

II CHRONICLES 21-23

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Chronicles chapter 21 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen with the previous two Kings in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, both Asa and his son Jehoshaphat, they brought spiritual reform to the nation.

They loved the Lord, not perfect men, but loved the Lord as did David, and they removed the false worship of God and brought the nation back to the true worship of God.

Two generations of spiritual reform in the Southern Kingdom of Judah and you would think that it would just continue to go on.

I mean, why wouldn't it?

Because the problem comes with each person, they have to make a choice in who they will serve and yes, parents and grandparents can influence them, but they still have to make that decision.

And thus, we are going to see that Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram is going to walk away from the Lord, he is going to bring the nation back to the false worship of God, he will lead them in idol worship.

We are going to see that the alliances that Jehoshaphat made with the Northern Kingdom of Israel, King Ahab, will affect the son of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram.

Remember, Ahab and his wife Jezebel were wicked, they were evil. I call them the ***DEMONIC DUO*** of the Old Testament and they truly were!

We will see that as we read on and we will talk about what Jehoshaphat allowed into his life that affected his children, specifically, Jehoram.

And so, on the heels of two generations of light, we now move into spiritual darkness in the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

With that said, let's begin reading in II Chronicles chapter 21, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

II CHRONICLES 21

VERSES 1-6

Here we see the death of this godly King, Jehoshaphat.

And he did good. He loved the Lord and tried to bring reform to the nation. But one of his downfalls you might say is his alliance with the King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, Ahab, who was very wicked.

And Jehoshaphat's reason for making this alliance may have been good, he wanted to see the nation healed and brought together again, no longer this division.

But you never sacrifice truth and righteousness for the sake of unity. And what we have seen is that Jehoshaphat did both.

Now the bad fruit of this alliance is not really seen until after the death of Jehoshaphat, but to make things good between these two Kings, he does something even worse than this alliance.

This strange alliance becomes even stranger when Jehoshaphat allows his son to marry Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

And what we see is that the wickedness that flowed from his in-laws touched not only his wife Athaliah, their daughter, but also Jehoram himself.

How do I know that?

Listen again to what is said here in II Chronicles 21:6, **“And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.”**

Because of this marriage and this evil influence, we see that he walked in the way of the Kings of Israel! Their wicked ways influenced him!

And it is true, some of the Kings in the Northern Kingdom of Israel were better than the others, but as we have seen in our study of I & II Kings, as good as some were, they all were bad, not one truly served the Lord.

And with the death of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram is the King. And we now see the wickedness that was inside of him become apparent and it affects an entire nation!

Think about this. There may be some people who feel that the marriage between the royal families of the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel would lift up the Kingdom of Israel, spiritually speaking.

But it did not work that way. Instead, it brought the Kingdom of Judah down spiritually.

And that happens anytime we make alliances with the unsaved! A good lesson for us to learn!

Now here's the thing, and let me expound on this for a minute as we apply this to our own lives.

Many people have no problem pushing the envelope you might say, crossing over the line, but it will affect their children or spiritual children, those that they have led to the Lord.

Yes, Jehoshaphat seems to have been able to separate himself from the evil that permeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Maybe he was strong enough not to allow the pleasures of the flesh to overtake him.

And understand that their religious activities in the north many times deteriorated into nothing more than orgies as they worshipped their gods in the groves.

Yes, it did appeal to the flesh and Jehoshaphat's son was not strong enough to deal with that kind of influence in his life. It overtook him.

Think about this for a minute. As parents we have a responsibility to protect our children from things that will stimulate their flesh, things that will be harmful to them.

Maybe we can handle certain things, but our children may not be able to, and they can succumb to their evil influence.

Don't leave the wrong impressions on your children because as they grow old, they may not be able to overcome them, just as Jehoram couldn't.

And make no mistake about it, no matter how strong you think you are, the things you do will influence your own walk.

We don't live in a vacuum, and I don't care how strong you think you are, the flesh, carnality, will affect you.

Remember the story of Lot living in the wicked city of Sodom. We are told in II Peter 2:7-8 that Lot “**... who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds).**”

Not only was his soul tormented but his witness was destroyed. Not even his family would believe his words of the coming judgment of God and all but his two daughters survived.

Instead of filling yourself with the garbage of this world, which the flesh feeds on, you need to fill yourself with the Lord.

Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 5:18-19, **“And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”**

You see, maybe our family, maybe our friends reject what we are saying about Jesus because we are not living for Jesus. Our words don’t match up with what we are doing.

Let me share with you a few verses to show you what I mean.

