



Joash
Escaped His
Grandmother's
Slaughter

compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Overview

JOASH ESCAPED HIS GRANDMOTHER'S SLAUGHTER

Joash's story is told in 2 Kings 11:1-14:23 and 2 Chron. 22:11-25:25.

All parents want their children to make the right decisions. But to do this, children must first learn to make *their own* decisions. Making bad ones helps them learn to make good ones.

If parents make all the decisions for their children, they leave their children without the skills for wise decision making when they are on their own. This problem seriously affected Joash. He had great advice, but he never grew up. He became so dependent on what he was told that his effectiveness was limited to the quality of his advisers.

When Joash was one year old, his grandmother Athaliah decided to slaughter all her descendants in a desperate bid for power.

Joash was the only survivor, rescued and hidden by his aunt and uncle, Jehosheba and Jehoiada. Jehoiada's work as a priest made it possible to keep Joash hidden in the temple for six years. At that point, Jehoiada arranged for the overthrow of Athaliah and the crowning of Joash. For many years following,

Jehoiada made most of the kingdom's decisions for Joash. When the old priest died, he was buried in the royal cemetery as a tribute to his role.

But after Jehoiada's death, Joash didn't know what to do. He listened to counsel that carried him into evil. Within a short time he even ordered the death of Jehoiada's son Zechariah. After a few months, Joash's army had been soundly defeated by the Arameans.

Jerusalem was saved only because Joash stripped the temple of its treasures as a bribe. Finally, the king's own officials assassinated him.

In contrast to Jehoiada, Joash was not buried among the kings; he is not even listed in Jesus' genealogy in the New Testament.

Joash was also called JEHOASH

Joash was the son of Ahaziah and king of Judah

Saved from his grandmother by Jehosheba, his aunt, and hidden for six years

2 Kings 11:1-3

When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that her son was dead, she set out to destroy the rest of the royal family.

But Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram, took Ahaziah's infant son, Joash, and stole him away from among the rest of the king's children, who were about to be killed. Jehosheba put Joash and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah, so the child was not murdered.

Joash and his nurse remained hidden in the Temple of the Lord for six years while Athaliah ruled over the land.

This story is continued from 2 Kings 9:27, where Ahaziah, Athaliah's son, had been killed by Jehu. Athaliah's attempt to kill all of Ahaziah's sons was futile because God had promised that the Messiah would be born through David's descendants (2 Samuel 7).

Jhosheba was the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest, so the temple was a practical and natural place to hide baby Joash. Athaliah, who loved idolatry, would have had no interest in the temple.

Anointed king by the priest, Jehoiada

Kings 11:12-21

Then Jehoiada brought out Joash, the king's son, and placed the crown on his head. He presented Joash with a copy of God's covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and all the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

When Athaliah heard all the noise made by the guards and the people, she hurried to the Lord's Temple to see what was happening.

And she saw the newly crowned king standing in his place of authority by the pillar, as was the custom at times of coronation.

The officers and trumpeters were surrounding him, and people from all over the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. When Athaliah saw all this, she tore her clothes in despair and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

Then Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders who were in charge of the troops, "Take her out of the Temple, and kill anyone who tries to rescue her. Do not kill her here in the Temple of the Lord." So they seized her and led her out to the gate where horses enter the palace grounds, and she was killed there.

Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people that they would be the Lord's people. He also made a covenant between the king and the people.

And all the people of the land went over to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They demolished the altars and smashed the idols to pieces, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

Jehoiada the priest stationed guards at the Temple of the Lord. Then the commanders, the Carite mercenaries, the guards, and all the people of the land escorted the king from the Temple of the Lord.

They went through the gate of the guards and into the palace, and the king took his seat on the royal throne. So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was peaceful because Athaliah had been killed at the king's palace.

Joash was seven years old when he became king.

Scripture Review

This covenant was in fact a recommitment to a very old covenant—the one set up in the book of Deuteronomy for the righteous rule of the nation.

It was meant to function as a constitution for the people. This covenant, however, had been virtually ignored for over 100 years. Unfortunately, with Jehoiada's death, the reforms were discontinued.

