

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 7B

THE SECOND BOOK OF KINGS

CHAPTER 12

INTRODUCTION

The heart of a man is not known till time has taken its course. Through trials the mettle of a man is seen. Many have proven to be wolves in sheep's clothing. It is sad that by the time their true colours are exposed, the damage could have already been done. The fact remains that such wolves in sheep's clothing that existed in the past continue to exist in the present. They are found in seminaries and churches and their evil and deceptive ways continue to wind their evil cords around unsuspecting hearts and minds.

Many, like Joash begin well. But like Joash, they end miserably. There seem to be no stopping of this foolishness. No matter how many are warned of this grave danger, the list of "never-end-well" continues to grow.

Chapter 12 opens with a declaration that Joash reigned for forty years in Judah and he was a good king. He initiated the repairs to the Temple which had been neglected in the days of the previous King Ahaziah and his mother Athaliah. Joash averted

Jerusalem being run over by Hazael, King of Syria. The chapter closes with the violent death of Joash. This lesson will give the diligent student some insights into the character of God and man, and the importance of having the right life partner in marriage.

OUTLINE

1. Joash was crowned King of Judah (vv.1-3);
2. The Restoration of the Temple (vv.4-16);
3. The Apostasy & Discipline of Joash (vv.17-21).

COMMENTARY

Joash King of Judah – 12:1-3

Chapter 12 begins with a summary statement of the reign of King Joash (also named as Jehoash). Joash was seven years old when he was crowned king, and Jehu, the King of Israel was then in his seventh year of rule. Joash reigned in Judah for forty years, a long period of time. His mother was Zibiah who came from Beersheba. Nothing more was said about her. Her name means "gazelle". It is quite strange that she was not mentioned when her son narrowly escaped death through the intervention of Jehosheba. Moreover she was not mentioned during the six years when Joash was brought up in the quarters of the Temple. One can only surmise that she must have died either at childbirth or before all these events happened.

The divine writer commended King Joash for doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the days “wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him” (12:2). This strongly suggests that as long as Jehoiada, the high priest, was his mentor, he did well. Joash was indeed privileged to have a godly priest to help and advise him. When he was of marriageable age, Jehoiada even picked two wives for him (2 Chronicles 24:3). The conjunction “but” introduces a sad note. The high places in the land were not destroyed. No action was taken and no order was given. The people were allowed to worship the LORD in these places instead of worshipping the LORD at the Temple in Jerusalem. This failure had its bad effect on him in later years. When Jehoiada died, Joash lost the privilege of his counsel. Joash drifted away from the ways of the LORD (2 Chronicles 24:17).

Restoration of the Temple– 12:4-16

Joash’s greatest accomplishment was the restoration of the Temple in Jerusalem which was in need of repair. The Temple was built by Solomon. It was now about 140 years later. The reason for its dilapidated condition could not be attributed solely to the long years of its use. Athaliah, the wicked woman, and her sons had maliciously vandalised the Temple and had taken the sanctified things from the Temple for their Baals (2 Chronicles 24:7).

Joash instructed the priests that all the money collected by them from the people should be used for the restoration of the Temple. Three

categories of collection were mentioned. The first category was money paid by every Israelite (Exodus 30:13). The next category was revenue from an Israelite who made a vow (Leviticus 27:2); and the third category was freewill offerings over and above the required donations (12:4). The collection of these dues was to pay for the cost of repairing the Temple. After twenty three years. the priests had still not repaired the Temple. Joash called Jehoiada and all the priests to enquire why the Temple had not been repaired. No reason was given by Jehoiada or the priests. One possible reason could be that the money collected was insufficient for the repairs or there was no support from the priests. Therefore it could be concluded that the priests probably took care of themselves according to what was due to them and left the Temple in a dilapidated condition. In the Levitical system of providing for the priests, the line was probably blurred between what was to be used for the renovation of the Temple and what was for the up-keep of the priests.

Joash relieved the priests of the responsibility of collecting the money for repairs. He personally took over the restoration of the Temple. Jehoiada installed a collection box beside the altar on the right side of the entrance to the Temple. All the money that was brought for the Temple was put into the box. When the box was full, the “king’s scribe” or treasurer and the high priest opened the box, counted the collection, and put them in bags. Notice that two responsible persons were appointed to handle and count

the money. This is a good and sound practice which leaves no room for embezzlement or misappropriation.

The money then was given to the foremen of the work force to compensate the various construction workers for their labour and also for the purchase of any materials needed for the repair. The sanctified vessels of the Temple were not made as yet because all the funds received were directed to the repair of the Temple first. After the repairs had been done, the money was directed to the making of the sacred vessels. The use of the collection money for the repairs of the Temple did not include the money for the trespass offering and the sin offering. These reparation offerings were meant for the priests. Therefore they were adequately provided for.

