

GOD WITH US

Part 6: *Israel's Unfaithfulness and God's Ridiculous Love* Kings & Prophets thru 722 B.C.

Message 7 – The Godly Power Couple (2Chron. 22:10-24:27; 2Kings 11,12)

Introduction

It has been said, “*God has no grandchildren, only children.*” We must have a *personal* faith in God that is truly our own. Thus, Paul wrote to young Timothy: “*I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, that first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well*” (2Timothy 1:4).

The issue of spiritual heritage is at the center of the story of the husband-wife team Jehoida and Jehosheba, and their nephew Joash. At a time when devotion to Yahweh was waning in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Jehoida and Jehosheba arose to display courageous faith. The primary beneficiary of their faith was the child Joash who, with their help, became king over Judah at the early age of 7. While king Joash was faithful to the Lord all the days that his godly uncle and aunt were there to encourage and inspire him, he turned away from God after they died. As a result, his kingdom was destroyed and his life ended in disgrace.

The courage of Jehosheba: 2Chr.22:10-12

Courageous faith shines in difficult times. In the southern kingdom of Judah, the difficult times came because of Athaliah, the daughter of the wicked Ahab and Jezebel. (*See more detailed notes on Athaliah at end of this lesson.*) She had been given in marriage to Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat. Like her mother Jezebel in the north, Athaliah used her power and position to turn the southern kingdom of Judah into a Baal-worshipping nation. After the deaths of her husband (Jehoram) and her son (Ahaziah), Athaliah took control of the throne of Judah and sought to eradicate any remaining godly offspring of Jehoshaphat. It was only because of the courage of her step-daughter, Jehosheba, that the Davidic line of kings was kept alive. Jehosheba rescued one child from Athaliah's wrath. (*Notes on Jehosheba at end.*)

“Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the

house of Judah. But Jehosheba the king's daughter took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehosheba, 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 would not put him to death. He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land" (22:10-12).

Jehosheba is called "*the daughter of King Jehoram.*" She was likely his daughter by a wife other than Athaliah (assuming that Jehoram had several wives). Still, all during her formative years, Jehosheba would have been exposed to the wickedness of her father Jehoram and his wife Athaliah. Nevertheless, she chose not to walk in their evil ways; rather, to follow in the footsteps of her godly grandfather, Jehoshaphat. She courageously stole away the infant Joash when all the other heirs to the throne were being killed by Athaliah. With the help of her husband, Jehoiada the priest, she hid the child in their room in the temple for six full years. (Note: 2Kings 11:3 highlights Jehosheba's role with these words: "*So he was hid with her in the house of the Lord six years.*") While Jehoiada and Jehosheba acted as a couple, clearly Jehosheba's courageous faith was key in this effort to save the child Joash.

Jehosheba chose to follow a godly tradition; but she had to look back two generations, to the faith of her grandfather Jehoshaphat, to learn of that tradition. This explains why she married a godly man, Jehoiada the priest, and why she acted with such courageous faith in a crisis. When you look at your family tree, do you see godly people who have gone before you, living wholeheartedly for the Lord? Who are you choosing to emulate? Perhaps you are the first one in your family tree (that you are aware of) that is choosing to follow the Lord faithfully. Do you sense the importance of establishing a God-honoring tradition so that those who come after you will look back and see your footsteps of faith?

Jehoiada crowns Joash king of Judah: 2Chr.23:1-15

Jehosheba's husband was the godly priest Jehoiada. Like his wife, he also exercised faith, courage *and skill* as he arranged for the inauguration of 7-year old Joash as the true king of Judah.

Then Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had been King

David's, which were in the house of God. He stationed all the people, each man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, by the altar and by the house, around the king. Then they brought out the king's son and put the crown on him, and gave him the testimony and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him and said, "Long live the king!" (23:9-11).

When Athaliah heard the celebratory noise coming from the temple, she ran in crying, "Treason!" She was immediately taken out and executed for her own treachery and wickedness – such as her murder of all the royal offspring, except for Joash.

Jehoiada's covenant with the people: 2Chr.23:16-21

Jehoiada the priest acted like a king (necessarily since "king" Joash was only 7 years old). One of Jehoiada's first acts was to invite the people to renew their covenant faithfulness with Yahweh.

Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king, that they would be the LORD's people" (23:16).

