

Lessons From Characters In Old Testament
Joash/Jehoash & The Prophet Joel
Lesson 37

INTRO:

- A. The names Joash and Jehoash are the same person.
- B. The life of Joash, king of Judah, is an interesting study of one who started out doing right but ended up in shameful disgrace (**2 Chronicles 22:10-24:27**).
- C. For the forty years he reigned we see him go from being zealous in serving the Lord to a murderer of one who spoke the will of God.
- D. His reign began with, "Long live the king!" and ended with his own servants killing him in bed after he been severely wounded in battle.
- E. His reign began in the house of God in the usual place of the kings (**2 Kings 11:14**) but upon his death, because of his disgrace, he was not buried in the tombs of the kings. (**2 Chronicles 24:25**)

I. A Good Beginning! (2 Kings 11)

- A. When a baby, Joash was saved from his evil grand-mother, Athaliah, who tried to kill him and take the throne for herself.
 - 1. Through all of this period we can see the bigger story of God's faithfulness to His promises.
 - 2. Joash survived Athaliah's wicked plan to kill all of the royal heirs that otherwise would have brought an end to David's throne.
 - 3. Joash was the sole heir!
- B. Joash was taken to the temple and raised for six years under the care of Jehoiada, a faithful priest of God.
- C. At the age of seven, Joash became king.
- D. During this time, Joash obviously learned God's law at the feet of Jehoiada, which served to guide him as king.
- E. After becoming king: (**2 Chronicles 23:16**).
 - 1. The next verse shows their willingness to put God's law into practice as they destroyed the temple of Baal and put to death the priest of Baal.
 - 2. The good influence of a faithful teacher is seen in Joash's early life by the statement, (**2 Chronicles 24:2**).
- F. On one occasion, Joash's zeal to do good exceeded that of those who had helped teach him the law of the Lord.
 - 1. Joash wanted to restore the temple and he commanded that it be done quickly.
 - 2. Those in charge procrastinated and Joash reproved them.
 - 3. At his insistence, the money was gathered more quickly, the work was undertaken, and the task was completed.
 - 4. In all this, Joash showed not only was he influenced to do good but he also influenced others to do good.
- G. It was definitely a good beginning; a good start.
 - 1. His greatest achievement as king was repairing the temple.
 - 2. Jehoiada died at the age of 130.

II. Things Changed!

- A. After the death of Jehoiada, the life of Joash took a different direction.

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1. Evil companions appealed to Joash's pride.
2. **2 Chronicles 24:17-18**
- B. The once faithful servant of God who formerly bowed in humility to God now was flattered by the evil men who bowed down to him.
- C. This resulted in Joash no longer listening to the counsel of righteous men and listening to the counsel of the ungodly (**Psalms 1:1**).
 1. Following their advice, Joash forsook God by forgetting the law he had been taught in his youth.
 2. The once good king who had influenced the people to serve God is now an evil king who has led God's people into condemnation.
 3. How sad!

III. The Hardening Of The Heart!

- A. God, however, did not give up on Joash and His people at their first rebellion.
- B. The Scriptures record the Lord's appeals for their return and the growing resistance to His pleas:
 1. Yet He sent prophets (plural) to them, to bring them again; and they spoke against them — they would not listen.
 2. When Zechariah rebuked them with the truth, they killed him instead of changing their ways. (**2 Chronicles 24:20-22**).
 3. Of course, killing the prophet did not change the truth he spoke. It only cut them off from the source which could bring them to repentance.
- C. The accountability of Joash is clearly stated.
 1. He had turned away from what he was in the beginning.
 2. All the good he had done would not be remembered because he had turned from it and did that which was evil. (**Ezekiel 33:13**)
- D. However, those who sought the favor of the king forsook him in his death by burying him away from the other kings (**2 Chronicles 24:25**).
 1. They used him to get what they wanted but then discarded him in the end.
 2. The cause of sin cost him everything but gave him nothing in return.
 3. That's always the 'bargain' of sin!

What lessons can we learn from such a life? How can we avoid the pitfalls which overcame Joash? How can we spot the danger signs?

I. Lessons From Joash:

A. The Life Of Joash Is A Classic Example Of Apostasy!

1. Those who leave the Lord and cause others to stray are often those who had the noblest of beginnings.
 - a. They are raised by godly parents.
 - b. They have benefited from the influence of faithful Christians, elders and preachers.
 - c. Those influences last for a while and can bring about a zeal for the cause of Christ.

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- d. But when put to the real test, the way of truth is left for the paths of sin and error.
- e. The downfall frequently occurs when pride enters the picture. (**Proverbs 16:18; 29:23**).
- f. Like Joash, when we start to listen to the vain flattery of those who seek to use our influence, disaster is going to be the result.
- g. The Scriptures are full of examples showing this to be true.
 - 1) In our own day, how many times have popular preachers wondered from the "straight and narrow" as they listened to the flattery from brethren they think a lot of?
- h. The perks offered by those who love the way of evil many times blind the eyes of those who are godly and they become tempted by pride.
- i. But let us always remember: the pleasures of sin are only for a short time. (**Hebrews 11:25**)
- j. Then, like Joash, those who have used our influence to promote evil will not be content to stop but their evil will only get worse and worse while we might not be willing to go that far.
- k. In the end of it all, those who continue to stand for the truth will view us as a traitor while Satan and those who continue to go further into error will forget us because we were only a stepping stone for them.

