

## Lesson 4    29 November, 2020

### Joash Forsakes the Lord

#### **Lesson Scope:** [2 Chronicles 24](#)

*References in brackets relate to Lesson Scope unless noted otherwise*

#### **Lesson Focus**

Joash's life held tremendous potential. The simple fact that his life had been miraculously spared when his brethren were slain by Athaliah was evidence of a divine plan for his life. His rise to the position of king at the tender age of seven years is especially noteworthy. An orphan, he benefited greatly from the godly counsel and advice of his uncle Jehoiada, the priest, who influenced him to make wise choices. Baal worship had been destroyed. It would seem that conditions were right in Judah for the continuation of spiritual success.

However, just as in Joash's experience, success or failure is not determined by the influences or circumstances that bear upon us, but rather by the choices we make. Joash's rejection of Jehoiada's influence in order to follow the advice of the princes initiated a course that ended in miserable devastation. Our choices today will also affect our future course of travel and will have far-reaching, even eternal, implications and consequences.

As you study this lesson keep before you the tremendous opportunity Joash had because of the groundwork laid in the previous lesson. It was his own choice, however, that initiated a course that would eventually lead to inevitable ruin. Joash's very sad ending reminds us that a good beginning, while it can be very valuable, does not ensure a positive outcome. One's own choices are the most consequential.

In some respects, the opportunities we have today are probably unparalleled in any other period of time. We have more history to benefit from than any previous generation. This history can be recorded and made available to anyone quickly and efficiently. We also have the blessing of faithful churches and committed leaders who continually exert a godly influence on our personal lives as well as our families. But deceptive influences also abound, and—alas!—even in this generation, many fall prey to the ever-present deception. We must always keep before us the

words of our Lord Jesus: “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luke 12:48).

God gives His children great opportunities for spiritual success. Those who lightly esteem these opportunities eventually oppose the truth and incur God’s wrath.

**Lesson Aim:** To learn from one who rejected God-given opportunities.

**Theme Verse:** Revelation 2:5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

## Lesson Text

### Jehoiada’s Influence

2 Chronicles 24:1-10 <sup>(KJV)</sup> Joash *was* seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. <sup>2</sup> And Joash did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. <sup>3</sup> And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters. <sup>4</sup> And it came to pass after this, *that* Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD. <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> 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 collection, *according to the commandment* of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? <sup>7</sup> For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim. <sup>8</sup> And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD. <sup>9</sup> And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *laid* upon Israel in the wilderness. <sup>10</sup> And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end.

## **Joash's Infidelity**

**2 Chronicles 24:17-22** <sup>(KJV)</sup> Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them. <sup>18</sup> And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. <sup>19</sup> Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear. <sup>20</sup> And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. <sup>21</sup> And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> 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, The LORD look upon *it*, and require *it*.

## **The Lord's Judgment**

**2 Chronicles 24:23-25** <sup>(KJV)</sup> And it came to pass at the end of the year, *that* the host of Syria 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. <sup>24</sup> For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash. <sup>25</sup> And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) 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.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Jehoiada's Influence**

1. What noble qualities did Joash portray? What was his weakness?
2. What are some areas of service to which we should willingly contribute?

### **Joash's Infidelity**

3. What made following the princes attractive to Joash?

4. What may have been Joash's intent in commanding the death of Zechariah?
5. What influences could cause us to turn away from sound Biblical positions?

### **The Lord's Judgment**

6. Do our choices determine our end? Are the consequences of our choices predictable? Explain.
7. What are the characteristics and purposes of God's judgments?

### **Analysing the Passage**

"The collection, according to the commandment of Moses" (24:6) was one-half shekel, collected from every male for atonement. This money was appointed for "the service of the tabernacle" (see Exodus 30:11-16). The making of the chest did not exactly follow the God-prescribed pattern. It did, however, provide opportunity for contributing more.

The princes (24: 17) were not likely the king's sons, but rather descendants of the elders in Judah. Their obeisance was probably an act of flattery rather than respect. What they influenced Joash to do illustrates their true intentions.

