

After Jehu had assassinated both Jehoram, the king of Israel, and Ahaziah, the king of Judah, in a single day, Ahaziah's mother took advantage of her son's death by attempting to kill anyone in the family that could challenge her for the throne. However, the LORD defeated Satan's attempt to destroy the Davidic family line, ensuring that Jesus Christ would be born as a descendant of David and heir to the throne.

2 Chronicles 22

10 But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah.

“But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead” – News that her son had died at the hand of Jehu had reached Jerusalem. Athaliah decided that Ahaziah's death provided the opportunity to assume the throne herself. Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, which may help explain why she was as evil as her mother.

“she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah” – She had all males killed who were in the Davidic family line that could challenge her claim to the throne, particularly the sons of Ahaziah. Thus Athaliah was guilty of the brutal murder of her own grandchildren, as well as any living sons and other any family members capable of being crowned king.

11 But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not. 12 And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

“But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king” – “The king” referred to here is Jehoram, Ahaziah's father. As described later in this verse, she was the sister of Ahaziah.

“took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber” – Joash was Ahaziah's youngest son and was about one year old at this time. His aunt Jehoshabeath wanted to spare his life and secretly removed him from the place where the other sons of Ahaziah were being killed so that he would not share their fate. She hid him and his nursemaid in a bedroom where they would not be discovered.

“So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,)” – This line summarizes who Jehoshabeath was, giving us a few more bits of information. It confirms that she had the same father as Ahaziah, making her his sister. We also see that she was the wife of Jehoiada the current high priest at the time, who obviously supported his wife's actions.

“hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not” – The couple hid Joash from the queen, who either was unaware of his existence or unaware of his survival. The LORD obviously ensured that Joash was overlooked when counting the bodies of the other dead sons.

“And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land” – Jehoiada and Jehoshabeath kept Joash hidden for six years in “the house of God,” which likely referred to the personal quarters of the high priest that was at the temple complex. Why six years? Obviously, Joash was too young and immature to serve as king before this. Also, Jehoiada probably trained Joash in the ways of the LORD and what would be required of him as the king of Judah. Another factor may have been that the evil of Athaliah's reign had reached a point that he could wait no longer.

2 Chronicles 23

3 And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David.

When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada enlists the support of several key “captains” (leaders; rulers) in Judah that he knew would be loyal to the legitimate heir to the throne. These leaders then helped him gather support among the Levites and the heads of the families of Judah and arranged for them to meet in Jerusalem. Once there, they made a covenant to declare their allegiance to Joash as the rightful king. By doing so, they were acknowledging that Athaliah had no legitimate claim to the throne. Jehoiada declares that Joash, as the king's son, was the legitimate heir to the throne because the LORD had promised this to the descendants of David.

Verses 4-10: Jehoiada and his confederates set in motion a plan to anoint Joash as king. They stationed guards at the doors of the temple complex and throughout the interior to limit access to only those who were loyal to Joash. The Levites served as Joash's body guards with orders to kill anyone who tried to approach the king. There were weapons that had once been David's stored at the temple and Jehoiada distributed them to the guards because they knew that Joash would be in danger if Athaliah or anyone loyal to her were to discover their plan.

11 Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and *gave him* the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king.

They were able to keep the king safe until they were able to anoint and crown the new king with the LORD's help. They placed the crown on his head and gave him the “testimony” (a copy of the Mosaic Law) to guide him in reigning according to the LORD's will. The priests, Jehoiada and his sons, anointed Joash, officially making him king according to the requirements of the LORD.

Verses 12-21: Athaliah discovers what has happened and cries out “Treason! Treason!” but she is captured and executed, along with all who were loyal to her. Jehoiada then makes a covenant between himself, the people and the king that they would all serve the LORD, after which all the altars and images of Baal are destroyed and priest of Baal is killed. The people of Judah rejoiced after Athaliah was killed and Baal worship was purged because they were able to enjoy the peace that comes from returning to the LORD.

2 Chronicles 24

15 But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died. 16 And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house.

“But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old *was he* when he died” – Joash was a good king under the guidance of Jehoiada, who was like and father and mentor to Joash (v. 2; 2 Kings 12:2). While Jehoiada was alive, Joash did good things such as having the house of the LORD repaired (v. 4) because it had been damaged during Athaliah’s reign and the things dedicated to the LORD had been stolen to be used in the worship of Baal (v. 7). However, Jehoiada eventually grew old and died at the age of 130 years.

“And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house” – Jehoiada was buried among the past kings of Judah in order to honor him for all the good that he had done as the high priest, his service toward Israel and the king, and as the patriarch of his family.

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. 18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.

“Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance [to bow down] to the king” – The “princes” (leaders) in Judah come to the king in a flattering way to make a request. They apparently knew that their request would never have been granted while Jehoiada was alive because of his influence with the king, so they have waited until now to make it.

“Then the king hearkened [to listen favorably] unto them” – Apparently Joash had become accustomed to having someone else serve as his conscience and be the source of his convictions. He had spent many years listening to the guidance of Jehoiada and now that it was gone, Joash is easily swayed by the leaders of Judah who apparently advocated a new direction for the nation. Some commentators suggest that Joash had become disgusted by the lack of enthusiasm for the house of God exhibited by the priests and Levites, particularly concerning the collection of money for repairing the temple and using it to have the repairs done (vs. 5, 6).

“And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves [Asherah] and idols” – The Hebrew word translated “groves” is *Asherah* and refers to a Canaanite goddess that employed sacred trees in her worship. Sometimes wooden poles were erected to represent these sacred trees and were worshiped to honor this goddess. These leaders of Judah had apparently requested that Joash allow the worship of other gods in Judah and/or suggested that Judah would prosper more if they sought the favor of more gods than just the LORD. Thus, Judah began to stray into idolatry.

“and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass” – This idolatry angered the LORD, particularly since the people of Judah should have known better. Joash, having been mentored by Jehoiada all his life to follow the LORD, had no excuse for turning to these idols. The LORD’s wrath became focused on the entire nation of Judah and particularly with the capital city of Jerusalem because they had forsaken Him to serve other gods.

19 Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

“Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them” – In spite of His anger, the LORD showed mercy by sending prophets to Judah and the king in order to call out their sin and warn them against the wrath that was coming if they did not repent.

“but they would not give ear” – The people, including king Joash, stubbornly would not listen to the warning of the prophets. At times they actively resisted the message of the prophets, as when they killed Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada (v. 20). There would be severe consequences for their lack of repentance.

Verses 20-27: These verses expand on the statements of the wrath of the LORD (v. 18) and the fact that they would not listen to the prophets that the LORD sent (v. 19). Joash showed no loyalty to Jehoiada when Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, proclaimed the sin of the nation and that they would not prosper while they were forsaking the LORD. Joash commanded that Zechariah be stoned in the court of the temple. As a result, the LORD used a small Syrian army to defeat Judah in a battle that resulted in a great loss of life in Judah and a spoiling of their possessions. Then, as Joash was recovering from his battle wounds, two of his servants conspired against him and assassinated him. Although he was buried in Jerusalem, Joash was not given the same honor at his death as Jehoiada had been. Jehoiada had been buried with the kings (v. 16), but Joash was not (v. 25).