

LESSON TWENTY 21-23

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JEHORAM THE REIGN OF AHAZIAH.

ATALIAH'S DEATH. THE CORONATION OF JOASH.

5. THE REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT—Continued (17-21:3)

INTRODUCTION

Jehoram's marriage to Athaliah brought serious trouble to Judah. Ahaziah's death at the hands of Jehu led Athaliah to murder all possible candidates for Judah's throne. Joash's rescue and Athaliah's death proved that Jehovah still directed affairs in Judah.

TEXT

(Scripture text in Lesson Eighteen)

PARAPHRASE

(Scripture text in Lesson Eighteen)

COMMENTARY

A brief summary note on Jehoshaphat's life is added in chapter 21:1-3. Upon his death he was accorded a very honorable burial in the royal cemetery in Jerusalem. The sons of Jehoshaphat were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah. Two of these sons were called by the same name, "Azariah". The Hebrew names show a slight variation. One son is called "Azarihu". In addition to these six sons, Jehoram is named as successor to his father's position. Jehoram is identified as the first-born son. These princes received splendid gifts from their father and held positions of authority in the kingdom.

6. THE REIGN OF JEHORAM (21:5-20)

TEXT

Chapter 21:5. Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. 7. Howbeit Jehovah would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a lamp to him and to his children alway.

8. In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. 9. Then Jehoram passed over with his captains, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites that compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots. 10. So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day: then did Libnah revolt at the same time from under his hand, because he had forsaken Jehovah, the God of his fathers.

11. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, and led Judah astray. 12. And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of David thy father, 'Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13. but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, like as the house of Ahab did, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, who were better than thyself: 14. behold, Jehovah will smite with a great plague thy people and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy substance; 15. and thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness, day by day.' "

16. And Jehovah stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians that are beside the Ethiopians: 17. and they came up against Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

18. And after all this Jehovah smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19. And it came to pass, in process of time,

at the end of two years, that his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness, and he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers. 20. Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years: and he departed without being desired; and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 21:5. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years, in Jerusalem. 6. But he was as wicked as the kings who were over in Israel. Yes, as wicked as Ahab, for Jehoram had married one of the daughters of Ahab, and his whole life was one constant binge of doing evil. 7. However, the Lord was unwilling to end the dynasty of David, for he had made a covenant with David always to have one of his descendants upon the throne.

8. At that time the king of Edom revolted, declaring his independence of Judah. 9. Jehoram attacked him with his full army and with all of his chariots, marching by night, and almost managed to subdue him. 10. But to this day Edom has been successful in throwing off the yoke of Judah. Libnah revolted too, because Jehoram had turned away from the Lord God of his fathers.

11. What's more, Jehoram constructed idol shrines in the mountains of Judah, and led the people of Jerusalem in worshiping idols; in fact, he compelled his people to worship them. 12. Then Elijah the prophet wrote him this letter: "The Lord God of your ancestor David says that because you have not followed in the good ways of your father Jehoshaphat, nor the good ways of King Asa, 13. but you have been as evil as the kings over in Israel, and have made the people of Jerusalem and Judah worship idols just as in the times of King Ahab, and because you have killed your brothers who were better than you. 14. now the Lord will destroy your nation with a great plague. You, your children, your wives, and all that you have will be struck down. 15. You will be stricken with an intestinal

disease and your bowels will rot away.”

16. Then the Lord stirred up the Philistines and the Arabs living next to the Ethiopians to attack Jehoram. 17. They marched against Judah, broke across the border, and carried away everything of value in the king's palace, including his sons and his wives; only his youngest son, Jehoahaz, escaped.

18. It was after this that Jehovah struck him down with the incurable bowel disease. 19. In the process of time, at the end of two years, his intestines came out and he died in terrible suffering. (The customary pomp and ceremony was omitted at his funeral.) 20. He was thirty two years old when he began to reign and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and died unmourned. He was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the royal cemetery.

COMMENTARY

In order to secure his position as king, Jehoram massacred all of his brothers. Along with them, many princes were put to death. The cruelties of Ahab and Jezebel were perpetuated in the new king of Judah. Jehovah was merciful to His people in that the reign of Jehoram extended only through eight years. The Bible record explains Jehoram's failures on the basis of his alliance with the northern kingdom which included his marriage with Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel. The king of Judah was charged with the sin of "walking the way of the kings of Israel". His manner of life and failure as a king were sufficient reasons for Jehovah to bring the kingdom of Judah to an end at that time. Jehoram's connection with the line of David caused God to be merciful to him and his subjects. The "lamp" of verse seven has to do with kingly leadership (see II Samuel 7). Jehoram had to contend with rebellion on the part of the Edomites and the people of Libnah. Libnah was a village in Judah about twenty five miles southwest of Jerusalem. Judah's relationship with Edom was regulated largely by the inner strength or weakness of the southern kingdom. On this occasion (verses 8-10) Jehoram was able to accomplish a military victory over Edom; however the Edomites continued in revolution

against the southern kingdom. Jehovah used Edom and Libnah in this manner to bring judgment on Jehoram because of his failure as a king.

