

(2 Kings) the Queen of Judah and the Boy King

by David Guzik

The sermon explores the story of Athaliah's rise to power and the restoration of the throne of David through the courage of Jehoshibah and the actions of Jehodiah, highlighting the importance of recognizing King Jesus.

Duration: 52:50

Scripture: 2 Kings 11:2, 2 Kings 11:12

Topics: "Faithful Endurance", "Kingdom Stewardship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of pressing forward and finishing well in the Christian faith. He uses the analogy of a race where runners carried torches, and the goal was to be the first one across the finish line with a burning torch. The speaker warns against having a complacent attitude and encourages believers to strive to finish with their torches burning bright. He also discusses the mutual obligations between the people, the Lord, and the king, highlighting the need for the king to be revealed and crowned, as well as the importance of the king's son coming with the word of God. The sermon concludes with a discussion on managing and directing resources for the work of God.

Transcript

Well, I have to say that I'm excited about these two chapters that we're going to take a look at tonight, 2 Kings chapters 11 and 12, because I find that the characters in these two chapters are very compelling, very engaging. At the same time, they're relatively unknown to a lot of people who read the Bible. I mean, I think of myself as somebody who knows the Bible pretty well, and I'm introduced to some characters in these two chapters that I really didn't know too much about before preparing and studying for the teaching that we have tonight.

But before we begin here in 2 Kings chapter 11, I do need to just sort of bring us up to speed with where we were last time we were together when we studied 2 Kings chapters 9 and 10, and we saw the very interesting career of this man named Jehu. Jehu was a man who was a captain in the army of the northern kingdom of Israel, and God called him and raised him up as an instrument of judgment against the house of Omri. The most notable king of the house of Omri was Ahab, Omri's son.

And he called him out against this dynasty of Omri to execute judgment against them, and he did it with great zeal, although we saw at the end of our study last time that he didn't quite carry through with everything that he could have. Notably, he continued on the idolatry of the golden calf in Dan and in Bethel. But that's another story.

What it brings us up to this evening is to consider that not only did Jehu bring judgment against the northern kingdom by killing King Joram, who was of the dynasty of Omri, one of the sons of Ahab, but he also killed the king of the southern kingdom, Judah. His name was Ahaziah. So at this interesting time in the history of God's people there in the promised land, you have a time when both kings were killed at basically the same time.

And so what are we going to do about the king for the southern kingdom of Judah? That's where we bring it up here into chapter 11, verse 1. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, that's the king who just got killed by Jehu of the southern kingdom of Judah. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all of the royal heirs. But Jehoshibah, the daughter of King Joram, the sister of Ahaziah, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered.

And they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom from Athaliah so that he was not killed. So he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years while Athaliah reigned over the land. Okay, so do we have the picture connecting it with the last time we were together? Ahaziah was executed by Jehu as recorded in 2 Kings chapter 9. Now we have here in verse 1 of chapter 11 the rise to power of Athaliah.

Now, I don't expect you to remember this, but let me just refresh your memory. Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who was married into the family of the kings of Judah, the southern kingdom. And so this evil, wicked woman, again, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, two of the most notorious king and queen pairs in the entire Bible, their daughter now takes the ruling position by force in the southern kingdom of Judah.

And what she does is a very common thing in the ancient world. She tries to seize power by murdering every possible other claimant to the throne. If you had a claim to the throne, Athaliah wanted to kill you.

Now, let me just ask you a question here. Did you know before tonight that there were six years in the history of Judah where basically they were ruled by a queen? They were ruled by a woman, this woman Athaliah. And not just any queen, we would call her the queen mother because she was actually the mother of the murdered king.

But this queen mother ruled over Judah for six years and she was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Well, she thought that she was going to murder every possible claimant to the throne so that nobody could oppose her reign. And it says there in verse one that she destroyed all the royal heirs.

And after Jehu's coup d'etat in the northern kingdom of Israel, Athaliah tried to save something for Ahab's family by trying to eliminate the house of David and Judah. In other words, she thought what Jehu did to the house of Omri, her family line in the northern kingdom, I'm going to do to the line of David in the southern kingdom. I want to destroy them all.

Now, before I go any further, I want you to think about this. Years before, the king of Judah, whose name was Jehoshaphat, married his son to the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, hoping to make an alliance with those wicked leaders of that apostate nature. And this was the fruit of it all.

