

2 Chronicles 23 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES The Kingdom of Israel From Splendor to Disaster					
Splendor			Disaster		
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36		
Kingdom United			Kingdom Divided 2Chr 10:1-19	Rulers of the Southern Kingdom of Judah After the Split	The Exile of Judah 2Chr 36:17-23
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Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple		Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years		

Click chart to enlarge
 Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission
 Click Chart from [Charles Swindoll](#).

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES

1107	1011	971	931	853	722	586
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1Samuel	2 Samuel				1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings	
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36	

Legend: B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

2 Chronicles 23:1 Now in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Johanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, and they entered into a covenant with him.

MSG In the seventh year the priest Jehoiada decided to make his move and worked out a strategy with certain influential officers in the army. He picked Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri as his associates. They dispersed throughout Judah and called in the Levites from all the towns in Judah along with the heads of families. They met in Jerusalem. The gathering met in The Temple of God. They made a covenant there in The Temple. The priest Jehoiada showed them the young prince and addressed them: "Here he is—the son of the king. He is going to rule just as God promised regarding the sons of David. Now this is what you must do: A third of you priests and Levites who come on duty on the Sabbath are to be posted as security guards at the gates; another third will guard the palace; and the other third will guard the foundation gate. All the people will gather in the courtyards of The Temple of God. No one may enter The Temple of God except the priests and designated Levites—they are permitted in because they've been consecrated, but all the people must do the work assigned them. The Levites are to form a ring around the young king, weapons at the ready. Kill anyone who tries to break through your ranks. Your job is to stay with the king at all times and places, coming and going."

- seventh year: 2Ki 11:4-16
- covenant with him: 2Ch 15:12 1Sa 18:3 Ne 9:38
- CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

NOTE: In passages which are generally parallel the text highlighted in **BOLD BLUE FONT** reflects text that is unique. Obviously if there is no parallel passage in the column that identifies the passage as unique for that respective book.

[Harmony of 2Kings 11-12 and 2Chronicles 22-24](#)

ATHALIAH'S REIGN

(2Ki 11:1-3 = 2Ch 22:10-12)

2Ki 11:1+ When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring.

2Ch 22:10+ 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.**

<p>2Ki 11:2+ But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, 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 they hid him from Athaliah, and he was not put to death.</p>	<p>2Ch 22:11+ But Jehoshabeath 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 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 would not put him to death.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:3+ So he was hidden with her in the house of the LORD six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land.</p>	<p>2Ch 22:12+ He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land.</p>
<p>ATHALIAH'S ASSASINATION (2Ki 11:4-20 = 2Ch 23:1-21)</p>	
<p>2Ki 11:4+ Now in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him in the house of the LORD. Then he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:1+ Now in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Johanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, and they entered into a covenant with him.</p>
	<p>2Ch 23:2+ They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.</p>
	<p>2Ch 23:3+ Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoiada said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has spoken concerning the sons of David.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:5+ He commanded them, saying, "This is the thing that you shall do: one third of you, who come in on the sabbath and keep watch over the king's house</p>	<p>2Ch 23:4+ "This is the thing which you shall do: one third of you, of the priests and Levites who come in on the sabbath, shall be gatekeepers,</p>
<p>2Ki 11:6+ (one third also shall be at the gate Sur, and one third at the gate behind the guards), shall keep watch over the house for defense.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:5+ and one third shall be at the king's house, and a third at the Gate of the Foundation; and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:7+ "Two parts of you, even all who go out on the sabbath, shall also keep watch over the house of the LORD for the king.</p>	
	<p>2Ch 23:6+ "But let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy. And let all the people keep the charge of the LORD.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:8+ "Then you shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes within the ranks shall be put to death. And be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in."</p>	<p>2Ch 23:7+ The Levites will surround the king, each man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the house, let him be killed. Thus be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."</p>

<p>2Ki 11:9+ So the captains of hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each one of them took his men who were to come in on the sabbath, with those who were to go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:8+ So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each one of them took his men who were to come in on the sabbath, with those who were to go out on the sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss any of the divisions.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:10+ The priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of the LORD.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:9+ 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.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:11+ The guards stood each with his weapons 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.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:10+ 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.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:12+ Then he brought the king's son out and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony; and they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, "Long live the king!"</p>	<p>2Ch 23:11+ 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!"</p>
<p>2Ki 11:13+ When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people in the house of the LORD.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:12+ When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came into the house of the LORD to the people.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:14+ She looked and behold, the king was standing by the pillar, according to the custom, with the captains and the trumpeters beside the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, "Treason! Treason!"</p>	<p>2Ch 23:13+ She looked, and behold, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters were beside the king. And all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets, the singers with their musical instruments leading the praise. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!"</p>
<p>2Ki 11:15+ And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army and said to them, "Bring her out between the ranks, and whoever follows her put to death with the sword." For the priest said, "Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD."</p>	<p>2Ch 23:14+ Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army and said to them, "Bring her out between the ranks; and whoever follows her, put to death with the sword." For the priest said, "Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD."</p>
<p>2Ki 11:16+ So they seized her, and when she arrived at the horses' entrance of the king's house, she was put to death there.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:15+ So they seized her, and when she arrived at the entrance of the Horse Gate of the king's house, they put her to death there.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:17+ Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they would be the LORD'S people, also between the king and the people.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:16+ Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king, that they would be the LORD'S people.</p>

<p>2Ki 11:18+ All the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces thoroughly, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:17-18+ And all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down, and they broke in pieces his altars and his images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18 Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses—with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David.</p>
	<p>2Ch 23:19+ He stationed the gatekeepers of the house of the LORD, so that no one would enter who was in any way unclean.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:19+ He took the captains of hundreds and the Carites and the guards and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guards to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:20+ He took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and came through the upper gate to the king's house. And they placed the king upon the royal throne.</p>
<p>2Ki 11:20+ So all the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet. For they had put Athaliah to death with the sword at the king's house.</p>	<p>2Ch 23:21+ So all of the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet. For they had put Athaliah to death with the sword.</p>

Related Passages:

2 Kings 11:4+ Now in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him in the house of the LORD. Then he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son.

**JEHOIADA TAKES CHARGE
IN THE SEVENTH YEAR**

To summarize the additional facts found in Chronicles that were omitted by the writer of Kings (See the specific verses above in bold blue and note the "+" sign links to commentary) - Jehoiada's age and long faithfulness, Levites gathered from all Judah (not just guards in Jerusalem), the renewal of temple worship, detailed Levitical guard assignments of who guards the king, who guards the temple and who may and may not enter the house of the LORD (2 Chr 23:6-7), the destruction of Baal's house and the renewal of God's covenant with explicit appeal to God's promise to David (2Ch 23:3). Kings records the fall of a tyrant. Chronicles records the revival of a nation.

Raymond Dillard adds that "Though in Kings the emphasis is on the role played by the military in the coup (2 Kgs 11:4, **the captains of hundreds, the Carites, and the guard**"), the Chronicler has underscored instead the role of the **priests and Levites**. The Levites had a traditional quasi-military role; in the absence of a military establishment in the post- exilic period, it is not surprising that the Chronicler should emphasize the role of cultic personnel in the coup, not to mention his own concerns with the sacrosanctity of the temple precincts. One of the difficulties in the chapter, however, is determining who did participate in the coup according to the Chronicler's account. Did he so emphasize the role of the priests and Levites as not to mention the participation of other elements in society? The broadening circle of the conspiracy may have incorporated elements from all three sectors of society: the royal/military, cultic, and private. The leaders of the ancestral families play a role in numerous crucial moments (1 Chr 29:6; 2 Chr 1; 2; 5:2; 19:8; 35:10; cf. Ezr 8:29). (See [2 Chronicles, Volume 15 - Page 180](#))

Now in the seventh year Jehoiada (THE PRIEST) strengthened ([chazaq](#); LXX - [kratoo](#) - became strong) himself and (summoned his courage, boldly forming a conspiracy and) took captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Johanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, and they entered into a covenant ([beriyth](#)) with him (see 2Ki 11:4+) - Jehoiada was a wise, godly priest who held fast to God in days when others vacillated (see [note below](#)). He was married to Jehoshabeath in 2 Chr. 22:11, who helped hide Joash in the temple chambers for six years.

Jehoiada (THE PRIEST) **strengthened** ([chazaq](#); LXX - [kratiao](#) - became strong) **himself** - The question is where did this strength come from and why now in the 7th year? While I cannot be dogmatic the LXX has the verb [kratiao](#) which is used 4 times in the NT and each use is associated with supernatural power which would support the premise that the strength and timing are from the Spirit.

F B Meyer - "The easiest thing for Jehoiada would have been to shut himself up in the temple, and leave things to take their course. The noblest thing was to come forth, and boldly confront the rampant, evil of his time....The world is full of Athaliahs, and it is not befitting that the Jehoiadas should remain at their holy rites and services if there is a paramount need for action in the world's battlefield, in the strife against wrong."

Bob Utley on "**captains of hundreds**" From 2 Kgs. 11:4 this includes some foreign mercenaries (cf. 1 Chr. 18:17). This may be the meaning of 2 Chr. 23:6, not just lay people (i.e., non-Levite), but not covenant people (i.e., Carites or Cherethites).

Andrew Hill: Jehoiada the priest is a clever strategist, planning his coup in three stages: - first assembling a coalition of conspirators (23:1-3a), - then strategically deploying armed guards to ensure the safety of the king (23:3b-7), and - finally presenting Joash for public installation as king of Judah (23:8-11). ([First and Second Chronicles](#))

John Walton - priests' political power. In much of the ancient Near East the priesthood wielded considerable political power. They had land holdings, independent assets that came as gifts to the temple and an emotional hold on the people. In Israel the power of the prophetic institution is more evident than that of the priests, but it is likely that the priests also carried some political clout. The wife of the high priest Jehoiada, Jehosheba, was the daughter of Joram, the previous ruler, and thus Jehoiada was connected to the royal line by marriage. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 445](#))

Strengthened ([02389](#)) [chazaq](#) means "strong" in the sense of "powerful" (including the power to resist) and is used both of God and of men. It occurs frequently with the nouns "arm" and "hand" to stand for "power," "strength" or "force." For example, it describes the saving power of God in rescuing his people from Egypt with a strong hand and a mighty arm (Exo. 3:19; 13:9; 32:11). It likewise describes the strong arm of Pharaoh (Ezek. 30:22), as well as the marvels wrought by God through the agency of Moses (Deut. 34:12). It describes the hardened faces and foreheads of the house of Israel, symbolizing their stubbornness and refusal to listen to the word of God as communicated through his prophets. Chāzāq is used to depict nouns as varied as the sword, the wind and the trumpet. During the Exodus of the Israelites, the same adjective occurs, this time describing the west wind which parts the waters, allowing the chosen people to pass dry-shod through the Red Sea (Exo. 14:21). And, in the account of Moses preparing to receive the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai during his journey to the Promised Land, the same adjective is used to convey the increasing volume of the shofar which resounded on the mountain (Exo. 19:16). War, sickness and famine are all described by chāzāq: Saul's battle against the Philistines (1 Sam. 14:52), the serious illness of the son of the widow of Zarephath (1 Ki. 17:17), and the severity of the famine which rages throughout Samaria (1 Ki. 18:2).

[Josephus Antiquities 9.7.3](#) records the following about this event...