In order to convince Jehoram that he was wicked, Jehovah directed Elijah to write a review of the king's sins. This is the only mention of Elijah in the Books of Chronicles. This Elijah is to be identified with the man of God who was called "troubler of Israel" by Ahab (I Kings 18:17). In setting up idol worship Jehoram was not content simply to provide materials and places for such worship. He "led Judah astray". He forced his people to become idolatrous. He rejected the good examples of Jehoshaphat and Asa. He found his models for leadership in the sinful kings of the northern kingdom. He massacred his brothers. Elijah told him that he was the least worthy of all his brothers to serve as king.¹ He could expect continuing crises in his government. His own family would be brought under Jehovah's judgment and he, himself, would be stricken with a mortal bowel disease. This "writing" of Elijah indicates that some of the prophet's prior to the eighth century B.C. reduced their messages to written form. The kind of accusation brought against Jehoram reminds us of Elijah's words against Ahab and Jezebel.

The king of Israel's troubles accumulated rapidly. Philistines along the coast of the Great Sea and Arabians who lived on the perimeter of the great desert revolted. They attacked Jerusalem and carried away much booty along with the wives and sons of Jehoram. Jehoahaz was the only remaining son of the king. Elsewhere he is named Ahaziah and Azariah. The curse in Elijah's writing was thus being fulfilled. Jehoram's final sickness and death proved beyond doubt that he was judged because of his sins. Jehoahaz probably reigned with his father during the last two years of Jehoram's life. Jehoram died in dishonor and was not buried in that plot reserved for the kings of Judah. The tragic epitaph for his life was, "he departed without being desired".²

¹Cook, F. C., *The Bible Commentary*, I Samuel-Esther, p. 401

²Clarke, Adam, *A Commentary and Critical Notes*, Vol. II., p. 675

7. THE REIGN OF AHAZIAH (22:1-9)

TEXT

Chapter 22:1. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead; for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. 2. Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri. 3. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly. 4. And he did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah, as did the house of Ahab; for they were his counsellors after the death of his father, to his destruction. 5. He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead: and the Syrians wounded Joram. 6. And he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which they had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

7. Now the destruction of Ahaziah was of God, in that he went unto Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom Jehovah had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. 8. And it came to pass, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, that he found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, ministering to Ahaziah, and slew them. 9. And he sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (now he was hiding in Samaria), and they brought him to Jehu, and slew him; and they buried him, for they said, "He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought Jehovah with all his heart." And the house of Ahaziah had no power to hold the kingdom.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:1. Then the people of Jerusalem chose Ahaziah, his youngest son, as their new king (for the marauding bands of

Arabs had killed his older sons). 2. Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, granddaughter of Omri. 3. He, too, walked in the evil ways of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. 4. Yes, he was as evil as Ahab, for Ahab's family became his advisors after his father's death, and they led him on to ruin. 5. Following their evil advice, Ahaziah made an alliance with King Jehoram of Israel (the son of Ahab), who was at war with King Hazael of Syria at Ramoth-gilead. Ahaziah led his army there to join the battle. King Jehoram of Israel was wounded. 6. and returned to Jezreel to recover. Ahaziah went to visit him,

7. but this turned out to be a fatal mistake; for God had decided to punish Ahaziah for his alliance with Jehoram. It was during this visit that Ahaziah went out with Jehoram to challenge Jehu (son of Nimshi), whom the Lord had appointed to end the dynasty of Ahab. 8. While Jehu was hunting down and killing the family and friends of Ahab, he met King Ahaziah's nephews, the princes of Judah and killed them. 9. As he and his men were searching for Ahaziah, they found him hiding in the city of Samaria, and brought him to Jehu, who killed him. Even so, Ahaziah was given a royal burial because he was the grandson of King Jehoshaphat—a man who enthusiastically served the Lord. None of his sons, however, except for Joash, lived to succeed him as king.

