the House of Yahweh, as well as craftsmen in iron and bronze to repair the House of Yahweh.

¹³ *The overseers did their work; under their hand the repairwork progressed, and they made the House of Elohim stand in its original state and made it structurally strong.*

¹⁴ *When they had finished, they brought the remaining money before the king and Jehoiada, from*

men into whose hands they would render the silver to give it to those doing the work, because they were performing it in faithfulness.¹⁶ Silver shekels as guilt offerings and silver shekels as sin offerings however were not brought to the House of Yahweh, for they came to be for the priests.

which one made utensils for the House of Yahweh, utensils for the ministry and for the ascent approaches, spoons, golden and silver utensils.

They were offering up ascent approaches in the House of Yahweh continually all the days of Jehoiada.

[end text]

2 Kings 11:21–12:1 and 2 Chronicles 24:1. We learn the name of Jehoash/Joash’s mother was Zibiah. Beersheba is in the south of Judah’s allotment of land. No further mention is made to her in Scripture. We do not know if she was alive or dead when Joash was crowned king. Joash (meaning “given by YHWH”) was his name before he was crowned king (2 Kings 11:2), Jehoash (which has the same meaning as Joash) was the name given to him after he became king.

After all the chaos of the reigns of his grandfather and father, King Joash reigned for 40 years, a very long time to rule in ancient times. In these passages we actually have few details of many aspects of Joash’s reign.

Verses 2 and 2. Joash (I will use Joash from here on) was a good king. Joash means “given by YHWH.” It was important for the king to have sons, so Jehoiada chose two wives for him. We are told in 2 Chronicles 24:3 that he bore both sons and daughters.

Verses 3 and 3. Personal information about Joash, and his marriage history. It was very important for him to have sons to continue the Davidic line of kings. He did not go all the way to root out paganism in Judah.

Verses 4 and 4. Joash wanted to renew and beautify the Temple of YHWH. Presumably this desire took place after he was older and had sons and daughters.

Verses 5–6 and 5. Joash said the repairs were to proceed quickly, but nothing was done for the first 23 years of his 40 year reign!

Verses 7 and 6. Joash called all the priests together, but he spoke to Jehoiada, holding them to account for their lack of progress. Only in 2 Chronicles 24:6 and verse 11 is Jehoiada referred to as **“the head priest.”** In 2 Kings 12:7 Jehoiada is called **“the great priest.”**

“The tent of the testimony,” what does that mean? There is a theory that the “tent” or Tabernacle of Moses was actually set up within the Holy Place soon after the Temple was built. If that theory is true, the “tent” may have lasted until Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple hundreds of years from the time of Joash.

2 Chronicles 24:7. We get insight into Queen Athaliah (described as **“a wicked woman”**) and her sons (who were later killed by invaders, 2 Kings 17:1). They damaged and vandalized the House of God (Elohim) and took **“holy things of the House of YHWH.”** Those treasures and valuables were used in the Temple of Baal.

2 Kings 12:8–15 and 2 Chronicles 24:8–14. These verses cover different aspects of the repairs, and they only slightly relate to each other. Therefore, read each section separately to get full understanding of all that was going on with the repairs to the House of YHWH.

TEXT: The Deaths of Jehoiada and Zechariah

2 Chronicles 24:15–22

¹⁵ Now Jehoiada was old and satisfied with days, and he died; he was a hundred and thirty years old at his death. ¹⁶ They entombed him with the kings in the city of David, because he had done good in Israel, and on behalf of the One, Elohim, and His House.

¹⁷ After the death of Jehoiada the chief officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king; from then on the king hearkened to them. ¹⁸ When they forsook the House of Yahweh, the Elohim of their fathers, and served the Asherah poles and the fetishes, then there was wrath upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs.

¹⁹ So He sent prophets among them to bring them back to Yahweh; they testified against them, yet they did not listen. ²⁰ The spirit of Elohim was put on [the] son of Jehoiada the priest; he stood above the people

and said to them,

“Thus says the One, Elohim: ‘Why are you trespassing the instructions of Yahweh so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken Yahweh, He is forsaking you.’”

