

# 2 Chronicles 21-24 • The Lineage of David Almost Destroyed

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2 Chronicles, chapter 21. Chronicles deals with the kings of Judah. The southern kingdom, after the nation of Israel suffered a split, if you will. And the last king that we dealt with as we ended out chapter 20, was king Jehoshaphat, and we're going to pick it up now in chapter 21. It begins by saying,

*“Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place. (We're told here that) <sup>2</sup> He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: (And it names them here) Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, ....” (ESV)*

Yes, 2 sons with the same name. I bet that got interesting around the house, or something like that. My son Azariah, and my other son Azariah. Anyway, that's what happens when you involve several different women unfortunately, and the multiplicity of wives and probably they don't even know. Oh, there's another one by that name? Okay, well, anyway. But there were also sons named Michael, Shephatiah, and we're told that,

*“...all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. <sup>3</sup> Their father gave them great gifts of silver, gold, and valuable possessions, together with fortified cities in Judah, but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn. (Not always the best decision. We're going to find that that in fact was probably the worst decision that Jehoshaphat made, because in verse 4 we're told that) <sup>4</sup> When Jehoram had ascended the throne of his father and was established, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and also some of the princes of Israel.*

And that was done to eliminate any possibility of any kind of competition for the throne. And so, we see here that man's way of doing things and that's man's way, and it's, where there are monarchies existing today it is still the way things go, you know? The oldest son or whatever, or oldest daughter, in the cases of England right now, ascends to the throne when the previous monarch passes away.

Man's ways are not God's ways. You remember when God chose a king for the nation of Israel, the Bible says that he came to the house of Jesse and said, I want to meet your sons, have all of your boys appear before me, and of course Jesse did what was normal. He started with the oldest son and came across, and parade in front of Samuel. And Samuel no, that's not the one, all of Jesse's sons came across Samuel's visual view, whatever, that's a dumb way to put it. Anyway, you know what I'm saying. And finally, Samuel says, this is no, aren't there any others? Well, there's David. He's a kid, he's out with the sheep.

And you'll remember that Samuel said, bring him. We're not going to sit down and eat until we get this thing taken care of. He came to perform a function, which was to anoint the next king of Israel. But it was the youngest, least respected from a human standpoint of all of the sons of Jesse, greatest king of Israel. God's choice, not man's choice.

Boy, I tell you, this is an important thing to remember. So many times we learn from our culture how to make decisions, and we apply those things that we've learned from our culture - well, that's just what you do. But is that God's way? Very important thing to remember. In this particular case it's a tragedy because Jehoram proceeds to murder all of his brothers. We're told in verse 5 that,

*“Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. (Not very long. And we're told also that) <sup>6</sup> ...he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, (not only is he a murderer, he is a spiritual adulterer) as the house of Ahab had done, (And then we're told one of the reasons why) for the daughter of Ahab was his wife ....”*

This is a very powerful thing to remember. We're reminded here of the influence of evil in the life of an individual, and you'll remember last week when we talked about the rule and reign of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram's father, there was a point in time when Jehoshaphat really wanted very much to patch things up between his kingdom in Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel and so he foolishly arranged a marriage alliance. And this is the one. He had his son, Jehoram, marry a woman by the name of Athaliah. She was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

And what was done with good intentions, because once again you have something that was commonly done culturally to try to create peaceful conditions between two potentially warring nations. What was done for good intentions was done very foolishly and it created a foothold for the enemy to bring great evil into the, here now, the southern kingdom of Judah, and we're told as a result here at the end of verse 6, that the king,

*“...did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.”* And remember something else, what is evil in the sight of man isn't always evil in the sight of the Lord, but we're told it was evil in the sight of the Lord and yet the Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David. We're told in verse 7,

*“...because of the covenant that he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.*

But even though he's not going to destroy the house of David, we're going to see the kingdom begin to unravel here. Beginning in verse 8, and the first thing that we hear is that in his days, meaning in the days of Jehoram,

*“...Edom revolted from the rule of Judah and set up a king of their own.”*

In their own country. And you might remember as we were going through the rule of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram's father, who was initially a very godly man, we're told that the nations around Israel feared Judah. There was a holy fear that God brought upon the neighboring lands and so the Edomites were part of that, and they lived that way during the days of Jehoshaphat but no longer. That holy fear is gone because of the attitude of the current king, and it tells us in verse 9,