Peter tells us regarding this issue in I Peter 2:11-12, **“Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.”**

Also, Paul tells us in Colossians chapter 3, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him . . . And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.”** Colossians 3:16-17, 23-24.

We are to let love reign in our lives, the love of Christ and we are to understand that in all we do we are serving the Lord and not man.

If we approach life with that understanding, it won’t matter what man may do to us because we serve the Lord and look at what they did to Him!

And it truly is by our actions and not our knowledge that people are drawn to Christ. I am not saying that we don't need to study God's Word, we do, but as we study it the lessons are for us to learn and grow by.

And thus, as we live by the Word, as we follow Christ, others will be drawn to Him! But if we don't live for Christ, then what others see in us they will not desire to have.

The hypocrisy will turn them away from Jesus and thus, may our words and actions work together for the glory of God!

Now we have seen in these verses that Jehoram was the firstborn son of Jehoshaphat and thus, he was the King.

And Jehoshaphat gave gifts to all of his sons, separated them into various areas, maybe some sibling rivalry and things looked good, but not for long. And we are told that these other sons were good, but not Jehoram!

Not only was Jehoram leading the people into idolatry, but he was just as wicked as his in-laws and his wife.

As soon as he is established on the throne, he killed all his brothers with the sword, wiping out all the royal heirs to the throne, preventing anyone from usurping his kingdom from him.

That tells me that he did not trust the Lord and had to put an end to any one of his brothers that may try and take the kingdom from him. You can see the evil that was in his heart overflow into his actions.

Now before we are too harsh on Jehoram for what he did, we as Christians many times are just as guilty as Jehoram.

What do I mean by that?

I mean that we take our sword of our mouth and destroy our brothers and sisters in the Lord with it.

We come against their character and so on.

Growing up we all heard that little saying, ***“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me!”***

That is not exactly true. Bones can be set and will heal, but the words we use to cut people up with, those scares many times last a lifetime.

Be careful in the things you say, for out of your lips you praise God, and then with those same lips are you cursing man whom God created in His image?

As James says, those things should not be so! (James 3)

How is God going to respond to what Jehoram is doing?

Let's read on and see!

VERSE 7

Now this is interesting to me. You see; many times, you hear people say that when they read the Bible all they see is God's wrath and judgment.

That is not what I see.

When I read the Bible I see God's grace, His mercy, His goodness towards sinful man!

You see, God had every right to wipe out the house of David, to extinguish the lamp, because of Jehoram's wickedness.

But because of the promise He made to David to establish his throne forever, he did not destroy the lamp. (II Samuel 7:13, I Kings 15:4-5, II Kings 8:19, I Chronicles 17:4-14)

That does not mean that there are no consequences to his actions, but God is faithful to the promise He has made to David and thus, the promises He has made to us are faithful, they will come to pass.

I am not saying that there are no consequences for our actions, there are! But God will not negate His promises to us because many of them are unconditional promises, all based in Christ and His faithfulness!

If you are in Christ, they are yours!

Remember what Paul said in Romans 6:23, **“For the wages of sin is death, but the [free] gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

That is God’s promise to us!

VERSES 8-11

Make no mistake about it, God is patient, He is longsuffering, but there comes a time when His judgment will come!

Here we see that the result of Jehoram’s actions, because he is leading the people away from the Lord, God brought judgment upon the nation.

He did this by causing various nations to rise up against them and I don’t believe that it was because God was vindictive, but because He wanted to awaken them from their spiritual sleep and draw them back to Him.

The sad thing here is Jehoram did not repent of his sins and turn to God, but continued down that road away from God and straight to hell.

He built up the high places or the pagan worship sites and many of these rituals involved immoral sexual activities.

And the King did not do this all by himself; he was not alone in his actions. He was leading the nation down that same path, and they too were following this rebellion against God.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 15:14, “**... They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.**”

And I guess the only way out is to have a walking stick you might say that is straight, that will lead you out of the darkness and into the light. And that walking stick is the Word of God, but they moved away from the Word because the Word kept them from doing the things that they wanted to do!

What a lesson for us. Whether we like it or not, whether we agree with it or not, God’s Word stands and we are to follow what God has said because it is what is best for us!

Listen to what Meyer has to say and then I will expound on this.

He wrote, “*As long as the kings of Judah remained true to their allegiance to God, they were able to keep in subjection the surrounding nations; but just so soon as they revolted from God these people revolted from there. It was as though power descended into them from the source of all power; and when that link between themselves and God was broken, that between themselves and their subordinates was broken also.*”

I think we can apply this to our own lives. As soon as we open the door of compromise, of false worship, of sin, we will see defeat in our lives.

It is as if we cut off the power source, we cut God out of our lives. And those areas of the flesh that we thought we conquered begin to revolt against us.

