

December 19

Scriptures: Read 2 Kings 11 & 12

Key Verse: “Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord, the king, and the people, that they should be the Lord’s people...” (2 Kings 11:17)

Overview

Jehu’s activities in Israel caused a crisis situation in Judah. When Ahaziah was killed (9:27), his mother Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, saw an opportunity to take the throne and wipe out the line of David. If it had not been for the rescue of Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, (also called “Jehoash”, v.21) then the line of David would have indeed been cut off. However, this was not God’s plan, for He had promised to give David “a lamp to him and his sons forever” (8:19; 1 Kings 15:4; 2 Samuel 7:13). Athaliah was used by evil spiritual forces to try to stop the plan of God, which was that the Messiah would come through the line of David.

Without Athaliah’s knowledge, but in the providence of God, the boy (about one year old) was safely hidden and found refuge in the House of God with the high priest. Athaliah reigned as a usurper for six years in Jerusalem. During that time she, like Jezebel, promoted Baalism in Judah and let the Temple of God fall into disrepair.

When Joash was seven years old, the brave high priest Jehoiada revealed the boy’s identity and gained much support. Under strict security, Joash, who was heavily guarded with David’s weapons (representing his Davidic lineage), was proclaimed king in the Temple of the Lord. Joash had been raised in a godly atmosphere in the home of the high priest, who instilled in him the spiritual responsibility of a king under God. In the coronation ceremony, Joash held the testimony of the law, indicating his responsibility to follow Moses’ instructions about a king (11:12; Deuteronomy 17:18-19).

The noise of the excitement in the Temple caused Athalia to make a rare appearance there. What a shock for her to find that one of David’s descendants had escaped her plan of extermination. Her wickedness returned on her head and she was slain, thus giving the kingdom back to the rightful heir.

Jehoida led in the most important part of the coronation ceremony: the reaffirmation of the covenant to live in obedience to their covenant obligations to God and thereby truly be His people (key Verse, 11:17). Even before Joash was officially taken to the throne room, the people obeyed God by tearing down the temple of Baal in Jerusalem, thus abolishing Baal worship in Judah. There was not only a political reform, but a religious one as well, for it began a revival of the true worship of God.

Until Joash matured, the actual ruler of the southern kingdom was Jehoiada the priest. He had much positive influence on the young king, as is evident in Joash’s desire to see the completion of the temple repairs. For some unstated reason, the money for the restoration project had not reached its goal; therefore, he took the leadership and assigned Jehoiada and himself to see to the matter. A collection chest was placed beside the altar for the people’s free-will offerings

designated toward the building project. When this was full, the money was used directly to pay the builders and the restoration was finally completed.

Although Joash did much good for the spiritual condition of Israel, he, like his godly forefather Asa (1 Kings 15:14), did not tear down the high places throughout Judah where the people would offer sacrifices and worship the God of Israel. This was wrong because it was in disobedience to Moses' command about only sacrificing to God at the central sanctuary (Deuteronomy 12:10-11).

Another failure of Joash was his lack of trust in the Lord, for when he was threatened by Hazael, he sent him the treasures of the temple and his palace. This weakness may have been the reason for the conspiracy against him and his eventual assassination (12:20-21).

Prayer

Lord, we determine to break down everything in our lives which exalts itself against You. May our lives please You. We ask this in the name of the one who always pleased You, our Lord Jesus. Amen.