*“Then Jehoram passed over (and that means crossed over) with his commanders and all his chariots, and he (and they're obviously going to Edom to try to win these people back. And he) rose by night and struck the Edomites who had surrounded him with his chariot commanders.”* Was he successful? Well, apparently not, because it goes on to tell us in verse 10,

*“...Edom revolted from the rule of Judah to this day. (So, they are still in revolt against Judah, and we're told also) At that time Libnah (which was a town, not a nation. It was a priestly town) also revolted from his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD, the God of his fathers.”*

Now here's some of their own Jews in the town of Libna. We're not exactly sure where Libna was located, but it was a town of priests. We know that, and these were priests who were literally in a state of mourning over how bad things have gotten now in the kingdom of Judah, just in one generation and it says that they revolted against the king. They basically said, we don't want anything to do with you. Your rule is so filled with paganism and there is murder on your hands and so forth. Crazy. This is, so things are going from bad to worse. But does any of this give the king reason to pause and to consider his ways? Well, verse 11 says,

*“Moreover, he made high places in the hill country of Judah (and high places were pagan places of worship on hilltops. And we're told that) he led the inhabitants of Jerusalem into whoredom (It's an interesting word, it means spiritual prostitution. In other words, the worship of pagan deities. And we're told that as a result, here at the end of verse 11) he made Judah go astray.”*

So, you can see that God is trying to get Jehoram's attention by the things that are unraveling in his kingdom, but he's not getting it. God's going to turn up the volume here a little bit, verse 12.

*“And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, “Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father, ‘Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah,<sup>13</sup> but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel and have enticed Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into whoredom, as the house of Ahab led Israel into whoredom, and also you have killed your brothers, of your father's house, who were better than you,*

*<sup>14</sup> behold, the LORD will bring a great plague on your people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions,<sup>15</sup> and you yourself will have a severe sickness with a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the disease, day by day.’”*

Yeah, what a great letter to get from Elijah, right? I mean, good grief. Now would that letter have gotten your attention? It apparently doesn't with Jehoram. We're told in verse 16,

*“And the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the anger of the Philistines and of the Arabians who are near the Ethiopians.<sup>17</sup> And they came up against Judah and invaded it (And look what they did) they carried away all the possessions they found that belonged to the king's house, and also (look at this) his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest son.”*

But what's interesting about this is as bad as this gets, we still hear nothing from the king in any way or reflection of repentance or sorrow or anything. No cry for mercy is heard coming from this man's lips, and God surely would have responded to such a cry. I remember some of the worst kings of Israel. We're going to get to some of that are even worse than what we're dealing with, in fact, one of them is the son of Hezekiah. You remember we'll get to Hezekiah.

He was a godly man, but he gave birth to a very ungodly young man who took the throne and began to just lead the people into total pagan worship, but when

his kingdom began to unravel, and by the way his name was Manasseh, and it says about him that no other king, he exceeded them all in evil, but we're told that he repented. He cried out to God. He cried to God for mercy. We'll see this when we get to it. And God responded, and he was worse than Jehoram, in terms of what he led Judah into. Surely God would have responded to a cry for mercy from this man, but nothing is heard from him. And then the final part of Elijah's prophecy comes to pass in verse 18 and following.

*18 "And after all this the LORD struck him in his bowels with an incurable disease. 19 In the course of time, at the end of two years, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great agony. His people made no fire in his honor, like the fires made for his fathers. 20 He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. (And look at this) And he departed with no one's regret. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings."*

So, the people are still responding. Some of the people are still responding in a Godly manner even though they're being led by these kings into, as the ESV calls it, whoredom, they still recognize that this was not a godly man. This was not a man who had the favor of the Lord. Horrible passing for this man. Chapter 22 continues and tells us that,

*"And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his place, for the band of men that came with the Arabians to the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned. (we're told that) 2 Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was (as we've mentioned was) Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri."*

(Which would make her the daughter again of Ahab and Jezebel of the northern kingdom.) *3 "He also walked (listen to this) in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly. 4 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done. For after the death of his father they were his counselors, to his undoing."*

Meaning, the house of Ahab. So, he had a close relationship. You know it's funny, Jehoshaphat, two generations ago, wanted very much to mend things with the house of Israel. Well, they're mended. He created this marriage alliance for his son, and so relations were kind of mended. But at what cost? These next two sons of Jehoshaphat, meaning son and grandson, have a very close tie with the northern kingdom of Israel. But it says here, they were his counselors in evil to his undoing. Verse 5 says,

*“He even followed their counsel and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab (We've got another Jehoram) king of Israel to make war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead. And the Syrians wounded Joram,”*

And by the way, Joram and Jehoram, it's the same name, it's just a variant of the same name. Here's what's interesting. This is the same thing that Jehoshaphat was pulled into. Do you remember?