2. [An. 879.] Now, on the seventh year, Jehoiada communicated the matter to certain of the captains of hundreds, five in number; and persuaded them to be assisting to what attempts he was making against Athaliah, and to join with him in asserting the kingdom to the child. He also received such oaths from them, as are proper to secure those that assist one another from the fear of discovery: and he was then of good hope that they should depose Athaliah. Now those men whom Jehoiada the Priest had taken to be his partners, went into all the countrey, and gathered together the Priests, and the Levites, and the heads of the tribes out of it; and came and brought them to Jerusalem, to the high Priest. So he demanded the security of an oath of them, to keep private whatsoever he should discover to them; which required both their silence and their assistance. So when they had taken the oath, and had thereby made it safe for him to speak, he produced the child that he had brought up of the family of David, and said to them, "This is your King, of that house which you know God hath foretold should reign over you for all time to come. I exhort you therefore that one third part of you guard him in the temple, and that a fourth part¹² keep watch at all the gates of the temple, and that the next part of you keep guard at the gate which opens and leads to the King's palace; and let the rest of the multitude be unarmed in the temple; and let no armed person go into the temple, but the Priest only." He also gave them this order besides, that "a part of the Priests and the Levites should be about the King himself, and be a guard to him, with their drawn swords; and to kill that man immediately, whoever he be, that should be so bold as to enter armed into the temple, and bid them be afraid of no body, but persevere in guarding the King." So these men obeyed what the High Priest advised them to; and declared the reality of their resolution by their actions. Jehoiada also opened that armory which David had made in the temple, and distributed to the

captains of hundreds, as also to the Priests, and Levites, all the spears and quivers, and what kind of weapons soever it contained; and set them armed in a circle round about the temple, so as to touch one anothers hands: and by that means excluding those from entering that ought not to enter. So they brought the child into the midst of them, and put on him the royal crown; and Jehoiada anointed him with the oil, and made him King. And the multitude rejoiced, and made a noise, and cried, "God save the King!"

Matthew Henry Notes: Chapter: 23

Six years bloody Athaliah had tyrannised; in this chapter we have her deposed and slain, and Joash, the rightful heir, enthroned. We had the story before nearly as it is here related, 2 Ki. 11:4, etc.

- I. Jehoiada prepared the people for the king, acquainted them with his design, armed them, and appointed them their posts (2Ch 23:1-10).
- II. He produced the king to the people, crowned him, and anointed him (2Ch 23:11).
- III. He slew the usurper (2Ch 23:12-15).
- IV. He reformed the kingdom, re-established religion, and restored the civil government (2Ch 23:16-21).

Verses: 2Ch 23:1-11

We may well imagine the bad posture of affairs in Jerusalem during Athaliah's six years' usurpation, and may wonder that God permitted it and his people bore it so long; but after such a dark and tedious night the returning day in this revolution was the brighter and the more welcome. The continuance of David's seed and throne was what God had sworn by his holiness (Ps. 89:35), and an interruption was no defeasance; the stream of government here runs again in the right channel. The instrument and chief manager of the restoration is Jehoiada, who appears to have been,

1. **A man of great prudence**, who reserved the young prince for so many years till he was fit to appear in public, and till the nation had grown weary of the usurper, who prepared his work beforehand, and then effected it with admirable secrecy and expedition. When God has work to do he will qualify and animate men for it.
2. **A man of great interest**. The captains joined with him, 2Ch 23:1. The Levites and the chief of the fathers of Israel came at his call to Jerusalem (v. 2) and were there ready to receive his orders. See what a command wisdom and virtue will give men. The Levites and all Judah did as Jehoiada commanded (2Ch 23:8), and, which is strange, all that were entrusted with the secret kept their own counsel till it was executed. Thus the words of the wise are heard in quiet, Eccl. 9:17.
3. **A man of great faith**. It was not only common equity (much less his wife's relation to the royal family) that put him upon this undertaking, but a regard to the word of God, and the divine entail of the crown (2Ch 23:3): The king's son shall reign, must reign, as the Lord hath said. His eye to the promise, and dependence upon that, added a great deal of glory to this undertaking.
4. **A man of great religion**. This matter was to be done in the temple, which might occasion some breach of rule, and the necessity of the case might be thought to excuse it; but he gave special order that none of the people should come into the house of the Lord, but the priests and Levites only, who were holy, upon pain of death, 2Ch 23:6, 7. Never let sacred things be profaned, no, not for the support of civil rights.
5. **A man of great resolution**. When he had undertaken this business he went through with it, brought out the king, crowned him, and gave him the testimony, 2Ch 23:11. He ventured his head, but it was in a good cause, and therefore he went on boldly. It is here said that his sons joined with him in anointing the young king. One of them, it is likely, was that Zechariah whom Joash afterwards put to death for reproving him (2Ch 24:20), which was so much the more ungrateful because he bore a willing part in anointing him.

QUESTION - [Who was Jehoiada in the Bible?](#)

ANSWER - The best known of the Jehoiadas in the Bible was a leading priest of Israel who served several of the kings of Judah. After Israel split into two kingdoms, Judah, the southern kingdom, which included Jerusalem, remained more faithful to the Lord. Jehoiada the priest married the sister of King Ahaziah of Judah. King Ahaziah reigned just one year before being killed.

Ahaziah's power-hungry mother, [Athaliah](#), smelled an opportunity. She rounded up all of her son's family, anyone with a potential claim to the throne, and had them all killed so she could become the queen (2 Kings 11:1). She missed only one in the slaughter. When Ahaziah's sister Jehoshabeath, Jehoiada's wife, realized what Athaliah was up to, she hid the youngest of her nephews, Joash, away (2Ki 11:2). Just a year old, Joash was too young to claim his rightful throne, but he was protected by Jehoiada and Jehoshabeath in the temple of the Lord (2Ki 11:3).

Six years passed, during which the usurping queen mother Athaliah remained in power and the rightful king grew into a boy within the temple courts. Finally, Jehoiada the priest decided the time had come to make the boy king. He called the captains of the guard and influential Levites and other leaders of the people to come to Jerusalem. He let them all in on the secret that one of the king's sons still lived, the rightful heir to the throne as a direct descendant of David. The soldiers and the people agreed, under oath, to provide protection and support for the king while he was being crowned and anointed in the temple (2 Chronicles 23:1–3).

When the day came, every person in the assembly stood ready to defend the young king (2 Chronicles 23:8–10). Jehoiada brought Joash out, placed the crown on the boy, anointed him with oil, and gave to him the testimony (or royal law). The people clapped and shouted, "Long live the king!" while the trumpets blared (2Ch 23:11).

Athaliah, the queen mother and Joash's grandmother, heard the noise from the temple and came over from the palace (2 Chronicles 23:12). When she saw the scene surrounding a boy wearing the crown of the king, she realized what was going on. She screamed out, "Treason!" and tore her own clothes in grief and fury (2Ch 23:13).

Jehoiada commanded the captains of the guard to take Queen Athaliah out of the temple and put her to death, along with anyone who followed her. The guards obeyed, and Athaliah was executed by the Horse Gate on the palace grounds (2 Chronicles 23:15). Serving now as the king's proxy, Jehoiada made a covenant between the king and the people that they would be the Lord's people and no longer worship Baal as the queen mother had allowed (2Ch 23:16). The people stormed and destroyed the temple of Baal and killed the idolatrous chief priest (2Ch 23:17).

Joash, just seven years old, assumed the throne and reigned as king over Judah for 40 years. Thanks to his adviser Jehoiada, Joash was known as one of the good kings of Judah who served the Lord. Together, Joash and Jehoiada oversaw extensive repairs to the Lord's temple that had gone neglected for far too long. 2 Kings 12:1–3 says that Joash "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him."

Jehoiada lived to be an impressive 130 years old and blessed the kingdom of Judah with his godly wisdom and able direction. Highly regarded by the people for his service both to the kings of Judah and the house of God, Jehoiada the priest was buried in Jerusalem in the place of the kings. Unfortunately, after Jehoiada died, King Joash began listening to wicked advisers, and Baal and Asherah worship revived in Judah (2 Chronicles 24:17–19).

You can read more of Jehoiada's story in 2 Kings 11–12 and 2 Chronicles 22:10–24:16. [GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org)

2 Chronicles 23:2 They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

- **went:** Ps 112:5 Mt 10:16 Eph 5:15
- **the heads of** See the parallel passages. 2Ch 11:13-17 1Ch 15:12 24:6
- See [Harmony of 2Kings 11-12 and 2Chronicles 22-24](#)

GATHERING THE LEVITES IN JUDAH

They (the captains) **went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem** - Don't be confused for the specific term **Israel** is used here to refer to the southern kingdom (cf "Israel" in 2 Chr. 11:13-17; 2Ch 12:6; 2Ch 21:2.) and not the northern kingdom which is often called Israel in other contexts.

Bob Utley - Jehoiada assembled a Levite army to protect the rightful Davidic heir (cf. 2 Kgs. 11:4-20). This is not mentioned in the 2 Kings parallel. The Chronicler is always promoting the Levites!

2 Chronicles 23:3 Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoiada said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has spoken concerning the sons of David.

[AMP](#) Then all the assembly made a covenant in the house of God with the king [that is, with the child Joash, to overthrow Athaliah by proclaiming his sovereignty]. And Jehoiada [the priest] said to them, "Behold, the king's son [Joash] shall reign, as the Lord has said in regard to the sons of David.

[AMPC](#) And all the assembly made a covenant in the house of God with the king [little Joash, to suddenly proclaim his sovereignty and overthrow Athaliah's tyranny]. And Jehoiada the priest said to them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the Lord has said of the offspring of David.

[CEB](#) The entire assembly made a covenant with the king in God's temple. Jehoiada said, "Look! Here is the king's son. He must be king, just as the Lord promised about David's descendants.

- **made a covenant:** 2Ch 23:16 2Sa 5:3 2Ki 11:17 1Ch 11:3
- **as the LORD has spoken:** 2Ch 6:16 7:18 21:7 2Sa 7:12,16 1Ki 2:4 9:5 1Ch 9:9-27 Ps 89:29,36

A SECOND COVENANT NOW WITH THE KING

Then all the assembly made ([karath](#) - cut) a covenant ([beriyth](#)) with the king in the house of God - This covenant not described in 2Ki 11, although 2Ki 11:17⁺ and 2Ch 23:16.

And Jehoiada said to them, "Behold ([hinneh](#)) the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has spoken concerning the sons of David - This would have been an incredibly dramatic moment and a surprise to all Judah because no one knew Joash was alive. There is an interesting play on words (or thoughts concerning "covenant"), for here **all the assembly** agree to a solemn, binding covenant the effect of which would be to assure the integrity of the [Davidic Covenant](#) and ultimately the line of the Messiah, for the one surviving son was the sole survivor in the line of David! Satan would have loved to snuff out Joash's life and void the [Davidic Covenant](#) that promised the Messiah!

I live [David Guzik's](#) comment - One reason Athaliah was able to reign for six years was that no one knew any alternative. Many people live under the reign of Satan because they don't really know there is a legitimate king ready to take reign in their life.

Covenant ([01285](#)) [berit/berith/beriyth](#) means covenant, treaty, compact, agreement between two parties (first use in God's covenant with Noah - Ge 6:18, 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17). As discussed more below [beriyth](#) describes a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh. Covenant is a solemn, binding arrangement between two parties and entails a variety of responsibilities, benefits and penalties depending on the specific covenant which is being studied. OT covenants were made between God and man (eg, God with Noah - Ge 6:18, with Abram - Ge 15:18) or between men (Abraham and Abimelech - Ge 21:27, Isaac and Abimelech - Ge 26:28, Jacob and Laban - Ge 31:44) (**For summary of covenants see - [Covenant in the Bible](#)**).

ISBE says that "In essence a **covenant** is an agreement, but an agreement of a solemn and binding force. The early Semitic idea of a covenant was doubtless that which prevailed among the Arabs. This was primarily blood-brotherhood, in which two men became brothers by drinking each other's blood. (ED: Now that sounds serious to me! [See illustration in pagan culture](#))

Covenant can be summarized as follows...

(1) Between two parties (sometimes equal, other times superior to inferior) -- (a) **nations** -- (peace) treaty, alliance of friendship (b) **individuals** -- a pledge or agreement with mutual obligations to each other (c) **monarch and subjects** (2Sa 3:21, 5:3, 1Chr 11:3) -- a constitution (d) **God and man** -- Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New Covenants.

