

## **GOD'S LAMP LIT FOR HIS REMNANT**

II Kings 11: 1-21 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Motivational speaker Ron White often tells his own story of being in Navy boot camp. He was exhausted, intimidated, scared, and hungry and probably homesick. Another sailor done with boot camp and about to graduate, passed him in the hallway. Seeing his fatigued expression, the sailor whispered out of the side of his mouth, “Hang in there...you can do it.” Ron White never learned that sailor’s name. He never saw him again. Yet those words shot through him like electricity. He replayed those words all through Navy boot camp. Those words revamped and restored his attitude, and he persevered until he finished the program. On graduation day, Ron White saw three new boot camp sailors leaning against the same wall he once was leaning on. They are looked washed up, busted, ruined and wanting out. Walking over to them, he whispered, “Hang in there...you can do it.” From the expressions on their faces, Ron knew his words hit home.

Let me tell you that after the New Year, when I read the last five chapters of our series, II Kings 9-13, I was tempted to call the series complete and begin a new series. Preaching on Jehu and I Kings 9-13 seemed a task I could justify passing by. The blood bath in chapters 9, 10, and continuing now in chapter 11, seemed needless to preach. I know God the Holy Spirit whispered often to me, “Hang in there...you can do it. You said the series didn’t end until II Kings 13: 21.” These are critical chapters to finishing up the last of Elisha’s life, even though chapters 11 and 12 make no mention of either Elijah or Elisha. I could have rationalized closing the series early. Perhaps today, you are on the home stretch of something God has given you to do, or maybe you’re afraid of starting a task God has called you to. I call you to begin the task and to complete it. Paul said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” (II Timothy 4: 7).

Let me summarize the setting of chapter 11, so we can look at it on the same level ground. Jezebel’s daughter, Athaliah, married the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat’s son, Joram. When she did, she introduced Baal worship into the king’s palace and into the idolatrous nation of Judah. This Baal worship in Judah seems to be why Jeremiah, changes his focus from the northern kingdom of Israel for 2 chapters to talk about the striking down of Baalism in Judah and the restoration of the worship of the Lord in Judah. Athaliah heard not only that Israel’s king Jehu had slaughtered her Mom, Jezebel, but that he had killed the king of Israel, Joram, whom her son, king Ahaziah had gone to visit, because king Joram was wounded and recovering in Jezreel. Seeing her son, the king of Judah was dead, Athaliah, nearly as wicked as her mother, did a dastardly deed. She quietly and quickly sought to remove all the rivals to her becoming the Queen Mother of Judah. Since

Ahaziah had quite a few sons, Athaliah arose and destroyed the royal family, all her grandsons, grandsons that would have been in line to assume the throne, and who would position themselves as the next king. Living there in the palace, or near the palace was Jehoiada, the priest, and his wife Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, but not necessarily the daughter of Athaliah. Jehosheba got wind of Athaliah's evil plan, and God helped her miraculously intervene. This sister of king Ahaziah, grabbed the youngest son of Ahaziah, Athaliah's grandson, a nursing baby boy named Joash or Jehoash, a year old, and stole him away from among the king's sons all who were being put to death.

Let's turn our attention to the four main characters that stand out in chapter 11. These characters are (1) the Queen Mother, Athaliah, (2) then Jehosheba, the wife of Jehoiada, (3) the baby boy Joash or Jehoash who became king of Judah, the only one of Ahaziah's sons not killed, and (4) the priest Jehoida, the husband of Jehosheba. Looking at these 4 main characters, each of their lives teach us one major lesson. What are these 4 lessons?

**OUR SELFISH AMBITION CAN BE MORE SHOCKING THAN ANY OF US WANT TO ADMIT, AND MORE COSTLY THAN WE CAN IMAGINE.**

This lesson comes from the awful story of Athaliah. (I.) Notice II Kings 11: 1. This Jezebel of a woman, was almost a carbon copy of her mother. This queen mother, Athaliah, realized her chance, and sin for her was no spoiler. For her, the death of her son was her big break in life to seize the throne by killing off all her competitors, all her son, Ahaziah's sons, the royal princes. What a diabolical scheme it was! She would kill all the heirs to the throne so that she herself might rule the kingdom. She desired to be Queen! Do we fully understand the selfish ambition of this wicked woman? Selfish ambition can ruin any of us who begin down that tragic road. Athaliah was willing to kill off her very own grandsons so she could have the throne. How exactly she carried out this plan is not revealed to us in the Word. We don't know if she carried out this slaughter alone, but she was successful or so it seemed! It was unimaginable and unthinkable. These young princes, these men of royalty with so much promise, and potential now were all lying in a heap, dead. One writer suggested that from the heap Jehosheba heard a cry of one baby not dead among the pile of bodies. I studied that from the text, and God stopped the slaughter of Joash, not from a heap of dead bodies, but by "having Joash stolen away from among the king's sons who were being put to death."