He got pulled into a military alliance with King Ahab going against Syria, and you'll remember that's when God actually brought the downfall of Ahab, he died in that battle. Jehoshaphat escaped with his life, barely, because he cried out to the Lord, and it just went from bad to worse. Well, now we have, two generations later, a similar sort of activity going on and once again, the king of Israel is wounded in the battle. It says in verse 6 that,

*“he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds that he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was wounded. (He's going to visit him. Look what it says in verse 7. This is very important)*

<sup>7</sup> *“But it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about through his going to visit Joram. (King of Israel) For when he came there, he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab.”*

Now stop there for just a moment. Let me catch you up on a little bit of the backstory because you see at this point the author of Chronicles assumes that we are acquainted with Jehu. Actually, if we didn't go and read 2 Kings, we wouldn't be at all, we would be completely in the dark. Who's this Jehu guy? Why was he anointed and so on and so forth. Jehu was a military commander.

He was a commander of the northern kingdom of Israel, and he was sitting one day in a meeting of the other military commanders, and a prophet came to the door of this meeting, knocked on the door came in and said I want to, I have a message for you. And Jehu stepped aside with this prophet and this prophet proceeded to anoint him, took a flask of oil, poured it over his head, and anointed him from the Lord and said, thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king of Israel, and I have called you to bring judgment upon the house of Ahab.

Jehu goes back into his military meeting with the commanders and the commanders say, what did the prophet say? And Jehu tried to pass it off. He goes, ah, those guys are whacked out. You can't really trust what they're saying one way or the other. They said no, no, no tell us what he said. Well, actually he told me that God had anointed me king of Israel and all the other commanders were like, that's good enough for us and they blew the trumpet.

They all took off their garments and laid them down on the steps before him and they basically said, long live the king. Now we basically have two kings in Israel. One of them that is actually anointed by the Lord, Jehu, but his fundamental purpose is to bring judgment on the house of Ahab, where Ahab's son is still ruling and reigning. You might say, well, if Jehu was anointed by the Lord to be king of Israel, I mean, God chose him, and chose him not only that, but to purge the evil of the house of Ahab and Jezebel he must have been a Godly man.

No, not really. He was a very zealous man. He wanted very desperately to get rid of Baal worship, and he did actually accomplish that during his time. He actually got rid of Baal worship, which is what Jezebel mostly brought into the northern kingdom. But when you read 2 Kings you find out that Jehu never actually got rid of the golden calves that had been built for the northern kingdom of Israel, way back at the time of the split, by Jeroboam.

He never got rid of them. In fact, he continued to allow the people, and it sounds very much in 2 Kings, like he continued in those same practices of worship. So, Jehu was not a Godly man in the upper, in the northern kingdom of Israel. In fact, if you want to remember an easy way to remember how many good kings there were in the northern kingdom of Israel. Zero, there were none.

That makes it real easy. Even those who were anointed by God, Jeroboam, who started the whole thing off, he was anointed by God to be the king of the northern kingdom of Israel. Horrible man. Set the standard for rotten leadership and then you got Jehu and there were others. Anyway, that's the back story here but here in Chronicles, the story is picked up as it is going on and we're told in verse 8, if you look with me there,

*“...when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab (meaning he was killing the family of Ahab and Jezebel) he met the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers, who attended Ahaziah, and he killed them. <sup>9</sup> He searched for Ahaziah, and he was captured while hiding in Samaria, and he was brought*

*to Jehu and put to death. They buried him, for they said, "He is the grandson of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." And the house of Ahaziah had no one able to rule the kingdom."*

Wow, that's an interesting statement. Jehu is told, by God, to execute judgment on the northern kingdom house of Ahab and Jezebel, but he also kills Jehoshaphat, the king from the southern kingdom. Why? Because his mother is the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, right? Athaliah. He knows there's blood there even in the southern kingdom, or in the king himself, and so he murders that whole family as well.

