

“Unsung Hero”
2 Kings 11
(Preached at Trinity, May 1, 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 1939 the Wizard of Oz was released and would become one of the classic films of the 20th century. Dorothy arrives via a whirlwind from Kansas and her house lands on the Wicked Witch of the West. We only see her feet protruding from underneath. Munchkin Land has been freed from the evil of the wicked witch. But she is quickly replaced by her wicked sister, the Wicked Witch of the East.
2. What does that have to do with the situation described in **Chapter 11**?
The Southern Kingdom has come under the control of wicked Queen Athaliah. She’s the wife of King Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, and the daughter of Jezebel, the wicked queen of the Northern Kingdom. By the time we enter this chapter, Jezebel has already met her end. She was tossed from the second-floor window and the hungry dogs consumed her. Although Athaliah is ruling the Southern Kingdom, she was actually a product of the Northern Kingdom—thus you might call her the Wicked Witch of the North.
3. Let’s get some background. Many years before (over 1000 years) God made a covenant with Abraham promising him a land and a posterity—that through his heir all of the nations of the earth would be blessed. That promise would find its fulfillment in Christ. Jesus was the promised seed of Abraham. History gives testimony to endless schemes to overthrow God’s covenant plan, but none have succeeded. God is an all-powerful, covenant keeping God.
4. God also made a covenant promising a never-ending Kingdom. Before Israel was divided between the North and South there was a king who was chosen and anointed by God—King David. God made a covenant with him promising him this never-ending Kingdom. **2 Samuel 7:16 NAU** - "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."
This too has been fulfilled through Jesus Christ, the King of kings.
And again, there have been endless attempts to destroy God’s covenant promise. It would seem the sinfulness of men and the wickedness of Satan have set forth endless schemes to remove Christ from His throne.
Psalms 2:1-3 NAU - "Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ³ "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!"

5. Queen Athaliah was one more attempt to destroy God's covenant promise; to destroy God's plan for the redemption of His elect people. Satan was most cunning. Both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms had fallen into gross sin and idolatry. Jehoshaphat was a righteous king but married his son, Jehoram, off to the daughter of Ahab, Athaliah. We assume her mother was Jezebel. After Jehoram's death, his son Ahaziah became king. Following in the footsteps of his mother, Athaliah, and his grandfather, Ahab, he led Judah in wickedness.
2 Kings 8:27 NAU - "He walked in the way of the house of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab *had done*, because he was a son-in-law of the house of Ahab."
6. It was during this time that God raised up Jehu as the instrument of His judgment.
 - A. It's a bit confusing because of kings by the same name reigning in both kingdoms. There are two Ahaziahs and two Jehorams.
 - B. Jehu first killed Joram, the son of Ahab. He then killed Ahaziah, the king of Judah. Thus, the kings of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were dead. Jehu would seize the throne of the Northern Kingdom but who would rule Judah, the Southern Kingdom? This is where wicked Athaliah enters front stage.
7. One would expect Ahaziah's successor to be his son, the rightful heir. That was the normal process, except when there was no son. Then the next lawful heir became king. At times, however, thrones were seized by force. For example, Jehu destroyed the house of Ahab and sat on the Northern throne.
With the death of Ahaziah, the lawful heir was his son. But his mother, evil Athaliah, was not interested in the rightful heir. She ordered the execution of every lawful heir. Ahaziah was only 22 when he became king so he most likely had several wives, thus several young children. Athaliah was unmoved as her grandchildren were butchered. She truly was an evil witch.
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."
8. Keep in mind, when Jehoshaphat died, and his son Jehoram became king, he killed all of his brothers. One has to wonder if Athaliah was behind his decision to do this.
2 Chronicles 21:4 NAU - "Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also."
9. So when Athaliah killed all of her son's heirs there was no one to reign. This was one more effort to destroy God's covenant plan. The kingdom has come to an end. No heir, no king.
Athaliah may not have had this intent. Hers was simply a lust for power, it was blind ambition. She wanted to rule, and nothing would stand in her way. Satan, on the other hand, had other motives. He simply wanted to thwart God's covenant plan.
10. One can only imagine the despair that fell upon those who had believed and trusted the Messianic promise of God.
But God's plan will not be thwarted. Ahaziah had a son. He was only a year-old baby, but still the lawful heir.