This is where it all ended up after that wicked alliance with the family of Ahab and Jezebel. And so this woman, Athaliah, did everything she could to eliminate all the descendants of David. I want to remind you that there's a sense in which there's the sovereign promise of God riding on this.

Because God has promised a few things. First of all, that it would be the descendants of David who reigned over Israel, at least over Judah, at least part of the ten tribes, forever and ever. But then also, God promised that the Messiah would come from the descendants of David.

If Athaliah is successful in wiping out all the descendants of David, then the promise of God is defeated. So it doesn't surprise us at all that at this critical moment, when there's somebody, no doubt satanically inspired, who is coming this close to destroying the sovereign plan of God, that God raises up a godly person to step into the gap. And that's where it comes into burst due.

I love this. Look at it here. But Jehoshibah.

Have you ever heard of Jehoshibah before? This little known woman had an important place in God's plan of the ages. Through her courage, through her ingenuity, she preserved the royal line of David through which the Messiah would come. I mean, look at what she did.

It says, but Jehoshibah, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash, the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered. And they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom from Athaliah so that he was not killed. This one courageous woman said, I'm not going to see the entire royal line of David wiped out.

I'm going to take this little boy and I'm going to hide him away. And I'm going to keep him hidden in what you might call a hiding place for six years. I want you to think about this.

Evil people like Athaliah will always try to do their work in this world. But God can always raise up a Jehoshibah, right? God can do it. And we should pray for God to raise up Jehoshibahs, people who will step in at that critical moment and do this great work.

Now, by the way, 2 Chronicles chapter 22 tells us that Jehoshibah was the wife of Jehodiah, the high priest, which is an interesting tidbit to know about her life. We find more about some of these details in 2 Chronicles chapter 22. And so it says there in verse three that he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years.

Now, even though Ahaziah was a bad king, the one who was killed, he made evil alliances, yet he was still a descendant of David and a successor of his royal line. And so for the sake of David, God remembered his promise and spared this one young survivor from the massacre of Athaliah. The line of David was almost extinguished and it continued only in the presence of a small little boy.

But God preserved that flickering flame. That's what I look at. I look at Athaliah trying to stomp out every flame of God's promise there to the line of David.

And she almost succeeds except for one little candle that's barely burning. And God will fan that one little flickering flame into existence until it grows up and until something great happens right there. And so like the little boy Samuel, Joash, this descendant of David and the murdered king Ahaziah, Joash grew up in the temple.

And like Samuel, he probably found little ways to help the priests. Whatever could be done without attracting too much attention. Now, verse four.

In the seventh year, Jehodiah sent and brought the captains of hundreds of the bodyguards and the escorts and brought them into the house of the Lord to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the Lord and showed them the king's son. Then he commanded them, saying, this is what you shall do.

One third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king's house. One third shall be at the gate of Sur and one third at the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down.

The two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord for the king. But you shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in hands, and whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in.

So the captains of the hundreds did according to all the Jehodiah, the priest commanded. Every one of them took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath and came to Jehodiah, the priest. And the priest gave the captains of hundreds, the spears and the shields, which had belonged to King David that were in the temple of the Lord.

Then the escort stood every man with his weapons in his hand all around the king from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple by the altar and the house. See, now's the moment. It's been six years that this boy has been hidden away.

And now Jehodiah, who's the high priest, he says, now it's the time to depose this wicked queen from ruling over Judah. She has no authority here. She's not part of the plan of God.

We're going to end her wicked reign right now. And so he brought forth the captains of the army. He was a godly man who was concerned about restoring the throne of David to the line of David and taking it away from this daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

And so he chose the Sabbath day to do it. Do you remember the mentions of the Sabbath in the passage that we just read? He did that because that was the day when the guards changed their shifts and they could be assembled into two groups of guards at the temple at the same time without attracting attention. And so he made a covenant with them.

It says there in verse four, and he took an oath from them in the house of the Lord and from the place where they made the oath. Can you imagine they're there right by the temple taking the solemn oath and there in the house of the Lord and the context of the oath? We learned that the worship of the true God was not dead in Judah. These captains and bodyguards and escorts could respond to their responsibility before the Lord.

And then it says you have to love how it says it's there. It says, and then he showed them the king's son. Isn't that thrilling there? You can imagine what that was like when they brought out this boy.

Here's the king of Judah. Athaliah didn't kill them all. And you can just imagine this little boy walking out there trying to look so old and so brave, you know, and the people around him, the excitement, the buzz in the air, because they were sick of this demonic reign of Athaliah.