And technically speaking, Jehu exceeded his mandate if you will, by killing the king of Judah. But even so we're told back in verse 7 that it was ordained by God. Verse 10. Okay what's going to happen now back in Judah, back in Jerusalem?

*"Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal family of the house of Judah."*

So, in other words, what a whacked-out family. She knew that her son was dead and so she figures well, one of the family is going to be crowned king in his place, right? She proceeds to kill everybody who has any blood. In other words, she's literally murdering her own family so that she might maintain the throne in Judah. And we're told that she basically killed everybody. But verse 11.

Now, hey, stop there for just a moment. You need to understand something. You need to understand something. This is not just a story that doesn't relate to you in any way, shape, or form. To kill the sons of the King of Judah means to kill the descendants of David. You with me? In other words, it means to kill the royal line of David. Do you understand that that is something that Satan wanted to accomplish?

To kill all the descendants of the royal line of David is to stamp out royalty in the line of David. And guess what can't happen then? The Messiah, who was to come in the line of David, was prophesied from the line of David, that would now be cut off. You see how close we got here? Do you see how close we came? It tells us here in verse 11, how close we came.

*"But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, (and, this is, I'll just tell you, this is Ahaziah's sister) took Joash the son of Ahaziah (and that would have been her little brother, but likely by a different mother) and stole him away from among the king's sons who were about to be put to death, and she put him and his nurse*



*in a bedroom. Thus Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of Jehoiada the priest, because she was a sister of Ahaziah, hid him from Athaliah, so that she did not put him to death.”*

You guys see how close we got here from snuffing out the entire royal line of David? One young boy, one young boy, and by God's providence this young boy survived the massacre by the sister of the king taking and stealing this little boy away and hiding him in a bedroom, and we're told here in verse 12 that he *“remained with them six years, hidden in the house of God while Athaliah reigned over the land.”*

Did you notice they hid him in the house of God? What a great place to hide a kid from a pagan woman who's ruling the land. Put him in the house of God, she'll never look for him there. Anyway, so what that means is, when it says they hid him there for six years, what that means is, for 6 years, a woman ruled and reigned the southern kingdom of Judah.

However, her rule is entirely illegitimate because we're going to see here, as we go on, that no statements will be made about when her reign started and when it ended, like it did for all the other kings, showing by the Chronicle author that he refused to recognize her rule as legitimate in any way, shape, or form. Chapter 23 says,

*“But in the seventh year Jehoiada (And by the way, Jehoiada is the high priest and he's a Godly man) took courage and he entered into a covenant with the commanders of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, (Actually that should be Jihaninan) Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri.*

*<sup>2</sup> And they went about through Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> And all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoiada said to them, “Behold, the king's son! Let him reign, as the LORD spoke concerning the sons of David.”*

All right, what's going on here? Jehoiada waited for 6 years, and he finally decided now's the time. It's time to bring this boy out. He has been living in secret for all this time and Jehoiada's not sure who to trust because Athaliah probably has a pretty firm grip on the kingdom at this point. And so, he begins to speak to the military commanders one by one, and when he sounded them out and figured out that they were not loyal to Athaliah, he then made a covenant with them.

He entered into a covenant with these military commanders saying, will you support me? There's something I need to tell you. What's that? There is a son of David who yet remains. He was just a boy. He was hidden away during Athaliah's terrible slaughter, but we've kept him safe for 6 years and it's time to bring him out. Are you with me? And one by one, the commanders entered into a covenant with Jehoiada and said, I'm with you.

I'll support you. Me and my men, we're here. We'll do whatever it takes. And so, one by one he speaks to each of these men and says, behold the king's son, he's alive and so forth. Verse 4. Here's his description,

*“This is the thing that you shall do: of you priests and Levites who come off duty on the Sabbath, one third shall be gatekeepers, <sup>5</sup> and one third shall be at the king's house and one third at the Gate of the Foundation. And all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> Let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and ministering Levites.”* In other words, we don't want anybody to get in there who's loyal to Athaliah. He said, the priests and Levites.