This covenant was more than just words; it involved action. The people torn down the temple of Baal and reinstated the worship of Yahweh. Priests, singers and servants of the Lord were all restored to their role in the temple. Not only was Joash put on his throne; but Yahweh was put on *His* throne as Lord of all in Judah.

"They placed the king upon the royal throne. So all of the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet" (23:20,21).

It is easy to say with our lips that we love the Lord. Yet, it is another thing to show our love through our actions. Jesus said: "If anyone lives Me, he will keep My word" (John 14:23). Faith and obedience go together. Faith is the disposition of the heart toward God. Obedience is the outward expression of the heart of faith. What step(s) of obedience is God inviting you to take right now. Is there something in your life that does not honor God that needs to be "torn down," or put aside? Is there something that does honor God that needs to be "rebuilt," or put back in its proper place? Take some time to invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you about the steps of obedience that He wants you to take.

Summary of Joash' reign: 24:1-3

Often, we find in the summaries of the kings' reigns clues to the key theme of their lives. So it is with the summary of Joash:

“Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem; and his mother’s name was Zibiah from Beersheba. Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest” (24:1,2).

He followed the Lord *“all the days of Jehoiada the priest.”* While there was godly supervision and influence over his life, Joash appeared to be faithful to God. Yet, as we will see, the moment the godly people were gone, he turned back to worshipping Baal.

Joash repairs the temple: 2Chr.24:4-14

One of king Joash’s first moves was to initiate repairs on the temple of the Lord (which had suffered much damage during Athaliah’s reign and her campaign to make Baal the god of Judah).

Now it came about after this that Joash decided to restore the house of the LORD. He gathered the priests and Levites and said to them, “Go out to the cities of Judah and collect money from all Israel to repair the house of your God annually, and you shall do the matter quickly.” But the Levites did not act quickly (24:4-5).

Joash seemed zealous for this repair effort, for when the priests were slow to carry out their rebuilding duties he reproved them (including Jehoiada his uncle) for being negligent. They had failed to go out and raise the money for the work in a timely manner.

So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest and said to him, “Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the levy fixed by Moses the servant of the LORD on the congregation of Israel for the tent of the testimony?” (24:6).

To speed up the fund-raising efforts, king Joash had a box placed at the entrance to the temple so that people coming in could drop their offerings into it. In this way, the funds were quickly raised to complete the temple repair project.

“So the workmen labored, and the repair work progressed in their hands, and they restored the house of God according to its specifications and strengthened it. When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; and it was made into utensils for the house of the LORD, utensils for the service and the burnt offering, and pans and utensils of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada” (24:13-14).

The excess funds were brought to “*the king and Jehoiada.*” It seems that godly Jehoiada was very much involved in this entire effort to reinstitute a God-honoring worship system.

How is it that Joash could be so zealous to repair God’s house, but then so quickly depart from the Lord after Jehoiada’s death? Matthew Henry wrote: “It is easier to build temples than to be temples to God.” In other words, it is easier to engage in activity in the name of God, rather than to cultivate an inner heart where God is enthroned. King David had a very active outer life – leading a nation, fighting battles, solving problems, etc. Yet, the reason he was “a man after God’s own heart” was because of his commitment to cultivate his HEART FOR GOD. David wrote: “One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple” (Psalm 27:4). How about you? Are you cultivating a HEART where God is enthroned as King? Or, are you so busy outwardly that you are neglecting the condition of your heart for God?

Jehoiada’s death and burial: 2Chr.24:15,16

Much attention is given to the life of Jehoiada the priest. Truly, he played a major role in calling the people to serve the Lord during his tenure as priest. Even in his death, he was highly honored:

“Now when Jehoiada reached a ripe old age he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old at his death. They buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done well in Israel and to God and His house” (24:15,16).

A priest buried among the kings! What an epithet over his life: “*He had done well in Israel and to God and His house.*”

Your epithet will be inscribed after you die; but it is being “written” right now, as you live. And . . . you have the chance to EDIT your epithet while you live. When Alfred Nobel’s brother died, a paper mistakenly printed Alfred’s obituary. They hailed him as the inventor of dynamite (along with his other inventions of destruction). Alfred decided he did not want to be remembered as the inventor of destruction. He spent the rest of his life establishing the Nobel Peace Prize. Today, few people associate the name “Nobel” with destruction. Most associate the name “Alfred Nobel” with peace. That’s because Nobel chose to edit his epithet while he lived. What kind of epithet are you currently writing for yourself? Are there life changes you need to make so that you can edit your epithet before it is finally inscribed?

