

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 7A

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION

For the first ten chapters of 2 Kings, the divine writer focuses on Israel, the northern kingdom. In chapter 10, Jehu, who usurped King Jehoram of Israel to be the new king, totally destroyed the house of Ahab. God's judgement upon the wicked Ahab and Jezebel his idolatrous wife was ultimately carried out. The dynasty of Ahab in Israel came to an end. Israel had a new king, Jehu. God allowed Jehu's dynasty to last for four generations, and then it would end because Jehu did not take heed to walk in the ways of the LORD with all his heart (2 Kings 10:31).

In chapter 11, the focus shifted to Judah, the southern kingdom. For this period of time, the two royal houses of Israel and Judah were so related by intermarriage that the distinction between the two kingdoms seems inconsequential and non-existent. However, the house of David was very different from the royal houses of the north. In chapter 11, the writer shows that while the house of Ahab passed away, the house of

David, which was threatened with extermination, must live on. The reason is a spiritual one. God had promised that the seed of the woman that would bruise the head of the serpent (see Genesis 3:15) will come from the Davidic line. This line of David cannot be cut off. If it were cut off, the plan of salvation for mankind would be severed and God's plan would have been thwarted by the Evil One. This must never be allowed to happen. God will always have his servant at the right time and the right place.

God demonstrated that He was in sovereign control over the affairs of men, in particular, in the house of David when nearly all his male descendants were killed. In such crises, God often raises courageous men and women, like Jehoiada and Jehosheba, to thwart men's evil and wicked schemes in order that His plan and purposes be achieved. The importance of godly parents or guardians cannot be overstated. It is always sad when the guidance and counsel of godly parents or guardians are ignored for some reasons and the subject strays away from his godly upbringing. In most cases, the subject suffers many hardships and even death.

Chapter 11 opens with Athaliah making herself Queen of Judah via murder. The scene shifts to Joash, an escaped descendant of the house of David, being proclaimed King of Judah in place of Athaliah. Athaliah met her death for her wicked and cruel deeds. Following her death, Judah experienced a national spiritual rebirth.

OUTLINE

1. Athaliah Became Queen (vv.1-3);
2. Joash Proclaimed King (vv.4-12);
3. The Death of Athaliah (vv 13-16);
4. A National Revival (vv.17-21)

COMMENTARY

Athaliah Became Queen – 11:1-3

Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:18, 26). She married Jehoram, the King of Judah. After Jehoram died, his son, Ahaziah succeeded him. When Ahaziah visited his wounded uncle, who was recuperating in Jezreel, he was wounded by Jehu. He managed to escape to Megiddo where he died. Normally when a king died, one of his sons would have to become the king in his place.

But in Judah, Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, had other plans. When she learned of the death of her son, she set out to make herself queen of Judah. She then ordered “all the seed royal” (literally, “seed of the kingdom”) to be wiped out. Some of the “seed royal” could therefore include the sons of Ahaziah or her grandsons. In her mad crave for the throne of Judah, she killed her very own grandsons.

Athaliah’s action seems to show that she did not want to see the Davidic dynasty succeed. She followed the example of her husband, Jehoram, King of Judah. When Jehoram ascended the throne, he killed all his

brothers and some of the princes of Israel to prevent them from dethroning him (2 Chronicles 21:4).¹ Satan was certainly trying his utmost to keep the promised Messiah from being born in David’s family.

Athaliah became a pawn of Satan without realizing it. Her greed for power turned her into a murderer. Her lust for power consumed her and she resorted to the annihilation of the Davidic lineage to achieve her wicked end. There seems to be no limit to the evil heart of mankind when it is consumed by greed and power.

But God was in control. Jehosheba (also known as Jehoshabeath), who was the daughter of King Jehoram of Judah (probably from one of his concubines) and therefore the sister of Ahaziah, did a heroic thing. She hid Joash, the son of Ahaziah, in the priests’ quarters of the Temple. Jehosheba was the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. Her act saved Joash from being killed by Athaliah. Joash was one year old then. Jehosheba hid her for six years in the Temple. No one could have suspected him to be the son of Ahaziah. He could

¹ 2 Chronicles 21:4 Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel. In verse 2 Jehoshaphat was referred to as the King of Israel when he was actually the King of Judah (2 Kings 8:16). There is no error here. During this period, the kings of Israel and Judah were related by intermarriages. King Jehoshaphat rendered military aid to the King of Israel. Ezra who wrote the books of Chronicles wanted to show that King Jehoshaphat was a compromising king. Later his son Jehoram who became king followed the ways of the King of Israel. King Jehoshaphat wanted to bring the nation together but in the wrong way.

have been passed off as one of the sons of the Temple priests.