*“They may enter, for they are holy, but all the people shall keep the charge of the LORD. <sup>7</sup> The Levites shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand. And whoever enters the house shall be put to death. Be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.”*

Jehoiada is not taking any chances. He has armed men literally surrounding this young king with drawn weapons and ready to literally kill anybody who walks through the door into the house of the Lord. He knows that if Athaliah finds out about this ahead of time, she's going to do whatever she can to kill this child. Verse 8,

*“The Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded, and they each brought his men, who were to go off duty on the Sabbath, with those who were to come on duty on the Sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss the divisions. (Kept them all on duty) <sup>9</sup> And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains the spears and the large and small shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of God.*

*<sup>10</sup> And he set all the people as a guard for the king, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house. <sup>11</sup> Then they brought out the king's son and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony. (Which is the Word of God) And*

they proclaimed him king, and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and they said, "Long live the king." (Well, you can imagine this is pretty exciting.)

*<sup>12</sup> When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she went into the house of the LORD to the people. <sup>13</sup> And when she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, "Treason! Treason!"*

Which is incredible coming from this woman. *"<sup>14</sup> Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains who were set over the army, saying to them, "Bring her out between the ranks, and anyone who follows her is to be put to death with the sword." For the priest said, "Do not put her to death in the house of the LORD." <sup>15</sup> So they laid hands on her, (they're not praying for her there) and she went into the entrance of the horse gate of the king's house, and they put her to death there.*

*<sup>16</sup> And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king that they should be the LORD's people. <sup>17</sup> Then all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. <sup>18</sup> And Jehoiada posted watchmen for the house of the LORD under the direction of the Levitical priests and the Levites whom David had organized to be in charge of the house of the LORD, to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David.*

*<sup>19</sup> He stationed the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean. <sup>20</sup> And he took the captains, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, marching through the upper gate to the king's house. And they set the king on the royal throne. <sup>21</sup> So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet after Athaliah had been put to death with the sword."*

After 6 years of this mad woman's reign in Jerusalem and in all of Judah, she was finally put to death, and the rightful heir to the throne is now sitting on the throne. But you'll notice here as we start this next chapter that Joash was seven years old when he began to reign. He was just a year old when they tucked him away with his nurse. Kept him for 6 years, and he reigned at age 7. Well, obviously, that's too young to do anything but he's got a godly man who is the

high priest, who is organizing and directing things until he grows up. And it says,

*“...he reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba, and Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, (and I wish it stopped right there, but it doesn't. It says that) Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada, the priest.”* Once again, we're coming back to the power of influence, although granted now we have a godly example, whereas Athaliah had been an ungodly and evil influence both with her husband and then later her son.

Now we see that the king, the son of king Ahaziah, is being influenced in a godly way by the priest Jehoiada as the king began to grow, we're told in verse 3 that,

*“Jehoiada got for him two wives, and he had sons and daughters.<sup>4</sup> After this Joash decided to restore the house of the LORD.<sup>5</sup> And he gathered the priests and the Levites and said to them, “Go out to the cities of Judah and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year and see that you act quickly.” But the Levites did not act quickly.”* (Why? We're not sure)

*<sup>6</sup> So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief and said to him, “Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and Jerusalem the tax levied by Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the congregation of Israel for the tent of testimony?”<sup>7</sup> For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also used all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD for the Baals.*

*<sup>8</sup> So the king commanded, and they made a chest and set it outside the gate of the house of the LORD.<sup>9</sup> And proclamation was made throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring in for the LORD the tax that Moses the servant of God laid on Israel in the wilderness.<sup>10</sup> And all the princes and all the people rejoiced and brought their tax and dropped it into the chest until they had finished.*

*<sup>11</sup> And whenever the chest was brought to the king's officers by the Levites, when they saw that there was much money in it, the king's secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and take it and return it to its place. Thus, they did day after day, and collected money in abundance.<sup>12</sup> And the king and Jehoiada gave it to those who had charge of the work of the house of the LORD, and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of the LORD, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the house of the LORD.*

*<sup>13</sup> So those who were engaged in the work labored, and the repairing went forward in their hands, and they restored the house of God to its proper condition and strengthened it. <sup>14</sup> And when they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, and with it were made utensils for the house of the LORD, both for the service and for the burnt offerings, and dishes for incense and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD regularly all the days of Jehoiada.”*

Remember, we come back to that same phrase, “*all the days of Jehoiada.*” Well, obviously this man can't live forever, even though God kept him alive a long time.