And for six years, everyone believed that there were no more surviving heirs of David's royal line and that there was no legitimate ruler to displace the wicked Athaliah. The secret had to be secure because the king's son would be immediately killed if his existence was made known. And so the captains and the bodyguards and the escorts, as it says there, they must have been shocked by seeing this six-year-old heir to the throne.

Now, once you think about it, just remember, put the pause button on in your mind for a minute. How was this wicked woman, Athaliah, able to reign as a queen over Judah for six years? I'll give you one big reason why. Because no one knew there was an alternative.

No one knew there was any other option, right? Well, yeah, we have Athaliah. But what else do we have? She killed all the descendants of David. Nobody knew of any other alternative.

And I just thought of that as I was reflecting on this passage, that many people live under the reign of Satan because they really don't know that there's a legitimate king ready to take up reign in their life. You know, they live under bondage to sin and self and Satan. And one of the reasons why they do is they just think, well, what other option do I have? Is there really any other way to live? That's just how life is.

They don't know the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And you just imagine as this boy king was brought up. And by the way, I love it in that section that we just read.

Do you see how often it refers to him as the king, the king, the king? We read that and we go, well, he's not a king. He's just a kid. But it doesn't say the kid, the kid, the kid.

It says the king because he was a king. He didn't look like a king. He wasn't even shaving a beard yet.

You know, he maybe hadn't even reached puberty yet. I wonder if his voice had even, you know, changed at all. He's the king with a very high squeaky voice or something like that.

But nevertheless, he's the king because of who he is. And so it says there, and I love this, too. It says that he gave the captains of hundreds, the spears and the shields which had belonged to King David that were in the temple of the Lord.

Can you imagine how much courage those men gained? How would you feel to put on your arm the shield of King David? To feel it hundreds of years old at that time, but still you could just almost feel the strength radiating from that mighty warrior for the cause of God. And so these men were ready to defend this this descendant of David who was now going to be revealed. And so now verse 12, it says, and he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him and gave him the testimony.

They put a copy of the word of God in his hand and they made him king and anointed him. And they clapped their hands and said, long live the king. Now, I want you to think about this.

Think about the steps in restoring a rightful king. OK, these are the steps in restoring a rightful king. Apply it to your life, too, here.

Number one, the king has to be revealed. It says he brought out the king's son. No one could support him.

No one could encourage him as he took his rightful throne until he's brought out before the people. And so when we want people to give their allegiance to King Jesus, the first thing you have to do is reveal Jesus unto them. You have to show them Jesus.

Secondly, you have to be crowned. They put the crown on him. There has to be a public and official recognition of this person as king.

Isn't that necessary if somebody is going to recognize King Jesus? It has to be public. It has to be open. Secondly, the king's son had come with the word of God.

I love this picture. Joash, the boy king, comes out before the people of God, holding the scrolls of God's word. It says there, and they gave him the testimony.

Did you know that in Deuteronomy chapter 17, it says that the king should have his own copy of the scriptures. And there was Joash's little copy right there in his hands as he walks out before them. And then fourth, they made him king.

It says it right there in verse 12, that they made him king. I want you to think about the strange paradox that we have here. He was king without anybody making him king, right? He was king because of the royal right of being a descendant of David of the royal line.

Nevertheless, they still had to recognize his reign. And isn't it just that same way with Jesus? Jesus Christ is king, whether you recognize it or not. He just is.

Nevertheless, there is still a sense that if you want to benefit from his reign, you must recognize him as king. You must make him king. And then it says they anointed him, and then they clapped their hands and said, Long live the king.

The king's son received praise as he was recognized as their king. Well, we can and we should follow the same pattern in our reception of Jesus Christ. He's the true king's son.

Let me read you a wonderful quotation here from F.B. Meyer. I think he catches the thought very well here. Is not the spiritual condition of too many children of God represented by the condition of the temple during the early years of the life of Joash? The king was within its precincts, the rightful heir of the crown and defender of the worship of Jehovah.

But as a matter of fact, the crown was on the head of the usurper Athaliah, who was exercising a cruel and wicked tyranny. The king was limited to a chamber, and the majority of the priests with all the people had not even heard of his existence. There needs to be an anointing and enthroning, a determination that he shall exercise his power over the entire temple of our being.