The only solution is to return to the power source, return to God by repenting of your sin. Get connected to Him and the enemy will be defeated!

It is as James tells us, **“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”** James 4:7-10.

Sin will see you in defeat, drawing close to God will give you the victory!

VERSE 12a

Here is one of those passages that may be confusing to you, and some have difficulty with this, why?

Because they say Elijah was taken up to be with the Lord prior to this event, so he could not have written this letter of coming judgment.

That is very true. Elijah ministered mostly to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and he was taken up into Heaven by this time, so how can this be?

First of all, Elijah was a prophet of God and God could have had him write this letter in advance.

There are many examples of this but one that sticks out in my mind is found in the book of Isaiah where we see hundreds of years before Cyrus, the King of Persia was even born, God called him by name.

He not only spoke of his name but explained how they were going to destroy the Babylonians and enter this fortified city through its gates.

You can read of this in Isaiah chapter 45!

It can be simply explained for God knows the things that are coming to pass before they happen, and He used the prophets to speak to the people, not only speaking forth the Words of God, but also speaking of future events that will come to pass and that is exactly what I believe happened here.

Elijah wrote these words down and now, after he is gone, they are being read to this King, words that Elijah spoke against this King!

Others will say that this person called Elijah was not the prophet Elijah or that these words were written in the spirit of Elijah and some even say he was not taken up yet. I don't think so.

Again, I see Elijah writing these words before he was taken up into heaven, before these events even took place!

VERSES 12b-15

Let me start by saying this. What Elijah wrote and sent to this King was not a Hallmark greeting card!

And what we are seeing here is the consequences of his sin and how his sin will affect those around him, even his family.

It is not a pretty picture nor is it intended to be. Judgment is never pretty.

We don't know what kind of affliction Jehoram was struck with, some kind of intestinal disease, and maybe its best we don't know, but it was serious enough to cause him to die a slow death.

What I find interesting is that we do not see Jehoram repent. When he hears what is going to happen to him and then it begins to happen in his life, he would rather suffer this affliction than repent and get right with God.

What a sad picture of a sinner who refuses to come to God.

We see this in the Tribulation Period in Revelation 6:12-17 where we are told, **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”**

Here we see these people, knowing where this judgment is coming from, God the Father and the Lamb, Jesus, and they refuse to repent, they refuse to get right with God. They would rather have the rocks fall on them and kill them than turn to God.

That is a hard heart and there are people today who do the very same thing.

They refuse to turn to God even though their lives are in shambles, they have this void in their life, and they are trying to fill it with everything except God.

And in the end, they will not be able to stand before God in their own righteousness, which is like filthy rags, but they will be judged for eternity in the Lake of Fire!

VERSES 16-17

Here we see God continuing to judge Jehoram and the Southern Kingdom of Judah with the Philistines and the Arabians coming and invading the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

They not only took his possessions but his wives and his sons, all of them except Jehoahaz, also known as Ahaziah. As we read on, we will see that his sons that were captured will be killed.

Think of all this King did to protect his throne, murdering all his brothers, and yet, in the end, his own sons were taken away and his possessions.

Payne put it like this, ***“In the outworkings of God’s justice, the man who began by massacring his own brothers ended by suffering the loss of his sons and wives.”***

God is not mocked and our sin will be dealt with as we see here with Jehoram!

VERSES 18-20

Here we see that Jehoram only reigned for eight short years, dying a slow death.

Keep in mind that yes, Jehoram reigned for eight years, but about five of those years he co-reigned with his father, Jehoshaphat.

Again, we are not exactly sure what kind of intestinal problem it was, one writer said it was constipation but that is a little hard to believe. But whatever it was, it was painful and for two full years he suffered, he died this slow death until his intestines came out!

Not a long life and it is as Proverbs 10:27 says, **“The fear of the LORD prolongs days, But the years of the wicked will be shortened.”** And long life is not always the number of years but how the years that God has given to us were used!

And with the death of Jehoram we see that there was no great burning of incense like they would do for the other Kings, the ones they loved.

In fact, the Scriptures say that the people could care less that he died; they had no sorrow in the death of this King.

What a sad ending to this life, but it did not have to be that way. He chose to live like the Devil, and he will be separated from God for eternity because of it.

Let me share with you what a few commentators had to say regarding this man Jehoram and his death.