TWOT adds that..."Apart from blood ties the covenant was the way people of the ancient world formed wider relationships with each other. The accounts of the relationship between David and Jonathan are the only unequivocal mention of a compact between two individuals in the Old Testament (1Sa 18:3; 20:8; 23:18). It is spoken of as "a covenant of the Lord" because the Lord witnessed the transaction and protected the legal order."

(2) Accompanied by (a) **signs** (also witnesses, memorials, shared meals) (b) **sacrifices**, (c) **solemn, binding oaths** -- sealing the relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking the covenant (d) Sometimes with written document on which the words of the covenant, its terms in the form of promises and stipulations were spelled out, witnessed to, signed and sealed. **Behm** (TDNT) notes that in ancient times

There is no firmer guarantee of legal security peace or personal loyalty than the covenant (e.g., [Amos 1:9](#)).

(3) Is depicted in the idiomatic phrase "**make (cut) a covenant**" in which there is was a blood sacrifice as part of the covenant ritual.

Almost 100 years ago, **Andrew Murray** motivated by a waning understanding regarding the truth and power inherent in the Biblical

truth of **covenant** wrote that...

One of the words of Scripture, which is almost going out of fashion, is the word **Covenant**'. There was a time when it was the keynote of the theology and the Christian life of strong and holy men. We know how deep in Scotland it entered into the national life and thought. It made mighty men, to whom God, and His promise and power were wonderfully real. It will be found still to bring strength and purpose to those who will take the trouble to bring all their life (**Ed**: and their marriages) under control of the inspiring assurance that they are living in **covenant** with a God who has sworn faithfully to fulfill in them every promise He has given. ([Two Covenants - Index - Andrew Murray](#))

The majority of the the OT uses of **beriyth** are translated as **covenant** (275/285 uses) and the majority of these are translated into Greek using the word **diatheke**, which was a common technical word used in the Greco-Roman law to describe the settlement of an inheritance (i.e., a "last will and testament") and used in the NT to describe the "*self-commitment, promises, and conditions by which [God] entered into relationship with man*" (Friberg).

Behold ([02009](#)) (**hinneh**) is an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). The first use of **hinneh** in Ge 1:29 and second in Ge 1:31 - "And God saw all that He had made, and **behold**, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day." **Hinneh** is often used in the idiom "**Here I am**" in Ge 22:1, 7,11 Ge 27:1,18, Ge 31:11, Ge 46:2 Ex 3:4 1Sa 3:4, 3:16, 12:3, 2Sa 1:7, Isa 52:6, Isa 58:9. **Hinneh** is used most often to point out people but also to point out things (Ge 31:41, 17:4). God uses **hinneh** to grab man's attention before He brings destruction (Ge 6:13, 17). God uses **hinneh** when He establishes covenants (Ge 9:9, 15:12, 17 [when Jehovah cut the Abrahamic covenant], Ge 17:4, cp Ge 28:13, 15), when He provided a sacrificial substitute for Isaac (foreshadowing His giving us His only Son!) (Ge 22:13). **Hinneh** marks the "chance (The Providence of God)" arrival of Boaz at the field where Ruth was gleaning (Ru 2:4-[read about this "chance romance" - Indeed, "Behold!"](#)). **Hinneh** is used to announce the Lord's sending of a child as a sign and a prophecy of **Immanuel-Emmanuel**, the Messiah (Isa. 7:14+). In fact **W E Vine** says that it is notable that when **behold** (**hinneh**) is used in Isaiah, it always introduces something relating to future circumstances.

Spurgeon reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Hinneh is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection **idou** (strictly speaking a command in the second person [aorist imperative, middle voice](#)) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said:

2 Chronicles 23:4 "This is the thing which you shall do: one third of you, of the priests and Levites who come in on the sabbath, shall be gatekeepers,

- entering: 1Ch 23:3-6 24:3-6 Lu 1:8,9
- gatekeepers: 1Ch 26:13-16

Related Passage:

2 Kings 11:5-8+ He commanded them, saying, "This is the thing that you shall do: one third of you, who come in on the sabbath and keep watch over the king's house 6 (one third also shall be at the gate Sur, and one third at the gate behind the guards), shall keep watch over the house for defense. 7 "Two parts of you, even all who go out on the sabbath, shall also keep watch over the house of the LORD for the king. 8 "Then you shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes within the ranks shall be put to death. And be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in."

THE COUP TAKES SHAPE

This is the thing which you shall do: one third of you, of the priests and Levites who come in on the sabbath, shall be gatekeepers - While 2 Kings 11 mentions captains and guards, focusing on protection and order, 2 Chronicles 23 emphasizes Levites, priests, and divinely prescribed roles (cf 2Ch 23:18[±])

Why the **Sabbath**? This was the day the guards changed shifts and it would allow Jehoiada to keep not one but two shifts of Levites for defense and doing so without arousing suspicions that a coup was in the works.

Trapp - It was a weighty work he went about, and therefore he took the wisest course, the fittest time; on the Sabbath, when the congregation met; and in the temple, wither Athaliah and her courtiers seldom came."

J.A. Thompson points out that "The arrangement for carrying out the crowning of Joash and the removal of Athaliah centered on the change in the shifts of temple personnel. There would be the maximum number of armed personnel for the coup as well as a large number of persons moving about in the temple so as not to arouse any suspicion in the mind of Athaliah, who would see these changes taking place daily. However, neither the details here nor in 2 Kgs 11:5-8 are clear, no doubt due to our ignorance about their procedures. ([1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

2 Chronicles 23:5 and one third shall be at the king's house, and a third at the Gate of the Foundation; and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD.

- **the king's house:** 2Ki 11:5,6 Eze 44:2,3 46:2,3
- **Gate of the Foundation;** Ac 3:2

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:6[±] (one third also shall be **at the gate Sur**, and one third at the gate **behind the guards**), **shall keep watch over the house for defense.**

THE OTHER 2/3'S OF LEVITES ARE ALLOCATED

and one third shall be at the king's house, and a third at the Gate of the Foundation(probably same as "the gate Sur"); **and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD** - See parallel 2Ki 11:6[±] which adds they **shall keep watch over the house for defense.**

Walton - The Foundation Gate is called the Sur Gate in 2 Kings 11:6. Its location cannot be determined with certainty. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 445](#))

2 Chronicles 23:6 "But let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy. And let all the people keep the charge of the LORD.

- **they:** 2Ki 11:6,7 1Ch 23:28-32

ONLY PRIESTS AND LEVITES CAN ENTER HOUSE OF THE LORD

But let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy. And let all the people keep the charge of the LORD - This fact is not in 2Ki 11.

Bob Utley - This limiting of access was for two purposes. It renewed the sanctity of the temple courts (i.e., Num. 1:15; 3:10,38; 18:7). It excluded any followers of Athaliah to enter.

2 Chronicles 23:7 "The Levites will surround the king, each man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the

house, let him be killed. Thus be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.”

- **the Levites:** 2Ki 11:8,9
- **whoever:** Ex 19:12,13 21:14 Nu 3:10,38

ARMED LEVITES SURROUND KING

The Levites will surround the king, each man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the house, let him be killed. Thus be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out = Parallel in 2Ki 11:8[±]. The king will be surrounded at all times. When I was in Israel on the Wailing Wall, Benjamin Netanyahu came to the wall and I tried taking pictures of him. When my pictures came back, every picture was of an Israeli soldier's head! Not one shot showed Netanyahu's head because he was completely surrounded to prevent a sniper from taking a shot at him.

2 Chronicles 23:8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each one of them took his men who were to come in on the sabbath, with those who were to go out on the sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss any of the divisions.

- **the Levites:** 2Ki 11:9
- **the courses:** 1Ch 24:1-26:32

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:9[±] So the captains of hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each one of them took his men who were to come in on the sabbath, with those who were to go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

LEVITES OBEY JEHOIADA'S INSTRUCTIONS

So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each one of them took his men who were to come in on the sabbath, with those who were to go out on the sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss any of the divisions- Jehoiada's instructions are followed to a "T." No one dismissed in effect "doubled" the forces available should Athaliah get wind and try to attack.

[Bob Utley](#) - "did not dismiss any of the divisions" This accumulation of Levites in the temple area had to be done secretly over time, so as not to cause Athaliah or her guards to notice.

2 Chronicles 23:9 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.

- **spears:** 1Sa 21:9 2Sa 8:7
- **which were in the house of God:** When the soldier retired from the tumults of war to the bosom of his family, he frequently hung up his arms in the temple, as a grateful acknowledgment of the protection he had received, and of the victories he had won. It is highly probable, therefore, that the arms of David which Jehoiada delivered to the captains of hundreds, "which were in the house of God," were laid up in the tabernacle by David when he resigned the command of his armies to his generals; and there is reason to believe that his conduct, in this respect, was followed by many of his companions in arms.

DAVID'S WEAPONS USED TO PROTECT DAVIDIC COVENANT!

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 - There is a bit of irony in that the weapons of David were used to protect the last living heir of the Davidic Covenant. There is a second subtle irony in that Joash was protected with weapons David had taken from the Arameans, the very ones who would defeat Joash and Judah after Joash began worshipping idols! 2 Sam. 8:7 says "David took the shields of gold which were carried by the servants of **Hadadezer** (ARAMEAN) and brought them to Jerusalem."

Bob Utley - Jehoiada passed out the weapons that were kept in the temple. David's shields of gold – 2 Sam. 8:7 Solomon's shields of gold – 1Kgs. 10:16-17; 14:26-27; 2 Chr. 9:16 Shishak of Egypt took Solomon's shields of gold and Rehoboam replaced them with bronze ones, 2 Chr. 12:9-10

Raymond Dillard adds that "It was appropriate that the weapons used to restore rule to a descendant of David had belonged to David."

John Walton - weapons from the temple. It is not certain where these weapons were stored, as there is no mention of a temple armory in Scripture. Likely these are ceremonial pieces used by the king in processions and kept on display. It is possible that they also included important weapons that had been captured in battle or taken as tribute. The Hebrew terms used for the weapons are rare. The Hebrew term that the NIV translates as "small shield" was long obscure but is now recognized as a technical term borrowed from Aramaic referring to a bow case. Ceremonial bow cases are pictured in later Persian reliefs. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 445](#))

2 Chronicles 23:10 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.

- **side of the house:** Heb. shoulder of the house, 2Ki 11:11
- **along by:** 2Ch 6:12 Ex 40:6

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:11+ **The guards stood** each with his weapons 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.

TEMPLE IS GUARDED ON THE RIGHT & LEFT SIDES

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 - Again we see the emphasis on high security to assure there is no assassination of Joash. It is interesting to me that God's sovereignty was in play (because He would never let the line of David die out) but there is also human responsibility (Jehoiada's careful plan). This reminds me of Psalm 127:1 "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the LORD guards the city, The watchman keeps awake in vain." In this case we can be certain Yahweh was on guard! (See "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)") See [ALTAR OF SACRIFICE](#).

Walton - The palace guard apparently surrounded the palace on all sides and protected the route from the palace to the temple. From its description in 1 Kings, the temple of Solomon appears to have been enclosed in the larger palace complex. Very little is known of the layout of the temple precinct and palace complex of this time. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 445](#))

2 Chronicles 23:11 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!"

- They brought: 2Ch 22:11 2Ki 11:12
- put upon: 2Sa 1:10 Ps 21:3 89:39 132:18 Heb 2:9 Jas 1:12 2:5 Rev 4:4,10 Rev 5:10 19:12
- the testimony: Ex 25:16 31:18 De 17:18-20 Ps 2:10-12 78:5 Isa 8:16,20 49:23
- anointed him: 1Sa 10:1 2Sa 5:3 1Ki 1:39 Ps 89:20 Ac 4:26,27
- God save the king: Heb. Let the king live, 1Sa 10:24 2Sa 16:16 1Ki 1:34 Mt 21:9

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:12⁺ Then he brought the king's son out and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony; and **they** made him king and anointed him, and **they clapped their hands** and said, "Long live the king!"