See, as long as that king was shut up into one little room of the temple, hidden away, not bothering everybody, Athaliah could do her thing. But as soon as you bring out the king and put him in his rightful place, then and only then Athaliah is going to be put in her place. And that's what we look forward to with great anticipation here, starting at verse 13, where it says, Now, when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts and the people, she came to the people in the temple of the Lord.

When she looked, there was the king standing by a pillar, according to custom, and the leaders of the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, Treason! Treason! Can you imagine how this looked to her? This wicked, rebellious queen mother, she saw something that in her eyes was a horrifying sight.

She ruled for six years because she believed and everybody else believed that there was no legitimate claimant to the throne of David. Now she saw that one son of Ahaziah, Joash, who, by the way, was her own grandson, that he escaped her murderous intent. And then when she saw that, can you imagine how horrified she was? I'd say what horrified her more than that was not just seeing that there was a grandson that she failed to murder.

Can you imagine a grandmother wanting to murder her own grandchildren? This is how wicked this woman was. She saw that there was one grandson that she failed to murder. And then she saw how happy everybody was about it.

She saw how everybody was rejoicing over it. And she must have just thought, I've lost it. This is it.

And, you know, she had lost it. She cried out, Treason! Treason! And might I say, I think it was a legitimate charge. This was treason against the government of Athaliah.

This was rebellion against her authority. And you know what? Praise God for that kind of rebellion. Praise God for people who will see ungodly, unrighteous authority when they'll see the authority of the devil in their life, so to speak, and they'll rebel against it.

I think a little bit of rebellion within a person can be good. You just have to channel the rebellion against the right things. You have to rebel against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

And you have to be sick of the devil's reign in your life. Well, that's exactly how the people were. And rightfully, I think the devil could sometimes say to us, Treason, you know, you're rebelling against me.

Well, yes, I am. I'm happy to do that. And so now, verse 15.

And Jehodiah, the priest, commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, Take her outside under guard and slay with the sword whoever follows her. For the priest had said, Do not let her be killed in the house of the Lord. So they seized her and she went by the way of the horse's entrance into the king's house.

And there she was killed. Now, this was both a righteous and a reasonable thing to do. It was a just sentence against this woman.

This woman was a cruel, bloodthirsty murderer. And careful precautions were taken so that she could be executed righteously and anybody who would want to follow her. We don't read of anybody following her, do we? And yet he had a great, and I'm speaking of Jehodiah here, the high priest.

He had a great concern for the sanctity and the reputation of the temple. And so he would not execute her unto death there at the temple. He had her carried outside.

Now, verse 17. Then Jehodiah made a covenant between the Lord, the king and the people that they should be the Lord's people and also between the king and the people. Isn't that beautiful? When the opposition to the righteous reign of God is eliminated, then they make a glorious covenant between the Lord, the king and the people.

They recommitted themselves to honor, to obey and to serve God. I want you to notice something, too. It's very interesting if you're interested in political theory here in verse 17.

Verse 17 shows us something. It says that there is an obligation, a mutual obligation, between the people, the Lord and the king. In other words, that the king has obligations to the people, not just the people obligations to the king.

There was a political theory which was very popular, you know, at a certain time in the Middle Ages that was called the divine right of kings. And basically what the divine right of kings said was that God put the king in power and therefore you must always obey the king and the king is always right and you must always follow what the king says. And what this shows us is that while the people do have legitimate obligations to the king, the king also has obligations to the people that they must observe or that the king must observe.

And so now, verse 18, And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They thoroughly broken pieces its altars and images and killed Matan, the priest of Baal, before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.

And he took the captains of the hundreds of the bodyguards, the escorts and all the people of the land. And they brought the king down from the house of the Lord and went by the way of the gate of the escorts to the king's house. Then he sat on the throne of the kings.

So the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet for they had slain Athaliah with the sword in the king's house. Jehoash was seven years old when he became king. Isn't that impressive? Now, last time we were together in 2 Kings chapter 10, we saw how Jehu supervised the destruction of the temple of Baal in Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom.

Here, the temple of Baal in Jerusalem. Doesn't that shock you to think that there was a temple of Baal in Jerusalem? Sure, you had a temple unto the Lord, but you also had a temple unto Baal. But that's the kind of wickedness that Athaliah, this queen mother, had.

Anyway, they destroyed the temple of Baal in Jerusalem. And apparently it was destroyed by the people of the land. The people just said, no, we're not going to have this anymore.