²¹ But they conspired against him, and by instruction from the king they [the people] pelted him with stones in the court of the House of Yahweh.

²² King Joash did not remember the kindness that his [Zechariah’s] father Jehoiada had shown to him, and he killed his son. As he was dying, he said, **“Yahweh is seeing and is inquiring** [for judgment].” **[end text]**

2 Chronicles 24:15–16. The greatly beloved and respected Jehoiada lived a long time. He was honored with burial **“with the kings.”** Does this mean he was buried with the good kings of Judah in the sepulchers of David (Nehemiah 3:16)? That may be the case. Indeed, Huldah the Prophetess is buried with them.ⁱ

Verses 17–18. With Jehoiada dead, Joash turned to listen to **“the chief officials”** and no longer listened to the sons of Jehoiada (who themselves were old, considering Jehoiada’s great age). Joash, the officials, and the people forsook YHWH, the Temple, and served pagan gods. Idolatry flourished. God’s protection was lost and God’s wrath came upon the Kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem.

Verse 19. There were prophets, plural, but only one speaks in these verses. Zechariah spoke directly to the people against Joash and the officials about their sins.

Verse 20. Directly inspired by God’s Spirit, Zechariah spoke to the people, but he was chastising the king and his officials. He warned them all of God’s displeasure and certain judgment, **“you have forsaken Yahweh, He is forsaking you.”**

Verse 21. Joash orders that God’s priest and prophet Zechariah be stoned to death. By order of Joash the people murdered Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, inside the court of the Temple, close to where Joash was revealed to the people decades earlier (**“by the altar and by the House,”** 2 Chronicles 23:10).

Verse 22. Joash and the people of Judah were warned and yet they murdered one of his prophets! Zechariah’s last words were that YHWH is watching, taking note, and will punish.

TEXT: The Death of King Jehoash/Joash of Judah

2 Kings 12:17–21

¹⁷ Then Hazael king of Syria marched up and fought against Gath and seized it. Hazael also set his face to go up against Jerusalem.

¹⁸ But Jehoash king of Judah took all the holy donations that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah his fathers, the kings of Judah, had sanctified, together with his own holy donations and all the gold that was found in the treasuries of the House of Yahweh and the house of the king; and he sent them to Hazael king of Syria, who then went up from against Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 24:23–27

²³ *It came about at the revolution of the year that the army of Syria marched up against him; they came to Judah and Jerusalem and massacred all the chief officers of the force from among the people;*

they sent all their loot to the king of Damascus.

²⁴ *Though the army of Syria had come with only an insignificant number of men, Yahweh, He delivered a much larger army into their hands, for they had forsaken Yahweh Elohim of their fathers. Therefore they executed judgment against Joash.*

ⁱ See [“The Location and Future Discovery of King David’s Tomb.”](#)

¹⁹ As for the rest of the affairs of Joash and all that he did, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Judah?

²⁰ His courtiers arose and conspired in a conspiracy and smote Joash in the house, the Millo bulwark at the descent to Silla.

²¹ Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer, his courtiers, they smote him so that he died. They entombed him with his fathers in the city of David; and

his son Amaziah reigned in his stead.

²⁵ When they departed from him, for they left him with many wounds,

his courtiers conspired against him because of the bloodguilt over the son of Jehoiada the priest; they killed him on his couch. He died, and they entombed him in the city of David; yet they did not entomb him in the tombs of the kings. ²⁶ Those conspiring against him were Zabad son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad son of Shimrith the Moabitess.

²⁷ As for his sons, and the abundance of the oracle against him, and the renovation of the House of Elohim, behold, they are written in the exposition of the scroll of the kings.

His son Amaziah reigned in his stead. [end text]

2 Kings 12:17 and 2 Chronicles 24:23. After 40 years reign Joash will be judged (see 2 Chronicles 24:17–22 above). We do not know how long after Zechariah’s death God’s judgment was brought on Jerusalem and Joash, but we do know it was near the first of the year. Gath was west and a bit south of Jerusalem.