Joash Proclaimed King – 11:4-12

Jehoiada patiently waited for six years undoubtedly with much thought and prayer to the LORD. He must have thought through how to remove Athaliah so that Joash, the rightful king, could be proclaimed. In the seventh year, he gathered the chiefs and officers of the Temple guards. He presented Joash as the king's son and disclosed his plans after he had made a covenant with them under oath to do as he bid.

The general plan of his attempt to proclaim Joash as king of Judah and oust Athaliah ran as follows. The Temple and palace were guarded by five companies of soldiers on a rotation basis. On a chosen Sabbath, one company of soldiers would stand guard over the palace. Another company of soldiers would stand guard at the gate of Sur, and a third company would stand guard at the gate behind the guards. The precise identification of this gate is unclear. Some commentators suggest that it was the gate of the palace that faced the Temple. The remaining two companies of soldiers would stand guard over the Temple and the king. Jehoiada then gave strict instruction to the soldiers guarding the king to be vigilant and to kill anyone who tried to break through the cordon.

On the chosen Sabbath day, the chiefs and officers of the five companies of soldiers cooperated with Jehoiada and carried out his proposed plan. They went to Jehoiada, the high

priest, who supplied them with spears and shields which belonged to King David, who had previously stored them in the Temple. The guards took their assigned positions. There were Levites from the cities of Judah who were assembled on that Sabbath day including the elders of the nation. Jehoiada had called them to congregate at the Temple in Jerusalem on that day.

Jehoiada then presented Joash, the crown prince before all who were gathered at the Temple. He set Joash up on one of the two pillars at the front of the Temple (11:14a). He then placed the crown on Joash, gave him "the testimony" which was a scroll of the Torah or the Mosaic Law, and anointed him. The guards, the Levites and the elders all applauded and shouted, "God save the King" (literally, "let the King live"). The Crown Prince Joash was officially declared the King of Judah. God had kept His covenant promise with David. The dynasty of Davidic line must not be broken.

The Death of Athaliah – 11:13-16

Athaliah was attracted by the commotion and the noise of the guards and the people at the Temple grounds. She made her way to the Temple. She saw the newly crowned King Joash standing on the pillar of the Temple as the custom was. Beside King Joash were the leaders of the community and the trumpeters were blowing. All the people were rejoicing. Athaliah reacted by renting her garments and shouted: "Treason. Treason." (11:14). How absurd and self-contradictory for her to shout

“treason” when she was the real traitor. She had no shame and conscience. Joash was a descendant of David and had every right to the throne. Athaliah, on the other hand, had no claim to the throne and she ruthlessly and unjustly seized it.

Jehoiada, the priest, caught sight of her and commanded the captains of the guards to arrest her. He instructed them to take her out of the Temple grounds and execute her, and to kill anyone who followed her too. She could not have the honour of being killed within the Temple precinct. The guards took her out by the way where the king’s horses were brought into the palace and there she was executed. This was the greatest insult to Athaliah to die in such a contemptible spot like the stable. This is the retribution of the LORD to all those who dare to oppose Him and do wicked deeds.

A National Revival – 11:17-21

Jehoiada “made a covenant between the LORD and the King and the people.” (11:17). A covenant is an agreement between the parties concerned to solemnly commit, guarantee promises or be obligated. In this case, the condition of the covenant was that the people of Judah made a solemn commitment to be the LORD’s people. This meant that they would worship, obey and serve the LORD. The LORD, as He had always promised, would bless His people if they kept their obligation of the covenant. The word “made” in Hebrew is a word that stresses the solemnity of the covenant. The literal meaning of

the word is “to cut”, that means, the people “cut” a covenant with the LORD. This implies that if one party breaks the covenant, that party shall be “cut” or liable to severe penalty. So in this national rebirth, King Joash and the people “cut a covenant” with the LORD. They solemnly pledged that they would be the LORD’S people. Jehoiada also had the king and the people to “cut” a covenant between them. The king would protect and provide for his people, and the people in turn give their undivided loyalty and service to the king. The LORD in truth is the King of the people of Israel and the king ruled as LORD’S chosen representative.