And they didn't stop at destroying the building itself. They went on to destroy both the sacred objects dedicated to Baal and to kill Matan, the priest of Baal. Again, it's interesting to fill in some of the missing pieces here from 2 Chronicles.

From 2 Chronicles, we find out one of the reasons why the people of Jerusalem and Judah resented the temple of Baal so much. It was because Athaliah was so wicked that she took some of the sacred vessels. I don't know.

We're not told specifically what. You know, maybe it was, you know, furniture like the table of soul bread or the altar of incense or lesser things of the temple. But she took articles that belonged to the temple of the Lord and she put them in the temple of Baal.

And that got the people mad. They didn't like that. And so when they got sick of it, when Athaliah was gone, they just went in and they destroyed that temple.

And then Joash came and sat on the throne of the kings. After six dark years, now the rightful king of Judah once again ruled over his very, very grateful people. And so here we come now into chapter 12.

But I got to say, before we leave chapter 11 and come into chapter 12, isn't that sort of shocking? Did you ever stop and consider that before? That there was a time in the history of Judah when it was ruled by a queen and a wicked queen at that. Actually, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. And it was only through the courage of this almost anonymous woman.

Look again at verse 2 of chapter 11 before we move on to chapter 12. Jehoshiva, you know, that should be a hero to people. Wouldn't you love it if you could just teach about it? I know I would love it if I could teach a sermon, on a Sunday morning and just mention Jehoshiva and everybody would know who you're talking about.

I can't say that. If a week ago, if you would have said Jehoshiva to me, I would have said, excuse me, who are you talking about? But isn't this really one of the great people of the Bible? A small mention, but it was her courage in the face of genuine, genuine threat that really furthered the work of God and kept the line of David from being completely extinguished. What amazing courage we have in this chapter.

There's courage from Jehoshiva. There's courage from Jehudiah, the high priest. And might I say that there's courage on behalf of that little boy, seven years old.

Don't you think that that's a little young for him to take the throne? You can see that Jehudiah, the high priest said, listen, I know he's only seven. I wish we could wait another four or five years. But Athaliah is destroying this kingdom.

We have to do something now. And so they did. Anyway, he's on the throne now, only seven years old.

So we move from Judah having a queen mother to now having a seven year old king. Now on to chapter 12, verse one. In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king.

Now, I need to stop right here. Don't get confused. We were just speaking of, we were just speaking of Jehoash.

And now in verse one, we hear of Jehoash. You say, well, who's this Jehoash? I thought we were just reading about Jehoash. Don't let it confuse you.

It's the same person just with slightly different spellings to the name. So don't let it confuse you at all. We're talking about the same person.

Verse one again. In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king and he reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibna of Beersheba.

Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada, the priest, instructed him. But the high places were not taken away. The people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

This was a long and mostly blessed reign. 40 years. Now we have to say that Jehoash fell short of the full commitment and complete godliness that we would like to see among the kings of Judah.

After all, he did allow the high places to remain. Should we remind ourselves what the high places were all about? The high places were places of unauthorized sacrifice. They were places where people would sacrifice animals unto the Lord on altars that they had built themselves or that people had built before them, but not at the Temple of Jerusalem.

You know what it was kind of about? It was about convenient worship. Oh, I want to make a sacrifice to the Lord, but I don't want to go all the way to Jerusalem. Just do it on top of the hill at the high place.

Hey, that's a lot easier. Don't people fall into the same thinking today? The worship of convenience instead of really doing it the way God wants you to. Well, that was exactly the problem with the high places.

So in one way, it wasn't a bad sin. It's not like they were worshiping Baal or Ashtoreth on the high places. But yet we have to say that it wasn't what the Lord wanted either, and they shouldn't have done it.

Anyway, he did not take away the high places. But we do like what we do read about him in verse two. Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada, the priest, instructed him.

This implies, though, that when Jehoiada died, Jehoash no longer did what was right in the sight of the Lord. I have to say we fill in things from the book of Second Chronicles. Second Chronicles chapter 24 tells us that he turned to idolatry when Jehoiada died and then judgment followed.

We don't read about it here in Second Kings, but you can read about it in Second Chronicles chapter 24 that after the death of the godly high priest, Jehoash fell into the hands of godless advisors who turned his heart over to Canaanite pagan practices. But even while Jehoiada was alive, this godly high priest, they did not take away the high places. Now verse four.

