

Queen Athaliah Removed; The Coronation of Joash

2 Kings 11

2 Kings 11:1-21 - *“When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king’s sons who were being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed. So he was hidden with her in the house of the LORD for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.*

In the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds—of the bodyguards and the escorts—and brought them into the house of the LORD to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king’s son. Then he commanded them, saying, “This is what you shall do: one-third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king’s house, one-third shall be at the gate of Sur, and one-third at the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down. The two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD for the king. But you shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in.”

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

Then the escorts stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, by the altar and the house. And he brought out the king’s son, put the crown on him, and gave him the Testimony; they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, “Long live the king!” Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts and the people, she came to the people in the temple of the LORD. When she looked, there was the king standing by a pillar according to custom; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, “Treason! Treason!” And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, “Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her.” For the priest had said, “Do not let her be killed in the house of the LORD.” So they seized her; and she went by way of the horses’ entrance into the king’s house, and there she was killed.

Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the people, that they should be the LORD’s people, and also between the king and the people. And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down. They thoroughly broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.

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

So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword in the king's house. Jehoash was seven years old when he became king."

Background Notes

Queen Athaliah was the daughter of Queen Jezebel. "Like mother, like daughter" - both of them were wicked and cruel. Athaliah married King Joram, or Jehoram, of Judah. Their son was King Ahaziah of Judah, who was killed by King Jehu of the northern kingdom of Israel. We discussed that in 2 Kings 9.

When Athaliah saw that her son, King Ahaziah, was dead and he had no living brothers, she quickly seized the throne for herself. In order to secure the throne, she killed off all the royal heirs. She murdered her own grandchildren! She was a heartless, evil woman.

However, Jehosheba, King Ahaziah's sister, rescued Ahaziah's one-year-old son. His name was Joash, or Jehoash. 2 Chronicles 22 tells us that Jehosheba was married to Jehoiada, the high priest. For six years they hid little Joash in the apartment where they lived in the Temple complex. In the seventh year, Jehoiada planned and organized a military coup to remove wicked Queen Athaliah. She had wrongfully usurped the throne, and the time had come to install the rightful king, Joash.

The plan called for the coronation of seven-year-old Joash to take place in the Temple area, on the Sabbath when many loyalists would be gathered at the Temple for worship. To avoid suspicion, it would coincide with the time of the changing of the royal guard.

Everything went according to plan. Young Joash was brought out of hiding and crowned as the rightful king (v12). He was given a copy of "the testimony" - the Scriptures. All the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

When Athaliah heard all the cheering, she came up to the Temple area from her nearby palace. When she realized what was happening, she cried out, "Treason! Treason!" Actually, Athaliah was the one who was guilty of treason. Then Athaliah was seized by the loyal military commanders and killed outside the Temple area.

Then, under the direction of Jehoiada the high priest, the people renewed their covenant commitment to the Lord and to the royal line of David. The people tore down the temple of Baal that had been erected in Jerusalem. They destroyed all its altars and images, and they executed the pagan priest of Baal. Now remember, this was in Jerusalem, in Judah. The

purge of Baal worship by Elijah in 1 Kings 18, and then by Jehu in 2 Kings 10, took place in the northern kingdom of Israel. Now Baal worship was removed from Jerusalem, in the southern kingdom of Judah in 2 Kings 11.

So there was peace and revival in Judah when little King Joash, only seven years old, began his reign in Jerusalem.

Doctrinal Points

1. Satan tried to destroy the Messianic line through a bloodbath by a wicked woman.

When wicked Queen Athaliah killed all the royal offspring – even her own grandchildren - in that terrible bloodbath, she was a willing pawn in Satan’s master plan to wipe out the Messianic line. Satan knew that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah, and that he would be in the royal bloodline of David. If Athaliah had been successful and been able to destroy all the royal offspring, the royal dynasty of King David would have ended. The line of David would have been cut off, and God’s promise to David could not have been fulfilled.

It looked like Satan was about to succeed in cutting off the Messianic line, but there was no way this could happen! God had made a solemn promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:16, *“Your house, and your kingdom, shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.”*

So God thwarted Athaliah’s plans. One-year-old Joash was rescued and preserved alive. The Messianic promise through the line of David was still standing. So in all the human drama of 2 Kings 11, we see the doctrinal point that Satan tried to destroy the Messianic line through the bloodbath of a wicked woman.

2. God preserved the Messianic line through the compassion of a godly woman.

Verse 2: *“But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king’s sons who were being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed.”*

It looked like Satan was about to destroy the Messianic line, but God preserved the Messianic line through the compassion of a godly and courageous woman.

Praise the Lord for Jehosheba! This godly woman was in the right place at the right time. Do you think this was all by chance? Of course not! God had placed her there to preserve the Messianic line. And Jehosheba “just happened” to be married to Jehoiada, a godly high priest, who was loyal to the house of David.

Together they protected little Joash and taught him the ways of the Lord. They prepared him for the day when he would become one of the good kings of Judah. Satan tried to destroy the Messianic line through the bloodbath of Athaliah, but God preserved the Messianic line through the courage and compassion of Jehosheba.

Practical Application

Let us be loyal to the true King!

King Joash is a “type” (or picture) of Jesus Christ, in a certain sense. The whole time that wicked Queen Athaliah was on the throne, the true king was hidden in the house of the Lord. In the same way, our Lord Jesus is the true King, but right now He’s “hidden” in Heaven, in the house of the Lord, waiting to be revealed to this world when He returns. In the meantime, Satan is the ruler of this world - the “*god of this world*” (2 Corinthians 4:4).. Satan has already been judged at the cross of Christ. However, until his final and eternal consignment to hell, Satan is still the “god of this world.”

Are we loyal to the true King? As Jehosheba and Johoiada and others were loyal to Joash, the true heir to the throne of David, so let us be loyal to the true King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Right now He is in Heaven, “hidden” and unseen by this world. But as the true son of David, He will be revealed when He returns and takes His rightful place as Ruler. And just as peace and quiet returned to Jerusalem when King Joash began his reign (v20), so there will be peace and quiet and rejoicing when Jesus Christ returns and sets up His kingdom on earth. Do you see the picture?

Are we loyal to the true King now? It may not be easy. In that day, godly people risked their lives to be loyal to the line of David. To be loyal to Christ today may be costly. You can’t always be politically correct. Being loyal to Jesus Christ may cost you a promotion in your career. It may cost you a better grade in a course you’re taking. And in some instances, loyalty to Christ may cost your freedom, and even your life.

Recently, when Margie and I were in Israel, we met a Christian man who had suffered quite a lot for his loyalty to Jesus Christ. Because he’s Jewish, he’s been ostracized by many Israelis - including some of his own relatives. His business and livelihood have suffered greatly because he is loyal to Christ. But in spite of these difficulties, he remains loyal to the true King!

What about us? Let us be loyal to our true King!