



# Church of God Sunday School

## JOASH BECOMES KING

2 Kings 8:24 — 12:21  
2 Chronicles 22:1 — 24:27

Ahaziah (*ay-huh-ZI-uh*), the king of Judah, was a wicked king. His mother was Athaliah (*ath-uh-LI-uh*), daughter of the king of Israel. He "walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor [advisor] to do wickedly."

Many years before, Elijah had foretold of the destruction of the house of Ahab (1 Kings 21:20-26). God used Jehu (*JEE-hoo*) to "smite the house [family] of Ahab" (2 Kings 9:7). Ahaziah was one of the many men who were destroyed.

After Ahaziah died, Athaliah wanted to be the queen. She made sure that no one else had a claim to the throne by having all the king's royal family (male children) killed. (Those were her own grandchildren!) This would have completely wiped out the house of David. (These were David's great, great, great, great, great, great grandsons.)

But God had other plans! Athaliah did not know that one small baby was saved. His name was Joash (also called Jehoash). Joash had an aunt named Jehosheba (*juh-HOSH-uh-buh*). (She was also called Jehoshabeath—*juh-hoh-SHAB-ee-ath*.)

Jehosheba was the wife of the priest Jehoiada (*juh-HOI-uh-duh*). She knew of the plot against the royal family, so she stole Baby Joash from among his brothers and hid both him and his nurse.

For six years Queen Athaliah reigned over the land of Judah and served the idol Baal. Meanwhile, Joash was growing up in the temple of God. His aunt Jehosheba took care of him, and his uncle Jehoiada taught him about God and the Law of Moses.

In the seventh year, Jehoiada felt that the time had come to make it known that Joash, one of Ahaziah's own children, was still alive. So Jehoiada told all the captains of the army about Joash and

persuaded them to help him make Joash the king. Then they went and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, with the chief leaders of Israel, and told them about Joash. These men all came to Jerusalem. In the house of God, they all joined with Jehoiada to make Joash the king.

Jehoiada had a plan. On the Sabbath day, a third part of the priests and the Levites were to guard the doors of God's house. A third part should guard the house of the king. Another third part was to guard "the gate of Sur" (a temple gate). All the people were to gather in the "courts of the house of the LORD" and "keep the watch of the LORD." No one was to enter the Lord's house except the priests and the Levites. If any others dared to enter, they were to be killed.

Once the priests and the Levites were all in their positions, Jehoiada armed them with "king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD." Then young Joash was brought out. He was only seven years old. Jehoiada "put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony." (The testimony was the Book of the Law; Deuteronomy 17:18-19.) Joash was made king and anointed. "And they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king."

All the people began to shout and rejoice. "When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD." She saw all the people rejoicing and heard the blowing of trumpets. She saw the king standing by his pillar. She saw the singers playing on instruments and singing praises to King Joash. Then Athaliah tore her royal garments and shouted, "Treason, Treason."

The historian Josephus wrote that Athaliah ordered her guard to kill Joash. But Jehoiada commanded the captains of the army to take Athaliah outside the Lord's



house and kill her. Anyone who defended her was to be killed too. Athaliah was taken as far as the "horse gate," and there she was put to death.

Then, because so many of the people had been worshipping Baal, "Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people." This covenant (agreement) was to remind the people that "they should be the LORD'S people," and He would be their God. Jehoiada also made a covenant between the king and the people.

Next "all the people went to the house of Baal" and tore it down! They also tore down Baal's altars, broke his images, and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal.

When Joash had been king for 23 years, he decided to repair the "house of the LORD" (the temple). It needed to be repaired because it was old and also it had been vandalized by Queen Athaliah's sons. They had taken the sacred things that were dedicated to God and used them in Baal worship.

Joash commanded that a collection chest be set by the gate to the Lord's house. The people rejoiced and brought so much money that, once the repairs were finished, vessels of gold and silver were made for the temple.

Jehoiada lived to be 130 years old, and while he lived King Joash "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD." But after Jehoiada's death, King Joash allowed temples to be built for idol worship. This made

God angry! He sent prophets to warn the people, "but they would not give ear [listen]." One of these prophets was Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. At the king's command, Zechariah was stoned and killed.

"Thus Joash . . . remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada [Zechariah's] father had done to him." As a punishment God allowed the Syrians to come and attack Judah. "All the princes of the people" were killed and the country was robbed of its valuables.

After the Syrians left, Joash was lying on his bed, badly wounded from the attack. His servants, angry about the death of Jehoiada's son, came in and killed him! King Joash had reigned over Judah for forty years.

King Joash had started so well. During his reign, idols were destroyed, the people were brought back to the true God, and the temple was repaired. But this was only while Jehoiada was alive. After his death, Joash failed to remain true to God. He became an idolater and a murderer. Thus, the words of the dying Prophet Zechariah came to pass: "The Lord look upon it [Joash's sin], and require it [punishment]."

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest."*

*—2 Chronicles 24:2*  
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