And Jehoash said to the priests, all the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the Lord, each man's census money, each man's assessment money, and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring to the house of the Lord, let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency, and let them repair the damages of the temple wherever any dilapidation is found. This just speaks of what they would do with the regular income that came into the temple from several different sources. King Jehoash wanted to put the money that came into the temple from the people towards a particular purpose.

Now the money came in three different ways. Again, take a look at here verses four and five. It says that the money came from each man's census money.

Exodus chapter 20 describes what the census money was all about. It was the half shekel that each Israelite who was older than the age of 20 had to pay every year. So every year, every Israelite, now I have to say I'm thinking it's every Israelite man over 20 years old, had to pay half a shekel for the census.

Then there was, again in verse four, each man's assessment money. That is literally each man the money of his soul, of his estimating. This was sort of a property tax based on the personal assessment of each individual.

It seems to be mentioned in Leviticus chapter 27. So it's sort of a tax money that they would apply. And then it said, again in verse four, all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the Lord.

These were freely given offerings over and above the required donations. Now, all of these things were being collected, but they weren't being put towards the proper purpose, and therefore the temple was a ruin. The temple looked like a junky old building, greatly in need of renovation.

And so Joash commanded, let them repair the damages of the temple. Now, I have to say here, isn't this natural? Where did Joash or Jehoash, you could call him by either one. Where did he grow up? He grew up in the temple, right? He was, you know, in a way in a little tiny room there growing up until he was seven years old, and then finally they made him the king.

He knew that temple inside and out. And I bet he thought, man, when I get older and when I'm the king, I'm going to fix this place up. It's a disgrace how this place is.

He knew that the money was coming in, but it was not being put to the correct purpose. By the way, Second Chronicles chapter 24 again tells us why the restoration was needed. And it's because the temple was basically vandalized by Athaliah and her sons.

And so they gathered the money for the work. Look now at verse six. Now, it was so by the 23rd year of King Jehoash that the priest had not repaired the damages of the temple.

So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priest and said to them, why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now, therefore, do not take more money from your constituency, but deliver it for the repairing of the damages of the temple. And the priest agreed that they would neither receive more money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple. Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid and set it beside the altar on the right side as one comes into the house of the Lord.

And the priest who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the Lord. So it was that whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, put it in bags and counted the money that was found in the house of the Lord. Then they gave the money which had been apportioned into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the Lord.

And they paid it to the carpenters and the builders who worked on the house of the Lord and to the masons and the stone cutters for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the damages of the house of the Lord and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. However, there were not made for the house of the Lord basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling bowls, trumpets and any articles of gold or silver from the money brought into the house of the Lord. I find this passage actually tremendously fascinating.

To me, it speaks of exactly what happens during any kind of building project. Did you see right there? It's described there in verse 23, excuse me, verse six. It says by the 23rd year of King Jehoash that the priest did not repair the damages of the temple.

Well, building projects always take a long time, don't they? And renovating an old building is almost always more expensive and more difficult than building a new one. Nevertheless, it appeared that King Jehoash had to wait a very long time until the damages of the temple were repaired. The work was going far too slow.

And so he brought in all the project leaders and he pounded his fist on the table and he said, what's going on here? I gave the orders for these repairs and I don't see anything getting fixed. And so we talked to him about the financing, what they were doing and what they weren't doing. And they did a great big project review.

I bet anybody's done any kind of building project. They've had to have these from time to time. And they just kind of pound their fist on the table and say, something's got to get done here.

Now, it's also typical. What is often a problem with a building project? The money. Sometimes it's not so much getting the money in, although that's always a problem, but oftentimes it's managing it and making sure the money goes to the right places when it does come in.

And so what did he do? It says that the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid and set it beside the altar under the direction of King Jehosh. The priest gave the people an opportunity to give and even willing givers should be given an opportunity to give. I find this very interesting.

Sometimes different churches have different philosophies on how they should give people an opportunity to give. I find in some churches they say, well, look, we're going to give our people an opportunity to give. We're going to pass bags through the congregation on the Sunday service or whatever, and people can give there at the Sunday services.

I know some other churches, fine churches, they say, no, we're not going to do that. We're going to put a box at the back or several boxes sometimes if it's a large church and people can come and put the money in the box. And I've seen God bless either way and I've seen either way at churches and it seems not to be blessed.

I don't think there's any secret in one or the other. I just think that it needs to be under the leading of the Lord and what the Holy Spirit would have that pastor do with that congregation. But it certainly seems that King Jehosh was being guided here to place this collection chest in a strategic location right on the right side of the altar.