Joash became king at only seven years of age, who really ran the country? Although the answer is not spelled out in the Bible, Judah was probably run during the first seven years of Joash's reign by the king's mother, the high priest Jehoiada, and other advisers.

2 Chronicles 23

To look upon ourselves and each other as the Lord's people, should make us earnest in the discharge of our duty both to God and man. Thus was this happy revolution brought about, and the people rejoiced. When the Son of David is enthroned in the soul, all is quiet, and joyful.

Righteousness and under influence of Jehoiada

2 Kings 12:2

All his life Joash did what was pleasing in the Lord's sight because Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

Joash didn't go far enough in removing sin from the nation, but he did much that was good and right.

When we aren't sure if we've gone far enough in correcting our actions, we can ask:

- (1) Does the Bible expressly prohibit this action?
- (2) Does this action take me away from loving, worshiping, or serving God?
- (3) Does it make me its slave?
- (4) Is it bringing out the best in me, consistent with God's purpose?
- (5) Does it benefit other believers?

Repaired the temple

2 Chron. 24:4-14

Some time later, Joash decided to repair and restore the Temple of the Lord.

He summoned the priests and Levites and gave them these instructions: "Go at once to all the towns of Judah and collect the required annual offerings, so that we can repair the Temple of your God. Do not delay!" But the Levites did not act right away.

So the king called for Jehoiada the high priest and asked him, "Why haven't you demanded that the Levites go out and collect the Temple taxes from the towns of Judah and from Jerusalem?"

Moses, the servant of the Lord, levied this tax on the community of Israel in order to maintain the Tabernacle of the Covenant."

Over the years, the followers of wicked Athaliah had broken into the Temple of God, and they had used all the dedicated things from the Temple of the Lord to worship the images of Baal.

So now Joash gave instructions for a chest to be made and set outside the gate leading to the Temple of the Lord.

Then a proclamation was sent throughout Judah and Jerusalem, telling the people to bring to the Lord the tax that Moses, the servant of God, had required of the Israelites in the wilderness.

This pleased all the leaders and the people, and they gladly brought their money and filled the chest with it.

Whenever the chest became full, the Levites carried it to the king's officials. Then the court secretary and an officer of the high priest counted the money and took the chest back to the Temple again. This went on day after day, and a large amount of money was collected.

The king and Jehoiada gave the money to the construction supervisors, who hired masons and carpenters to restore the Temple of the Lord. They also hired metalworkers, who made articles of iron and bronze for the Lord's Temple.

So the men in charge of the renovation worked hard, and they made steady progress. They restored the Temple of God according to its original design and strengthened it.

When all the repairs were finished, they brought the remaining money to the king and Jehoiada. It was used to make utensils for the Temple of the Lord—utensils for worship services and for burnt offerings, including ladles and other vessels made of gold and silver.

And the burnt offerings were sacrificed continually in the Temple of the Lord during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest.

The Levites took their time carrying out the king's order, even though he told them not to delay. A tax for keeping the temple in order was not just the king's wish, but God's command (Exodus 30:11-16). The Levites, therefore, were not only disregarding the king, but disregarding God. When it comes to following God's commands, a slow response may be little better than disobedience. Obey God willingly and immediately

Evidently the Levites weren't convinced that the people would want to contribute to the rebuilding of the temple (2 Chron. 24:5), but the people were glad to give of what they had for this project. Don't underestimate people's desire to be faithful to God. When challenged to do God's work, they will often respond willingly and generously.

Wickedness of Judah after Jehoiada's death

2 Chron. 24:17-22

But after Jehoiada's death, the leaders of Judah came and bowed before King Joash and persuaded the king to listen to their advice. They decided to abandon the Temple of the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and they worshiped Asherah poles and idols instead!

Then the anger of God burned against Judah and Jerusalem because of their sin. The Lord sent prophets to bring them back to him, but the people would not listen.

Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: Why do you disobey the Lord's

commands so that you cannot prosper? You have abandoned the Lord, and now he has abandoned you!"