COMMENTARY

Chapter 22:1 says that all of Jehoram's sons, except Jehoahaz, had been murdered by men who were associated with a band of Arabians. If the Davidic succession was to be followed, there was no alternative to setting Jehoahaz on the throne. Jehoahaz is called by the name of Ahaziah in chapter 22. He was Athaliah's son and she ruled Judah through him. Athaliah was Ahab's daughter and her grandfather was Omri. The chronicler emphasized the fact that the moral degeneracy of the northern kingdom had spilled over into Judah. Ahaziah's relationship to Athaliah brought him and Judah into alliance

with Jehoram, son of Ahab.¹ The Syrians under Hazael's kingship had fought with Jehoram and Israel at Ramoth-gilead. In this conflict Jehoram was wounded. He retreated from the battle field and remained at Jezreel while he recovered from his wound. Jezreel was about twenty miles southwest of the southern tip of the Sea of Chinnereth. Ahaziah (here called Azariah) came up from Jerusalem to visit Jehoram. This visit was another indication of the implications of Judah with the idolatrous northern kingdom. Ahaziah's death was the result of Jehovah's judgment on his wicked life. "Joram" is a shortened form of "Jehoram". Jehovah never approved Ahaziah's friendliness with this worshipper of Baal. The record in II Kings 9:21ff describes Ahaziah's ultimate tragedy. When Elijah met Jehovah at Horeb (Mount Sinai) as recorded in I Kings 19:15ff, the prophet was commissioned to anoint Jehu to be king of Israel. Jehu's assignment was to annihilate the houses of Omri and Ahab and to cleanse the northern kingdom of its Baalism. When Jehu had been anointed by one of the sons of the prophets at Ramoth-gilead, he hurried to Jezreel to execute judgment on Jehoram. At that time Ahaziah was visiting Jehoram. Both of the kings came out of the city to inquire about Jehu's mission and both of them were killed. Ahaziah had been able to avoid Jehu briefly while hiding in Samaria. Jehu hunted him and killed him. Even though he was the son of a righteous father, Jehoshaphat, his father's goodness could not save him. In connection with these events Jehu met "brethren of Ahaziah" who evidently were coming to Samaria to visit Jehoram and Jezebel (II Kings 10:12-14). He fell upon them and slew them.

8. THE TIMES OF ATHALIAH (22:10-23:15)

TEXT

Chapter 22:10. Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah. 11. But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole

¹Elmslie, W. A. L., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. III, p. 502.

him away from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in the bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she slew him not. 12. And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

Chapter 23:1. And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroaham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him. 2. And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3. And all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as Jehovah hath spoken concerning the sons of David. 4. "this is the thing that ye shall do: a third part of you, that come in on the sabbath, of the priests and of the Levites, shall be porters of the thresholds; 5. and a third part shall be at the king's house; and a third part at the gate of the foundation: and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of Jehovah. 6. "But let none come into the house of Jehovah, save the priests, and they that minister of the Levites; they shall come in, for they are holy: but all the people shall keep the charge of Jehovah. 7. "And the Levites shall compass the king around about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whosoever cometh into the house, let him be slain: and be ye with the king when he cometh in, and when he goeth out."

8. So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men, those that were to come in on the sabbath, with those that were to go out on the sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses. 9. And Jehoiada the priest delivered to the captains of hundreds the spears, and bucklers, and shields, that had been king David's, which were in the house of God. 10. And he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his

hand, from the right side of the house to the left side of the house, along by the altar and the house, by the king around about. 11. Then they brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony, and made him king: and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him; and they said, "Long live the king."

12. And when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of Jehovah: 13. and she looked, and behold, the king stood by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpets by the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew trumpets; the singers also played on instruments of music, and led the singing of praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, "Treason! treason!" 14. And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, "Have her forth between the ranks; and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword:" for the priest said, "Slay her not in the house of Jehovah." 15. So they made way for her; and she went to the entrance of the house gate to the king's house: and they slew her there.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 22:10. for their grandmother Athaliah killed them when she heard the news of her son Ahaziah's death. 11. Joash was rescued by his Aunt Jehosabeath, who was King Ahaziah's sister, and was hidden away in a storage room in the Temple. She was a daughter of King Jehoram, and the wife of Jehoiada the priest. 12. Joash remained hidden in the Temple for six years while Athaliah reigned as queen. He was cared for by his nurse and by his aunt and uncle.

