

Week Four Ahaziah/Athalia/Joash

2 Chronicles 21-23 (also II Kings 8.16-24 Jehoram [Joram]; 8.25-29; 9.16-29 Ahaziah; chapter 11 Athalia/Joash [Jehoash])

We have declared our purpose and method for our study.

Purpose: We want discover positive character traits and recognize negative character traits in the people that want to lead us.

Method: We will do this by looking at a select group of leaders among the kings of Israel and Judah. We can't study all of the kings in a 10-12 week study. There are too many.

A key verse we have used to help us in vetting possible leaders is:

Ex 18:21 Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

To this point we have looked at:

- Rehoboam – The King who listened to bad **counsel**.
- Asa – The King who **almost** finished well.
- Jehoshaphat – The King who kept making terrible **alliances**.

Today we are going to look at more than one person. We are going to look at a **wimp** king; a **conniving** queen mother and a king **unprepared** to rule. We will actually split the study into two parts and emphasize the Queen Mother today. Next time we will look at Joash – Boy King and figurehead.

Background facts:

- The kingdoms have been divided for five generations.
- Baal worship has taken over in Israel.
- Baal worship is rising in Judah.
- Dependence on military alliances have done little to secure the kingdoms.
- God was still in control even when his people were being attacked.

- God always has his people...

Heritage:

This is a very interesting aspect of our study today. The influence of our predecessors is very important. So what was the heritage of Ahaziah?

1. Ahaziah's Grandfather Jehoshaphat made some **bad alliances**. When we make bad alliances we open the door for those wicked people to influence and intermingle with our family.
2. Ahaziah's father, Jehoram, married one of **Ahab's** daughter's, Athalia (21.6). She influenced him. Like Jezebel influenced Ahab to murder Naboth to take possession of his vineyard, Athalia her daughter likewise encouraged Jehoram to do evil, namely, to kill all possible rivals. Let's read it. *4. But when Jehoram had become solidly established as king, he killed all his brothers and some of the other leaders of Judah.*⁵ *Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years.*⁶ *But Jehoram followed the example of the kings of Israel and was as wicked as King Ahab, for he had married one of Ahab's daughters. So Jehoram did what was evil in the Lord's sight.* God was not pleased and he raised up the Edomites, to attack them and later the verse ¹⁶ *Then the Lord stirred up the Philistines and the Arabs, who lived near the Ethiopians,* to attack Jehoram.*¹⁷ *They marched against Judah, broke down its defenses, and carried away everything of value in the royal palace, including the king's sons and his wives. Only his youngest son, Ahaziah, was spared.* It is very important who we associate with because our kids may marry one of their kids.

Situation:

1. Ahaziah became King by **default** (22.1-2). The invading armies had sacked Jerusalem and killed all King Jehoram's sons except the youngest, Ahaziah. He was young and only had his mother to influence him.
2. Ahaziah had no personal **character**. If Ahaziah had any fleeting thought of returning to the God of David and his ancestors his wicked mother wiped them out of his mind. Listen to v.2-4 *Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother was Athaliah, a granddaughter of King Omri.*³ *Ahaziah also*

followed the evil example of King Ahab's family, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. 4 He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as Ahab's family had done. They even became his advisers after the death of his father, and they led him to ruin. So get this now the King of Judah is listening to the advisors from Ahab cabinet.

3. Ahaziah repeated the foolish **alliances** of his Grandfather Jehoshaphat. V.5-9 tells of how he once again joined forces with Joram of Israel in an evil alliance to fight against the Syrians (Arameans). God had determined to eliminate Joram and all of Ahab's descendants. By association with Joram, God's avenger, Jehu killed all of Joram's descendants, many leaders in Judah and among them he killed Ahaziah.
4. Evil always steps forward in a **leadership vacuum** (22.10). Athalia, Jezebel's and Ahab's daughter, wife of Jehoram of Judah, and mother of Ahaziah saw her power position and her cushy situation evaporating so she took measures. Count on it; Satan is always seeking power positions.

Deliverance:

God has stepped in to deliver his people time and again throughout history. Now remember God made a promise to David that a descendant of his would sit on the throne perpetually. God may work miracles to deliver his people but his plan always includes a human agent as leader.

1. A **godly woman** refused to let the king's son perish (v.11-12). Let's read it. ¹¹ *But Ahaziah's sister Jehosheba,* the daughter of King Jehoram, took Ahaziah's infant son, Joash, and stole him away from among the rest of the king's children, who were about to be killed. She put Joash and his nurse in a bedroom. In this way, Jehosheba, wife of Jehoiada the priest and sister of Ahaziah, hid the child so that Athaliah could not murder him.* ¹² *Joash remained hidden in the Temple of God for six years while Athaliah ruled over the land.* Ahaziah was wicked but his sister Jehosheba feared God. She was the daughter of Wicked Athalia but she refused to follow in her ways. Thank God some children break the cycle of evil Amen.
2. A **courageous** and godly man decided to act (chapter 23)

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is
For good men to do nothing." Edmund Burke

- *V.1-3 In the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada the priest decided to act. He summoned his courage and made a pact with five army commanders: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri. 2 These men traveled secretly throughout Judah and summoned the Levites and clan leaders in all the towns to come to Jerusalem. 3 They all gathered at the Temple of God, where they made a solemn pact with Joash, the young king. Jehoiada said to them, "Here is the king's son! The time has come for him to reign! The LORD has promised that a descendant of David will be our king. Jehoida said enough is enough.*
3. People **gain courage** when godly people lead. People will follow courageous **leadership**. ¹¹ *Then Jehoiada and his sons brought out Joash, the king's son, placed the crown on his head, and presented him with a copy of God's laws. They anointed him and proclaimed him king, and everyone shouted, "Long live the king!"* They go on to celebrate and rejoice that the rightful king is back on the throne and the wicked Athalia is deposed. Listen to Solomon in Proverbs. Pr29:2 *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.* The
4. Evil can be diminished and **limited** when godly people act faithfully and courageously.
- First, the wicked usurper, Athalia, was **deposed**, and put to death (23.12-13). She was carried out and killed at the horse gate of the palace.
 - Second, her wicked influences were **eliminated** (23.16-21). ¹⁷ *And all the people went over to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They demolished the altars and smashed the idols...* Everyone was involved in tearing down the temple of baal and its worship elements. They all had a hand in killing Mattan the wicked priest of baal right in front of the altars of baal. v.21. *So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was peaceful because Athaliah had been killed.* Now this is no incitement to riot or to assassinations because we are not setting up a physical kingdom and we are not Jews defending our throne. Yet we are the people of God and we are not

supposed to sit by idly and watch the destruction of our nation. We must act. The best action we can take today is to pray, to witness for Jesus, to speak up for righteousness in our daily lives. Also, political correctness should not shut our mouths when evil is being promoted.

What can we learn about proper leadership?

- Associations and alliances matter. There may not be guilt by association but there is definitely **influence**.
- You marry the **family**. Jehoram's marriage to Athalia was more than a love affair between two young people it was the invitation to the wicked influence of Jezebel.
- Changing the names of the people that sin and disobey does not change the **outcome**. If you want a different cake you had better use different ingredients.
- Evil is always waiting in the wings to take over when good people **do** nothing.
- Thank God, the **cycle** of evil can be broken in families. There are a lot of strong women in the world good and bad.
- God has his people in every generation and they will rally around a godly and **humble** leader like Jehoida.
- Praise God the situation is never **hopeless**.

Again, 2Ch 16:9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

Who will stand up for righteousness and who will be loyal to God?