When people came to bring their cow to the Lord, well, why not put some money into the box as well? And so he says, listen, let's get this project done. I love how he says they're King Jehosh. He said, don't take more money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple.

You see, there was real administrative problems in the renovation of the temple. It was plagued by poor administration and by financial mismanagement. And through Jehodiah, the priest, he implemented a system where the money would be set aside, saved and then wisely spent for the repair and the refurbishing of the temple.

And I'll have you know something else, too. I think that once people saw that the money was being spent wisely, that they would give more readily. You know, if people aren't confident that money is being spent wisely and perhaps they have a reason for that confidence, perhaps they don't.

But when people aren't confident, they're always less likely to give. And so, again, if you want to compare with something back there in Second Chronicles, chapter 24, it tells us that the king's program was so successful and so well carried out that there was even money left over for buying some extra things for the renovation of the temple. And so now in verse 14, the project's just about finished.

It says, but they gave it to the workmen and they repaired the house of the Lord with it. Moreover, they did not require an account from the men whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to the workmen, for they dealt faithfully. The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the Lord.

It belonged to the priests. I find this very interesting how it says that they did not require an account from the men into whose hands they delivered the money to be paid. You see, through good administration of the project, they were able to find men who could be trusted.

And because they could trust the men to use the money wisely and honestly, the project went forward. I want you to notice that before, the project was previously stalled, not because of a lack of money, but more so because of poor money management. But it's not as if they took all the money that came into the temple and used that for the renovation of the building.

It still says that the money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the Lord. It still belonged to the priests. The point is made that the project succeeded without taking anything away from the priests.

The temple was not repaired and refurbished at their expense. They still received the money from the trespass offerings and from the sin offerings. Now, if we were to leave it here at the end of verse 16, without knowing what we know from Second Chronicles, we'd stand up and give Jehoash or Jehoshua, however you want to call his name.

We would give him a standing ovation. Godly man, serve the Lord, repair the temple. Way to go.

But sadly, as is the case with many of even the good kings of Judah, we find a decline. Look at it here now, starting at verse 17. Hazael, king of Syria, went up and fought against Gath and took it.

Then Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem. And Jehoash, king of Judah, took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated and his own sacred things and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and in the king's house and sent them to Hazael, king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

Now, at this time, the kingdom of Syria attacked Judah with an inferior army. But God used them as a instrument of judgment against the time of disobedience in the life of King Jehoash. King Jehoash, we're going to find out, was wounded in a battle outside of Jerusalem.

We're not told this. Maybe you should turn here. Keep your finger here in Second Kings, chapter 12.

Turn to Second Chronicles, chapter 24, starting now at verse 23. OK, so here we are. Second Chronicles, chapter 24, starting at verse 23.

So what happened in the spring of the year that the army of Syria came up against him and they came to Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, but the Lord delivered a very great army into their hand because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Jehoash.

You see, after this spiritual high of the renovation of the temple that started a season of decline in the life of Jehoash. He declined in some way. We don't really know.

The scriptures don't really tell us. But to discipline him, to get his attention, to bring God's hand of correction against him. God allowed this small army from Syria to come in and bring this correction so much so that King Jehoash, king of Judah, took all the sacred things and sent them to Hazael, king of

Syria.

You see, instead of trusting God, Jehoash traded the prior blessing. That's the sacred treasures of the temple to protect his capital and his kingdom against the attacking Syrians. Don't you feel bad about this? Don't you read this and say, King Jehoash, why don't you trust the Lord? But why don't you look to God to defend you? Why are you buying off evil men? Why are you trading with wicked attackers against your kingdom? You shouldn't be doing this.

You should be trusting God and acting boldly. Now, we have to admit he was in a difficult place. Second Chronicles tells us that he was wounded in battle.

He was had an attacking and a successful army bearing down upon Jerusalem. He found it hard to trust God in the difficult place. But why? I'm going to suggest to you that he stopped trusting God in easier circumstances long before.

You know, we see that from time to time, a man or a woman or maybe a group of people fail at a critical moment. They're put in a situation where they really have to trust God at a critical moment and they fail. And you say, wow, it seemed like they were doing pretty good up until that moment of failure at that moment of crisis.

I want to suggest to you that most all the time, the failure began much earlier. Usually they stopped trusting God in the easier times and then when the more difficult times came, there was nothing left. You rarely find it where a person is trusting God and serving him and surrendered unto him in the easy circumstances along the way.

