

Lesson 2 15 November, 2020

Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah Corrupt Judah

Lesson Scope: [2 Chronicles 21 & 22](#)

References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise

Lesson Focus

Even though J Jehoshaphat did much good for the kingdom of Judah, his pursuit of peaceful coexistence with Israel left a damaging influence on his posterity. Jehoram's marrying Athaliah, daughter of King Ahab, was likely part of Jehoshaphat's affinity with Ahab (18:1). This wicked influence helped to meld the life of Jehoram's son, Ahaziah, and gave Athaliah the opportunity to usurp the throne in Judah. Athaliah's presence also brought the influence of other wicked nations into Judah. In fifteen years, Judah was left in a deplorable condition.

The change of generations is always a vulnerable time. Each generation must embrace established Biblical positions and desire to rise above the failures of previous generations. A lack of vigilance in what might seem minor deviations will chart a downward course that will eventually result in immeasurable loss.

This lesson illustrates how the seeds of failure in one generation will often bear fruit in the generations that follow. We must remember that the law of sowing and reaping accompanies our choice of associates, even today. Likely all of us have observed families or churches who have allowed wrong influences to cause them to turn away from Scriptural positions they once held. Sadly, the course is often set for further ruination and a bitter harvest.

This lesson also identifies the detrimental effects of unwholesome associations. Be sure to identify some positive aspects of godly associations and see how God was working through persons like the prophet Elijah, Jehoiada, and Jehoshabeath even in this dark time.

Courting the world's favour and friendships opens the door to the world's evils. Those influences set the stage for moral and spiritual decay.

Lesson Aim: To see the deplorable effects of corrupting influences upon God's people.

Theme Verse: [James 4:4](#) Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Lesson Text

Jehoram

[2 Chronicles 21:1](#) ^(KJV) Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.

[2 Chronicles 21:4](#) Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and *divers* also of the princes of Israel.

[2 Chronicles 21:6](#) And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD.

[2 Chronicles 21:11](#) Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah *thereto*.

[2 Chronicles 21:16-18](#) Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that *were* near the Ethiopians: And they came up into 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. And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease.

[2 Chronicles 21:20](#) Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings.

Ahaziah

[2 Chronicles 22:1-3](#) 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. His

mother's name also *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.

2 Chronicles 22:7-9 And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. ⁸ And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them. ⁹ And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he *is* the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom.

Athaliah

2 Chronicles 22:10-12 But 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 him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a 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.

Questions for Study

Jehoram

1. What motivated the change from Jehoshaphat's true worship?
2. What lessons can We learn from Jehoram's destruction?
3. How might we destroy others in order to promote ourselves?

Ahaziah

4. Was Ahaziah doomed to destruction? Explain.
5. What wrong influences could cause our downfall?

Athaliah

6. What was Athaliah's goal in destroying the royal seed?
7. In what situations might we have opportunity to nurture the good in times of special danger?

Analysing the Passage

Jehoram rejected the appointments of his father to his brethren (21:3-4) and slew them. The prophet Elijah declared them to be better than Jehoram (21:13). Perhaps Jehoram feared their influence would be a deterrent to his wicked ambitions.

Second Chronicles 21:6 indicates that Jehoram's wife influenced his "walk[ing] in the way of the kings of Israel." The immorality to which he compelled Judah (21:11) was a companion sin to the idolatry he introduced.

The prophet's message in 21:12-15 gives the reasons why God would judge Jehoram and why he would experience an unimaginable death. His wickedness and cruelty also caused him to be despised by his people. He died "without being desired" (21:20).

Ahaziah reigned a very short time—only one year. His counsellors were his mother Athaliah (22:3) and his relatives in Israel (22:4). During his visit to Jehoram king of Israel, he met his death at the hand of Jehu who was 'responsible to slay the descendants of the house of Ahab.

Athaliah took the throne as an imposter. Perhaps this deviation illustrates the extremity to which the pagan influences of Israel had taken Judah. However, in God's miraculous protection of Joash, we see His preservation of the godly even in perilous times.

Principles and Applications

Jehoram

1. Viewing brethren as competition leads people to destructive behaviour

(21:4). Already expressed even in childhood, our carnal nature would have us defame or mistreat others to promote or justify ourselves. Blessed the child whose parents have curbed this tendency at a young age.

First John 3:12 tells us that Cain slew Abel "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." Verse 15 adds, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." How well are we doing? Our carnal tendency is to exploit the weaknesses of another in an effort to justify ourselves, when in reality we are expressing an unwillingness to humbly acknowledge personal failure.

2. Rebelling against a godly heritage leads people to reject those whose help they need the most (21:4). When people distance themselves from godly influence, they remove the spiritual protection it is to them.

Resisting the challenges that come to us from faithful brethren will hinder our spiritual growth. Perhaps their perspective is the very key to our spiritual success. Sometimes individuals will discard time-proven applications to Bible principles and initiate “new” or “improved” individualistic ideas or practices. The end result of experimentation is often spiritual bankruptcy.

3. Those unequally yoked to the ungodly will be influenced to do evil in the sight of the Lord (21:6). A life of self-denial stands in stark contrast to the emphasis of the world around us: self-expression, self-gratification, self-defence, self-pity, self-improvement, and the list goes on. This worldly perspective falls under the description of men being “lovers of their own selves” (2 Timothy 3:2). Sinful indulgences the world simply calls pleasures are actually abominations to God. “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

4. Failure to endorse God’s standard of morality leads to widespread disillusionment and moral decay (21:11). Worship in the high places included immorality. We must constantly be on our guard and seek to shield ourselves and our families from the unrestrained boldness we are bombarded with. Living in rural communities can shield us from some of this exposure. The confusion in our society illustrates how a disregard for reserve between the genders will ultimately end in immoral conduct.