JOASH CROWNED & GIVEN THE TESTIMONY

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!" - See 2Sa 10:24; 1Ki 1:25,34,39 cry of "Long live the king." (lit. "may the king live"). Don't miss who anointed Joash! The sons of Jehoiada, one of whom would have been Zechariah which later prophesies against Joash and Judah and was "anointed" not with oil but with stones! (2Ch 24:20, 21⁺) And without a doubt Joash and Zechariah most probably played together and ate together when they were young boys. This is an incredibly sad testimony on the drift into depravity of King Joash!

Deuteronomy 17:18-20⁺ says "Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. "It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God (CLEARLY SOMETHING JOASH FAILED TO DO!), by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel."

THOUGHT - Clearly King Joash's heart had become extremely hardened which is what persistent, unrepentant sin will do to you. The writer of Hebrews gives ALL of us an antidote and a warning regarding the power of sin calling on (more accurately commanding) believers to "But **encourage** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that (term of purpose - of encouraging) none of you will be hardened ([skleruno](#) - [passive voice](#) = by outside force in this case SIN) by the deceitfulness ([apate](#)) of sin ([hamartia](#))." (Hebrews 3:13⁺). Is there someone the Spirit is prompting you to contact today so you can encourage them? Do you need to reach out to your brethren for a healthy dose of encouragement?

August Konkell: The coronation affirms the commitment of the king to lead the people according to the book of the covenant, which was to be kept at his side. This commitment obligates the people be loyal to the new king. . . The covenant had three aspects: a vow between God and the king, God and the people, and the king with the people. The Chronicler expresses this as a vow between priest, king, and people, together they vow to be the people of the Lord. The first vow included the eradication of Baal worship. The institution of temple worship according to the arrangements made by David is a way of emphasizing the restoration of the Davidic rule.

Raymond Dillard: The copy of the covenant given to Jehoiada was probably the arrangement agreed to in 2Ch 23:3; alternatively it could be a copy of the law, received from the hands of a priest, as envisioned in Deut 17:18. If it represented a document somewhat curbing royal authority in favor of the temple, it may have set the stage for the disagreement between Joash and Jehoiada in 2Ch 24:4-12.

Frederick Mabie: While it is unclear whether this is a copy of the law (cf. Dt 17:18-20) or another significant document or symbol of the (Davidic or Mosaic) covenant, the emphasis is that the enthronement of Joash is meant to be in accord with God's Word and that his subsequent reign should likewise be faithful to covenantal stipulations.

Mark Boda: The rituals associated with the installation of a king appear to have included: (1) gathering at a significant place; (2) assembling leading royal, sacred, military, and secular officials as well as the populace; (3) anointing the royal figure with oil (SEE ["ANOINTING" IN THE BIBLE](#)); (4) blowing the trumpet; and (5) people declaring, "Long live the king." The liturgy used for such occasions is never provided, but many have suggested that Psalm 2 and Psalm 110 may preserve parts of this liturgy. According to 2 Kings 11:14, the Temple had become the customary place for the coronation of the king in Israel, and since this location was under Jehoiada's control, he could easily manipulate the situation.

Walton - testimony - This appears to be a document that frames a constitution or charter of some sort. One possibility is that it details the people's subordination to the king and the king's subordination to the Lord. In Egypt the coronation ceremony involved a proclamation by the god Thoth that gave the official approval of the gods for the king's accession. The theme of a covenant between king, subject people and god can also be found in the Hittite annals of the late second millennium B.C. and Assyrian vassal loyalty oaths during the mid-first millennium B.C. In Assyrian records there is a ceremony where Esarhaddon of Assyria made a binding

covenant with the people of Assyria to be loyal to his successor, Ashurbanipal. What is different in Scripture is the mention of a document that was physically handed over to the king, which is not mentioned in the extra-biblical sources. **Anointing.** The acts here are regular features of the accession ritual of the kings of Israel and Judah. First, the ram's horn was blown to signify the people's recognition and submission to the new king. The phrase "long live the king" is attested in a number of places in the historical books of Scripture and in the enthronement psalms (47, 93, 96, 97, 99). It was used after the accession of the king to the throne. The anointing of the king was also a symbolic gesture of the divine favor of the king before Yahweh. For more information on anointing see comment on 1 Samuel 16:1. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 445](#))

F B Meyer - "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 sanguinary 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, an enthroning, a determination that He shall exercise his power over the entire Temple of our Being."

Crowns of Ancient Kings

John Kitto - A Coronation—II Kings 11:4–16; II Chronicles 23:1–15

For all that appears in the narrative, the six years of Athaliah's reign were quiet and undisturbed; and she doubtless flattered herself, that her throne was established, and that the people were contented with her government. But they were only silent—only waited because they knew not what to do. They had no leader; and, what was more, they had no ostensible object to fix their attention; for there appeared not, nor was there supposed to exist, any claimant of the throne of David to rouse them to action.

At length, when the power of Athaliah seemed most secure, it began to be secretly whispered, that a young scion of the royal house had escaped the massacre. And it was so. The youngest of the doomed, Joash by name, then a mere infant of a year old, was saved by his aunt, Jehoshabeath, daughter of king Jehoram, and wife to the high-priest Jehoiada, who privately introduced him and his nurse into the temple, where he was preserved and brought up in the chambers of the high-priest. When the child was seven years old, Jehoiada considered the time was come to put an end to this unseemly usurpation, and to restore the true heir to the throne of his fathers. The present state of things, besides being a great public wrong, was a scandal to religion, not to be endured one moment longer than necessity compelled. The high-priest took his measures with great prudence and skill. He communicated the fact, with his plans, to those on whom he could rely; and rejoiced to find a great readiness on all hands to enter into his views, and carry out his designs.

The Sabbath day was chosen for the demonstration, because then there would be a great number of the people present, and still more, because he could then obtain a double force of priests and Levites; for at the change of the weekly turn of service, he would be enabled to detain those who were to go out, and add them to those who had come in for the service of the ensuing week. For these to enter the temple in arms would have prematurely awakened suspicion; they were therefore furnished with the swords and spears which, as we now first learn, were deposited within the temple. Even the officers of Athaliah's guard, or at least some of them, had been gained over, and lent the important sanction of their presence to the proceedings. Indeed, we may presume that Jehoiada would hardly have taken this bold step, had he not previously ascertained that the troops were not hearty in the service of Athaliah, and were prepared to hail the restoration of the royal line with gladness. All being ready, and the Levites properly stationed to guard the person of the young king and the approach to the temple, when the people assembled at the morning sacrifice, they were astonished at this strange display of military armament within the temple, wondering what this might mean. But, while astonishment held them mute, the high-priest appeared, conducting a fair boy to a stage under the pillar which formed the usual station of the kings when they came to the temple. He then, with a loud voice, proclaimed who he was, and proceeded to anoint him, and to place the crown-royal on his head, while the trumpets sounded, and the people hailed the act with loud acclamations of "Long live the king!"

The noise of this rapturous uproar in the temple reached the palace, and Athaliah hurried off to learn its cause. What she there beheld, revealed the truth to her at once. She rent her clothes, and shouted, "Treason! treason!" But no voice responded to her cry; no friends gathered around her; no arm was lifted in her cause; and on a word from Jehoiada, she was hurried forth from the temple and put to death. Hers was the only blood shed in this well-managed revolution, except that of Mattan, the high-priest of Baal, who was slain at the altar, when the people hastened to destroy the idol temple. We do not recollect any revolution of such great importance that took place so peacefully, and at so little cost of blood.

The kings of Judah usually succeeded each other with little if any ceremony, without even the anointing; the solemn inauguration of the founder of the dynasty being usually considered sufficient for his descendants. The only kings whose accession was attended with ceremonial observances were Saul, the first king; David, the first of his line, Solomon, who had an elder brother aspiring to the

crown; and now Joash, in whose person the broken line was restored. By this it is seen, that the coronation was rather an exceptional than a customary ceremony, resorted to only when peculiar circumstances seemed to require the solemn public recognition which it involved.

The ceremonies are more particularly described in this case than in any other, though still with great conciseness. "He brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony: and made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king!"⁶⁰⁰ Again, it is stated that "the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets."

There is nothing in the law respecting the anointing of kings, only of high-priests; but as Samuel anointed the two first kings, and as it was an ancient custom to anoint them, this came to be regarded as a most essential part of the ceremony. Its antiquity is evinced by the monuments of Egypt, which exhibit this anointing of kings by priests. The kings were usually, but not indispensably, anointed with the same "holy anointing oil," stored up in the temple, as was used in the anointing of the priests; but the Jewish Rabbinical writers tell us, there was this curious difference in the form of anointing, that the king was anointed in the form of a diadem encircling his head, to show that he was the head of the people; but that the high-priest was anointed in the form of a cross, one line drawn in the oil, running down his forehead, crossed by another line drawn between his eyebrows. The Scriptural expression, as well as the Egyptian monuments, would, however, rather suggest that the oil was poured out somewhat copiously upon the head. One who had been himself royally anointed, describes the oil with which Aaron was anointed, as running down his beard to his garments. Psalm 133:2.

After the king had been anointed, the officiating priest, or prophet, gave the king what the Jews call the kiss of majesty or greatness, but what we should call the kiss of homage. This was upon the forehead, or between the eyes. It is recorded that Samuel so kissed Saul; and, although the act is not afterwards historically mentioned, it was probably retained, as there is a distinct allusion to it in Psalm 2:12. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry." The crown was then placed upon the king's head. This was probably a stiff cap or turban, enriched with gold and jewels, such as are still used in the East, and which was doubtless worn, as at present, only on occasions of high state.

The "testimony" was then, as in the case before us, put into the royal hands. This was the book of the law, and while the prince held it, he entered into a covenant with God, to observe and keep his commandments as set forth therein. Then he entered into an engagement upon oath with the people, to govern them with justice, and to violate none of their rights and privileges; while the people, on their part, took a kind of oath of allegiance, and promised faithful obedience to him. The trumpets then sounded, and the people hailed their king. But the ceremonies of the day were not complete until the new sovereign had been conducted in high state from the temple to the palace, and was put in actual possession of the kingdom by being placed upon the throne, where none but the king dared, it is said, to be seated on pain of death. But if a king were proclaimed when another was in possession of the throne, the guards of the new monarch, to supply this defect in the ceremonies, would place him upon some kind of eminence, so as to raise him above the rest of the people. Thus Jehu was acknowledged as king by his captains, when they extemporized a throne for him, by setting him at the head of the stairs, and spreading their clothes under his feet.

On such an occasion many sacrifices were offered, and a splendid feast was held, at which the nobles and high officers were entertained with great state and magnificence—in fact, a coronation feast. The poor also were liberally cared for, and there were few who were left unprovided with "a loaf of bread, a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine."

2 Chronicles 23:12 When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came into the house of the LORD to the people.

- **When:** 2Ki 11:13-16
- **she came:** 2Ki 9:32-37

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:13[±] When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people in the house of the LORD.

**EVIL ATHALIAH
IS AROUSED**

When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came into the house of the LORD to the people - The coup d'état comes to fruition. Imagine what went through her evil mind as she heard them praising the king! Surely it began to dawn on her that the **jig is up!** Needless to say, Athaliah did not join in praising the king! Most grandmothers would be doting over a young grandson, but Athaliah wanted to destroy him. Such is the depravity of a heart filled with (controlled by) SIN!