And then the crisis comes and they can't meet it. Oh, I suppose it happens occasionally, but that's not common, is it? Usually it's a slow decline in the small things and in the easy things. And then like King Joash, when you're wounded, when an army is attacking, when everything seems desperate, then you say, well, let's just sell everything to satisfy the enemy.

Let's give in to his demands and hope he'll leave us alone. That's what happened there. Now, back to verse 19 of Second Kings, Chapter 12.

Now, the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? And his servants arose and formed a conspiracy and killed Joash in the house of the Millo, which goes down to Silla. For Jazakar, the son of Shimeioth and Jehozabad, the son of Shomer, his servants struck him. So he died and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David.

Then Amaziah, his son, reigned in his place. Sadly, we have to say that there is no record of repentance on Joash's part. He never came back to or fulfilled his bright early promise.

You would have thought this could have been one of Judah's, one of the greatest kings over the people of God. It really could have been. I mean, raised in the temple, a godly mentor like Jehodiah, a real reformer to start out.

He came out with the scriptures in his hands, all these wonderful, beautiful signs about King Jehoash. It didn't end up that way, did it? He didn't fulfill his bright early promise. Instead, his servants arose and formed a conspiracy and killed Joash.

And it's startling to us. And it shows us that the blessing of God long before vanished from what I would call Jehoash, the compromised king who began so well, but failed to finish well. You know, this is the bitter reward of disobedience.

And it shows us that God's people, they do, they reap what they sow in one way or another. Joash, you could say, abundantly deserved his shameful and terrible end. Here ended a rain full of bright promise and hope in the beginning.

But it ended up being cruel and untrusting in God. Never was the hand of God's justice more clearly stretched out against a king who fell away and at this time against King Joash. Leaves you with this sort of a bad taste in your mouth, doesn't it? You read this and you say, this king who could have been so much more, he finished so poorly, he ended up being murdered by his own servants after what seemed to be a significant season of decline, capped off by the time where he ended up selling out everything to buy off his enemies instead of trusting the Lord for victory in the face of his enemies.

Shouldn't be that way. You know, God is worthy of our trust. He genuinely is.

He is trustworthy. And when a man like Joash fails, he didn't need to fail because the failure wasn't on God's part. God preserved him.

God blessed him. God put lots of godly people in his life. Think about that.

Think about this woman that we saw in chapter 11, verse 2, Jehoshaba. God put her in his life. And then you had Jehodiah, the high priest.

And I'm sure there were other godly people in his life. Yet he wasted those great resources and ended up finishing poorly. I think about that.

Think about that with the lives of people that I meet. Think about it in my own life. Look at your own life and say, well, you know, I'm doing pretty good with the Lord.

You know, I'm happy with what God's doing in me and my relationship with him. And maybe you just sort of think you can do like you drive in a car, put it kind of on cruise control and go for a while. You know, there is no cruise control in the Christian life.

There really isn't. You have to keep pressing forward. You have to be dedicated to the idea that you're going to finish well.

It said that the ancient Greeks had a race. You know, they were all into sports with the ancient Olympic games and all of that. Well, it said that they had a race among the ancient Greeks where the runners carried torches.

And there were two things that you had to do to win the race. You had to be the first one across the finish line with your torch still burning. If your torch had gone out, you lost.

Listen, I think some of us as Christians, we're saying, oh, listen, just as long as I cross the finish line, that can't be our attitude. That attitude will slip us into the same dangerous compromise and slumber that King Joash ended his life with. No, it's going to be, Lord, I'm going to cross the finish line with my torch burning bright.

That's the only kind of attitude to have. So let's pray and ask that God gives us that grace. Father, we look at these two chapters that we studied here this evening, and we're just amazed at how you use people, Lord, and how you use people like this wonderful woman Jehoshiva, how you use her husband, the high priest Jehodiah, how you use many other loads, those courageous captains and guards there at the temple who stood up against the wicked queen Athaliah at that critical time, Lord.

We thank you how you use people. But, Lord, you don't want to use us as robots. You want to use us as living, breathing people who cooperate with you.

So help us to do that, Lord. Help us to cooperate with you fully and completely so that we might finish well. It's not enough for us, Lord, to have begun well.

We want to finish well as well. So help us to do that, Lord, to cross the finish line with our torches burning brightly for you. In Jesus' name, amen.

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