Then the leaders plotted to kill Zechariah, and by order of King Joash himself, they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the Lord's Temple.

That was how King Joash repaid Jehoiada for his love and loyalty—by killing his son. Zechariah's last words as he died were, "May the Lord see what they are doing and hold them accountable!"

If everything went so well in Judah when the people worshiped God, why did they turn away from him? Prosperity can be both a blessing and a curse. While it can be a sign of God's blessing to those who follow him, it carries with it the potential for moral and spiritual decline. Prosperous people are tempted to become self-sufficient and proud—to take God for granted. In our prosperity, we must not forget that God is the source of our blessings. See Deut. 6:10-12; Deut. 8:11-14.

When King Joash and the nation of Judah abandoned God, God sent Zechariah to call them to repentance. Before dispensing judgment and punishment, God gave them another chance. In the same way, God does not abandon us or lash out in revenge when we sin. Instead, he aggressively pursues us through his Word, his Spirit in us, the words of others, and sometimes discipline. He does not intend to destroy us, but to urge us to return to him. When you are moving away from God, remember that he is pursuing you. Stop and listen. Allow him to point out your sin so you can repent and follow him again.

God sent many prophets to Joash and the people to warn them that they were headed for destruction. Joel may have been one of these prophets. Read the book of Joel for more information about the political and spiritual climate of the times.

Procured peace from Hazael, king of Syria, by gift of dedicated treasures from the temple

2 Kings 12:17-18

About this time King Hazael of Aram went to war against Gath and captured it. Then he turned to attack Jerusalem. [18] King Joash collected all the sacred objects that Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, the previous kings of Judah, had dedicated, along with what he himself had dedicated.

He sent them all to Hazael, along with all the gold in the treasuries of the Lord's Temple and the royal palace. So Hazael called off his attack on Jerusalem.

Prophecy against

2 Chronicles 24:19-20

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Put Jehoiada's son to death

Chron. 24:20-22

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Zechariah asked God to call the people to account for their sins. He was not seeking revenge, but pleading for justice. When we feel like despairing over the wickedness around us, we can rest assured that in the end God will bring complete justice to the earth.

Matthew 23:35

As a result, you will become guilty of murdering all the godly people from righteous Abel to Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered in the Temple between the altar and the sanctuary.

These prophets, wise men, and teachers were probably leaders in the early church who were persecuted, scourged, and killed, as Jesus predicted. The people of Jesus' generation said they would not act as their fathers did in killing the prophets whom God had sent to them (Matthew 23:30), but they were about to kill the Messiah himself and his faithful followers. Thus they would become guilty of all the righteous blood shed through the centuries.

Jesus was giving a brief history of Old Testament martyrdom. Abel was the first martyr (Genesis 4); Zechariah was the last mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, which ended with 2 Chronicles. Zechariah is a classic example of a man of God who was killed by those who claimed to be God's people

Conspired against and slain

1 Kings 20:21

However, the other horses and chariots were destroyed, and the Arameans were killed in a great slaughter.

The death of Joash

1 Chronicles 24:25

The Arameans withdrew, leaving Joash severely wounded. But his own officials decided to kill him for murdering the son of Jehoiada the priest. They assassinated him as he lay in bed. Then he was buried in the City of David, but not in the royal cemetery.

Lessons from his life:

A good and hopeful start can be ruined by an evil ending. Even the best counsel is ineffective if it does not help us make wise decisions. As helpful or hurtful as others may be, we are individually responsible for what we do.

As dependent as Joash was on Jehoiada, there is little evidence that he ever established a real dependence on the God Jehoiada obeyed. Like many children, Josh's knowledge of God was secondhand. It was a start, but the king needed his own relationship with God that would outlast and overrule the changes in the advice he received.

It would be easy to criticize Joash's failure were it not for the fact that we often fall into the same traps. How often have we acted on poor advice without considering God's Word?

Key verses:

“After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them. They abandoned the temple of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger came upon Judah and Jerusalem” (2 Chron. 24:17-18).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