I. Unsung heroes

- A. There is an unknown hero in this story
1. We are briefly told her name - "Jehosheba"
 - a. This is the only place we find this name in the Word of God. She isn't famous. We name our daughters Deborah or Sarah or Rachel – but no one names their girl, Jehosheba.
 - b. In 2 Chronicles 22 she is called "Jehoshabeath," but again, she's only mentioned there and no one today knows her name.
 - c. But she single-handedly rescued God's covenant from destruction- she rescued David's heir.
 2. We don't know a lot about her.
 - a. We are told she is the daughter of King Joram. This is the Jehoram (Joram) who was the son of Jehoshaphat who married Athaliah. We're not told Athaliah was her mother, but it might be assumed since we are told Ahaziah was her brother. Ahaziah was 22 when he ascended to the throne. She was probably a couple years younger which made her only 19-20 years old.
 - b. In 2 Chronicles 22 we're told she was the young wife of Jehoiada the high priest.
 3. This brave woman took young Jehoash and hid him for six years. **2 Chronicles 22:11-12 NAU** - "But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she would not put him to death. ¹² He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land."
 4. Like with Moses centuries before, it was a risky move. Babies cry a lot. Moses could only be hidden for three months before his mother knew it was no longer possible. Jehoash was hidden for six years. **Exodus 2:2-3 NAU** - "The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was beautiful, she hid him for three months. ³ But when she could hide him no longer, she got him a wicker basket and covered it over with tar and pitch. Then she put the child into it and set *it* among the reeds by the bank of the Nile."
- B. Did Jehosheba understand the importance of this act of loyalty and valor?
1. Jehoash was the only remaining heir to the throne. He was the thread upon which the Davidic Covenant hung. If Athaliah had been successful in killing him the Covenant would have ended and God's redemptive purpose would have come to an end.
 2. And we shouldn't overlook the other hero, Jehosheba's husband, Jehoiada the priest. His hand was probably behind this entire scheme to rescue the young heir to the throne. But it was risky. **2 Chronicles 23:1 NAU** - "Now in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself" When the time came to execute his plan he "strengthened himself." CSV – "Jehoiada summoned his courage." ESV – "Jehoiada took courage"

3. It was by the righteousness of this priest that the young king learned how to rule in righteousness.
2 Kings 11:21 NAU - "Jehoash was seven years old when he became king."
2 Chronicles 24:2 NAU - "Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest."
4. These were instruments in the hand of God to maintain His covenant faithfulness. Nothing shall overcome God's covenant purpose. He could have intervened in a supernatural act to destroy the evil acts of Athaliah, but God uses His frail human agents.
 We saw it before when wicked Jezebel was determined to destroy all of God's prophets, but God used his simple servant Obadiah to rescue and protect one hundred of them.
5. 2000 years later Herod ordered the execution of the Christ, even though he didn't know His identity. So, he ordered the deaths of all the young boys. And Mary and Joseph carried the King for safety in Egypt. Mary and Joseph were mere peasants subverting the plans of the powerful king. Herod thought he'd won, but God's ways will not be thwarted.

II. Do you understand the importance of your place in the Kingdom of God?

- A. There are no insignificant lives in God's Kingdom.
 1. But you say, "I'm not an important person. I don't move about with the rich and famous, the powerful and influential."
 2. Rich and powerful does not describe God's people. Its more like poor and lowly. God has His servants stationed throughout the world. When Paul was threatened in Corinth God encouraged him:
Acts 18:9-10 NAU - "And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid *any longer*, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city."
2. Don't underestimate the significance of your life.
 - a. Mom and Dad, don't underestimate the power of your influence over the lives of your children—for good or bad.
 - b. Jehoshaphat was a Godly king, but he failed in this important role and it almost destroyed the Kingdom. It was his decision to unite his son with the daughter of Ahab that brought down God's judgment upon his house.
 - c. Jehoiada the high priest knew the importance of teaching this young child in the disciplines and doctrines of godliness. He was training up Judah's future king who would reign for the next forty years.
 Who are you training up? This is true of children, grandchildren, and every other child under your influence.

3. Are you in your place of employment by accident? When the Jews were being threatened with extinction and Esther was the only one who could speak to the king on their behalf, Mordecai told her:
Esther 4:14 NAU - "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place and you and your father's house will perish. And who knows whether you have not attained royalty for such a time as this?"
- B. We must not overlook the bitter hatred of Christianity that is increasing today. What will you do? How will you respond?
1. The effort to destroy the Kingdom is still very much active.
 2. Tim Keller: "The culture is more hostile to Christianity. Whether speaking of the academy, the media, government, business, popular entertainment, the arts, or social media—our culture is growing more hostile toward Christian beliefs and values."¹
 3. Things haven't changed since the wicked scheme of Athaliah. God's people are always facing danger, but we must determine to exalt Christ and serve His Kingdom.
Dale Ralph Davis – "Is this really so in our day? Is Athaliah's sword still dripping? Ask the two million who've perished in south Sudan over the last two decades, many of them Christians. Ask believers in Indonesia where 10,000 Christians (one report—this is probably far too low) have perished at the hands of Muslims. This is par. This is what we can expect. Don't even be surprised if you see tinges of this fury in your office or shop or school."²
 4. Wickedness is always around us, always seeking to derail the work of the Kingdom. But God always has His faithful remnant who have died to self and have pledged service to Christ.

Conclusion:

1. Do you recognize the significance of your life? Remember, there are no insignificant Christians. This is our hour. We must be valiant in the war.
2. We are no less certain of the outcome today as any other generation. While it might seem that Christianity is waning, don't be fooled. It is an unstoppable force.

¹ World Magazine, Vol. 37, No. 1 (01/15/2022) – Sophia Lee's interview with Tim Keller, page 32.

² Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Kings: The Power and the Fury*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Great Britain: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 170.