Chapter 23:1. In the seventh year of the reign of Queen Athaliah, Jehoiada the priest got up his courage and took some of the army officers into his confidence: Azariah (son of Jeroham), Ishmael (son of Jehohanan), Azariah (son of Obed), Maaseiah (son of Adaiah), and Elishaphat (son of Zichri). 2, 3. These men traveled out across the nation secretly, to tell the

Levites and clan leaders about his plans and to summon them to Jerusalem. On arrival they swore allegiance to the young king, who was still in hiding at the Temple. "at last the time has come for the king's son to reign!" Jehoiada exclaimed. "The Lord's promise—that a descendant of King David shall be our king—will be true again. 4. This is how we'll proceed: a third of you priests and Levites who come off duty on the Sabbath will stay at the entrance as guards. 5, 6. Another third will go over to the palace, and a third will be at the Lower Gate. Everyone else must stay in the outer courts of the Temple, as required by God's laws. For only the priests and Levites on duty may enter the Temple itself, for they are sanctified. 7. You Levites, form a bodyguard for the king, weapons in hand, and kill any unauthorized person entering the Temple. Stay right beside the king."

8. So all the arrangements were made. Each of the three leaders led a third of the priests arriving for duty that Sabbath, and a third of those whose week's work was done and were going off duty—for Jehoiada the chief priest didn't release them to go home. 9. Then Jehoiada issued spears and shields to all the army officers. These had once belonged to King David and were stored in the Temple. 10. These officers, fully armed, formed a line from one side to the other in front of the Temple and around the altar in the outer court. 11. Then they brought out the little prince and placed the crown upon his head and handed him a copy of the law of God, and proclaimed him king. A great shout went up, "long live the king!" as Jehoiada and his sons anointed him.

12. When Queen Athaliah heard all the noise and commotion, and the shouts of praise to the king, she rushed over to the Temple to see what was going on—and there stood the king by his pillar at the entrance, with the army officers and trumpeters surrounding him, and people from all over the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers singing, accompanied by an orchestra leading the people in a great psalm of praise. Athaliah ripped her clothes and screamed, "Treason! Treason!" 13, 14. "Take her out and kill her," Jehoiada the

priest shouted to the army officers. "Don't do it here at the Temple. And kill anyone who tries to help her." 15, 16, 17. So the crowd opened up for them to take her out and they killed her at the palace stables. Then Jehoiada made a solemn contract that he and the king and the people would be the Lord's. And all the people rushed over to the temple of Baal and knocked it down, and broke up the altars and knocked down the idols, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before his altar.

COMMENTARY

The scene of action quickly transfers to Jerusalem where the queen mother, Athaliah, moved to make certain her claim to the throne.¹ Upon Ahaziah's death at the hands of Jehu, Athaliah set out to kill every person who through David's line might claim the throne. Jehoshabeath (Jehosheba) was the daughter of Jerhoram and the sister of Ahaziah. She acted quickly and wisely in taking Ahaziah's young son, Joash, and hiding him in a room in the Temple. Jehoshabeath was also the wife of Jehoiada, the high priest. Jehoiada was destined to become the power behind the throne in Judah. Most likely, Athaliah feverishly hunted this little boy; however, his aunt was able to hide him for six years. During this difficult period, Athaliah reigned as queen over Judah. She did not fear Jehovah and she used her influence to establish Baalism in the southern kingdom.