At that time **“Hazeal king of Syria,”** the nemesis of the northern Kingdom of Israel, has his army suddenly attack the southern Kingdom of Judah. They are amazingly successful. Seizing the strong city of Gath, Hazeal sent his army to strike against Jerusalem. Surprisingly they captured the capital city. The Syrians **“massacred all the chief officers of the force”** referring to the commanders of Judah’s army and perhaps the officials mentioned in 2 Chronicles 24:17.

“They sent all their loot to the king of Damascus.” Clearly, Hazeal was not with the army that captured Jerusalem, but he gladly accepted his majority share of the riches from pillaging Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 24:24. What happened? Perhaps a traitor opened a gate allowing Syrian troops to enter the city and surprise the guards and the army. Jerusalem at that time was very defensible with walls around the original City of David with both the king’s palace and Temple on top of a hill. This verse in Chronicles emphasizes the small size of the Syrian army — small but effective against the troops of Judah who were soundly defeated, and **“massacred all the chief officers.”** The Syrians captured most of Jerusalem but likely Joash and the remainder of his body guard and a few troops held on to the fortress-like palace and Temple where all the treasure was located.

YHWH’s judgment on Judah was the real reason the Syrian troops were successful. YHWH punished Judah and King Joash because they abandoned the true worship of YHWH in favor of pagan gods. The punishment occurred as predicted by Zechariah, just before he was stoned to death (2 Chronicles 24:19–21).

Verse 25. The Syrians severely wounded Joash. He was either wounded when taken by surprise (and fought bravely) or his wounds came from torture to reveal where treasure was located. The Syrians left him alive, taking great plunder with them. Jehoiada was buried with kings (2 Chronicles 24:16), Joash was not.

It is said the assassins killed Joash **“because of the bloodguilt over the son of Jehoiada the priest.”** It is likely that the murderers cared more about the decline of the kingdom than about the moral issue of Joash ordering Zechariah’s murder.

Verse 18. This verse describes Joash’s actions after the Syrians captured Jerusalem. It catalogues all the treasure accumulated over decades, even the Temple treasure. It was all given to Hazeal as a bribe for him not to devastate and burn the city, and massacre the people. After he received the bribe, Hazeal left Jerusalem, and returned to Damascus in triumph. The account of Hazeal’s victory must have been legendary, but there is

no surviving record of it. Such bribes happened in the past (1 Kings 15:18) and they will happen again during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:15).^j

Verse 19. Next is the formulaic statement summarizing the reign of Joash.

Verses 20 and 25. Two courtiers (court officials who were still alive) **conspired** and murdered their king.

Verses 21 and 26 (not in sequence). The assassins are named. Jozabad (meaning “YHWH remembers”) and Jehozabas (meaning “YHWH endows”) both had non-Israelite mothers, as if to say that contributed and led to the conspiracy and murder of Joash. In verse 26, the short version of “Josabad” without the prefix “Jo” is “Zabad” (his name means “he endows”). Together the names of the two courtiers tell a story, “YHWH remembers” and “endows” or “gives payment.” Joash began his reign with a coup, it ended with a coup.

Verse 27. “**The oracle against him [Joash]**” refers back to Zechariah’s warning (2 Chronicles 24:19–21) about the guilt of the people, of the court officials, and of Joash that YHWH would forsake them all, He would remember, and He would punish them for idolatry and killing one of His prophets. After 40 years of rule, disaster is the legacy of Joash of Judah.

The scene changes from the King of Judah and Jerusalem to focus on Kings of Israel.

TEXT: The Reign of Jehoahaz of Israel

2 Kings 13:1–9

¹ In the twenty-third year of Joash son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria for seventeen years.

² He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh. He walked in pursuit of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, with which he [Jehoahaz] caused Israel to sin; he did not withdraw from them. ³ So Yahweh’s anger burned hot against Israel, and He gave them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria and into the hand of Ben-hadad son of Hazael all these days.

⁴ Yet Jehoahaz beseeched the face of Yahweh; and Yahweh hearkened to him; for He had seen the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them.

