

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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How Will You Be Remembered? (Part 6)

I Kings 14:16; II Kings 12:2; II Kings 18:5

Having concluded our thoughts about Jeroboam, we now turn our attention to a second king—Joash. Joash is perhaps the most disappointing of these three kings. Jeroboam always does wrong, and Hezekiah, whom we will look at later, always does right. Joash, as we will see, starts out right, but then changes. For that reason, I call him **A Man of Change**.

Joash's life begins with great excitement. His father Ahaziah was killed by Jehu who had also killed the king of Israel, Jehoram. Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah and grandmother of Joash, decides to take the throne and kills all of her grandchildren and anyone else that may have claim to the throne. This is hard for us to fathom in the day in which we live, but it was a fairly common practice in ancient times. Anyone that may have claim to the throne, and is thought to perhaps want it, is killed by the one who is presently on the throne. Jehosheba, who is the sister of Ahaziah, aunt to Joash, and wife of Jehoiada the priest, takes Joash and hides him in the temple.

For six years, Joash is hidden in the temple complex and is reared by Jehoiada and Jehosheba. When Jehoiada feels the time is right, he gets some military leaders on his side, and arranges the plans to have Joash crowned as king. The people accept Joash as king, and when Athaliah protests, she is killed. The line of David, as prophesied by the Lord in II Samuel 7, is now ruling Judah again. Satan's attempt to destroy the line of the Messiah is stopped.

Most of Joash's growing-up years are passed over with no discussion about them in the Bible. The only thing mentioned is

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Jehoiada's destruction of the house of Baal, and the return of Judah to the worship of Jehovah (II Kings 11:17-18). Although his father is killed and no mention is made of his mother, Joash is seemingly taught well by his aunt and uncle, Jehosheba and Jehoiada. He has a great start. In fact, that is the first point that we will consider in Joash's life—His Start.

How we begin our lives or any project is important. It is always good to start on a firm foundation. Spiritually speaking, it is absolutely essential. Jesus gave the parable about the wise man and foolish man building houses. The structures may have been identical, but the one that was built on sand collapsed because it was built on the wrong foundation. So a life without Christ will not survive the storms of life, nor the judgment of God

But Joash had a very good start. Notice *The Comment* that is made about him in II Chronicles 24:2, "*And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.*" The first part of the verse is wonderful and could not be any better. *Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD*—if only the verse could have stopped there. If there was a period after the word LORD, then Joash would have gone down in the annals of Jewish history as one of their greatest kings. But the Bible does not omit the last part of the verse. The last part lets everyone know that Joash will change, and the remainder of the chapter gives the details of that change.

There are many applications to that comment in II Chronicles 24:2. Everyone of us must ask ourselves, "Why are we doing what we are doing?" What do I mean by that statement? In one instance in particular, "Why are we a Fundamental, Independent Baptist?" Many have been in good, Bible-believing churches as long as their parents were alive, but when the parents died, they left. Why? Because they were just doing it to please their parents.

We can think of this in another way. Think about dress standards.

It is appalling the way people in many churches dress today. Thirty, forty, or fifty years ago, you would not find most people in churches in casual, every day clothes. They wore what everyone called their "Sunday best." But many people have no respect for the house of God in 2012. They show their lack of respect for God's house by wearing every day, normal clothes to church. They treat it like any other, every day place and activity. What does this have to do with Joash? Like the change in Joash, we can see the change in our society and churches. Previous generations always treated the house of God differently, but our current generation has changed. The adults of today are not doing what they were taught by their parents, and now they are not teaching their children anything.

One other thing that I will mention concerns the change in the direction and doctrine of churches. Numerous examples could be given of churches and schools that started out right, but changed like Joash. They had founders that were good men. Some started to drift while the founders were alive, but many stayed true during their lifetime. After the founder died, subtle changes started to be made. Once the small changes were made, then bigger ones were instituted until the current church or school no longer appears as it originally did. Churches like Highland Park in Chattanooga and Temple Baptist in Detroit are just two that readily come to mind. Schools like Harvard, Yale, and Fuller Theological Seminary are just three of the many that started with a great desire to train young people in a Biblical manner, but are now bastions of Bible deniers. What happened? The second and third generations changed from following the God of their fathers. They were just like Joash. As long as their pastor, teacher, or founder was around, they stayed right. When their leader died, they left the straight path for the wrong path.

What about you? Are you simply doing what you are doing, and going where you are going, because dad, mom, pastor, founder, etc., are doing and going that way. Are you determined to follow God because He is real to you, or are you doing it because of others? The names could be changed for many churches and schools. Could your

name be placed in II Chronicles 24:2 as one who followed God for a while until your leader died? What a sobering thought that should be to each of us!

In thinking of Joash's start, we also see *The Construction*. II Chronicles 24:4 says, "*And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD.*" Joash's allegiance to God is not just heard in words, but it involves his actions. It had been over 100 years since Solomon had constructed the temple. As with any building, repairs would be necessary from time to time. Besides any normal repair, the building had been destroyed by the sons of Athaliah and "*the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim*" (II Chronicles 24:7). It was now time to restore the place of worship.

Joash had commanded the priests to start collecting the money needed for repairs, but by the twenty-third year of his reign, the work had not started. Joash called for Jehoiada and the other priests and told them to put a collection chest at the gate of the temple to collect the needed money. A proclamation was made to the people throughout Judah, and the people responded in a great way. More than enough money came in to refurbish the temple. When the repairs were done, burnt offerings were made again.

Joash, as I said earlier, apparently had been taught well. He started with a heart for God. In this instance, he even had to get after Jehoiada for not repairing the temple as Joash had commanded. He started so well and was even doing things on his own and not just what Jehoiada told him to do. But unfortunately, there is more to mention about Joash.

In II Chronicles 24:15, we read that Jehoiada died at the age of 130. He was so highly esteemed that he was buried among the kings. Sadly, instead of remaining faithful to God, Joash begins His Slide. It will be quick and detrimental to Joash himself and the entire nation. Happily, his son is not totally affected because he is said to do right,

“*but not with a perfect heart*” (II Chronicles 25:2). But how does this slide come about?

Joash’s slide begins because of *His Listening*. II Chronicles 24:17 says, “*Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.*” The Bible does not say how long after the death of Jehoiada this took place, but I think it was just a few weeks or months. These princes of Judah, which could be considered as counselors to the king, obviously did not worship God with a whole heart. As one writer stated, they went along with getting rid of Athaliah, but did not care for a whole-hearted devotion to God as led by Jehoiada. No doubt, they flattered Joash and convinced him to allow idolatry. There are no excuses to make for what Joash did. He had been taught by Jehoiada that only the true worship of Jehovah was accepted. But he would reject the truth for this lie of the princes. We will pick up with Joash’s listening next month.