

## Lesson 101

# God Protects Joash

Joash becomes king and repairs the temple.

# Overview

## Lesson Focus

Athaliah killed the royal family so she could be queen, but Joash was rescued by his aunt and hidden in the temple. After six years, Jehoiada the priest crowned Joash as king and had Athaliah executed. King Joash repaired the temple and did what was right as long as Jehoiada lived. When Jehoiada died, Joash turned to idolatry and was judged.

## Key Passages

2 Kings 11:1–3, 11:12–14; 2 Chronicles 24:1–4, 24:17–22

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

Understand how God preserved David's line.  
Evaluate the godliness of Joash's reign.

## Memory Verse

Ephesians 2:4–5 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.

# Prepare to Share

## Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

During the time of the divided kingdom, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah were characterized by their kings. All the kings of Israel rejected the ways of God, worshipping idols and doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord. The people followed the example of their kings, and after many years of patience, God sent judgment on the northern kingdom. In 721 BC, the Assyrians captured Israel and scattered the people throughout the Assyrian territory. Meanwhile, Judah was on a similar path.

The people of Judah followed their kings in obedience to God or idolatry. In contrast to Israel, Judah was more responsive to God's warnings. Several notable kings did what was right in the sight of the Lord, abolished idolatry, and turned the people's hearts toward God. Other kings started their reigns by honoring God but turned away from him later in life. Ultimately, Judah suffered the same judgment as Israel. Just as Israel had rejected God, so did Judah. And just as God sent judgment on Israel, he judged Judah for their idolatry.

Joash was one of the kings of Judah who started off faithfully but failed in the end. He was the son of Ahaziah, who reigned in Judah for one year and did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. In fact, Ahaziah walked in the ways of Ahab (2 Kings 8:27), the wicked king of Israel. Ahaziah ruled in Judah while Jehoram (or Joram) was ruling in Israel. Ahaziah went with Jehoram to battle against the Syrians. After being wounded, Jehoram returned to Jezreel to recover, and Ahaziah visited him there. Jehu, who had been anointed as king and appointed to strike down the house of Ahab, approached Jezreel, and the two kings came out to meet him. He killed both kings and assumed the throne in Israel (2 Kings 9:21–27).

When Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, heard that her son was dead, she usurped the throne by killing the royal family. Jehosheba (or Jehoshabeath), Ahaziah's sister, took young Joash and hid him from Queen Athaliah. She and her husband, Jehoiada the priest, hid the young prince in the house of God (2 Kings 11:2–3).

After six years, Jehoiada gathered the royal guards, the Levites, and the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel. On a selected Sabbath, they enacted the plan to instate Joash as king. One shift would report for duty at the palace as usual. Their task would be to make sure the queen did not know what was going on. The other two shifts reported to the temple to protect the heir to the throne. Then Jehoiada anointed

the king, giving him the crown and a copy of the law. When Athaliah came out to see what the commotion was, she was seized, carried out of the temple, and executed.

Joash became king when he was seven years old, and he did what was right in the sight of the Lord for as long as Jehoiada lived. He restored the temple, which had been ransacked and its furnishings stolen to use in worship of the Baals. The people gladly followed Joash's lead, the temple was repaired, and the burnt offerings were performed regularly in the house of the Lord (2 Chronicles 24:14). But when Jehoiada died, Joash began to listen to the princes of Judah, and he abandoned the temple and the God worshipped there. He even ordered Jehoiada's son to be stoned in the temple complex for confronting the king's sin. Joash began as a godly king, but he was assassinated by his own servants and buried in dishonor after God delivered his army into the hands of the Syrians.

## Historical/Apologetics Background

The preservation of Joash was a significant event in the history of Judah and all of Israel. The royal line of David had been preserved through the kingship of Judah and was a part of God's much bigger plan. At this point in time, though, that line was almost completely eliminated. Ahaziah's father had killed all his brothers when he ascended the throne (2 Chronicles 21:4).

Ahaziah's brothers had been killed by the Philistines (2 Chronicles 21:16–17). If Athaliah had succeeded in killing all of Ahaziah's sons, there would be no heir to the Davidic throne. Thankfully, our God is sovereign over all things and faithful to his promises. He had promised an eternal throne to David's descendant, and it was through this lineage that the Savior would be born. God's plan cannot be thwarted, and we see his sovereign hand in the protection of Joash.

Joash's lineage is also interesting on his grandmother's side, and not just because she tried to kill him. Athaliah was the daughter of the wicked King Ahab. Ahab ruled in Israel during the time of Elijah. It was Ahab's queen's prophets of Baal that Elijah defeated at Mount Carmel. The Bible tells us that "There was none who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab" (1 Kings 21:25). Joram, king of Judah, married Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, and walked in the ways of his father-in-law (2 Kings 8:18). Their son, Ahaziah, walked in the ways of Ahab (2 Kings 8:27). Athaliah killed her own grandsons in order to rule. Finally, Joash broke the cycle by following the godly influence of Jehoiada, at least while the priest was alive.

During the reign of Athaliah, the temple was neglected, and dedicated articles had been taken for use in the temple of Baal. Joash, under the influence of Jehoiada, restored the temple and reinstated regular burnt offerings. Ironically, this effort was undone at the end of his life. When

King Hazael of Syria came against Judah, God delivered Joash's army into their enemy's hands. In order to pacify the Syrian king, Joash stripped the temple of the sacred gifts and all the gold he could find and sent it to Hazael as tribute. Then Joash's servants killed him on his bed. So Joash's reign ended as it began: with conspiracy against the throne and the temple of God in disrepair. Confidence that God is sitting on his throne with Jesus at his right hand offers us great comfort and hope. We can rejoice in his goodness, knowing that he is patient to call sinners to repentance as they look to Christ for forgiveness.

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