The "house of the LORD" (24:4) that had just been repaired was left or deserted and "groves and idols" set up again (24:18).

"They would not give ear" indicates a deliberate choice to reject God's message.

Zechariah, son of Jehoiada the priest, was king Joash's cousin. His word from the Lord rebuking the idolatry of Judah and Jerusalem prompted the rash decision of the king to stone him. If spoken in the king's presence, the prophet's words "The LORD look upon it, and require it" (24:22) should have awakened Joash to the reality of God holding him accountable.

Judgment was first executed on the princes who influenced Joash wrongly (24:23) and then on Joash "because they had forsaken the LORD" (24:24). Joash was "left . . . in great diseases" (24:25), apparently severely wounded. This should have given him opportunity to reflect on the prophet's words and to repent.

### **Principles and Applications**

#### **Jehoiada's Influence**

1. God-given opportunities bring accountability (24:1-2). A good start, while essential, is no assurance of continued and ultimate success. Joash had a good beginning but appears to have failed when the godly influence of Jehoiada was no longer present. Many of us have had the blessing of godly ancestors whose influence and teaching has helped to mold our lives and protect us in vulnerable times. But their influence will not always be with us. How will we do when we need to stand alone against the pressures of the day?

2. Those who utilize spiritual opportunities have the vision to address the needs at hand (24:5-6). The sons of Athaliah had damaged the temple (24:7). King Joash saw these much-needed repairs and gave direction to how it should be carried out. If we are spiritually alert, we will see needs in our own lives or families and perhaps areas in the church that may need attention. Many times failure to identify and address seemingly small details results in a much more difficult or even impossible task later. We should never allow the laxness of others to hinder our personal responsibility.

3. Utilizing spiritual opportunities brings joy and rejoicing (24:10).

The need was for resources to repair the temple, partly because the people had failed in their giving. Contributing to meeting this need was cause for rejoicing. The church today needs individuals and resources as well, teachers, funds for school expenses, funds to meet brotherhood assistance needs, mission funds, mission personnel, and willing hands to carry out all the seemingly insignificant daily details. "He that goeth forth . . . shall doubtless come again with rejoicing" (Psalm 126:6). The blessings are only for those who are willing to make the sacrifice.

### **Joash's Infidelity**

4. Seeking to please men more than God begins a course away from God (24:17). Truly, this story illustrates how "a flattering mouth worketh ruin" (Proverbs 26:28). Perhaps Joash did not initially perceive the intentions of the princes. Perhaps their approach intimidated him. It would appear that he personally failed to seek the Lord. The temptation to compromise truth to avoid conflict is an ever-present threat.

5. Leaving God's prescribed worship patterns incurs His wrath (24:18). Man can only approach God in the way God Himself has prescribed. The idolaters knew they could not worship in the temple. They experienced the consequences God had outlined if they would turn away from

Him (see Exodus 34: 10-17 and Deuteronomy 28: 15-20). To be too quick to change established worship patterns can easily lead to a loss of true worship.

6. Those who lightly esteem God's messengers are forsaking God (24:19-20). The prophet's message should have been a call to repentance. God can use our brethren to rescue us from a potentially tragic course. To disregard their challenges could be rejecting God's message.

7. The Lord forsakes those who forsake the opportunities He gives (24:20). Rejecting God's message begins a hardening process that will ultimately remove one from divine protection and blessing. A safe position is to first check our own motives in responding to challenges that come to us.

8. Those who lightly esteem God-given opportunities act irrationally (24:21-22). Joash attacked the very source of divine help. Perhaps he thought that to destroy the messenger would free him of his accountability. Even today some will retaliate against those who bring God's message.

### **The Lord's Judgment**

9. Those who reject God-given opportunities become vulnerable to the enemy (24:23-24). "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" (Proverbs 6:27). Joash and his people had lost God's protection and blessing and were powerless to face their enemy. Let us take heed lest flattery, carelessness, resentment toward concerned church leaders, or complacency turns us away from God and we in turn lose God's blessing on our lives.

