

## February 4

**Scriptures:** Read 2 Chronicles 23 & 24

**Key Verse:** "...Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper?..." (2 Chronicles 24:20)

### Overview

After six years of hiding Joash (the young son of King Ahaziah), the high priest Jehoiada wisely and without having to resort to civil war, planned the secret preparations for his coronation. He called upon the priests and Levites throughout the land for their support, which they were glad to give. The usurper, Athaliah, had to be removed; she was destroying the kingdom with idolatry, including the vile cult of Baal. The Levitical Temple guards were armed with King David's weapons. They were intended to not only protect Joash, David's descendant, but also to do justice by slaying the wicked idolatrous usurper, who was not from the House of David but from the condemned House of Ahab (cf. 2 Kings 9:8).

Since Joash was only seven years old when he was crowned, the real leader of the nation was the godly high priest Jehoiada, who had raised Joash in his own home. Even before they took Joash to his throne, Jehoiada led Judah in the renewing of their covenant with God (23:16). In obedience to God's laws, they destroyed the temple of Baal and killed the pagan priest, thus obeying Moses' command to put away the evil from their midst (cf. Deuteronomy 13:5-10).

Jehoiada's reformation included the reinstatement of the Levitical service as King David had established it for the true worship of the Lord. The Temple was also repaired and reinforced under the leadership of Jehoiada and King Joash, who was by that time a young adult. Joash even confronted the Levites when they did not do their job of gathering the funds according to the words of Moses. He then thought of an efficient way to raise funds for the restoration project that they might pay the workers directly (24:8-12).

How tragic that Joash, who was faithful and obedient to the Lord in the early days of his reign, had such a drastic fall after the death of Jehoiada. Without his guidance and leadership, Joash did not remain a strong spiritual leader and quickly fell into sin. It was only the grace of God that blessed Jehoiada with a very long life (130 years), and thus Israel remained loyal to God for a longer period under his spiritual leadership. He had done much good for Judah and was honoured like a king in his death, even to the point of being buried in the tombs of the kings.

With the flattering of some wicked leaders in Judah, Joash agreed to reinstate idolatry (probably in some way it would benefit them for their own personal gain, 24:17-18), but, as we have seen before, such harlotry brings the wrath of God. In His grace, however, God sent prophets to warn Joash and the people of Judah so they might turn back to Him, but Joash's heart had become so hardened that it was of no avail.

When Zechariah boldly rebuked Joash, his reaction was one of hatred; this king, who had once served God faithfully, actually reached the depths of conspiring against this righteous man and then ordering that he be stoned to death (24:21; cf. 1 Kings 21:8-13,19; a similar conspiracy by Ahab and Jezebel against Naboth resulted in their condemnation). Joash was so filled with hatred

that it did not matter to him that Zechariah was his cousin and the son of Jehoiada to whom he owed his life and kingship (24:22). Our Lord Jesus referred to Zechariah as the last recorded martyr found within the Old Testament (in the Hebrew book order). By killing him, the children of Israel shed innocent blood (Matthew 23:34-35; Luke 11:51).

The Lord did indeed repay Joash for murder and idolatry both of which deserve death according to the Law of Moses. God used the smaller army of Syria to execute His judgment on Judah; the wicked leaders were killed, all their spoil was taken, and Joash was wounded before being assassinated by his own servants. It is again illustrated here that whatever you sow, that you shall also reap.

### **Prayer**

Lord, thank you for godly older leaders like Jehoiada. You've blessed our family greatly through such people. Help us to continue to be blessed by the ministry of our brothers and sisters who have served You faithfully for many years. Grant that we may follow in their footsteps.