Iain Duguid: The coronation was met with two contrasting responses. "All the people of the land" and "the captains and the trumpeters and the singers" were exuberant. As elsewhere, the Chronicler adds details of "singers . . . leading in the celebration" (or "hymns"). Athaliah, however, shouted out, "**Treason! Treason!**" (The word is used later of other acts of "conspiring" that led to a killing; 2Ch 24:21, 25–26; 2Ch 25:27; 2Ch 33:24–25.) She "tore her clothes," an action linked elsewhere with mourning, submission and repentance, and despair; here it was possibly an expression of powerlessness. Her death followed, after Jehoiada made sure it did not violate the sacred temple precincts. ([ESV Expository Commentary: 1 Samuel-2 Chronicles](#))

Matthew Henry Notes: Verses: 12-21

Here we have,

I. **The people pleased**, 2Ch 23:12, 13. When the king stood at his pillar, whose right it was to stand there, all the people of the land rejoiced to see a rod sprung out of the stem of Jesse, Isa. 11:1. When it seemed a withered root in a dry ground, to see what they despaired of ever seeing—a king of the house of David, what a pleasing surprise was it to them! They ran in transports of joy to see this sight, praised the king, and praised God, for they had with them such as taught to sing praise.

II. **Athaliah slain**. She ran upon the point of the sword of justice; for, imagining her interest much better than it was, she ventured into the house of the Lord at that time, and cried, Treason, treason! But nobody seconded her, or sided with her. The pride of her heart deceived her. She thought all her own, whereas none were cordially so. Jehoiada, as protector in the king's minority, ordered her to be slain (2Ch 23:14), which was done immediately (2Ch 23:15), only care was taken that she should not be slain in the house of the Lord, that sacred place must not be so far disgraced, nor that wicked woman so far honoured.

III. **The original contract agreed to**, 2Ch 23:16. In the Kings it is said that Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord, the people, and the king, 2 Ki. 11:17. Here it is said to be between himself, the people, and the king; for he, as God's priest, was his representative in this transaction, or a sort of mediator, as Moses was. The indenture was tripartite, but the true intent and meaning of the whole was that they should be the Lord's people. God covenanted by Jehoiada to take them for his people; the king and people covenanted with him to be his; and then the king covenanted with the people to govern them as the people of God, and the people with the king to be subject to him as the Lord's people, in his fear and for his sake. Let us look upon ourselves and one another as the Lord's people, and this will have a powerful influence upon us in the discharge of all our duty both to God and man.

IV. **Baal destroyed**, 2Ch 23:17. They would not have done half their work if they had only destroyed the usurper of the king's right, and not the usurper of God's right—if they had asserted the honour of the throne, and not that of the altar. The greatest grievance of Athaliah's reign was the bringing in of the worship of Baal, and supporting of that; therefore that must be abolished in the first place. Down with Baal's house, his altars, his images; down with them all, and let the blood of his priests be mingled with his sacrifices; for God had commanded that seducers to idolatry should be put to death, Deu. 13:5, 6.

V. **The temple service revived**, 2Ch 23:18, 19. This had been neglected in the last reigns, the priest and people wanting either power or zeal to keep it up when they had princes that were disaffected to it. But Jehoiada restored the offices of the house of the Lord, which in the late times had been disturbed and invaded, to the proper course and proper hands.

1. He appointed the priests to their courses, for the due offering of sacrifices, according to the law of Moses.
2. The singers to theirs, according to the appointment of David. The sacrifices (it should seem) were offered with rejoicing and singing, and with good reason. We joy in God when we receive the atonement, Rom. 5:11.
3. The porters were put in their respective posts as David ordered (2Ch 23:19), and their office was to take care that none who were upon any account ceremonially unclean should be admitted into the courts of the temple.

VI. **The civil government re-established**, 2Ch 23:20. They brought the king in state to his own palace, and set him upon the throne of the kingdom, to give law, and give judgment, either in his own person or by Jehoiada his tutor. Thus was this happy revolution perfected. The generality of the people rejoiced in it, and the rest were quiet and made no opposition, 2Ch 23:21. When the Son of David is enthroned in the soul all is quiet and springs of joy are opened.

2 Chronicles 23:13 She looked, and behold, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters were beside the king. And all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets, the singers with their musical

- she looked: Ps 14:5
- the king: 2Ch 34:31 2Ki 23:3
- and the princes: Nu 10:1-10 1Ch 15:24
- all the people: 1Ki 1:39,40 1Ch 12:40 Pr 11:10 29:2
- sounded: Judges 7:8,18-22 2Ki 9:13
- the singers: 1Ch 15:16-22,27 25:1-8
- Then Athaliah: Ec 9:12
- Treason: Heb. Conspiracy, 1Ki 18:17,18 2Ki 9:23 Ro 2:1,2

Parallel Passage:

2 Kings 11:14+ She looked and behold, the king was standing by the pillar, according to the custom, with the captains and the trumpeters beside the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, "Treason! Treason!"

PAYBACK FOR A TREACHEROUS QUEEN!

She looked, and behold, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters were beside the king. And all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets, the singers with their musical instruments leading the praise. - Her "treason" was Yahweh's justice, for her treachery and treason to usurp the crown from Joash (and his deceased brothers).

When compared to the narrative in 2 Kings 11, the Chronicles addition of singers, musical instruments and liturgical celebration (praise) shows that Chronicles presents this anointing of the new king as a worship service, not merely a coronation.

Then Athaliah tore her clothes (cf [GRIEVING RITES](#)) **and said, "Treason! Treason!"** - What hubris! What self-deception! What hypocrisy! The dichotomy in this scene is amazing. People praising while Athaliah screaming. The louder the people's praise, the more hollow Athaliah's cry of treason sounds.

Athaliah's very presence there was an act of treason in itself because she had usurped the legitimate authority of the boy-king Joash.

J.A. Thompson: Athaliah went to the temple to investigate. This was to her undoing (2 Chr 23:15). There she saw the legitimate boy-king standing by "**his pillar**," the customary place for a king to stand when making a public proclamation. The place was "at the entrance," that is, the entrance from the court of the city to the inner court. Athaliah could not help being taken aback and cried aloud, "Treason!" Such a cry from the mouth of Athaliah was full of irony. Athaliah's very presence there was an act of treason in itself because she had usurped the legitimate authority of the boy-king Joash.

Walton - king's pillar. This may have been one of the two entry pillars at the entrance of the temple, Jachin and Boaz (see comment on 1 Kings 7:15–22). Ezekiel describes the "prince's station" at the "doorposts of the gate" of the temple (Ezek 46:2). The king may have stood on some kind of a platform reserved only for himself. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 444](#))

G Campbell Morgan - 2 Chr 23.13.

There is tremendous dramatic power in that sentence. It is a further proof of the truth emphasized in the words of our previous note, that of the powerlessness of evil. Athaliah had done everything within her power to secure her own position, and to gain her own ends. With vindictive cruelty she had, as she thought, destroyed all the seed-royal of the house of Judah. She was wrong. No evil passions, however thorough their methods, are able to frustrate Divine purposes. Against the wickedness of one woman, God had set in motion the compassion of another. Jehoshabeath had rescued Joash, and for six years with patient persistence had cared for him under the shelter of the Temple. Now at last the day had come when the well-kept secret should be divulged. The boy was brought out, anointed, and crowned amid the plaudits of the people. Athaliah, hearing the shoutings, came to the Temple, and: "She looked, and behold, the king stood by his pillar at the entrance." Then she knew the powerlessness of evil. In vain she cried: "Treason! Treason!" Her own treason against the true and abiding King of the nation was defeated. Thus, sooner or later, and in ways equally dramatic, the moment arrives when those who plot and plan against Heaven and righteousness, find themselves looking at the evidences of the triumph of God and of goodness over all their wickedness.

2 Chronicles 23:14 Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army and said to them, “Bring her out between the ranks; and whoever follows her, put to death with the sword.” For the priest said, “Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD.”

- Have her forth: The Vulgate has here, and in the parallel place, {Educite illam extra septa templi,} "Take her out beyond the precincts of the temple." These were walls erected in parallel lines, and forming an extensive range of buildings around the sacred edifice. Ex 21:14
- whoever follows her: He who takes her part let him be instantly slain. 2Ki 10:25 11:8,15
- Slay her not: Eze 9:7

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:15+ And Jehoiada the priest **commanded** the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army and said to them, “Bring her out between the ranks, and whoever follows her put to death with the sword.” For the priest said, “Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD.”

**LET'S KEEP THE TEMPLE
COMPLEX HOLY!**

Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were appointed over the army and said to them, “Bring her out between the ranks; and whoever follows her, put to death with the sword.” For the priest said, “Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD. They were to march Athaliah out of the Temple between the ranks of soldiers and kill any who might try to rescue her.

[Josephus Antiquities 9.7.3.](#) has an interesting comment that Athaliah came with her royal guard whom she ordered to kill the crowned child, but she was stopped and she and her supporters killed. Below is the full quote.

When Athaliah unexpectedly heard the tumult, and the acclamations, she was greatly disturbed in her mind; and suddenly issued out of the royal palace with her own army: and when she was come to the temple, the Priests received her: but as for those that stood round about the temple, as they were ordered by the High Priest to do, they hindered the armed men that followed her from going in. But when Athaliah saw the child standing upon a pillar, with the royal crown upon his head, she rent her clothes, and cried out vehemently, and commanded [her guards] to kill him that had laid snares for her, and endeavoured to deprive her of the government. But Jehoiada called for the captains of hundreds, and commanded them to bring Athaliah to the valley of Cedron, and slay her there: for he would not have the temple defiled with the punishments of this pernicious woman. And he gave order, that if any one came near to help her, he should be slain also. Wherefore those that had the charge of her slaughter took hold of her, and led her to the gate of the King's mules, and slew her there.

4. Now as soon as what concerned Athaliah was by this stratagem after this manner dispatched, Jehoiada called together the people, and the armed men into the temple; and made them take an oath, that they would be obedient to the King, and take care of his safety, and of the safety of his government. After which he obliged the King to give security [upon oath] that he would worship God, and not transgress the laws of Moses. After which they then ran to the house of Baal; which Athaliah and her husband Jehoram had built, to the dishonour of the God of their fathers, and to the honour of Ahab; and demolished it, and slew Mattan, that had his priesthood. But Jehoiada intrusted the care and custody of the temple to the Priests and Levites, according to the appointment of King David; and enjoined them to bring their regular burnt-offerings twice a day; and to offer incense according to the law. He also ordained some of the Levites, with the porters, to be a guard to the temple; that no one that was defiled might come there.

5. And when Jehoiada had set these things in order, he, with the captains of hundreds, and the rulers, and all the people, took Jehoash out of the temple into the King's palace: and when he had set him upon the King's throne, the people shouted for joy; and betook themselves to feasting, and kept a festival for many days. But the city was quiet upon the death of Athaliah. Now Jehoash was seven years old when he took the Kingdom. His mother's name was Zibiah, of the city Beersheba. And all the time that Jehoiada lived, Jehoash was careful that the laws should be kept, and very zealous in the worship of God. And when he was of age he

married two wives, who were given to him by the High Priest: by whom were born to him both sons and daughters. And thus much shall suffice to have related concerning King Jehoash; how he escaped the treachery of Athaliah, and how he received the Kingdom.

2 Chronicles 23:15 So they seized her, and when she arrived at the entrance of the Horse Gate of the king's house, they put her to death there.

- the horse gate: This gate was in the eastern wall of the city, towards the brook Kidron, (Jer 31:40,) at which the king's horses probably went out from the stables at Millo. It was near the temple; and some Rabbins suppose that, in order to go to the temple, a person might go on horseback to this place, but was then obliged to alight. Ne 3:28
- **put her to death there:** 2Ch 22:10 Judges 1:7 Ps 5:6 55:23 Mt 7:2 Jas 2:13 Rev 16:5-7

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:16⁺ So they seized her, and when she arrived **at the horses' entrance** of the king's house, she was put to death there.

ATHALIAH SEIZED AND STRUCK DEAD

So they seized her, and when she arrived at the entrance of the Horse Gate of the king's house, they put her to death there They make sure she is well removed from the Temple complex before killing her. And so like mother, like daughter, Athaliah is terminated just as her mother had been. And there is not even mention of a proper burial.

Frederick Mabie says that "The Horse Gate was associated with death and judgment (cf. Jer 31:40)."