As the founder of Baal worship in Judah, Athaliah had no concern about God's remnant or the lamp of the Lord's godly line. She had no desire for David's dynasty to succeed. As we search for clues about this selfish ambition of Athaliah, we look back at her husband, king Joram of Judah. We read in II Chronicles 21: 4,

that when he ascended to the throne following his good father Jehoshaphat; in order to establish his throne, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and also some of the other princes of Israel. Perhaps Athaliah, his wife coaxed him into this dastardly deed. We know also from II Chronicles 22: 1-4 that when Athaliah's son, Ahaziah became the king of Judah, "his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly." What kind of a woman was Athaliah? We read in II Chronicles 21: 17 that God brought judgment on king Joram for killing off his brothers. The Arabs and Philistines carried off Joram's own sons, with the exception of Jehoahaz whose other name was Ahaziah. Athaliah saw her own sons carried off into captivity, so she lost them, and even that loss did not blunt her poisonous selfish ambition. She proceeded to slaughter her grandsons—to kill them all off. She had only one purpose—to secure the throne and be the unchallenged Queen Mother of Judah. Athaliah thereby secured Baal as the god of Judah to replace the worship of the Lord in the temple of the Lord. How many grandmothers would kill their own grandsons to have full sway and power in a nation? Athaliah could and she did. Athaliah now was the uncontested Queen Mother in Judah for six years. Unbeknown to her, her rival, little one-year old Joash, her grandson was stolen away and hidden in one of the temple chambers. Apparently Joash's nurse and Jehoida and Jehosheba raised Joash as a child who apparently was one of the children whose parents worked in the temple. Athaliah would probably have seen him, but she had no clue she missed killing the last of her grandsons. Athaliah's selfish ambition was shocking. God didn't let her selfish ambition go unchecked.

Jehoida, the sheltering shepherd in Judah was mentoring this little king to be. When the fullness of the time was come to reveal the little king and crown him, Jehoida had a mighty well planned out strategy that worked. Look at verses 4-10. I won't try to speak of this plan much except to say—after six years, God said to Jehoida, in essence, "Now is the time!" Athaliah learned that the cost of selfish ambition is deadly and final. Notice verses 11-16. The degree of detail that is included in this account is intended by Jeremiah to indicate how thorough Jehoiada was in providing protection for the little king. At the proper moment, Jehoiada provided the guards with weapons like the ones that belonged to David, which were kept in the temple. When the guards were stationed so that they surrounded the king, he was brought out before the people. The royal crown was placed upon his head, he was anointed, and it was official. All the soldiers and the crowd burst out with shouts of, "Long live the king." The uproar of the people reached the ears of Athaliah, who made her way into the temple, along with the crowd. I wonder how often this Baal worshipper ever went in the temple. Was this the first time? There, the young king was standing by the pillar, where the king customarily stood. There was the blast of trumpets, and the people joyfully celebrated the coronation of their new and legitimate king. It did not take Athaliah long to see

what was happening. She tore her garments and shouted, “Treason, treason!” How ironic it was that she would yell, “Treason.” She was the one guilty of treason. Jehoiada the priest and the guards were not intimidated by Athaliah’s protest. No doubt he had been planning on it. The priest ordered the officials to bring this woman outside the temple and to kill anyone who followed her. Jehoiada didn’t want her blood shed inside the temple. Athaliah was seized and hauled out of the temple, through the horses’ entrance to the king’s house. There is where Athaliah was executed. Her reign of terror was over. The cost of selfish ambition is death, as are all the wages of sin. Romans 6: 23. Secondly,

**OUR SELFLESS SACRIFICE KEEPS THE LAMP OF GOD BURNING IN OUR DARK, DARK WORLD.**

This lesson comes from the wife of Jehoida, the priest, Jehosheba, daughter of king Joram, and sister to Ahaziah, the aunt of the baby boy, Joash. (II.) Notice II Kings 11: 2-3. We read, “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 put to death, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus, they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not put to death. And he remained with her six years, hidden in the house of the LORD, while Athaliah reigned over the land.” When wicked Athaliah killed the heirs of David’s throne, the faithful remnant in Judah must have wondered where God was and what He was doing. Why would God make a covenant promise to David and not keep it? How could God allow this queen mother to do this evil deed and not only jeopardize, but take away all the prophesies and the Messianic hopes from Judah? Beloved, when it is the darkest, God is still on the throne. In the middle of that dark, dark world controlled by selfish ambition and murder, God still had a remnant in Jehoiada the priest, and his precious wife, Jehosheba. They believed in the promises of God and they had faith in His word. They stepped in and at the risk of Jehosheba’s life, she courageously did God’s will. Jehosheba was herself not only the wife of the high priest, Jehoiada, but she was a princess, a daughter of king Joram, and a sister to Ahaziah, whom king Jehu killed. She was this little baby boy’s aunt. How such a godly woman would come out of that sinful family is another miracle of the grace of God. Growing up in an evil family is not a death sentence. God knows how to break through. This princess of Judah had no selfish ambition like the queen mother. She risked her life, stole this one-year old baby boy, Joash from the royal nursery and hid him with his royal nurse, in a bedroom in the king’s house, in the premises and part and parcel of the palace. Warren Wiersbe commented, “As Joash grew older, he probably mingled and played with other children in the temple area and he was not recognized as an heir to the throne.” This is one of the greatest lessons on confidentiality. Millions of believers believe gossip is fine. “I just told my best friend, who promised not to tell anyone, who told her best friend, and soon—what is the product of gossip? It can