5. Those who persist in a corrupt lifestyle will experience God’s judgment (21:16-18). The immediate results are disease, poverty, crime, and broken relationships. Several deadly diseases prevalent today are the consequences of moral perversions. God’s blessing is upon the exclusive marriage relationship, but “whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).

6. Those who persist in a corrupt lifestyle will be disdained by those whose admiration they coveted most (21:20). Jehoram’s wickedness had earned him repudiation. He was even denied the dignity of being buried with those of his position. Children who need to live with the

consequences of parental failures many times become bitter and too often end up in a worse state.

Ahaziah

7. Accepting advice from worldly counsellors leads people away from Biblical truth (22:3). Much of what we receive from the world is tainted with the idea that truth is relative and can be made compatible to what is accepted in society. We must believe in the absolute authority and eternal truth of the Scriptures.

8. Associating closely with the ungodly puts us in danger of becoming like them and sharing in their fate (22:8-9). Sin is progressive, and a seemingly insignificant thing may be the beginning of a course to a wretched end. “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Athaliah

9. When sin prevails, there is increased potential for the good that is left, to be extinguished (22:10). However, even in these times, God has miraculous ways of protecting His people and preserving His Word.

10. A corrupted society presents perils for the righteous both spiritually and physically (22:11-12). There have been many times in history when those whose choice to serve the Lord placed them in great physical danger. Perhaps the greatest dangers in society today are spiritual, but we never know when that could change. “But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13.)

Only those with a steadfast loyalty to truth will endure faithfully.

Important Teachings

1. Viewing brethren as competition leads people to destructive behaviour (21:4).

2. Rebelling against a godly heritage leads people to reject those whose help they need the most (21:4).

3. Those unequally yoked to the ungodly will be influenced to do evil in the sight of the Lord (21:6).

4. Failure to endorse God’s standard of morality leads to widespread disillusionment and moral decay (21:11).

5. Those who persist in a corrupt lifestyle will experience God’s judgment (21:16-18).

6. Those who persist in a corrupt lifestyle will be disdained by those whose admiration they coveted most (21:20).
7. Accepting advice from worldly counsellors leads people away from Biblical truth (22:3).
8. Associating closely with the ungodly puts us in danger of becoming like them and sharing in their fate (22:8-9).
9. When sin prevails, there is increased potential for the good that is left, to be extinguished (22:10).
10. A corrupted society presents perils for the righteous both spiritually and physically (22:11-12).

Answers to Questions

1. What motivated the change from Jehoshaphat's true worship? Jehoram's heart was not perfect toward God. He was likely influenced by his wife, king Ahab's daughter. This brought the idolatrous influences of Israel into Judah. His father Jehoshaphat had failed to reckon with how his alliance with Israel would affect his son and the people of Judah.
2. What lessons can we learn from Jehoram's destruction? Man makes choices, but God establishes the consequences. When one fails, he then becomes more vulnerable to the enemy. When man rejects God's warnings from faithful messengers, destruction is sure to follow. Personal failure, especially by those in authority, gives rise to a loss of respect.
3. How might we destroy others in order to promote ourselves? We might make unrealistic claims about our product or demote the product of another. We could be tempted to exploit others' weaknesses to justify our own failures. Taking advantage of another's ignorance is wrong.
4. Was Ahaziah doomed to destruction? Explain. He, without choice, was one of the descendants of Ahab. But he could have humbled himself and sought after wise counsel.
5. What wrong influences could cause our downfall? Spending too much time with apostate relatives or acquaintances could erode our convictions. Those who disrespect God-ordained authority have a leavening influence; youth are especially vulnerable. Unwholesome music is a threat. The speech of the world is often not very sanc-

tified. Health care professionals often do not reckon with man's carnal nature.

6. What was Athaliah's goal in destroying the royal seed?

She obviously wanted to eliminate the possibility of a rival to her position. Perhaps it was a retaliatory act against God for cutting off the house of Ahab.

7. In what situations might we have opportunity to nurture the good in times of special danger?

This really is our work in this wicked world. Our presence could be the tool that will help a weaker one be victorious when confronted with temptation. Our distinctive attire identifies us with those who desire to live in moral integrity. We shield our families from the unrestrained boldness of the world.

Summarizing the Lesson

A "goodly heritage" is a tremendous blessing but is of little value to one who refuses to identify with it. The world is continually beckoning for our allegiance. The "god of this world" would entice man away from God onto a path that will end in spiritual ruin. We must choose our associations carefully because their influence will affect our eternal destiny as well as that of our posterity. God continues to work through persons like Jehoshabeath. God's people, as well as society, benefit from their influence. Even in perilous times, God uses these committed individuals for the furtherance of His eternal purposes.

Research Guide

1. Read 2 Kings 8:16 to 11:3, the parallel passage to this lesson scope. This passage describes more in detail the activity of Jehu in destroying the house of Ahab.
2. The transition of responsibility from the prophet Elijah to Elisha apparently took place during this lesson. In our lesson scope, Elijah wrote a letter to king Jehoram, and details of Elisha's activities are given in 2 Kings 2-13. "
3. The Book of Proverbs has many verses that relate to the principles taught in this lesson.
4. Read 2 Timothy 3, 2 Peter 2, and Jude for Biblical descriptions of the corrupt society in which we live and the apostate influence around us.