G. Campbell Morgan: Her own treason against the true and abiding King of the nation was defeated. Thus, sooner or later, and in ways equally dramatic, the moment arrives when those who plot and plan against Heaven and righteousness, find themselves looking at the evidences of the triumph of God and of goodness over all their wickedness.

Cyril Barber postulates and is probably correct writing "Athaliah's body was probably dragged through the streets to the Valley of Hinnom (which served as the city's refuse dump) or else taken there on an open cart. Once the soldiers had passed through the Dung Gate her corpse was probably dumped out with the other garbage. A slow burning fire would gradually have consumed her remains. Athaliah's body was not interred with the kings of Judah because she had usurped the throne." ([2 Chronicles](#))

Walton - Horse Gate on the palace grounds. The Horse Gate was a gate of the temple enclosure and not the Horse Gate of the city. It may have been a passage through which mounted riders entered the city from the east (Jer 31:40).([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 444](#))

2 Chronicles 23:16 Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king, that they would be the LORD'S people.

- **made a covenant:** 2Ch 15:12,14 29:10 34:31,32 De 5:2,3 29:1-15 2Ki 11:17 Ezr 10:3 Ne 5:12,13 9:38 10:29-39
- **that they should:** De 26:17-19 Jos 24:21-25 Isa 44:5

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:17⁺ Then Jehoiada made a covenant between **the LORD** and the king and the people, that they would be the LORD'S people, **also between the king and the people.**

ANOTHER COVENANT WITH PEOPLE & KING

Then Jehoiada made ([karath](#) - cut) a covenant ([beriyth](#)) between himself and all the people and the king, that they would be the LORD'S people. This is a solemn, binding, national covenant renewal, restoring Judah as Yahweh's covenant people, not merely installing a king. Some writers suggest this was not just a political coup but a spiritual revival. Perhaps, but as we see it was short-lived. If it was true revival, the subsequent events make it clear that in order for revival fires to persist they need to be constantly stoked by the Word of God! (See [THE SECRET OF REVIVAL- Mouth to Mouth Resuscitation!](#))

This recalls the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 26:17-19+ "You have today declared the LORD to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice. 18 "The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession, as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; 19 and that He will set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the LORD your God, as He has spoken."

Peter Pett comments that "Such a renewing of the covenant on important occasions can be paralleled in 2 Kings 23:3; Deuteronomy 5:1 ff; Joshua 8:30-35; Joshua 24:2-25; 2 Samuel 5:3 with 1 Chronicles 11:3; 2 Chronicles 29:3 ff). It was an essential part of returning to the true worship of YHWH. By it the people were acknowledging YHWH as their sole God and Overlord, and their responsibility to be His holy people and observe His laws and commandments.

Andrew Hill: The coronation of Joash climaxes with a covenant-renewal ceremony led by Jehoiada the priest (2Ch 23:16). Two distinct but related covenants are enacted in the aftermath of the coup against Athaliah. The first covenant is ratified by the king and the people of Jerusalem, reestablishing the authority of Davidic kingship in Judah (2Ch 23:3, 11; cf. 2 Kings 11:17b). The second pact is a covenant-renewal ceremony binding king and people in obedience to the law of Moses (2 Chron. 23:16; cf. 2 Kings 11:17a). The covenant renewal with Yahweh prompts the reform of religious practice in Judah. False worship is purged from the land by destroying the temple of Baal in Jerusalem and executing the priest of Baal, Mattan (2Ch 23:17; cf. Deut. 13:5-10). Little is known about the temple of Baal in Jerusalem, but it may have been built as part of a marriage contract between Jehoram and Athaliah (cf. 2 Kings 11:1-8). The first covenant rids the land of Athaliah, the illegitimate usurper of the Davidic throne, and reinstates Davidic kingship in Judah. The second covenant renews Yahweh's relationship with Judah as God's people and reorganizes temple worship according to the law of Moses. The destruction of the Baal temple in Jerusalem and the purification of temple worship mirrors similar reforms taking place in the northern kingdom at the same time under the leadership of Jehu (cf. 2 Kings 9). For the Chronicler, the restoration of proper temple worship is no less important than the reestablishment of Davidic kingship in Judah. ([First and Second Chronicles](#))

Martin Selman: The covenant is different from that in verse 11, since this one is made between the people and God rather than the people and the king. The follow-up confirms this distinction, since verses 17-21 are concerned more with religious matters in general than with the specific issue in verses 4-15 of who should be the rightful king. The aim of this covenant was to put current wrongs right. As often in Chronicles, it resulted in a purge of pagan worship (v. 17; cf. 2 Ch. 15:12-16; 34:31-33) in obedience to the Deuteronomic law (cf. Dt. 4:23; 7:6). It also led to the reinstatement of the twin pillars of the [Davidic Covenant](#), reorganized temple worship according to God's law (vv. 17-19) and setting the Davidic king on the rightful throne (v. 20-21). ([2 Chronicles: A Commentary - Page 449](#))

2 Chronicles 23:17 And all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down, and they broke in pieces his altars and his images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

- **the house of Baal:** 2Ch 34:4,7 2Ki 10:25-28 11:18 18:4
- **brake his altars:** De 12:3 Isa 2:18 Zec 13:2,3
- **slew Mattan:** De 13:5,9 1Ki 18:40 2Ki 11:18,19

Parallel Passages:

2Ki 11:18+ All the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces **thoroughly**, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest **appointed** officers over the house of the LORD.

DESTROY BAALISM

And all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down, and they broke in pieces his altars and his images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars (see Deut 13:5-10+) - They did not stop with tearing down the building itself; they went on to shatter the sacred objects devoted to Baal and to put Mattan, the priest of Baal, to death. In 2 Kings 10:18-26,27+ Jehu supervised the destruction of the temple of Baal in Samaria.

This purge of Baalism in Judah closely paralleled the earlier purge carried out by Jehu in the northern kingdom (2 Kings 10:18–29). In both cases, Baal worship was publicly exposed, violently dismantled, and decisively suppressed, signaling a dramatic reversal of apostasy at the national level. Altars were destroyed, sacred objects desecrated, and Baal's priesthood eliminated, demonstrating that covenant infidelity would no longer be tolerated—at least for a time.

Paul House adds that "This religious reform parallels Jehu's in some ways yet diverges in certain crucial areas. Baal's temple is destroyed in both instances, but only the leader of Baalism is killed in Judah's reform. Baalism is removed as the state religion in each case, yet the people dominate the reform in Judah, whereas the new king orchestrates the changes in Israel. Prophetic predictions fuel Jehu's purge, while a priest drives the people forward in Judah. In the north separatist Yahwism seems to have no real voice after the coup, and Jeroboam's cult appears to resume its earlier role as state religion. In Judah the high places are not removed (cf. 2 Kgs 12:3), but separatist Yahwism has been returned to the temple by its champion, Jehoiada. From this analysis it seems likely that the reform in the south has more popular support, more institutional backing, and more chance of long-term survival. Neither reform, though, goes as far as the narrator thinks is necessary. (See [1, 2 Kings: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

Bob Utley - The fact there was a temple and priesthood of *Ba'al* in Jerusalem shows the level of idolatry that "the house of Ahab" had caused in Judah (especially Jezebel and Athaliah). [Josephus, Antiq. 9.7.4.](#), says Athaliah ran to the temple of *Ba'al* which she and her husband had built in Jerusalem.

Bob Utley - "the house of Baal" Ahab had built a house (temple) for Ba'al in the capital city of Samaria (cf. 1 Kgs. 16:32; 2 Kgs. 10:21,26,27). Since Ahab had married the daughter of the king of Tyre, Ethbaal, this was probably a temple to Ba'al Melqart. But this house of Ba'al was in Jerusalem. The influence of Ahab and Jezebel had polluted Judah also. It must have been next to Solomon's temple or even on its grounds (cf. v. 18).

J. Barton Payne: They didn't stop at destroying the building itself; they went on to destroy both the sacred objects dedicated to Baal and to kill Mattan the priest of Baal. The execution of "Mattan the priest of Baal" carried out the requirement of God's Word directed against those who should lead others into false religion ([Dt 13:5-10+](#)). (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition- Page 50](#))

Walton - house of Baal. This is the only reference to the "House of Baal" in Jerusalem (parallel to 2 Kings 11:18). Thus its location can only be a source of speculation. It may have been a private shrine in the vicinity of the palace. There is, however, a large structure excavated at Ramat Rahel, two miles south of Jerusalem, that has similarities to the palace at Samaria. Its location compares to the location of the Baal Temple of Samaria, which was outside the acropolis of the city. The reaction of the populace to the destruction of the temple of Baal is similar in nature to the purge orchestrated by Jehu some years earlier. All evidences of the previous regime were eliminated. In New Kingdom Egypt, Thutmose III attempted to destroy all vestiges of the reign of Hatshepsut, while Horemheb (and others) did the same to the Aton kings. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 444](#))

THOUGHT - "The second thing the Judeans got rid of was the idolatrous apparatus — the altar and the images. Again, we need to apply this personally, in our lives, our homes, and the businesses and other institutions we control. Does the machinery or apparatus of idolatry exist in your home? If you worship the God of entertainment, the apparatus you use is a big TV and a powerful sound system. If you worship the God of convenience, the apparatus with which you do it may be a big smartphone or an Amazon Echo. If you worship the god of human relationships, the apparatus with which you do it may be clothes, makeup, and other image and status artifacts. If you worship the god of prosperity, the apparatus may be your tools or your bank accounts. If you worship the God of the Bible, but reduced to a size and level you can control, you may have images of God and Jesus in your house. You may not be able to get rid of certain of these different apparatuses of idolatry, and some of them have legitimate uses. But brothers and sisters, if you are confirmed money-worshipper you may need to severely curtail your bank account. If you are a food-worshipper you may need to keep an empty fridge. If you are an images-of-Christ worshipper, you may need to get rid of your idolatrous pictures." ([Caleb Nelson](#))

Baal (proper noun)([O1168](#)) *ba'al* refers to the pagan god who was called by the name "Baal". Elijah contended with and exterminated the prophets of **Baal** (1 Ki 18:18, 19, 21, 22, 25, 26, 40). One of the more incredible mentions of Baal is Jehu's

eradication of them from the northern kingdom (see 2 Ki 10:18-28). Before God would use Gideon to deliver His people from the Moabites, He first had him tear down his father's backyard altar to **Baal** (Jdg 6:25, 28, 30-31⁺). As a result Gideon was named Jerrubball ("Let **Baal** contend against him" - Jdg 6:32⁺). Under Gideon Israel was set free from Moabite oppression, but apparently they people were not set free from the "seed" of Baal worship in their hearts for "Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot (SPIRITUAL ADULTERY!) with the **Baals**, and made **Baal**-berith their god" (Jdg 8:33⁺)! Wow! Our hearts are more deceitful than all else and are desperately sick (Jer 17:9)! In 1 Sa 7:4 we see that "Israel removed the **Baals** and the Ashtaroth and served the LORD alone" but they must have backslide because we see their cry in 1 Sam 12:10! Beware of idols (1Co 10:14+). Idols need to be radically uprooted lest they revive and return!

2 Chronicles 23:18 Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses—with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David.

- whom David: 1Ch 23:1-24:31
- as it is written: Nu 28:1-31
- by David: Heb. by the hands of David, 2Ch 29:25 1Ch 25:1-31

JEHOIADA PUTS GOD'S HOUSE IN ORDER

Moreover, Jehoiada placed the offices of the house of the LORD under the authority of the Levitical priests, whom David had assigned over the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as it is written in the law of Moses—with rejoicing and singing according to the order of David. - There is no parallel in 2 Kings 12. Jehoiada restored order to the temple, following the plans outlined years before by David. He made sure that sacrifices would be conducted.