10. Those who continue to reject God-given opportunities will reap the judgments of God (24:23-25). Despised by men and rejected by God was Joash's final fate. This disgraceful end illustrates the corresponding dishonour and eternal destruction of those who reject the God-given opportunities they have today. We can choose to serve God or turn away from Him, but the consequences of that choice are determined by God. Joash is an Old Testament example of how "he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8).

### **Important Teachings**

1. God-given opportunities bring accountability (24:1-2).

2. Those who utilize spiritual opportunities have the vision to address

the needs at hand (24:5-6).

3. Utilizing spiritual opportunities brings joy and rejoicing (24:10).

4. Seeking to please men more than God begins a course away from God (24:17).

5. Leaving God's prescribed worship patterns incurs His wrath (24:18).

6. Those who lightly esteem God's messengers are forsaking God (24:19-20).

7. The Lord forsakes those who forsake the opportunities He gives (24:20).

8. Those who lightly esteem God-given opportunities act irrationally (24:21-22).

9. Those who reject God-given opportunities become vulnerable to the enemy (24:23-24).

10. Those who continue to reject God-given opportunities will reap the judgments of God (24:23-25).

### **Answers to Questions**

1. What noble qualities did Joash portray? What was his weakness?

He was alarmed about the disrepair of the temple and collected monies for the purpose of repairing it. He willingly responded to the direction of Jehoiada.

It would seem that when Jehoiada died Joash lacked the personal conviction to stand alone.

2. What are some areas of service to which we should willingly contribute?

Efforts to spread the Gospel and establish congregations in new areas require many willing contributors. Street meetings and community visitation give opportunity to encourage others.

Brotherhood assistance needs are always present. Our schools need funds and teachers. Visiting the elderly or caring for them can require patience, but will prove a blessing to both them and us.

3. What made following the princes attractive to Joash?

Apparently he had a tendency in his own heart that was awakened by their flattery. Perhaps he felt insecure, having lost his mentor. The course the princes were promoting was popular with many in Judah and with the nations around them.

4. What may have been Joash's intent in commanding the death of Zechariah?

He likely felt condemned by Zechariah's word from the Lord. He possibly intended to avoid any future confrontation. He likely knew Zechariah's message was not what the princes wanted to hear. Today it is possible for the same to happen; men attack the messenger when they do not accept the message.

5. What influences could cause us to turn away from sound Biblical positions?

We live in a world that has degenerating morals. Apostate relatives and acquaintances can exert a negative influence. Pietistic and ecumenical influences are prevalent in many churches. Casualness tends to make one dull to the seriousness of accountability. Too many times, wayward children have a way of pulling their parents and siblings along.

6. Do our choices determine our end? Are the consequences of our choices predictable? Explain.

If we choose to surrender to God and follow His Word, we can have the promise of eternal life. If we refuse to surrender and choose to reject God's message, our end will be eternal damnation.

Man cannot choose the consequences of the choices he makes; God will be the Judge. When man repents God in mercy has promised to forgive. God's Word does, however, tell us that He will ultimately reject those who dishonour Him.

7. What are the characteristics and purposes of God's judgments?

God judges sin with accuracy and fairness. His judgment upon Joash illustrates the truth that "he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy" (James 2:13). His judgments are designed to warn the living to repent. At times God allows the destruction of one's own life to be a warning to others. God has ordained the law of sowing and reaping. "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints" (Revelation 15:3).

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

Joash is an example for us of the tragic end experienced by one who turned away from God. As a leader of God's people, he miserably failed. He lost his own life at the hand of the enemies of God's people. Only those "who by patient continuance in well doing" (Romans 2:7)



persevere to the end will experience eternal life. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Revelation 2:10).

### **Research Guide**

1. Read the parallel passage in 2 Kings 12.
2. Look up flattery in Nave’s Topical Bible for an understanding of what it meant when the princes did obeisance to Joash.
3. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 23:35 and Luke 11:51, which show the seriousness of disregarding the Word of the Lord, given by the prophets, and of the accountability it brings.
4. Read Romans 2:1-11.