Clarke put it like this, *“He was hated while he lived, and neglected when he died; visibly cursed of God, and necessarily execrate [great hatred for] by the people whom he had lived only to corrupt and oppress. No annalist [historian] is mentioned as having taken the pains to write any account of his vile life.”*

And Morgan tells us, *“Strange indeed is the human heart. It turns to evil, and pursues it persistently; and yet it never really loves those who lead it in the way of evil . . . Love is only inspired by goodness. Men will follow those who lead them in the ways of corruption, but such following is always inspired by evil selfishness, and never by admiration or love.”* How true that is!

And let me say this. Sin does take its toll on our bodies. A person living in sin is affected emotionally, spiritually, and even physically.

And what comes radiating from their life is the ugliness of the world. You see, as they are in bondage to sin, all you can do is radiate that frustration to others.

But to those who have been freed in Christ, His love is what radiates from their life.

Now if you want to be a slave to sin, let it eat away at you, and be like the walking dead, then yield yourself to sin. But the death process will be slow and painful and even in death you will not escape the judgment.

But if you yield yourself to Christ, become a bondsman to Him, then God will take your dead spiritual body and make it alive again in Christ.

It is then that your life is filled with love, peace, joy and so on. And that will radiate from your life and touch the lives of others.

It is as Paul said in II Corinthians 5:17-21, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

Clarke said regarding these words here in verse 17 of II Corinthians chapter 5, *“The man is not only mended, but he is new made . . . there is a new creation, which God himself owns as his workmanship, and which he can look on and pronounce very good.”*

May we not forget that! God sees the finished product, we are perfect in a positional sense and in a practical sense, God is still working, just don’t live in the past and what you have done, but in the present and what God has done and is doing in your life! That is the new life in Christ!

And now, because all that Christ has done for us, reconciling us back to God, we, as His ambassadors, need to bring that message of reconciliation to the world.

Keep in mind that an ambassador doesn't speak for himself but for the one who sent him, and for us it is the King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ!

Thus, as we go out, we implore people; we come alongside people urging them to receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, to not allow the terror of the Lord to come upon them, the wrath of God for their rejection of Jesus!

Thus, our sins are not counted against us and so, we should share with others the love that God has shown us!

It truly is an amazing grace; it truly is a sweet sound in our ears because we know that God loved us so much that He saved a wretch like you and me! Praise the Lord for that!

II CHRONICLES 22

VERSES 1-4

Remember that the sons of Jehoram were all killed by invading armies and the only son that was left was Ahaziah. Keep in mind that he is called Jehoahaz in II Chronicles 21:17.

Now here is the problem. We are told in II Kings 8:26 that Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became King and yet here in II Chronicles, we are told that he is 42 years old when he became King.

What is going on with this?

It seems we have a copyist error here in II Chronicles, which is easy to do with numbers.

Does that make the Bible unreliable like some like to say?

First of all, this does not change any doctrine related to our faith and that is important to understand. There is no Scripture that is dealing with our faith that is in dispute!

And again, I know that many try and say that the Bible is not reliable and is filled with many discrepancies, especially the Old Testament.

Let me say this. The earliest manuscripts of the Old Testament were from 916 A.D. until the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which date around 125 B.C.

The Scroll of Isaiah from around 125 B.C. is some 24 feet long and 10 inches high.

In comparing it with the text of more than 1,000 years later, from 916 A.D., we find that it is 95% accurate and the 5% variation consisted chiefly of variations in spelling and in not one case did it change the meaning or the intent of the Scripture. No doctrine was changed.

William Green said, ***“It may safely be said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted.”***

The original text of the Scriptures was without error and the entire Old Testament of today has only 1/2 of 1% error. And in that we see that it does not change one doctrine.

The Scriptures are accurate, for they have been one of the most highly analyzed books of antiquity.

In fact, there is more evidence for the reliability of the New Testament than any 10 pieces of classical literature put together.

In fact, if anyone says that the New Testament is not reliable, they will have to throw out all literature of antiquity.

Today we have between 23,000 to 24,000 manuscripts to work from. The number two book is the Iliad, and it only has 643 manuscripts.

I think we can trust the Scriptures!

Now even though Ahaziah was on the throne, his mom, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah was the power behind the throne.

She influenced her son greatly, and not for the good. She counseled him to do wickedly.

Can you imagine leading your children into wickedness, that is what she did with her son!

What does that mean to us.

There is a lot I can say about this, but I think the Holy Spirit is showing us that being a mom is important.

In our society, if you are a stay-at-home mom, you are looked down upon, but God does not look down upon you.

If moms would only see what kind of impact they can have on their children. That is a great responsibility we as parents have, to raise our children to love the Lord.

Let us not hand over that responsibility to the government, they can't even run the post office let alone train up our children!

One more point here and that is this. Not only was Ahaziah influenced by his mom but also by the counselors of Ahab who taught him the evil ways of the Kings of Israel!