Believer's Study Bible - The role of David in establishing the religious services of the house of the Lord is underscored here. The reference to the Torah as "the Law of Moses" indicates the numerous titles ascribed to God's Word in the O.T. (cf. 17:6-9, note; 1 Chr. 29:29, note).

2 Chronicles 23:19 He stationed the gatekeepers of the house of the LORD, so that no one would enter who was in any way unclean.

- **gatekeepers:** 1Ch 9:23,24 26:1-32

HOUSE OF THE LORD TO BE KEPT CLEAN

He stationed the gatekeepers of the house of the LORD, so that no one would enter who was in any way unclean gatekeepers - This is not in 2 Kings 12.

Trapp - "Oh that we also had store of such porters, to keep out the unclean from holy ordinances!"

Walton - **gatekeepers.** The doorkeepers were evidently royal guards who were responsible for the entrance to the temple precinct by which the king normally passed (see also 1 Kings 14:28; 2 Kings 11:19). The exact route from the temple to the palace is unclear. It may have been south between the temple mount and the City of David. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 444](#))

2 Chronicles 23:20 He took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and came through the upper gate to the king's house. And they placed the king upon the royal throne.

- the captains: 2Ki 11:9,10,19

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:19+ He took the captains of hundreds **and the Carites and the guards** and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of **the gate of the guards** to the king's house. And **he sat on** the throne of the kings.

KING JOASH SEATED ON ROYAL THRONE

He took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and came through the upper gate to the king's house. And they placed the king upon the royal throne.

Bob Utley - Notice the different groups of Judean society -captains – military, nobles – wealthy, rulers of the people – common people, people of the land – poor people or parallel to common people. The whole point is that all Judean society supported the coup and the Davidic child king.

Andrew Hill: The processional leading Joash from the temple to the palace is symbolic, because in one sense Yahweh is returning to the throne of Judah along with the Davidic descendant.

Frederick Mabie: As the final step of the king's investiture ceremony and celebration, the whole community participates in a procession to restore the new king on the throne of David in the royal palace. The full gamut of participants in this event (military, noblemen, governors, citizenry, priests) reflects the widespread support for the reforms enacted by the priest Jehoiada, culminating in the reign of Joash.

Walton - Jerusalem geography. The temple mount was at the highest point on the northern end of the City of David. The palace was situated just south of (and probably adjoining) the temple complex. Immediately southeast was the Kidron Valley, which separated the Temple Mount from the Mount of Olives. Southwest of the City of David was the Ben Hinnom Valley. ([IVP Background Commentary - OT - page 444](#))

2 Chronicles 23:21 So all of the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet. For they had put Athaliah to death with the sword.

- 2Ki 11:20 Ps 58:10,11 Pr 11:10 Rev 18:20 19:1-4

Parallel Passage:

2Ki 11:20+ So all the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet. For they had put Athaliah to death with the sword **at the king's house**.

JOYFUL JUDAH QUIET CITY

So all of the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet. Clearly the people had been silenced, thus they were not mourning but rejoicing. Her removal brought relief, not grief. In Scripture, when people rejoice at a ruler's fall, it exposes the ruler's true character. The Hebrew idea of **quiet** is undisturbed, settled, at rest — not eerie silence. Did you see the author's interesting contrast - people rejoiced but city quiet. The people had joy on the inside because there was peace on the outside (in Judah). And finally, peace did not come by compromise, but by removing evil.

When illegitimate, idolatrous power was removed and God's rightful king restored, the people rejoiced inwardly and the city rested outwardly. This reminds me of [Isaiah 32:17](#) "And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever."

For ([term of explanation](#)). What's it explaining and what is the explanation?

They had put Athaliah to death with the sword at the king's house- In the Wizard of Oz there is a song at the end which sings "[Ding, dong, the wicked witch is dead.](#)" The spirit of Jezebel has been definitively snuffed out with her daughter's death. The

murderous usurper who had slaughtered the royal heirs is herself slaughtered. Payday someday had come for her. This proverb proved true "When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices, and when the wicked perish, there is joyful shouting. (Pr 11:10)

Peter Wallace: Verse 21 brings to fulfillment the Sabbath-theme of the chapter. . . There is joy and rest and peace, now that Athaliah is gone. A sabbath-rest comes to the people of God, because the foul seed of Ahab is no more.

J.A. Thompson: Athaliah's interregnum was now over. In a sense there never was an interruption of Davidic kingship because Joash was living throughout that sad period even if formally another, a usurper, was on the throne.

Andrew Hill: Typically, the Chronicler employs the expression the people "**rejoiced**" (smh) to signify the fact that the will of God is now being observed (2Ch 23:21; cf. 1 Chron. 29:9; 2 Chron. 15:15; 29:36). A second idiom using the word "**quiet**" (sq) is often found in Chronicles to denote divine blessing on those who are obedient to God's word (cf. 1Ch 4:40; 22:9; 2Ch 13:22; 14:4-5). The biblical adages hold true: The violence of the wicked returns to them (Ps 7:15-16; Pr 26:27; Eccl. 10:8), and the judgment of the Lord leads to "quietness" in the land (Ps. 76:8).

F B Meyer - 2 Chronicles 23:21 And the city was quiet after they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

This was a great revolution, admirably planned and carried into effect. It was intolerable that such a woman as Athaliah should desecrate the throne and temple. Jehoiada, by his prudence and courage, deserved well of the entire nation in ridding the world of her presence. No half measures would have availed to meet the case.

There are times in every life when strong and strenuous action is inevitable if the cause of God is to be promoted and saved. In many of us there is a willingness to tolerate evil, rather than arouse ourselves to grasp it with a firm hand, and, if needs be, drag it up by its roots. Be strong, yea, be strong, is an injunction that has to be emphasized even to men who are greatly beloved. The easiest thing for Jehoiada would have been to shut himself up in the temple, and leave things to take their course. The noblest thing was to come forth, and boldly confront the rampant evil of his time. So God's call rings out for helpers in the great fight against sin. Its notes penetrate into the retirement of Christian homes, to noble women and devoted men, demanding that they should come forth to resist impurity, the love of strong drink, the strong tendency toward extravagance, luxury, and waste. The world is full of Athaliahs, and it is not befitting that the Jehoiadas should remain at their holy rites and services if there is a paramount need for action in the world's battlefield, in the strife against wrong.

The children of God are citizens of the New Jerusalem, but they are also certainly citizens here; and they must not stand aside from great public issues, allowing them to be decided by ungodly and wicked men.

PAUL APPLE - [DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:](#)

- 1) Why does the Chronicler place so much focus on the role of the Temple and the Levitical priests?
- 2) How could Joash have avoided detection for a six year period?
- 3) What are the lessons from seeing how wicked rulers like Athaliah feel so secure in their position and yet actually are so vulnerable to God's imminent judgment?
- 4) Are we supposed to rejoice at the execution of the judgment of the Lord?

[QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:](#)

Raymond Dillard: The economic and power structures in societies in the ancient Near East revolved around three foci: the governmental, religious, and private sectors. Behind the details of Jehoiada's coup in both Kings and Chronicles, it is possible to speculate regarding the tensions between these three power centers in Israel. The installation of a monarchy owing its existence to the cult and under the regency of the high priest may reflect the consolidation of political power in the hands of the temple; in the Chronicler's account, the temple officers along with tribal leaders from outside Jerusalem appear to have cooperated not only in a religious reform but also in curtailing the power of the monarchy. The tension between temple and monarchy may also underlie some of the events recorded in 2 Chr 24.

August Konkell: The Levites and the people are given a much more significant role in the coup of Jehoiada than in the parallel account in Kings. Jehoiada made a covenant with key military officers. These officers solicited broad popular support among the Levites and tribal leaders, so the people were essential partners in the coup. The initial agreement was then extended to the entire assembly. The content of that covenant was expressed in Jehoiada's declaration The king's son shall reign (2 Chron 23:3). The Levites were required to assist the military officers, who were not permitted to enter the temple where much of the action took place (vv. 6-7). Levites themselves served as armed guards.

Mark Boda: The Temple, that house of worship built by the house of David, now plays a key role in preserving the Davidic dynasty from destruction. Jehoiada the chief priest and his royal wife Jehosheba hide the young Davidide Joash in the "house of God." Six years later Jehoiada finally makes his move, crowning Joash, executing Athaliah, and instituting key religious reforms. Even when Joash was finally crowned, he ruled under the protective care of what is deemed the positive influence of the priest Jehoiada. It was when Jehoiada died that Joash went astray, committing acts of unfaithfulness, which explain Joash's subsequent defeat and death at the hands of the Arameans.

Steven Cole - [A Good Boy Gone Bad \(2 Chronicles 23 and 24\)](#)

*"For of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"*

So wrote poet John Greenleaf Whittier (in Familiar Quotations [Little, Brown and Company], John Bartlett, p. 527.) There's always something sad about seeing a person with great potential who starts well but falls apart. We've seen it in the sports world, when a young athlete blows a promising career because of drug abuse or a loose lifestyle.

But it's the most sad when you see it happen spiritually. A young man or woman makes a profession of faith in Christ and begins serving Him with zeal. But something happens, he or she gets tripped up and falls by the wayside. If you've been a Christian for any length of time, you've seen it happen many times over. It's always sad and often somewhat puzzling. I often wonder, "Why did it happen? How could it have been prevented? Could it happen to me?"

When I was five years old my family began attending a church pastored by a promising young graduate of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (now Biola). He and his attractive, musically-gifted wife saw this little church in the L.A. suburbs outgrow its first building and build a beautiful new one that seated about 500 people. Eventually, as I recall, they even went to two services in the new building. He was the pastor who baptized me at age 12.

When I was 18, my dad, who served on the board of the church, confronted the pastor concerning what seemed to be impropriety with some funds. The pastor was using the church offices for his private counseling practice (for which he charged) and channeling the fees through a fund wrongly labeled "youth camp fund" to avoid the IRS. When confronted, the pastor blew up and called for a vote of confidence. The church backed the pastor, and our family left the church.

Shortly thereafter, the pastor left the ministry, left his wife and five children, and moved in with a young divorcee he had been counseling. He went into a private counseling practice and married the gal he had run off with. Later I heard that she had left him because he had lost their expensive home in a gambling debt. He was drinking heavily and not leading any sort of Christian life. How sad!

How does that sort of thing happen? How can you and I avoid the same thing? The story of King Joash gives some answers. He was a boy with a great potential. His life was obviously under God's providential care. At age one he had been rescued from death when his wicked grandmother, Athaliah, slew all his brothers. He was raised secretly in the temple precincts by his godly uncle Jehoiada and aunt Jehoshabeath. Like John Wesley, who as a child narrowly escaped from a burning house, Joash was "a brand plucked from the fire." At seven he was anointed as king, the wicked Athaliah was executed, and Joash had a lifetime of opportunity ahead for serving the Lord and leading His people.

And he started well. He began by restoring the temple which had been desecrated and had fallen into ruin under Athaliah. He had to reprove the priests and even the godly Jehoiada himself, who were not progressing on the rebuilding project as quickly as they should have been. Joash got the funds together and saw to it that the work was completed. Things went well as long as Jehoiada was alive.

But after Jehoiada died, the leaders of Judah tempted Joash, he listened, and they abandoned the house of the Lord and fell into idolatry (24:18). Joash resisted the attempts of the prophets to call him back to the Lord. Finally he murdered the son (or perhaps, grandson) of Jehoiada, his own cousin, who confronted him. They even did the dirty deed right in the temple precincts!

A small Syrian army came up against Jerusalem. Joash (2 Kings 12:18) stripped the temple of all of its treasures (which he had previously labored to restore) and sent them as tribute to the King of Syria. That held him off for a year or so, but then he returned, killed the officials of Judah, took more spoil, and left Joash himself wounded. Two of Joash's own servants conspired against him and murdered him on his own bed. Dead at 47, he was not given the honor of being buried among the kings in Jerusalem. He was a good boy gone bad. Joash's tragic story teaches us that ...