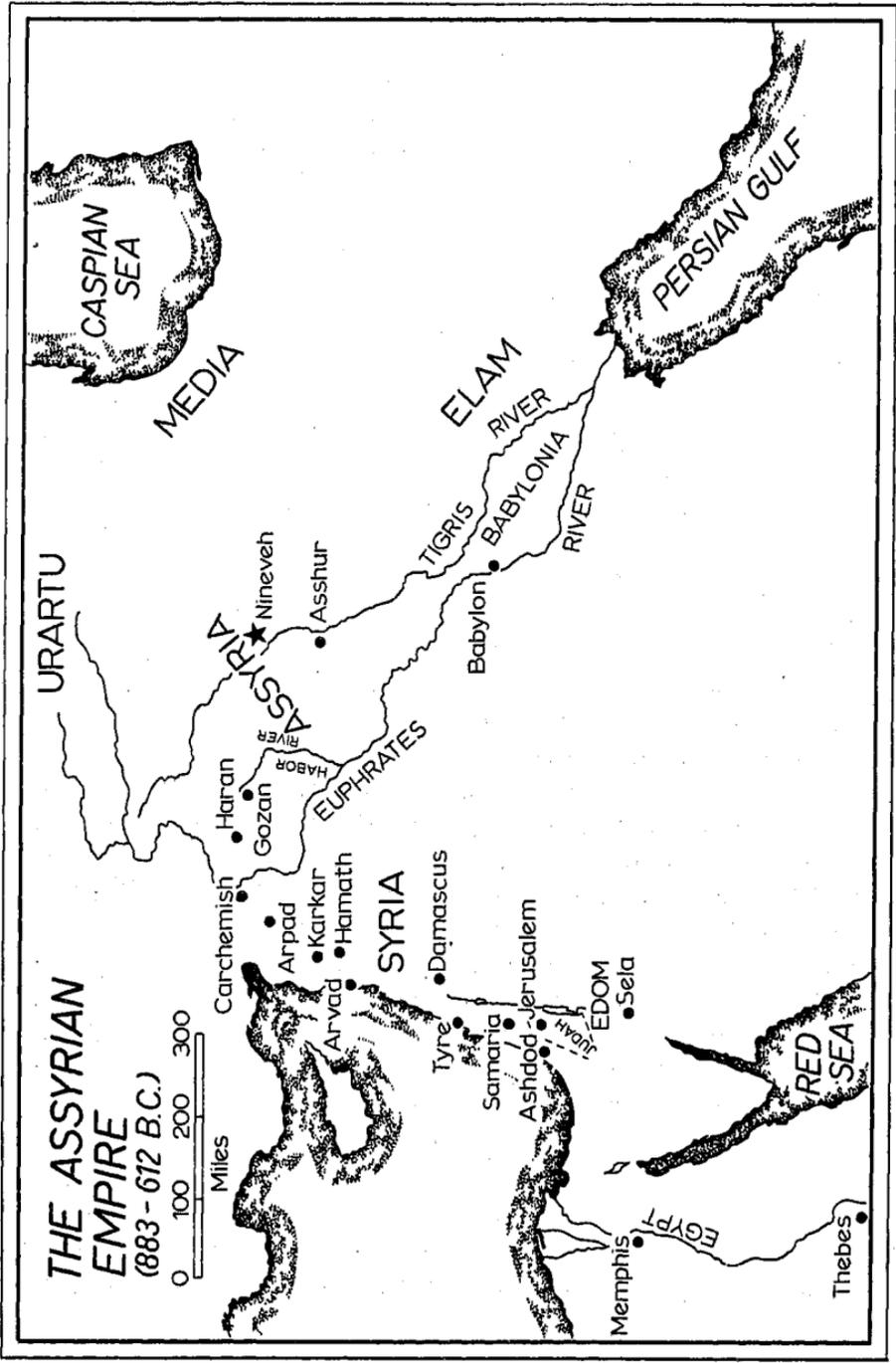
When Joash passed the sixth anniversary of his birth, the high priest, Jehoiada, made his move to depose Athaliah and put the true Davidic king on the throne of Judah. The five men named in this account are not named in II Kings 11:5-7. They are Azariah, Ishmael, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah, and Elishaphat. The whole group of soldiers over which they had charge probably numbered about five hundred. In addition to these soldiers, there was a representative group of Levites and elders who had agreed with Jehoiada to put Joash on the throne. All of this work was done without Athaliah's

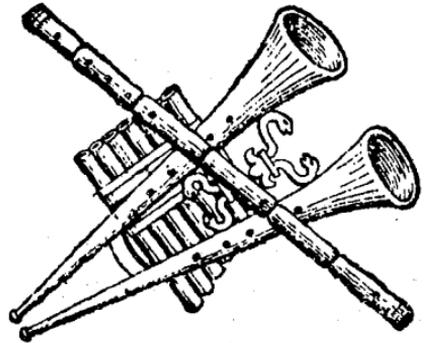
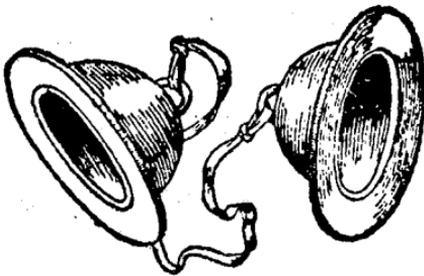
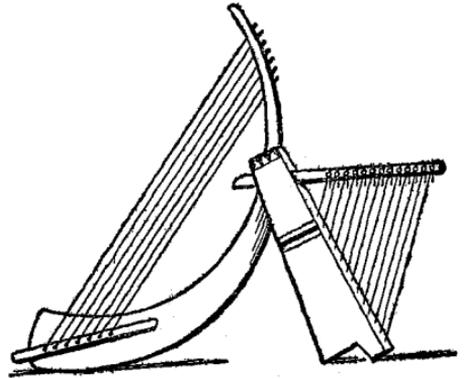
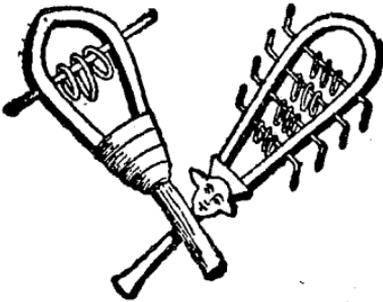
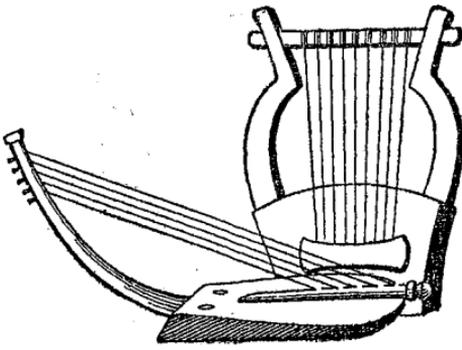
¹Pfeiffer, Charles H., *The Divided Kingdom* Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1967, p. 20.