(⁵ Now Yahweh provided a saviour for Israel, so that they came forth from under the hand of Syria; and the sons of Israel dwelt in their tents as heretofore. ⁶ Indeed they [the people] did not withdraw from the sins of the house of Jeroboam with which he caused Israel to sin. They walked in them; and even the Asherah pole stood in Samaria.)

⁷ For He [YHWH] had let not armed people remain to Jehoahaz save fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand men on foot, because the king of Syria had destroyed them and made them like dust under threshing.

⁸ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehoahaz, all that he did and his masterful deeds, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Israel? ⁹ Then Jehoahaz lay down with his fathers, and they entombed him in Samaria; his son Joash reigned in his stead. [end text]

2 Kings 13:1. This section is about the Kingdom of Israel (and not Judah). It is a flashback describing events 17 years before the death of King Joash of Judah and the end of his 40-year reign. The entire 17-year reign of Jehoahaz of Israel is only briefly covered. Jehu was the first, Jehoahaz was the second of four kings of Jehu’s dynasty:

“So Yahweh said to Jehu, ‘Because you did well in doing what is upright in My eyes and you did to the house of Ahab according to all that was in My heart, sons of yours to the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.’”

• **2 Kings 10:30**

^j Paul House, [1, 2 Kings](#), 303.

Verse 2. Jehoahaz was an evil king, sinning greatly like the first king of the northern Kingdom of Israel, Jeroboam. He did not repent.

Verse 3. Hazael of Syria and his heir, Ben-hadad, were to be YHWH's means of judgment upon Israel. It began in 2 Kings 10:30–32 during the reign of Jehu.

Verses 4–5. Jehoahaz' implored YHWH to save His people from Hazael of Syria. YHWH heard the plea from Jehoahaz. He provided a deliverer who is not identified. Some commentators think it was the Assyrians, who drew off Syrians from oppressing Israel. Whoever he or she was, the result was that for the remainder of Jehoahaz' reign the people of the northern Kingdom of Israel lived in peace, "**dwelt in their tents**" is the phrase used.

Verse 6. In spite of God's deliverance, the people continued in their sins, even replacing the Asherah pole.

Verse 7. YHWH saw to it the army of Israel was diminished to a small size, not enough for the kingdom to defend itself. Hence, Hazael and his small Syrian army was able to pass from Judah with all their plunder, through Israel to the Kingdom of Syria without resistance (2 Kings 12:17–18 and 2 Chronicles 24:23–24).

Verse 8. The standard formulaic statement is given about Jehoahaz' history and burial site.

TEXT: The Reign of Jehoash/Joash of Israel

2 Kings 13:10–13

¹⁰ In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria for sixteen years.

¹¹ He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh; he did not withdraw from all the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat with which he had caused Israel to sin; he walked in them.

¹² As for the rest of the affairs of Joash [Jehoash], all that he did and his masterful deeds when he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written on the scroll of the annals [chronicles] of the days of the kings of Israel?

¹³ Then Joash lay down with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. Joash was entombed in Samaria with the kings of Israel. **[end text]**

2 Kings 13:10. The reign of Jehoash of Israel is described in four formulaic verses that cover his 16 years of rule. This king also had two names. I will use Jehoash in these notes to distinguish him from Joash the king of Judah. See the texts of 2 Kings 13:9, 12–14, and 25 where Jehoash is called Joash. Jehoash is the third of four kings of Jehu's dynasty as God prophesied (2 Kings 10:30).

Verse 11. Jehoash did evil, and did not stop doing evil.

Verse 12. More is said about Jehoash of Israel in his wars with Amaziah king of Judah (we will meet him in the next episode), and his last meeting with the prophet Elisha in the verses below.

TEXT: The Death of Elisha the Prophet of Israel

2 Kings 13:14–25

¹⁴ As for Elisha, he had become ill with his illness of which he was dying. So Joash king of Israel came down to him. He wept over his face and recited, "**My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horse-men!**"

¹⁵ Then Elisha said to him, "**Take a bow and arrows.**" So he took to him a bow and arrows.