Spiritual privilege requires spiritual reality or else there will be spiritual consequences.

To whom much has been given, much is required. If people who have been given spiritual privilege do not walk in reality with the

Lord, they and even those close to them (since sin always affects others) will reap severe consequences. Let's trace Joash's history and relate it to our own spiritual history in order to glean its lessons.

1. Joash was blessed with spiritual privilege; so are we.

As Joash grew to manhood, he had to be impressed with the fact that the hand of God was on his life in a unique way. Why were his brothers slaughtered and he alone was spared? He was only a year old at the time, so he certainly had nothing to do with it. And why was he saved by his godly aunt and uncle, who raised him in the ways of the Lord? His aunt was the daughter of the wicked King Jehoram, who had slaughtered his own brothers. She was the sister of the wicked Ahaziah who was slain. She easily could have been as self-serving as her wicked mother, Athaliah.

Or Joash's uncle could have easily decided that he enjoyed his position of power as the regent until the boy-king came of age. He could have refused to yield power, or he even could have poisoned the young Joash. But none of this happened. Truly God's providential hand was on Joash in a remarkable way. He was blessed with great spiritual privilege.

So are we. This is especially true of those of us who were raised in Christian homes. One of my earliest memories is that of kneeling with my parents when I was three years old and asking Jesus to be my Savior. My parents loved me and never abused me physically or verbally. They sacrificed so that I could attend a Christian elementary school for several years. They made sure that our family was in church every Sunday. I still have a badge I earned for seven years of perfect Sunday School attendance. My parents never pushed me into the ministry, but gave me the freedom to be whatever God wanted for me. They have been supportive, loving Christian parents. My great-grandmother was a Cherokee Indian, and I've often thought that if I had been born 100 years before, I would not have been born into a family that knew the Lord and taught me His ways. I need to realize that I enjoy great spiritual privilege!

But some of you may be thinking, "Yes, but I didn't have it like that. I grew up in a pagan home. My parents abused me and each other before they divorced. I never felt loved or accepted. I never received any spiritual training or encouragement as a child."

But you, too, are spiritually privileged. That is shown by the very fact that you are sitting here in church today, hearing God's Word. You don't live in a country like Tibet that is 100 percent Buddhist, where there are no Christian churches. You live in a land where we are still free to worship God, where there are many churches which preach the gospel. You can read and you probably own at least one Bible (if not several); if you don't you can go into any bookstore (or even supermarket) and buy one. You can turn on your radio and hear programs where the gospel is preached and God's Word is taught. We all are people of great spiritual privilege!

We live in a culture that's encouraging us to blame our parents for being imperfect. Granted, some parents are more imperfect than others! Joash certainly had an imperfect family, including his "dear" grandmother who killed all his brothers and would have killed him if she could have gotten her hands on him! But if you focus on blaming your parents or your past, you're really blaming the sovereign God and not submitting to His providence. That root of bitterness and ingratitude will only defile you and many others and rob you of how God wants to bless and use you. Focus instead on your spiritual privilege.

2. Joash demonstrated early spiritual zeal; so should we.

Joash directed the priests to restore the temple. We don't know how long things dragged on, but in his twenty-third year (2 Kings 12:6; Joash was 30) things weren't moving quickly, so he even confronted Jehoiada (who was about 120 years old, which probably explains why he wasn't keeping the project moving!). They got the job done so that worship was restored (2 Chron. 24:14).

Just as Joash was zealous about the things of God as a young man, so should we be. Youth is the time when you've got the ideals and energy to pour yourself into serving the Lord. What a great thing it is to see young people with a burning zeal to see their junior high or high school or college campus reached for Christ!

But with the zeal of youth goes an inherent danger: it's possible to get swept away with enthusiasm to do great things for God, but in the process you fail to build a foundation for a lifetime of ministry. It's easier to build the temple than it is to walk in personal reality with God. People can see the temple and exclaim, "That Joash is quite a king! He must really love God!" But it's all outward. What people don't see, but God does, is whether you spend time each day with Him, whether you deal with sinful thoughts, whether you seek and submit to God in the trials of life. If you aren't growing in personal holiness and devotion for God, then all your zeal for serving God in your youth is just a hollow shell that will crumble under temptation some day.

The Christian life is not a chicken coop; it's a skyscraper. If you're throwing up a chicken coop, you don't have to worry too much about the foundation. But if you're going to build a skyscraper, you had better dig deep and make sure that the foundation is solid. Like the seed sown upon the rocky, shallow soil in Jesus' parable, it's possible to spring up quickly, but if you lack sufficient roots, in a time of temptation you will fall away (Luke 8:13). And you will face temptation!

3. Joash faced spiritual testing; so will we.

We read (2Ch 24:2) that “Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.” But Jehoiada finally died and then Joash was faced with a spiritual test (2Ch 24:17). This was a hinge-point in his life, and Joash failed the test.

Our enemy, the devil, is neither stupid nor impetuous. He is waiting in the wings, biding his time for the right moment to attack. The officials of Judah did not approach Joash while Jehoiada was alive--the time was not right. But as soon as he was dead, and Joash was vulnerable, they hit and he fell.

Joash's temptation was a common one. In Deuteronomy 31:29 Moses warned Israel that after his death, they would act corruptly and turn from the way which he had commanded them. In Joshua 24:31 we read that Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the leaders who survived Joshua, who had known all the deeds which the Lord had done for Israel. But then comes the book of Judges, when everyone in Israel forsook the Lord and did what was right in his own eyes.

The time comes for us all when we can no longer lean on those who have nurtured us in the faith. We must be weaned and learn to stand on our own spiritual legs. We must develop and maintain our own walk with God, or else we will fall when Satan comes, as surely he will, to tempt us. The story of Joash shows four dangers Satan often uses to test those who are spiritually privileged:

A. THE DANGER OF SPIRITUAL PIGGYBACK.

Those who grow up in a spiritual atmosphere are prone to ride on their parents' faith instead of developing a strong personal walk with God. Joash did fine as long as Jehoiada was around. But the fact that he fell apart immediately after Jehoiada died suggests that he was riding piggyback.

We've always hiked as a family, even when our kids were toddlers. At that age, of course, I used to carry them most of the way. As they grew older, though, they had to do more and more of it themselves. Now, they're too big to carry at all.

Spiritually, it should be the same. If you're growing up in a Christian home, it's great that your parents walk with God. But what about you? Do you have your own faith in Christ as Savior? Do you have your own quiet time with Him? Do you have your own desire to fellowship with God's people and to serve Him? The older you get, the more you need to be walking on your own.

B. THE DANGER OF MAKING THE HOLY COMMONPLACE.

Joash grew up in the temple. When he turned from the Lord, we find him giving the command for the godly Zechariah to be stoned to death in the temple precincts (2Ch 24:21). Joash should have at least regarded that place as sacred. His uncle Jehoiada wouldn't allow Athaliah to be executed in the Lord's house (2Ch 23:14), but for Joash, it didn't matter. When you grow up surrounded by the things of God, you're always in danger of treating that which is holy as commonplace. You become irreverent or even joke about God, His Word and His church. You don't have a sense of awe about the Lord. It ought to be a warning light on your spiritual dashboard!

C. THE DANGER OF EXPERIMENTING WITH SIN.

We aren't told exactly what the officials of Judah said to Joash (2Ch 24:17-18), but an intelligent guess is that they appealed to him to be more “free” than he had been under Jehoiada. Perhaps they said, “Listen, King! All your life you've been restricted by Jehoiada. You've been cooped up in the temple. You've obeyed the old man's rules. But you're missing out on the excitement of life. Be your own man! Be more open to other forms of worship.” And he fell for it! The appeal of idolatry is that you can make a god in your own image, according to what you like and how you want to live, and you don't have to submit to the living God.

If you've been raised in a godly home, you face the same temptation of experimenting with sins that have been off limits. As you get into your teen years and beyond, your friends are going to say, “Listen, you've been missing out on the fun! You've never been drunk? You've never smoked pot? You've never had sex? You don't know what you're missing! Don't be so up tight! You're only young once! Enjoy yourself!” But, beware! It's Satan's lie!

D. THE DANGER OF UNGRATEFULNESS.

Joash didn't remember the kindness which Jehoiada had shown him, but murdered his son (2Ch 24:22). How tragic! Those who are born with spiritual privilege tend to take things for granted. They don't appreciate what a great blessing it is to know Christ. The parents know that God has rescued them from a horrible pit, but the kids have never known the hard side of sin. They're like rich kids who never know the value of a dollar because they've never had to do without.

If you come from a Christian home, you need to stop often and think about where you would be without the Lord. What if you had been born to pagan parents who abused you? What if you had been born under the domination of Islam or Buddhism or Hinduism? You would be without hope and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). That's why our Lord calls us frequently to His table--to remember the kindness and grace which we've been shown at the cross.

Joash was blessed with spiritual privilege; so are we. He demonstrated early spiritual zeal; so should we. He faced spiritual testing; so will we. But when he failed, God didn't leave him to go his way without repeated warnings:

4. Joash was given repeated occasions to repent; so are we.

See 2Ch 24:19-20. In His grace, God doesn't leave us in our sin and rebellion. He brings repeated opportunities for us to turn back to Him. God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live (Ezek. 33:11).

But how strange is the human heart! Joash, who was so weak as to give in quickly to the evil officials proved to be strong and obstinate in his resistance to the Lord! Isn't it strange how a young person raised in a Christian home who weakly gives in to peer pressure can be so strong in resisting the loving correction of the Lord? And yet it's not so strange, if you know your own propensity toward sin. Let it stand as a warning to us all! God allows U-turns, but only for a while. If you repeatedly resist His offer of repentance, the time will come when you reap the consequences:

5. Joash reaped the consequences of his rebellion against God; so will we if we do not repent.

See 2Ch 24:23-27. Note the correspondence between Joash's disobedience and the consequences: Joash forsook God; God forsook him to this invading army (2Ch 24:20). Joash cast off God's rule; Joash's servants cast off his rule. Joash conspired against Zechariah; Joash's servants conspired against him (2Ch 24:21, 25). Joash murdered a defenseless man; his servants murdered him as he lay sick and defenseless in bed. Joash did not heed the dignity of Zechariah's office as a prophet, but had him stoned; Joash's servants did not heed his dignity as a king, but had him buried outside the tombs of the kings.

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap (Gal. 6:7; see also, 2 Pet. 2:20-22). How miserable are those who enjoy great spiritual privilege and then turn from God and refuse to repent! They suffer grave spiritual consequences.

Conclusion

As I have talked with my dad over the years about our former pastor who fell away from the Lord, it has become apparent to me that he was a man with great spiritual privilege who failed to walk in reality with God. My dad served on the board for years, and he told me of numerous board meetings where the pastor lost his temper. He never let God deal with his anger. His best friends in the church were those who pursued worldly pleasure and entertainment rather than God. On numerous occasions the pastor made comments about women that reflected a sensuality unchecked by the Holy Spirit. And so instead of seeing the deeds of the flesh replaced by the fruit of the Spirit, he had an outward veneer of religion, but no inner reality. He was like a tree in the forest that looks strong, but it falls during a storm. When you look more carefully you discover that bugs had eaten the life out of the tree and so its strength was gone.

Spiritual privilege requires spiritual reality or there will be spiritual consequences. How is it with you? God has graciously given you the spiritual privilege of hearing His Word. Are you walking in reality with the living Lord? Are you allowing His Word and His Spirit to confront sin in your heart? He is graciously seeking to bring you back to Himself so that you don't end up as a good "Christian" who goes bad.

Discussion Questions

1. How can Christian parents encourage their kids to develop their own walk with God? How do we often hinder them?
2. Can a true Christian fall away and stay away (like Joash), or does his refusal to repent reveal his true heart condition before God?
3. Does God's grace remove the consequences of sin if we repent? How does grace fit in with reaping what we sow?
4. What are the main ingredients of walking in reality with God? How can we guard against hypocrisy?

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