

“The New King”
2 Kings 12
(Preached at Trinity, May 15, 2022)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In the previous chapter we witnessed God's intervention in the deliverance of a child from the murderous scheme of Athaliah. She had ordered the death of every heir to the throne, all who might challenge her stolen reign.
2 Kings 11:1 NAU - "When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring."
2. But God is faithful to His covenant promises. He promised David an unending kingdom. If Athaliah had been successful this promise would have been destroyed. Through the faithful act of Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, Joash was delivered, and the Kingdom was rescued.
At times Joash is called Jehoash. To prevent confusion, I'll refer to him as Joash. I'll use the name Jehoash in the next chapter to refer to Israel's king – **Verse 10**.
3. When Joash was just seven years old he became king. **Chapter 12** gives us a snapshot of his reign. It is summarized in **Verse 2**:
2 Kings 12:2 NAU - "Joash did right in the sight of the LORD all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him."
4. It was a glorious beginning. It shouted of the almighty power of God. Who would have thought, a seven-year-old king? God is able to do exceeding great things.
The new king was taught well under the godly leadership of his priest and mentor, Jehoiada. We are told he did right and reigned for forty years. He was testimony to God's grace, to God's covenant faithfulness. The kingdom would be preserved.
5. But that's not the end of the story. Yes, the kingdom was preserved awaiting the coming of Christ, but once again, this earthly king would prove to be a failure.
Like so many of the kings, Joash didn't finish well. We are told here that when threatened by King Hazael, instead of trusting God, he emptied the treasuries of the Temple to gain the king's favor. But this chapter doesn't tell the half of Joash's failure. I'll take us you to **2 Chronicles 24** in a moment.
6. He was just as wicked as the Northern kings and fell under God's judgment.
He would be assassinated ending his reign, but the kingdom continues. His son Amaziah succeeds him to the throne. God is maintaining His covenant promise.
These events remind us of several important truths.

- I. God is behind every detail of history maintaining His covenant promise.
- A. Living as a child of God during the reign of Athaliah must have been devastating
1. It was a wretched day
 - Jehoshaphat married off his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter
 - The daughter was Athaliah.
 - When Jehoram died his son Ahaziah became king
The plague of wickedness that infected the Northern kingdom had now made its way into the Southern kingdom. Athaliah introduced Baalism and wickedness spread across the land.
 - The only thing that kept God from destroying Judah was the covenant promise He made with David.
 2. After the death of Ahaziah his mother, Athaliah, seized the throne and murdered all of the heirs, any who might challenge her hold upon the throne.
If she had been successful the covenant promise would have come to an end. There would be no more Davidic heirs.
 3. God did not allow Athaliah to succeed. No one knew. From all outward observation she had succeeded. But things are not always as they seem.
 4. Joram was seven years old when he became king, but it was cause for celebration. David's heir was on the throne. God's promise is secure. The people rejoice.
But Joram is ultimately a failure and once again the kingdom is in jeopardy. But God continues to reign supreme. God judges Joram and he is assassinated. But the kingdom continues. His son, Amaziah is a Davidic heir. The kingdom is safe.
 5. The assault upon God's covenant promise has not ended. Are the nations not in league together to dethrone King Jesus? Is it not all around us?
 - What is the widespread acceptance of homosexuality, transgenderism, and sexual promiscuity? Is it not an assault upon the throne of Jesus?
 - And isn't the abortion movement just a display of insisting on our own way in sexual morality and the demand for absolute autonomy? We will destroy anything that gets in our way – even taking the life of a baby. Is this not also an assault upon the throne of Christ?
 - And what is behind the ever-increasing hatred of Christianity and the attempt to marginalize the church? Is it not an assault upon the throne of Jesus?
- B. But God's sovereign purpose will stand. He is behind every detail of life as He is working out His eternal purpose.
1. You have to peel back the veil of Divine sovereignty to see things through the eyes of God.
 2. The decrees of God are secret. He doesn't disclose all of His ways.
But His promises are revealed and are absolute.
Deuteronomy 29:29 NAU - "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."
 3. Every event in the world continues God's redemptive purpose.

4. How do you understand the daily, ever changing news reports?
We may not be able to see what God is doing until it is accomplished. Is there any purpose as we view world events, tragedy, warfare, terrorism? What about civil unrest and lawlessness? Or even natural disasters – storms, wildfires, earthquakes?
Everything is working towards God's appointed end.
5. When Athaliah was ruling could they see God's plan at work? Or when Joram is assassinated? What about then?