Joash turns away from the Lord: 2Chr.24:17-19

God has no grandchildren; only children. Now we see this principle played out in the life of Joash. It appears that he was coasting on the faith of his uncle and aunt, not cultivating a faith of his own.

“But after the death of Jehoiada the officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king, and the king listened to them. They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols; so wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt. Yet He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the LORD; though they testified against them, they would not listen” (24:17-19).

Joash was easily swayed by the voices of other people, in this case, those of the “officials of Judah.” These officials had been waiting for Jehoiada to die so that they could influence the king to take things in a different direction.

Opinions are ideas that we hold loosely. Beliefs are ideas that we hold firmly. Convictions are ideas that take hold of us. We may debate our opinions. We should defend our beliefs; but we will die for our convictions. If you made a list of opinions, beliefs and convictions, what would you place under each heading? For a Christ-follower, there are two core convictions that should serve as the foundation for all other convictions: 1) God has spoken to us through the written Word, the Bible. Thus, the Bible is our ultimate authority in all matters of faith and practice (and God’s Word will give shape to all of our other convictions.) 2) God has spoken to us through the Living Word, Jesus, the 2nd Person of the Triune God. Thus, in Jesus we receive the ultimate revelation of the Person and Plan of God. Read Hebrews 1:1-2 and you will see how the author states these two foundational convictions. How does one develop firm convictions? Opinions become beliefs as we study truth. Beliefs become convictions as we personally experience the truth at work in our lives.

Joash murders Zechariah, son of Jehoiada: 24:20-22

There are few acts of treachery in the Bible that can compare to what king Joash did to Zechariah, the godly son of Jehoiada the priest. When Zechariah saw Joash turning away from the Lord, he went in the power of the Spirit of God to reprove him and call him back to God’s ways:

Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada

the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!" (24:20-22).

Joash, who became king because of Jehoiada's courage, murdered Jehoiada's son Zechariah, who courageously called him to account for his spiritual wandering! In Joash and Zechariah we see the juxtaposition of two kinds of "sons": **Joash** never embraced or embodied the faith of his "spiritual father" Jehoiada. **Zechariah** made it clear through his life and death that he had his own strong faith, much like his father's. (Note: "Zechariah" means, literally, "God remembers." Surely God remembers what Joash did to Zechariah. The Lord will see and avenge such treachery!)

Syrian invasion and the death of Joash: 2Chr.24:23-24

God regularly brought judgment upon His people when they strayed from the terms of the Mosaic covenant. These judgments had been written into the terms of the covenant by Moses when the nation entered into the covenant with Yahweh at Mt. Sinai (much like a modern contract might include, "Penalties for breach of contract.") If the people were unfaithful to the covenant, many disciplines would fall upon them, including:

"The LORD will bring a nation against you from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an eagle swooping down, a nation whose language you will not understand, a fierce-looking nation without respect for the old or pity for the young . . . They will besiege all the cities throughout the land the LORD your God is giving you" (Deuteronomy 28:49-52).

This explains why, when the kings of Judah and Israel turned away from the Lord, we almost always find a story of foreign invasion close by. So it was with Joash. His rebellion against the Lord was swiftly met with a foreign invasion called forth by God.

"Indeed the army of the Arameans came with a small number of men; yet the LORD delivered a very great army into their hands, because they had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. Thus they executed judgment on Joash" (24:24).

The dishonorable burial of Joash: 2Chr.24:25-27

The Aramean invasion signaled the end of Joash' reign. The leaders who had encouraged him to turn away from the Lord were killed (24:23). Joash himself was left in mortal condition after the Aramean's departed. Finally, his own servants murdered him:

“When they had departed from him (for they left him very sick), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son of Jehoiada the priest, and murdered him on his bed. So he died, and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings” (24:25).

Joash reigned as king for 40 long years in Judah; but in death he was not recognized as a true “king.” How sad. Yet, how fitting. Jehoiada the priest, who lived a godly life, was buried like a king. Joash the king, who turned away from God, was buried like a non-king.

