

### King Joash of Judah Plans to Repair the Temple in Jerusalem

#### 2 Kings 12:1-10

**2 Kings 12:1-10** - *"In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. But the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*

*And Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the LORD—each man's census money, each man's assessment money--and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the LORD, let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found."*

*Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, that the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the other priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take more money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple." And the priests agreed that they would neither receive more money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.*

*Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the LORD; and the priests who kept the door put there all the money brought into the house of the LORD. So it was, whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up and put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD."*

#### Background Notes

King Jehoash, or Joash, was the youngest king to ascend the throne in Judah. He became king when he was only seven years old. He was the son of King Ahaziah of Judah – the only son who survived the bloodbath when his grandmother, wicked Queen Athaliah, usurped the throne of Judah. The high priest, Jehoiada, and his wife, who was Ahaziah's sister, hid the infant Joash in their temple apartment until he was seven years old.

Joash was a good king. He *"did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him."* So we see that the primary reason why Joash was a good king was that he had a good teacher. Jehoiada the priest instructed Joash in God's Word and the things of the Lord. These instructions started when Joash was only a toddler, and they continued through all the days that Jehoiada was the high priest. It shows the great value of a good Christian upbringing in God's Word - whether it's in the home, in Sunday school, or in Christian school.

Joash was a good king who followed the Lord, but unfortunately he did not order the “high places” to be removed. The people still sacrificed and burned incense in the high places. In some parts of the nation, worship was made to pagan gods in the high places, but in other places, sacrifices and offerings were made to the Lord. But *both* practices were wrong. According to Deuteronomy 12, all sacrifices and all offerings to the Lord were to be made at the central sanctuary, the Temple that would be ultimately be located in Jerusalem. Deuteronomy 12:13-14: *“Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the Lord chooses.”*

It seems that some of the good kings of Judah, like Joash and others, allowed the high places to remain because the Lord was worshiped at some of the high places. It was wrong to sacrifice to the Lord anywhere other than the Temple, but at least worship of the Lord in the high places wasn't as bad as pagan worship. Only in Josiah's revival in about 621BC, about 200 years later, was there a clean sweep. All the high places were removed so that they would not be rebuilt.

As a good king, it was Joash's desire to repair the house of the Lord. The Temple had fallen into disrepair during evil Queen Athaliah's reign. Not only that, it was more than 150 years old at this time. The plan was to take certain of the monies that were collected by the priests, according to the Law, and use these funds to repair the Temple. The plan sounded good - but it didn't work. Apparently, the people did not give freely, and the priests did not use the money that they collected for Temple repairs.

So a new plan was proposed. A chest with a slot in it was placed in the Temple area where people could give voluntarily by placing their money directly into the chest. This money would go directly to the repair of the temple. And the plan worked! The people gave, and the Temple was repaired. I think we see some lessons about giving to the work of the Lord here.

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. The Lord's people will give voluntarily when they know where the money is going.

Under the Law, the priests were entitled to receive a wage from a certain portion of the offerings that were brought to the Temple. So the priests reasoned here that since not enough money was coming into the Temple treasury, they were entitled to meet their living expenses first. As a result, no money was going to the Temple repair project - it was all going into the priests' pockets! Even though the priests weren't squandering the money, people didn't want to give when they didn't see how their money was being spent.

People don't like to give when they don't know where their money is going. Do you? Would you give voluntarily to Social Security, for example? I don't think so. It's not that you don't care about the elderly, or consider your own future security - you just don't know where that money is going. Don't for a minute think that there's a vault in Washington labeled “Social

Security” and all the funds collected are going in there! No way! People don’t want to give when they don’t know where the money is going.

The same is true in the Lord’s work – in Christian service. The Lord’s people don’t want to give when they don’t know where the money is going. But the Lord’s people will give voluntarily when they see where their money is going. Look at verse 10. Under the new plan, the people knew where the funds were going. Notice that both the high priest Jehoiada and a royal scribe counted the money. That’s a good check. It’s a good lesson for us – we should have a check like that. Once the people knew where the money was going and that it was properly accounted by trustworthy people, they gave voluntarily!

For twenty years now, I’ve been writing a publication, Devotions for Growing Christians. This is a faith ministry, and we never request donations. But the Lord’s people give! Each year we let our readers know where the gift money is going – printing, postage, equipment, etc. People know that Margie and I never take any of the donations for any personal use or any salary. And the ministry has never been in the red - for over twenty years! I think one reason is that the Lord’s people know where the money is going. The Lord’s people give voluntarily when they know where the money is going.

## **2. The Lord’s people will give voluntarily when they see what the money is doing.**

Look at verse 6. *“Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, that the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple.”* Under the original plan, a number of years went by, and no work was done. Well, the Lord’s people will not give voluntarily to a unaccountable project like that. They want to see some results.

Under the new plan, the chest was emptied periodically, the funds were counted properly, and the repair work went on. People could see results, and they continued to give. They didn’t even need one of those building fund signs with a thermometer on it to show how close donations were getting to the goal! When the Lord’s people see results, they give voluntarily.

When the Lord’s people see the fruit of a ministry, they give voluntarily. When the Lord’s people see kids being saved at a Christian camp, they give to that camp ministry. When the Lord’s people see the foundation constructed for a growing evangelical church, they give so the building can be completed. The Lord’s people will give voluntarily when they see what the money is doing.

Keep these doctrinal points in mind if you’re ever part of a church leadership or involved in a non-profit ministry. These are biblical principles of giving, and they’re very practical.

## **Practical Application:**

### **When Plan A is not working, try Plan B!**

The original plan for financing the Temple repairs did not work. It wasn't a bad plan. It just didn't work. So what did they do? Did they keep trying the same old plan hoping that somehow it would work? No! Did they quit? No!

Verse 8 seems to indicate that some of the priests wanted to quit. The priests agreed that they would neither receive any more money from the people, nor would they repair the damaged Temple. But they finally changed plans. From the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles, it seems that King Joash himself may have come up with the new plan, and certainly he implemented it. 2 Chronicles 24:8 - *"Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the Lord."* At the command of the king, the high priest Jehoiada took a chest and drilled a hole in it - kind of like a giant piggy bank! He put it in the Temple area, where the people could voluntarily give money specifically for Temple repairs. And guess what? The people gave!

Some of the priests probably laughed when this novel idea was first proposed. "What's this? We've never done anything like this before! Is this some kind of 'piggy bank'?" But the plan worked!

When Plan A is not working, try Plan B. Don't be such a traditionalist that you're unwilling to change to Plan B if Plan A isn't working. As long as the Plan B is biblical, be willing to flex when Plan A is not working.

Here's an illustration: Some years ago I was running a winter retreat for a group of teens. I was the speaker, and I was also heading up the program. I remember the first day quite well. After an exhausting day of activity and a big evening meal, everyone was falling asleep during my evening talk! Did I get mad at them for falling asleep during my teaching? No. (Well - maybe a little bit - but I understood, because I was tired too!!) Getting mad wouldn't have helped, but something had to change. After all, the goal of the retreat was getting the teens into God's Word!

So what did I do? After praying about this situation, I changed plans. Instead of teaching *after* supper, I led an interactive Bible study *during* supper. It worked perfectly - even though I had to scrap some of my sermon notes! No one fell asleep, and the Lord blessed in a big way.

When Plan A is not working, try Plan B!