knowledge. It is possible that many people were surprised to learn that Joash was alive, supposing that all the princes had been killed in Athaliah's purge. Jehoiada proceeded with great care to organize the men at his disposal. One third of the patriots would be priests and Levites who would be stationed at the doors of Jehovah's Temple. One third of the men would take up their positions at "the king's house", the place where Joash had been living. One third of the high priest's helpers were assigned to guard a particular gate in the vicinity of the Temple. The people would fill the courts to which they normally were allowed access. The Temple was not to be desecrated even for this important occasion. "The charge of Jehovah" concerning the sacredness of the Temple had to be observed. On this occasion the Levites were equipped with swords and at the proper time they were to form a protective shield around the boy, Joash. They were to guard this child with their own lives and they had orders to kill anybody who would attempt to harm him.

In order to carry out this very important project, Jehoiada kept all of the priests and Levites in service at the Temple. All of those who were responsible for groups of men were briefed concerning their assignments. Military equipment was taken out of the museum in the Temple and placed in the hands of Levites and others who were ready to put Joash on the throne. When all preparations had been completed, Joash was brought into the court of priests and stationed near the altar of burnt offering as Jehovah had instructed in Deuteronomy 17:18, when Joash was crowned. He was also presented a copy of the Law (the testimony) and the high priest anointed him to be king. The blessing, "Long live the king", was used when Saul was chosen for that office (I Samuel 10:24). It was also employed in the rebellion of Adonijah (I Kings 1:25).

No attempt was made to conceal the coronation. Athaliah had not been invited. From her quarters she heard the shouting of the congregation and the festival sounds of a free people. Upon leaving her house she hurried to Jehovah's Temple where she saw the boy king and the soldiers who blocked her access to





him. She tarried long enough to hear the sound of the trumpets and to hear a few words of the spirited singing. Not being able to contain herself, in a burst of emotion she ripped her queenly robes and charged the whole assembly with treason. Jehoiada answered this demonstration by ordering her to be led from the Temple. Careful attention was to be given to any who might come to Athaliah's defense. Such persons were to be put to death. The queen was not to be killed in the Temple, thus avoiding defiling the house of God. As she made her way back to her residence, she was slain. Her departure was as dramatic as that of her mother, Jezebel.

9. THE REIGN OF JOASH (23:16-24)

TEXT

Chapter 23:16. And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, and all the people, and the king, that they should be Jehovah's people. 17. And all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18. And Jehoiada appointed the officers of the house of Jehovah under the hand of the priests the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of Jehovah, to offer the burnt-offerings of Jehovah, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David. 19. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of Jehovah, that none that was unclean in anything should enter in. 20. And he took the captains of hundreds, and the nobles, and the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought down the king from the house of Jehovah: and they came through the upper gate unto the king's house, and set the king upon the throne of the kingdom. 21. So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. And Athaliah they had slain with the sword.

Chapter 24:1. Joash was seven years old when he began to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Zibiah, of Beer-sheba. 2. And Joash did that which

was right in the eyes of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3. And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters.

4. And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to restore the house of Jehovah. 5. And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year; and see that ye hasten the matter." Howbeit the Levites hastened it not. 6. And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, "Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the tax of Moses the servant of Jehovah, and of the assembly of Israel, for the tent of the testimony?" 7. For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, hath broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of Jehovah did they bestow upon the Baalim.

