

The Attackers: Ahaziah, Son of Jehoram & Athaliah, Assassinated by His Uncle Jehu, 2 Chron 22:7–9; Assassination of Ahaziah's Sons by Athaliah, v. 10; Joash Rescued and Sequestered by His Aunt Jehoshabeath, vv. 11–12; Background on Jehoiada and Jehoshabeath: Athaliah Killed, Joash Ascends David's Throne at Age 7

27. The public rejection of Jehoram is indicated by its refusal to burn spices in his honor. This ceremony was provided for Asa in:

2 Chronicles 16:12 - In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians.

v. 14 - They buried him in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire [שֶׁרָפָה (*serephah*): to consume thoroughly by fire¹] for him.

28. Both men had a bad KER² but Jehoram's was apparently so beyond the pale that the people didn't bother to even strike a match.
29. Chapter 22 introduces us to the brief reign of Ahaziah (or Jehoahaz), his mother, Athaliah, a woman of the same ilk as Jezabel and Potiphar's wife, and Ahaziah's KER:

2 Chronicles 22:1 - Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his place, for the band of men who came with the Arabs to the camp had slain all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign.

v. 2 - Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri.

v. 3 - He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor to do wickedly.

v. 4 - He did evil in the sight of the Lord like the house of Ahab, for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.

30. The house of Ahab was one of the most horrendous in all of Israel. (For a detailed study of this period of the Northern Kingdom's history, consult *Clanking Chains*, CC02-124–158.)

31. The assassination of Ahaziah is described in:

2 Chronicles 22:7 - Now the destruction of Ahaziah was from God, in that he went to Joram. For when he came, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu ᵹē'-hū\ the son of Nimshi \nīm'-shī\, whom the Lord had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

v. 8 - It came about when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers ministering to Ahaziah, and slew them.

¹ “And they kindled for him a great, very great burning,” cf. 21:19 and Jeremiah 34:5, whence we gather that the kindling of a burning, i.e. the burning of odorous spices, was customary at the burials of kings” (Keil, *The Books of Chronicles*, 371).

² King Evaluation Report.

v. 9 - He also sought Ahaziah, and they caught him while he was hiding in Samaria; they brought him to Jehu, put him to death and buried him. For they said, "He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart." So there was no one of the house of Ahaziah to retain the power of the kingdom.

32. Note that the royal line of David is under genocidal assault. The regicide of Ahaziah made the surviving nephews potential heirs to the throne, a circumstance eliminated by their assassinations.
33. Athaliah, the evil mother of Ahaziah, conjured up a lust for the throne. To accomplish the feat she assassinated all of Jehoram's grandsons. The life of Ahaziah's infant son Joash was dramatically saved by his Aunt Jehoshabeath \jē-hō-shāb'-ē-āth\.

2 Chronicles 22:10 - Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son (Ahaziah) was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring of the house of Judah.

v. 11 - But Jehoshabeath the king's daughter took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada \jē-hoi'-a-da\ the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she would not put him to death.

v. 12 - He was hidden with them in the house of God six years while Athaliah reigned over the land.

34. Athaliah was demon possessed; her purpose was to join with her husband, Jehoram, her son, Ahaziah, and the invading armies of Philistines and Arabs to terminate the house of David and in so doing obviate the Davidic Covenant.
35. Jesus Christ's control of history is clearly in view as we observe the circumstance by which the lone heir to the Davidic throne is preserved:

Background on Jehoiada and Jehoshabeath:

- 1) In the time of Athaliah, during the minority of Joash and during his early reign, Jehoiada was high priest and chief advisor. He seems to have been the most influential man in the kingdom for more than half a century.³
- 2) As high priest, Jehoiada lived in the temple in Jerusalem, a perfect place to sequester the infant Joash.
- 3) Jehoiada was married to Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram and therefore they were Joash's uncle and aunt.
- 4) This is the only instance in Scripture of a princess marrying a high priest. This is clearly a case of divine design. The only people who had the motivation and the circumstance to rescue the crown prince and sequester him for six years was his Aunt Jehoshabeath and Uncle Jehoiada.

³ James Josiah Reeve, "Priest, High," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 4:2442.

- 5) The rescue and isolation of Joash is described in 2 Kings which correlates with the parallel passage just referenced from 2 Chronicles 22:10-12:

2 Kings 11:1 - When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she rose and destroyed all the royal offspring.

2 Kings 11:2 - But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and placed him and his nurse in the bedroom. So they hid him from Athaliah, and he was not put to death.

v. 3 - He was hidden with her in the house of the Lord [the temple] six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land.

