

File No. 82

II KINGS 11:1–21

II Kings 8:16–18, 25, 26; II Chronicles 22: 10 — 23:21

JOASH SAVED / JEHOIADA, FAITHFUL PRIEST

(SBS Bk 3 Story No. 30)

Story Notes

Athaliah became queen mother in the South. Her parents were King Ahab and Jezebel of the northern tribes but she alone was left of all her royal family. Jehu had killed her son, the king. Here in the South, she sought to grasp a throne for herself and Ahab's family by killing all her remaining sons who could inherit the throne in David's name. That is, she thought she had killed them all.

God had promised to bless the world through David's line. One of her stepdaughters had married the priest Jehoiada, and they rescued one son. God's promise was kept (II Sam. 7:11; Ps. 89:36) and Solomon's prayer was heard (I Kings 8:25). The lamp of David was not extinguished (I Kings 11:36; Ps. 132:17).

When the son was old enough to be presented to the nation, Jehoiada staged a coup de etat. Surprise was gained by off duty soldiers joining those on duty, and coming to the temple unarmed as if to worship, and then being armed from an arsenal within the temple. Joash was crowned and given a copy of the covenant and proclaimed king to the acclaim of the nation. It appears that army commanders and priesthood, together with the people welcomed the restoration of covenant loyalty to Yahweh.

Athaliah and the house of Ahab were finished and Baalism had suffered a crushing blow. Young Joash had been given a crown but also 'the covenant', perhaps a copy of the Ten Commandments. His power was not his own but an expression of God's covenant with and kingship over his people. The covenants which the king and the nation made with God, and which the king made with his people, affirmed this. It would have been good for the young king Joash to have prayed the prayer of Psalm 73 at this time. He needed to live in the covenant grace by which he had been sealed in his kingship.

The well meaning but unwise alliance that Jehoshaphat had made with the North had had a sorry history, but had now been brought to an end.

Baalism was not finished however. It would recur in the reigns of Ahaz (II Chron. 28:2) and Manasseh (II Kings 21:3) in the South.

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