Additional Notes on Athaliah and Jehosheba:

Wicked ATHALIAH'S Role

Athaliah's married Jehoram, Judah's 1st born prince, so that his father (Jehoshaphat) and her parents in Israel (Ahab and Jezebel) could secure an alliance. As wife of Judah's king, she supported Jehoram as he killed all 6 of his royal brothers to secure their reign in Judah (2Chr.21:4,5,13). God disciplined them for this evil, and Judah was attacked. All their sons and wives were captured except for their youngest son Ahaziah (2Chr 21:13,16,17). Athaliah and Jehoram reigned for 8 years until he died from a very painful disease (2Chr 21:6,13). Their son Ahaziah reigned for only 1 year, but as Queen Mother, she influenced him to continue doing evil (2Chr 22:3). After Ahaziah died, Athaliah seized the throne and ruled with an iron fist for 6 years. She is the only female monarch in the history of Judah or Israel who reigned by herself.

Her Feminine Strength

Athaliah had many strengths; but like her mother Jezebel, she used these strengths only for evil gains. She was ambitious, tenacious, and fanatical; and not afraid of killing innocent royal family members to protect her territory as Queen. She influenced her husband to promote Baal worship in Judah, and was responsible for the Baal Temple being built, and using parts of Solomon's

Temple to build it (2Chron 24:7). She killed all her royal grandchildren from her son Ahaziah, so that she could secure her uncontested authority as Queen. (Only Joash the 1 year old infant was hidden from her.) Her ability to retain her position as Queen without an over-throw for 6 yrs shows her power! She had royal origins and family connections in the North, plus political knowledge & personal determination. Athaliah had the guts during the well-planned coup, to run into the temple by herself and shout “Treason! Treason!” as if she had the power to stop it.

God on Display

God was patient with this woman. Athaliah had many years she could have believed in Yahweh. Yet, His sovereign rule overruled her wicked plans. The royal line of David was preserved, even though she tried to destroy it completely.

Her life as a Warning

The life of Athaliah warns us as to what evil can look like in human form. She got what she wanted for a while, even murdering her very own grand-children, but God caused her schemes to fail, when she was finally slain as well. The Bible teaches that we should not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. We WILL reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).

Courageous JEHOSHEBA’S Role

Jehosheba was the daughter of King Jehoram, but from a different wife. Athaliah was her stepmother. She was the ½ sister of her younger brother Ahaziah, and the AUNT of his infant son Joash. Her key role was to preserve the royal line of King David by rescuing baby Joash as wicked Athaliah was murdering all her grand-children who were potential heirs to the throne of Judah. Jehosheba was married to Jehoiada the high priest and uncle to Joash. He was his spiritual father and mentor as Joash grew up.

Her Feminine Strength

Jehosheba was a woman of courage in the face of Athaliah’s tyranny. She wisely chose to marry a godly priest and follow the Lord, even though her father and stepmother were trying to extinguish all faith in Yahweh. Jehosheba surely experienced her own fears, yet chose faith over fear. She escaped the attacks and raid that captured all of her brothers except for Ahaziah. She and her husband hid Joash in the Temple for 6 long years!

God on Display

God uses people to fulfill His promises. Jehosheba chose to believe God's promise that ISRAEL'S MESSIAH would someday be a royal heir of King David. She played a key role by rescuing the only remaining heir to that Messianic promise! God's plan will always be fulfilled, even when human tyrants seem to be winning.

Her life as an Example to Follow

God used Jehosheba as a faithful believer who could be trusted with the task of preserving His eternal promise to king David: "*Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before Me; your throne will be established forever*" (2 Samuel 7:16). She also serves as a great example of faith and courage. She inspires women to fill their minds and hearts with God's Word, so that when we are afraid we can be reminded to put our trust in God and take a risk (Psalm 56:3,4).

Discussion Questions

1. Throughout this section of the Bible, there is the theme of the *transfer of faith from one generation to the next*. Think about this theme in light of your own spiritual heritage, journey and legacy. What comes to your mind when you ponder your own place in the transfer of faith?
2. What do you take away from the lives of courageous Jehosheba and Jehoiada? How do their actions inspire you? Is there some act of courageous faith that God is calling you to do?
3. Think about this Matthew Henry quote: "*It is easier to build temples than to be temples to God.*" How does that quote speak to you?
4. Think about your epithet. How do you want to be remembered? If you could write your own obituary today, how would it read?