B. Influences In Our Lives Matters Greatly!

- 1. While Joash had godly influences around him, he chose wisely and served well.
- 2. With evil men persuading him to do wrong, Joash caved to their influence.
- 3. The people with whom Joash surrounded himself greatly affected him and the entire kingdom of Judah.
- 4. Let us carefully choose what and who we allow to influence us.

C. Don't Listen To Bad Advice! "And the king listened to them" (2 Chronicles 24:17).

- 1. Joash didn't need to give the time of day to the voices of those who contradicted God's commands.
- 2. He didn't need to listen!
- 3. He could and should have turned them out and stopped them in their tracks.
- 4. Joash had been under the guidance of godliness long enough that he, of all people, should have known idol worship was wrong.
- 5. Listening produced temptation which led to disobedience.

D. Accept Godly Reproof!

- 1. It's never easy to admit when we have sinned.
- 2. But like David, who recognized his sin, God restores repentant hearts.
- 3. God desired Joash's repentance and obedience.
 - a. He sent prophets to steer him back to do right.
 - b. Joash refused to listen to God's reproof and did not repent from his sin.

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- c. Instead, he reacted in an all too familiar way — with offense!
- 4. He “dug in his heels” to his own hurt and the nation’s, too.
- 5. Repentance leads back to a relationship with God.
- E. God Is Faithful To Do What He Promises!**
 - 1. God had made a covenant with David.
 - 2. His plan was for Jesus to be heir to David’s throne.
 - 3. Nothing could hind that.
 - 4. God does what He says He will because He is Who He claims to be!
- F. Idolatry Has Never Pleasod God!**
 - 1. He was not pleased throughout the Old Testament and He still isn’t now!
 - 2. Although we may not have the carved idols that gave so much of a problem to Israel and Judah, idols of different kinds can creep into our lives.
 - 3. Money, relationships, addictions, and power can be idols that compete for our affections and gain control over us.
 - 4. **ANYTHING/ANYBODY** which takes a higher position in our lives than our allegiance to God is an idol.
 - 5. Whatever replaces Him is wrong!
- G. Leaving The Door Open To Evil Is Never A Good Idea!**
 - 1. *“But the high places were not taken away...” (2 Kings 12:3).*
 - 2. Joash did right in God’s eyes for as long as Jehoiada lived but he allowed the continuation of sacrifices and burnt incense.
 - 3. Whenever God’s people leave a crack open to sin, inevitably that small space is all it takes to allow Satan to sneak his temptations inside.
 - 4. When we clean our spiritual house, but don’t close the door completely, it leaves us vulnerable to sin.

CONCLUSION:

- A. We have choices.
 - 1. Joash’s story could have ended much differently had he made different choices.
 - 2. He could have refused listening to the leaders of Judah who brought bad advice.
 - 3. He could have acknowledged his sin and repented when confronted.
 - 4. He could have completely purged the land from all idols and all the high places of idol worship.
 - 5. He could have, but he chose not to!
- B. We sometimes think life happens and we groan and moan for the way it does, but we are often living the consequences of our choices.
- C. God desires us to seek Him for the choices we make.
 - 1. He gives wisdom. (**James 1:5** “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*”)
- D. Let this study thoroughly convince us of the fact that His thoughts and ways are higher than our thoughts and ways. (**Isaiah 55:8-9**)
- E. Even though we may not see a full picture of what God is accomplishing, we can always be confident He is faithful to His promises.

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The Prophet Joel

- A. Though it may be difficult to give an exact date for Joel's prophesying it was most definitely directed toward the nation of Judah.
1. Judah's corruption was brought on by Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, when Jehoram, Judah's king, married her.
 2. She worked hard to destroy belief in God and to institute Baal worship.
 3. During the twelve years of Jehoram's reign, the one year of Ahaziah's reign, and the six years of Athaliah's own reign, Judah had fallen greatly into sin.
 4. Even though the prophet Jehoiada renewed the covenant between Judah and the Lord, the people still sacrificed and burnt incense on the high places.
 5. Joel's prophesy was fitting and paralleled Jehoiada's work of trying to win the people of Judah back to God.
- B. Joel's message is centered around a severe locust plague that had come to the land of Judah.
1. To summarize Joel's message it would be this: If you do not take warning from this plague of locust and truly repent, then there will be something much worse - one of armies which will destroy the land.
 2. His entire prophesy is written in poetic language.
- C. The outline of his message is:
1. The devastation of the locust. **(1:2-12)**
 2. The call to repentance. **(1:13-20)**
 3. The "*day of the Lord*". **(2:1-11)**
 - a. This is an expression which is often used in the Scriptures to indicate judgment or day of wrath to come from God against His people.
 4. A second call to repent. **(2:12-17)**
 - a. True repentance - "*rend your hearts and not your garments*" **(v. 13)**
 5. The promise of blessings. **(2:18-27)**
 6. The pouring out of God's spirit. **(2:28-32)**
 - a. After these days God will pour out His Holy Spirit upon all people.
 - b. This is the passage quoted by Peter in Acts 2 on the day of pentecost.
 7. Victory is promised to God's people. **(3:1-21)**
- D. These promises, in chapter 3, could never be brought to reality in the physical kingdoms of Israel or Judah because the people never turned to God with their whole hearts.
1. Their history however gives a glimpse of what God would have been willing to do for them if they had been faithful.
 2. Because they were not, God fulfilled His promises for blessings in the spiritual blessings offered in the New Testament and in a spiritual kingdom.
 3. Now all who want to be can be a part of God's chosen people.

LESSON 38

Amaziah

2 Kings 14:1-20; 2 Chronicles 25:1-28