8. So the king commanded, and they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of Jehovah. 9. And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in for Jehovah the tax that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness. 10. And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end. 11. And it was so, that, at what time the chest was brought unto the king's officers by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the chief priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to its place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. 12. And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of Jehovah; and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of Jehovah, and also such as wrought iron and brass to repair the house of Jehovah. 13. So the workmen wrought, and the work of repairing went forward in their hands, and they set up the house of God in its state, and strengthened it. 14. And when they had made an end, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of Jehovah, even vessels wherewith to

minister and to offer, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt-offerings in the house of Jehovah continually all the days of Jehoiada.

15. But Jehoiada waxed old and was full of days, and he died; a hundred and thirty years old was he when he died. 16. And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house. 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 forsook the house of Jehovah, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guiltiness. 19. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto Jehovah; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.

20. And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people, and said unto them, "Thus saith God, 'Why transgress ye the commandments of Jehovah, so that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken Jehovah, he hath also forsaken you' " 21. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of Jehovah. 22. Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, "Jehovah look upon it, and require it."

23. And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the army of the Syrians came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. 24. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; and Jehovah delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken Jehovah, the God of their fathers. So they executed judgment upon Joash.

25. And when they were departed from him (for they left him very sick), his own servants conspired against him for the

blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died; and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings. 26. And these are they that conspired against him: Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabite. 27. Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the rebuilding of the house of God, behold, they are written in the commentary of the book of kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

PARAPHRASE

Chapter 23:18. Jehoiada now appointed the Levite priests as guards, and to sacrifice the burnt offering to the Lord as prescribed in the law of Moses. He made the identical assignments of the Levite clans that King David had. They sang with joy as they worked. 19. The guards at the Temple gates kept out everything that was not consecrated and all unauthorized personnel.

20. Then the army officers, nobles, governors, and all the people escorted the king from the Temple, wending their way from the Upper Gate to the palace, and seated the king upon his throne. 21. So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet and peaceful because Queen Athaliah was dead.

Chapter 24:1. Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years, in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah, from Beer-sheba. 2. Joash tried hard to please the Lord all during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. 3. Jehoiada arranged two marriages for him, and he had sons and daughters.

4. Later on, Joash decided to repair and recondition the Temple. 5. He summoned the priests and Levites and gave them these instructions: "Go to all the cities of Judah and collect offerings for the building fund, so that we can maintain the Temple in good repair. Get at it right away. Don't delay." But the Levites took their time.

6. So the king called for Jehoiada, the High Priest, and

asked him, "Why haven't you demanded that the Levites go out and collect the Temple taxes from the cities of Judah, and from Jerusalem? The tax law enacted by Moses the servant of the Lord must be enforced so that the Temple can be repaired."

7, 8. (The followers of wicked Athaliah had ravaged the Temple, and everything dedicated to the worship of God had been removed to the temple of Baalam.) So now the king instructed that a chest be made and set outside the Temple gate.

9. Then a proclamation was sent to all the cities of Judah and throughout Jerusalem telling the people to bring to the Lord the tax that Moses the servant of God had assessed upon Israel.

10. And all the leaders and the people were glad, and brought the money and placed it in the chest until it was full.

11. Then the Levites carried the chest to the king's accounting office where the recording secretary and the representative of the High Priest counted money, and took the chest back to the Temple again. This went on day after day, and money continued to pour in. 12. The king and Jehoiada gave the money to the building superintendents, who hired masons and carpenters to restore the Temple; and to foundrymen who made articles of iron and brass. 13. So the work went forward, and finally the Temple was in much better condition than before. 14. When all was finished, the remaining money was brought to the king and Jehoiada, and it was agreed to use it for making the gold and silver spoons and bowls used for incense, and for making the instruments used in the sacrifices and offerings.

Burnt offerings were sacrificed continually during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. 15. He lived to a very old age, finally dying at 130. 16. He was buried in the City of David among the kings, because he had done so much good for Israel, for God, and for the Temple.

17, 18. But after his death the leaders of Judah came to King Joash and induced him to abandon the Temple of the God of their ancestors, and to worship shame-idols instead! So the wrath of God came down upon Judah and Jerusalem again. 19.

God sent prophets to bring them back to the Lord, but the people wouldn't listen.

20. Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah, Jehoiada's son. He called a meeting of all the people. Standing before them upon a platform, he said to them, "God wants to know why you are disobeying his commandments. For when you do, everything you try fails. You have forsaken the Lord, and now he has forsaken you."

21. Then the leaders plotted to kill Zechariah, and finally King Joash himself ordered him executed in the court of the Temple. 22. That was how King Joash repaid Jehoiada for his love and loyalty—by killing his son. Zechariah's last words as he died were "Lord, see what they are doing and pay them back."