Apostasy & Discipline of Joash – 12:17-21

The next section of chapter 12 speaks of Judah being under threat of attack by King Hazael of Syria. He had marched with his troops to the south of the land after reducing the borders of the northern kingdom of Israel. After ransacking the Philistine city of Gath, Hazael was intent on invading Jerusalem. Joash quickly took the Temple treasures which his forefathers had dedicated, and his own things which he had dedicated to the Temple, including gold from the Temple and palace, and sent them to placate King Hazael. The King of Syria departed very much richer leaving Jerusalem very much poorer. One wonders why the divine writer includes this sorrowful experience of King Joash in this

section immediately after the account of King Joash's role in repairing the Temple. The answer is found in 2 Chronicles 24:17-18.¹

The problem was that the faith of Joash was not strong. After the death of Jehoiada, who had been his faithful spiritual mentor, Joash wilfully sinned against the LORD. He succumbed to the princes of Judah who led him to commit the sins of idolatry. Jehoiada, the high priest, had taught him the way of the LORD, and that idolatry was forbidden of the LORD. So, the threatened invasion by King Hazael of Syria and the impoverishment of the wealth of Judah were the LORD'S punitive will upon Joash. Later, his servants conspired and assassinated him. The reason for the assassination was revenge. He had ordered the death of Zechariah, who was the son of Jehoiada. In this aspect, he was ungrateful to the high priest who had been his guardian and faithful mentor. Joash showed great promise of being a good king. He had such a good beginning. But he had such a bad ending because he forsook the way of the LORD.

¹ 2 Chronicles 24:17 Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. 18 And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.

PRACTICAL VALUE

Joash's greatest contribution to his kingdom was in the repair and restoration of the Temple of God. The dilapidated state of the Temple was indeed dishonouring to God although God does not live in Temples made by the hands of man. However this particular Temple was God's own for He gave the blueprint and He instructed its construction. In OT times, the place of worship was still very significant. It was only after Christ came that the place of worship became insignificant. Today, true worshippers worship God in spirit and in truth whereas in the OT times, true worshippers worship God in spirit, in truth and in God's specified location. The Temple in Jerusalem was symbolic of the LORD's presence, protection and provision. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple would mean "Ichabod" i.e. the glory of the Lord has departed! This was one of the main reasons why Nehemiah was commissioned by God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and Ezra and Zerubbabel was commissioned to rebuild the Temple about 70 years earlier than Nehemiah.

CAMPBELL MORGAN remarked concerning the significance of the physical aspects of today's churches: "Whereas the house of God today is no longer material but spiritual, the material is still a very real symbol of the spiritual. When the Church of God in any place in any locality is careless about the material place of assembly, the place of its worship and its work, it is a sign and

evidence that its life is at a low ebb!" There is no need to be ostentatious and showy, but the least a church should always be is a clean, tidy and orderly church. Such a church reflects the character and spirituality of its members.

When money is to be collected and used for the work of God, there must be no lack. This is illustrated by the amount of money given by the people willingly for the repair of "the house of God". It is always an honour and privilege to give towards the building of God's house. This is a lesson of faith for many a church. God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills has no lack (Psalm 50:9, 10). God must not be limited by our subjective notion of Him. The more we study the Word, the more we will know Him, the better will be our understanding of Him. The better our understanding of Him, the stronger and more intimate our relationship with our God becomes. Many churches fail because their leaders do not know God and hence lack the faith in God to lead God's people to God's work.

Do not be like Joash who began well but finished badly. His failure was straying away from the ways of the LORD and fearing the loss of approval of his princes. Be steadfast and faithful to the LORD our God all the rest of our life. God will never fail His obedient child. AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: 2 Kings 12:1-16; 1 Chronicles 29:1-19.

TUESDAY: 2 Kings 12:17-21; 2 Chronicles 24:17-24.

WEDNESDAY: 2 Kings 12:1-21.

THURSDAY: 2 Kings 12:1-21.

FRIDAY: 2 Kings 12:1-21.

Discussion Questions

1. Was it the fault of Jehoiada that Joash turned out badly after his death?

2. What is your assessment of the character of Joash in this chapter? What further light is thrown in 2 Chronicles 24:17-24? What was the cause for Joash's apostasy? What does this tell us about what can happen in the hearts and minds of some godly people when they grow older?

3. In what ways would you commend Jehoiada the high priest?

4. What was Joash's sin in 2 Kings 12:17-19? If you were his servant, what counsel would you have given him?

5. What have you seen in this chapter that illustrates the principle of “a person’s belief determines his behaviour”?

6. What warnings do you find in this chapter that you would apply in your life?