Look what it says in verse 15. “*But Jehoiada grew old and full of days and died. He was 130 years old at his death.*”

That's old. I mean, that is old. Good grief. When David died, he was just 70 and it says of him that he died old and full of years. What do you say about Jehoiada? You know? Wow! But I really believe the Lord kept him alive to perpetuate that influence, that godly influence in Judah as long as possible. But and we're told in verse 16,

*“And they buried him in the city of David (Look at this) among the kings, (they literally gave him a kingly burial. It says,) because he had done good in Israel, and toward God and his house. <sup>17</sup> Now after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king. Then the king listened to them.*

Okay, we're swinging the other direction again with influence all over. Jehoiada is gone, these young bucks come to pay homage to the king, and they start speaking into his ear, chirping about this and that and the other thing. And it says that the king listened to them. Well, what did it, how did it, what did it result in? Verse 18, here's what happened,

*“And they abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols. And wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. <sup>19</sup> Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention. <sup>20</sup> Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, (all right, you got, you with me here? This is the son of Jehoiada who just died at 130. His son, Zechariah, is now anointed by the Lord and it says here that) he stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God, ‘Why do you break the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you.’”*

*“<sup>21</sup> But they conspired against him, (And look at this. This is the sad part) and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. And when he was dying, he said, “May the LORD see and avenge!” (Well, you know the Lord always sees)*

*<sup>23</sup> At the end of the year the army of the Syrians came up against Joash. They came to Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. (This is what happened to these princes that led the king astray. They were all killed within a year, and) <sup>24</sup> Though the army of the Syrians had come with few men, the LORD delivered into their hand a very great army, because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. Thus, they executed judgment on Joash.*

*<sup>25</sup> (And) When they had departed from him, leaving him severely wounded, his servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So, he died, and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings. (Notice this) <sup>6</sup> Those who conspired against him were Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonite, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabite.*

*(We have an Ammonite and a Moabite who were servants of the king. Who conspired to kill him.) <sup>27</sup> Accounts of his sons and of the many oracles against him and of the rebuilding of the house of God are written in the Story of the Book of the Kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his place. ”*

This is actually the beginning, although we've seen this before of a trio of kings that we're going to see over the next few chapters, not tonight, who start off good but end badly. I'm reminded of something that the Apostle Paul talked about in his second letter to Timothy. Paul knew that he was about to die. He said as much in his letter to Timothy. But he also said, I've finished the race. I've kept the faith.

It was recently said in many, many beautiful ways, the very same thing of Billy Graham when he recently passed. Truly a man who kept the faith, who finished the race, who finished well. And when I look at these kings and I see how many of them started well, it reminds me of a race because the Bible, many times, refers to our walk with Christ as a race.

As I already mentioned, Paul said, I've finished the race and, of course, that's not the only reference in the Bible of a race, referring to our Christian walk. I

remember when I was in school, starting a race was really easy. Finishing well, was really hard. Number one I was not a long-distance runner at all. After about 50 yards, I completely would peter out, so I kept myself to the 50-yard dash or any other relay races where all I had to run was about 50 yards because I could do pretty good with 50 yards, 50 yards isn't that far. That's not far at all.

My ability to go beyond 50 yards was greatly hindered and I don't know why. The point is, I think that's true with a lot of us. It's not that it's easy to start the race and it's not that hard to push and to go at least a certain distance and look pretty good. But after about 50 yards I would slow, I would just watch as people passed me up and I did not finish well if I had to run farther than that. Only God knows how long your race is. The question that we need to be asking ourselves is, Lord, how am I going to finish this thing, because I want to finish well.

I want to finish with my head held high, not pridefully, but just knowing that I kept the faith. I didn't deny the Lord, I kept my eyes on the prize to run that race, as Paul talked about, with our eyes toward the goal of being called heavenward in Christ Jesus. Once again, starting the race is easy. Running for a while, we can all do that. The question is, how are we going to finish?

And if, at the end of your life, you could read a chronicle of your life, just like this what would it say? He or she kept the faith, finished strong, maintained a heart of devotion to the Lord, did not waver in unbelief, or something else. I think it needs to be a matter of prayer for each of us. Lord, strengthen me to finish well. Some of the greatest kings that we know of didn't finish very well.

Solomon, Asa, great kings from the standpoint of the things that they accomplished, their godliness early on, but the finishing part of the race was not impressive at all. May the Lord strengthen us to finish well, amen?