bring death. Here Jehoiada, his sweet wife Jehosheba, his royal nurse, -- just three people kept a confidentiality on which the Messianic line was counting on. Only six years later, notice with me verse 4, “But in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of the Carites and of the guards, and had them come to him in the house of the Lord. And he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the Lord, and he showed them the king’s son. Oh beloved, what a lesson embodied in Jehosheba and the royal nurse and Jehoiada! They had the patience to wait six more years for God’s perfect time. Ecclesiastes 3: 11 tells us that God makes everything beautiful in His time. Faith and patience go together.

The writer of Hebrews 6: 11-12 wrote, “And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience, inherit the promises.” Isaiah 28: 16 prophesied of Jesus to come, Messiah, saying, “Therefore, thus says the Lord God, ‘Behold I am the One who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: Whoever believes will not be in haste.’ Don’t ever be in haste to break a confidence. Oh, beloved, in God’s gracious providence, He watched over this little child as well as his three caretakers who alone knew for six years who he was and where he was and what he was doing. If the queen mother had known, it would have been curtains. Beloved, when you promise a confidence, it is no small thing. During those six years, God was moving in Jehoiada, the high priest, and giving him a plan to put Joash on the throne, by taking Athaliah off the throne. One last thought about Jehosheba. Often the success of any man of God revolves around who his wife, who his Jehosheba is, and how she is one with him in his ministry and in their dedication to fulfilling God’s will in their ministry. 3rd,

**OUR SALVATION BY GOD IS NOT FOR FAME BUT FOR GOD’S PURPOSE TO MAKE US HIS SMALL BUT FAITHFUL REMNANT.** This lesson comes from the nephew of Jehosheba, king Ahaziah’s son, Joash or Jehoash, whom God miraculously saved from Athaliah’s destruction to become the king of Judah in David’s line. (III.) Notice II Kings 11: 4-12, and especially verse 21. We read, “Joash or Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign.” Imagine all Israel as the truth came out. “There is one that lives. The Queen missed one little baby boy unable to walk or run away because he is only one year old! He is the only one of the royal sons left! He was rescued. God does care about His Messianic promises. Forgive us, Lord, when we accuse You of not caring. And here in this chapter in verse 4, Jehoiada the priest sent for the Carites and the guards. These were going to become God’s means of securing the kingship for little seven-year old Joash. These Carites were captains and similar to centurions over military personnel who helped Jehoiada, the priest, install Joash as king and

assassinate the queen mother Athaliah. Little Joash had no idea that God was seeing to it that the Davidic line, and that he was being protected under the direction ultimately of God's almighty hand, and though not mentioned, had his own guarding angel. Joash was not saved to be famous, but for God's purpose to fulfill His Messianic purpose that Jesus would come incarnate as the Son of David. Isaiah said in Isaiah 11: 1, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse. Isaiah also said in Isaiah 9: 6-7, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be not end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this." In some strange way, beloved, each of us whom God has called to Himself and saved by grace through faith, have been saved by the zeal of the Lord of hosts to fulfill His call for each of us as His small but forever remnant. Fourthly,

**OUR SECURE SHELTERING SHEPHERDING OF THOSE MARKED FOR DESTRUCTION IS A WORK OF GOD WITH RICH REWARDS.**

This lesson comes from God's priest in Jerusalem, Jehoida, the uncle of Joash, who with help from his wife secured Joash from a bloody death, and he sheltered Joash in hiding and shepherded this little boy. This picture is what God dreams for us to do in each other's lives when we see dark danger. (IV.) Notice II Kings 11: 17-20. Listen to what happened because of the mentoring, the security, the sheltering and the shepherding of this little baby boy marked for destruction, but saved, protected, taught, and who saw Jehoiada the priest and his wife Jehosheba as his parents. Oh the rich reward of such a work of God. I ask you today—who are you having mercy on, saving them, snatching them from out of the fire? (Jude 22) As I close today, I want to read you part of the introduction to a book I am reading, a commentary on the book of Ruth. The author of the book is Dan Schaeffer, the pastor of Shoreline Community Church in Santa Barbara, California. Who will help those marked for death? This book is entitled, "Restored, God's Salvage Plan for Broken Lives." Who are you going after? Who are you fostering, mentoring, coming along side of, taking with you in discipleship? Will you be a Jehosheba and Jehoiada to the Joash's who are marked for destruction? I call us all today to becoming a shelter in the storm for others, becoming shepherds, becoming a secure family to take in those in need? Oh, the rich rewards! Let's pray!