The pledge of allegiance to the LORD necessitates a demonstration of its sincerity. Accordingly, the people tore down the “house of Baal” in Jerusalem, and smashed the altars and idols completely to bits. This was the first evidence that a temple devoted to Baal was erected in Jerusalem. Josephus the Jewish historian reported that it was built by Queen Athaliah during her six years’ rule over Judah. This pagan structure must have been built adjacent to the palace or very near to the Temple grounds because the people were able to destroy the structure immediately. After that, they escorted the newly crowned King Joash to the king’s palace where he sat on the royal throne. King Joash was only seven years old! This brought about a spiritual renewal or revival in Judah. The priests and Levites resumed their religious responsibilities and duties in

the Temple. The people of the land were rejoicing and there was peace.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Athaliah's slaughtering of nearly all her own grandsons to achieve her own self-interest and her greed for power is extremely wicked. Sometimes it is difficult to understand the evil and pain that men brings to their fellow men. At such times, some people would ask, if there is God, where is He? But we see that God was not at all uninterested nor was He ignorant of the wicked deeds of Athaliah. God has a plan and purpose for mankind. He has his appointed time for carrying out His plan. Unless we learn about Him by studying His Word, we will never learn to understand His will and His way. In the case of Athaliah, God raised Jehosheba and Jehoiada, a courageous couple to fulfil His plan. And ultimately Athaliah had to pay for her sin against God and men.

Jehoiada and his wife Jehosheba were a brave couple who risked their lives to hide Joash and bring him up to install him later in his rightful place as king of Judah. They not only needed courage but much wisdom and knowledge to keep Joash for six years! We see God's protection of them and blessings on them. God granted Jehoiada much wisdom, understanding and knowledge in the way he planned the installation of Joash to be King of Judah. Jehoiada lived to a ripe old age and there is reason to believe that his wife enjoyed the same. The lesson we can learn is

that a life given completely to God will be richly blessed. The blessing is not necessarily in terms of material wealth or long life which so many people equate it to be.

God raises one and puts down another. There is human responsibility in the establishment of Joash as king. His life was kept safe by God's appointed people. He became king according to God's time. The wicked queen for six years was punished, dying in a shameful manner. May Christians realise that evil people will not escape the judgement of God. Therefore, there is no reason to envy the evil or murmur. Obedient believers will lose nothing and are better off. Myopic views often lead to discontentment. Trust in God at all times and submit to His ways and not our own. His timing will be perfect. At God's chosen time, we will be ready to serve and the chosen persons will be ready to receive the service. AMEN

DAILY READING & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: 2 Kings 11:1-3; 2 Chronicles 22:10-12; Hebrew 11:23.

TUESDAY: 2 Kings 11:4-12; 2 Corinthians 8:16-24.

WEDNESDAY: 2 Kings 11:13-21; Deuteronomy 11:8-32.

THURSDAY: 2 Kings 11:1-21.

FRIDAY: 2 Kings 11:1-21.

Discussion Questions

1. What was Athaliah's aim in the massacre and which two persons brought it to nought? What new light does it reveal about God?

2. How do you evaluate the plot and plan of Jehoida in the re-establishment of Joash's kingship? Explain your answer.

3. What was the significance of starting the re-establishment of Joash's kingship from the house of the LORD?

4. What should be done to one who has committed a sin publicly and yet refuses to acknowledge his sin, and keeps insisting he is right? He is one who blames everyone else for the sin and problem caused in the church. What if this person is a pastor or elder in the church like Athaliah, the queen, who cried "treason"?

5. How do you respond when you see those who deceive and sin by stealth and have gained and won and seemed to have escape the law of the land? Explain how you would feel and what is the biblical response to such matters of injustice?

6. What signs of a healthy moral and spiritual life do you find in this chapter that could be applied in your life?