23. A few months later the Syrian army arrived and conquered Judah and Jerusalem, killing all the leaders of the nation and sending back great quantities of booty to the king of Damascus. 24. It was a great triumph for the tiny Syrian army, but the Lord let the great army of Judah be conquered by them because they had forsaken the Lord God of their ancestors. In that way God executed judgment upon Joash. 25. When the Syrians left—leaving Joash severely wounded—his own officials decided to kill him for murdering the son of Jehoiada the priest. They assassinated him as he lay in bed, and buried him in the City of David, but not in the cemetery of the kings. 26. The conspirators were Zabad, whose mother was Shime-ath, a woman from Amon; and Jehozabad, whose mother was Shim-rith, a woman from Moab.

27. If you want to read about the sons of Joash, and the curses laid upon Joash, and about the restoration of the Temple, see *The Annals of the Kings*. When Joash died, his son Amaziah became the new king.

COMMENTARY

The high priestly office was a position of real authority among the Hebrew people. This had never been more manifest than it was in Jehoiada's day. The high priest at this time was

the real power behind the throne. Jehoiada led in the covenant renewal. His rage against the idols of Baal reminds the student of Paul's righteous wrath which he vented against Athens' idols (Acts 17). In a later day, John Knox turned his fury on idolatry in England. Athaliah had been the champion of Baalism. The whole Baalistic system was supported by her government. The Temple of Jehovah suffered because of the neglect of the queen and the people under her influence. With rare delight Jehoiada and the faithful Jehovah worshipers ruined the temple of Baal with all of its fixtures. Mattan, the priest of Baal was killed near the altars of his own temple.

The new government under Joash was committed to Jehovah worship. Priests were appointed for regular service. Offerings were to be presented to Jehovah according to directions in the Law. The singers and instrumentalists were assigned to their respective duties. The gatekeepers were charged with their peculiar responsibilities. Under heavy guard Joash was brought from the Temple to the throne room and installed as king over the southern kingdom. There had been bloodshed. It was a day of dramatic incidents. The stage had been set for a time of renewal and growth among Jehovah's people.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

LESSON TWENTY 21-23

748. Locate the royal cemetery.
749. Who followed Jehoshaphat as king?
750. Name the sons of Jehoshaphat.
751. What was one of Jehoram's first official acts? Evaluate this.
752. Jehoram ruled in Judah. Why would the record refer to "the way of the kings of Israel"?
753. Name Ahab's daughter. Name Ahab's wife.
754. Why was David's house secure?
755. How did Jehoram handle his problems with Edom?

756. Locate Libnah.
757. How did Jehoram use the high places?
758. Who is this Elijah and how did he communicate with Jehoram?
759. List the terrible calamities that were to come upon the king.
760. What did the Philistines and the Arabians do?
761. Which of Jehoram's sons escaped?
762. How did Jehoram die?
763. Explain the "burning" of 21:19.
764. How did Jehoram's burial differ from that of other kings?
765. Who succeeded Jehoram as king of Judah?
766. Who was Omri?
767. Who counselled Ahaziah?
768. Carefully locate Ramoth-gilead. What happened there at this time?
769. Who went to make a hospital visit and who was the patient?
770. Identify Jehu.
771. How was Ahaziah related to Jehoshaphat?
772. How did Ahaziah die?
773. Who was Athaliah? Explain her actions at the time of Ahaziah's death.
774. Identify Jehoshabeath.
775. Where was Joash hid?
776. Who was Jehoiada?
777. How long was Athaliah in power over Judah?
778. To what does "the seventh year" refer in 23:1?
779. Where did Jehoiada go to seek support for his plan?
780. Where was the covenant agreed upon?
781. Describe the three-fold organization set up by Jehoiada.
782. Who would be granted entrance to the Temple?
783. Why would the Levites be armed?

784. What special arrangement was set up for the courses of priests according to 23:8?
785. Where did Jehoiada's men obtain their military equipment?
786. Name the king who is now crowned.
787. What was "the testimony"?
788. Locate another reference to the cry, "Long live the king".
789. How did Athaliah react when she saw what had happened?
790. Why use the trumpets?
791. What happened to the queen mother, Athaliah?
792. What was the nature of Jehoiada's covenant?
793. Identify a special house which the people completely ruined that day.
794. In re-establishing Temple service what code did Jehoiada follow?
795. What kind of person was excluded from the Temple?
796. How old is Joash at this time? Who is the real power behind the throne?