¹⁶ Then he said to the king of Israel, "**Let your hand ride on the bow.**" When he let his hand ride, Elisha placed his hands over the king's hands ¹⁷ and said, "**Open the window eastward.**" So he opened it, and Elisha ordered, "**Shoot.**" And he shot. Now he stated, "**An arrow of victory for Yahweh and an arrow of victory over Syria! You will smite Syria at Aphek unto the finish.**" ¹⁸ Then he added, "**Take the arrows.**" When he took them, he said to the king of Israel, "**Smite earthward.**" So he smote three times and stayed.

¹⁹ Now the man of Elohim was wrathful with him and stated, "**If you had smitten five or six times, then**

you would have smitten Syria unto the finish. But now you shall smite Syria only three times.”

²⁰ Elisha died, and they entombed him. Now there were Moabite raiders who entered into the land whenever a year came to its end. ²¹ It came to pass as they were entombing a man, behold, they saw the raiding party, and they flung the man into Elisha’s tomb. When the man came to touch the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood firm on his feet.

²² As for Hazael king of Syria, he oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. ²³ Yet Yahweh was gracious to them. He had compassion on them and turned around to them on account of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He would not ruin them, and He did not fling them away from on His face until now.

²⁴ When Hazael king of Syria died, his son Ben-hadad reigned in his stead. ²⁵ Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz restored and took from the hand of Ben-hadad son of Hazael the cities that he had taken from the hand of his father Jehoahaz in war. Three times Jehoash smote him and restored the cities of Israel.

[end text]

2 Kings 13:14. The prophet Elisha is dying. The era of Elijah and Elisha in Israel is ending. Jehoash weeps over him as Elisha lay dying. Jehoash is an evil king and does not repent of his ways, but he loves Elisha. The stories about the deeds of Elijah and Elisha were well known in Israel.

Jehoash quotes Elisha’s own words to Elijah (2 Kings 2:12) from what was probably a story that was told to Jehoash when he was a child. It concerned the time when the fiery chariot flew Elijah to safety to somewhere in Judah:

“Elisha was seeing it, and he was crying [to Elijah], ‘My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!’ Then he saw him no more. Now he took fast hold of his own garments and tore them into two torn pieces.”

Verse 15. That caught Elisha’s attention and he gave Jehoash a series of strange commands.

Verses 16–18. Why are we told these details? After all, we have no idea what Elisha was trying to demonstrate, nor did Joash of Israel know why Elisha wanted him to do them. **“You will smite Syria at Aphek”** is what Elisha says to Joash. Unfortunately we are never given details of Joash’s victory where Israel earlier won a victory when King Ahab of Israel fought an earlier Syrian king named Ben-Hadad (1 Kgs 20:26–34).

Verse 19. Elisha is angry with Joash because he did what he was told, but did it a minimal number of times. He thought he was following Elisha’s instruction to do something that made no sense.

Verses 20–21. When people die in biblical times they were buried the same day. These two verses give an example of the many such miraculous events that occurred in biblical times, but very few are recorded in Scripture. This was also the case with Jesus, as we are told in John 21:25. This raising of the dead man was evidence of the validity of Elisha’s prophetic ministry.

Verses 22–23. Hazael continues to oppress Israel while Jehoahaz was alive, yet YHWH remembered His covenant and once again gives Israel favor, relief, and blessing. He still has patience and is long-suffering toward His people Israel.

Verses 24–25. The situation of Israel vs Syria changed once the king of Syria died. Hazael’s son Ben-hadad was crowned king and he met Jehoash and Israel’s army in battle three times. Ben-hadad and the Syrian army were defeated decisively three times, in accord with Elisha’s prophecy in 2 Kings 13:15–19. (No historical record exists of these battles, nor is there any biblical account of them in Second Chronicles or any other book of the Bible. Jehoash takes back the cities Ben-hadad’s father (Hazael) took from Israel during the reign of Jehoash’s father (Jehoahaz).

David Sielaff, April 2018