- 6) Jehoshabeath's courageous effort to rescue her nephew from the slaughter of his brothers was only the first part of the divine plan to preserve the Davidic line.
- 7) Once delivered from danger, the next problem was how to protect the child from the power mad Athaliah.
- 8) The plan of God continued to provide the necessary answers for the child's preservation. Married to the high priest, the child was sequestered in the family's quarters within the temple complex.
- 9) There the child could be protected and nurtured until the political winds removed the evil Athaliah from power.
- 10) No one knew of Joash's presence outside his immediate family. It was kept secret by his mother, aunt, uncle, and nurse until Jehoiada determined the time was right to inform the people there was a rightful heir to the throne.
- 11) Athaliah had no legitimate claim to the throne of Judah. She was the daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, and Jezebel his wife. The marriage of Athaliah to Jehoram, crown prince of Judah, was one of political expediency.
- 12) Ahab, king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah established a period of peace between the two competing kingdoms and this marriage was considered a way to seal the deal.
- 13) However, Jezebel's evil influence on her daughter resulted in the murderous intrigue that defined the reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah.
- 14) Blood flowed in a fashion that makes Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* pale by comparison.
- 15) The entire bloodletting was a satanically inspired assault on the line of Christ. The presence of Jehoshabeath and Jehoiada were the divinely supplied agents to preserve the Davidic Covenant's bloodline.
- 16) It should be noted that Jehoiada lived to be 130 years old and received the unique distinction of being buried among the kings.

2 Chronicles 24:15 - Now when Jehoiada reached a ripe old age he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old at his death.

v. 16 - They buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done well [טוֹב (*tov*): good in a moral sense as opposed to evil] in Israel and to God and His house [בַּיִת (*bayith*): the temple].

- 17) Jehoiada led a successful effort to restore the temple that had been desecrated by Athaliah who used it in her perverted worship of Baal. Renovation was accomplished after Athaliah's death and during the regency of Joash.
- 18) This and Jehoiada's council of Joash are referred to as "doing well," i.e., good of intrinsic value. Merrill F. Unger provides some detail:

The new reign was inaugurated by a solemn covenant between himself, as high priest, and the people and king to renounce the worship of Baal, which was followed by the destruction of the altar and temple of Baal and the death of his priest, Mattan \māt'-ăn\). His influence over the young king was very beneficial, who ruled well and prosperously during Jehoiada's lifetime. The restoration of the temple in the twenty-third year of his reign was carried on under Jehoiada's supervision. For account of this work see 2 Kings 12, and 2 Chronicles 24. At length he died at the age of one hundred and thirty years and, as a signal honor, was buried "in the city of David among the kings," B.C. perhaps 798.⁴

- 19) Jehoiada is credited with three categories of good works: (1) to Israel, (2) to God, and (3) to His house.
- 20) The primary reference in the third area is to the restoration of the temple, but a secondary reference is directed to Jehoiada's efforts in conjunction with his wife, Jehoshabeath, in rescuing the crown prince Joash from Athaliah's attempted assassination, sequestering him in the temple for over six years, and leading the revolt that placed Joash on the throne of Judah.
- 21) These efforts were indeed good of intrinsic value since they were instrumental in keeping the Davidic line uninterrupted as it made its inexorable advance toward the virgin birth.
- 22) That the phrase "His house" in 2 Chronicles 24:16 implies the line of David is justified by this excerpt:

God's promise to "build a house" (*bayith*) for David is clearly attached to the development of the Davidic dynasty (2 Sam 7:11-16). The ultimate failure of the Davidic kings to realize the expectations for an "eternal kingdom" led, following the Exile, to a shift to a future descendant of David who would rule justly forever. As a result of this promise and the growing eschatological interpretation of its fulfillment, Davidic lineage became an important element of messianic thinking and theology.

⁴ Merrill F. Unger, *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, 3d ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1966), 561.

This explains the conscious attempts in the New Testament to connect Jesus with the “house of David” by tracing his genealogy through his earthly father Joseph (Matt 1:12–17, 20; Luke 2:3–4, 3:23–38).⁵

36. The presence of Jehoshabeath and Jehoiada at this moment in history demonstrates the fact that God knew in eternity past what would be required to bring the Messiah into history.
37. His omniscience and omnipotence discerned the ebb and flow of human free will. Knowing the machinations of the evil Athaliah, he allowed her to continue on Judah’s throne for six years so that once Zibiah \zib'-i-a\, Ahaziah’s wife became pregnant with Joash, He then allowed events to transpire that would remove the interloper from David’s throne.
38. Here is an interesting perception of Zibiah’s personal integrity by Dr. Herbert Lockyer:

ZIBIAH. A woman of Beersheba, Zibiah became the wife of King Ahaziah and the mother of Joash, who was saved from murder in childhood and lived to become king of Judah and reigned for 40 years. All we know about Zibiah is her name, but the fact that her noble son is spoken of as one who did “that which was right in the sight of the lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him” (2 Kings 12:2, KJV), indicates something of her care to bring up her son in the fear of the Lord, and also of his willingness to follow the godly advice of his appointed representative, Jehoiada. How grateful we should be for the spiritual instruction of those who themselves are taught of the Lord!⁶

39. Lockyer is accurate regarding the positive influence Zibiah and Jehoiada had on Joash (not to mention that of his Aunt Jehoshabeath who surreptitiously snatched him from Athaliah’s assassins). However, once their influence was removed by death, Joash reverted to the idol worship which characterized his father’s and grandparent’s lives.

⁵ Gerald H. Wilson, “בִּיָּה,” in *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, gen.ed. Willem A. VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 1:656.

⁶ Herbert Lockyer, *All the Women of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Books, nd), 167.