- II. Every human institution is plagued by sin – Human institutions are not our source of hope
- A. Joash was crowned. The heir of David was reigning.
1. The people were rejoicing. There was great hope.
2 Kings 11:12 NAU - "Then he brought the king's son out and put the crown on him and *gave him* the testimony; and they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, "*Long live the king!*"
2 Kings 11:14 NAU - "and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets."
 2. At first, Joram did well. As he grew older the king ordered repairs upon the Temple. Solomon had built a beautiful structure, but through the years it had fallen into disrepair. The seven years Athaliah reigned it was completely abandoned. Joash ordered repairs.
 - a. Apparently, he was zealous in seeing the repairs done because when the priests had not adequately obeyed his orders he ordered others to complete the task.
 - b. But they were all external repairs. He had little concern for the work of the Temple, the worship of God. He was doing good things, but not spiritual things.
Matthew Henry: "Many have been zealous for building and beautifying churches, and for other forms of godliness, who yet have been strangers to the power of it."¹
 - c. We shouldn't miss the point that these repairs are the only high point mentioned in his 40 year reign.
 - d. It was all for nothing, for when Hazael, the king of Aram, threatened invasion, Joash emptied the Temple treasures to convince him not to attack. The king who used resources to build up the Temple just as easily used the same resources to pay off an enemy.
A righteous king would have sought the aid of God rather than emptying the house of God.
 - e. Joash was only externally righteous. His righteousness was a borrowed righteousness – the reflected righteousness of his mentor.

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 541.

3. Jehoiada raised Joash and served in the role of father. Never underestimate the powerful effect your life has upon those around you. How wonderful it is to have God's people living as examples as they teach the next generation. This is especially true for parents. Children will believe our words when they're young, but as they get older they must see that our actions support our words. Jehoiada was a godly priest.
2 Kings 12:2 NAU - "Joash did right in the sight of the LORD all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him."
 4. Everything changed when Jehoiada died.
2 Chronicles 24:15-22 NAU - "Now when Jehoiada reached a ripe old age he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old at his death. ¹⁶ They buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done well in Israel and to God and His house. ¹⁷ But after the death of Jehoiada the officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king, and the king listened to them. ¹⁸ They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols; so wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt. ¹⁹ Yet He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the LORD; though they testified against them, they would not listen. ²⁰ Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus God has said, 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.'" ²¹ So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. ²² Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!"
 5. We read in the Chronicles that Joash abandoned God's worship altogether and worshipped other Gods. And when God sent the son of Jehoiada to prophesy against his actions he had him put to death.
 6. In the end, Joash was no better than the kings who reigned before him. Once again, we read about the failure of Israel's kings. We are being taught an important truth. Every king, every ruler, every government, all without exception are plagued by sin. We are supposed to turn our attention to the God's ultimate fulfillment of His covenant. Jesus Christ, the King of kings. Holy, blameless, spotless – the perfect Judge and King.
- B. How are we to look to human governments, human institutions?
1. We know they are ordered by God as His ministers of justice. We owe them our submission.
 2. The best governments are still cursed by sin. The best leaders are sinful. This means they will make bad decisions that are self-serving. They will disregard God's Law.
 3. The Christian does not look to this world's governments as their confidence. Is the Democratic Party or the Republican Party your confidence? Is your political party your source of hope?

4. This doesn't mean we ignore the world around us. It means we maintain a Christ centered perspective. Jesus alone is our ultimate hope.
5. This is a wonderful comfort. God is working His purpose in this world of sin. The sinfulness of men reminds us of our need for the Gospel of Christ. And it reminds us of the surety God's sovereign purpose. He is working out His perfect will.

Conclusion:

1. Don't look upon the world as the people of this world see it – from nowhere, going nowhere—things just happen without design or purpose.
2. See every event, every news story as a display of God's sovereign purpose. And see the corruption of human beings and the wickedness of their actions as the display of their sinful heart. They are living consistently with their nature. Rather than placing our hope on changing their actions, we must cry out to God for His mercy in changing their hearts through the Gospel.
3. This doesn't mean we don't speak out against sin. It means we do so with a Gospel priority.