Don't tell me that we are not influenced by those we hang around with. Ahaziah saturated himself with evil counselors, and that is what came flowing from his life.

We need to remember that.

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 15:33, **"Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"**

VERSES 5-6

Now this once again can get confusing.

We see Jehoram, also known as Joram on the throne in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Keep in mind that Jehoram or Joram is Ahab's son.

And Joram persuaded Ahaziah, who is the King in the Southern Kingdom of Judah to go to battle with him against the Syrians.

And in this battle Joram, King of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was wounded, and he goes to Jezreel to recover from these wounds.

Jezreel was a royal city that was located in the Plain of Jezreel.

As Joram goes to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he received in this battle, his nephew, Ahaziah, King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah goes to visit him.

VERSES 7-9

What an interesting string of events that takes place here and folks, this was not just bad luck for either of these men.

It was the judgment of God coming upon them for their wickedness.

Look at what transpired. While Ahaziah is visiting his uncle Joram, who was recovering from his battle wounds, Jehu, the son of Nimshi, an Israelite military officer, came to see them.

Prior to this the Lord told Jehu by a prophet of God, that he will be the next King in Israel and that he would destroy the house of Ahab for their wickedness.

Thus, Jehu kills Joram, King of Israel, and he finds 42 of Ahaziah's brothers or probably kinsman to Ahaziah since his brothers were killed, and kills them and finally, he kills Ahaziah.

This now places Jehu on the throne in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and in the Southern Kingdom of Judah we have no one yet stepping up and being the next King after the death of Ahaziah.

But that will quickly change!

Talk about your soap operas! As sand through the hour glass, so go the days of our life!

VERSE 10

Now when you think of grandmothers you think of this sweet little old lady, or I better be careful, middle-aged grandmother or I will be in trouble with my wife.

But so much for a nice old grandmother here, she is evil!

She gets word that her son is dead and instead of mourning, she kills all her grandsons, all the royal heirs, and she is now going to assume the role as Queen or, in her mind, King.

Make no mistake about it, she was the power behind the throne while her son was King, and now she comes out from behind the scenes and steps into the spotlight.

But Athaliah missed one of her grandsons, as we shall see.

It is as Knapp wrote of this woman, ***“No character in history, sacred or secular, stands out blacker or more hideous than this daughter-in-law of the godly Jehoshaphat.”***

Now let’s look back to where this all got started.

The godly King Jehoshaphat allowed his son to marry the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and as Poole wrote, ***“And this was the fruit of Jehoshaphat’s marrying his son to a daughter of that idolatrous and wicked house of Ahab, even the extirpation [cutting off from existence] of all his posterity but one.”***

That is why we are not to be unequally yoked together, believers and unbelievers because the fruit of this relationship is bad!

VERSES 11-12

Here we see that Athaliah missed one of her grandchildren and Jehoshabeath or Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, hid away one remaining son by the name of Joash.

During the time that Athaliah was murdering all the royal heirs, the sons of Ahaziah, Joash was only a year old. And he is taken by Jehosheba to the Temple where he is hidden for six years in one of the chambers that surround the Temple.

If you remember, Solomon's Temple had a three-story chamber that was used for storage and some for housing for the priests who would rotate through every two weeks, performing their services in the Temple.

Now, as you read this, maybe you are thinking, ***“How dark things look for the Southern Kingdom of Judah!”***

But as dark as things can get, let us not lose sight that God is in control and He has a plan that will expel the darkness.

It is as Clarke wrote, ***“Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy relative to the Messiah. The whole truth of that prophecy, and the salvation of the world, appeared to be now suspended on the brittle thread of the life of an infant of a year old, (see 2 Chronicles 24:1,) to destroy whom was the interest of the reigning power! But God can save by few as well as by many. He had purposed, and vain were the counter-exertions of earth and hell.”***

May we not lose sight of that no matter how dark it may be in this world right now!

Let me make this last point from what Morgan wrote.

First of all, he tells us, *“There are hours in human history when it seems as though evil were almost all powerful. It entrenches itself in great strength; it builds up great ramparts; it inaugurates policies of the utmost craft and cleverness. It seems to be able to bind together a kingdom which is invincible. All this is false seeming. There is no finality, no security, in the apparent might of iniquity.”*

Again, let us look up for our redemption draws near. I am sure you have read the end of the Bible, Revelation, and guess what, God wins!

It was never in doubt and thus, as dark as it may be, there is a light that is coming that will blast away this darkness and righteousness will fill this land!

Keep in mind that six years occur between chapters 22 and 23. Jehoiada and his patriots realize the time has come for the throne of Judah to return to its rightful heir as we will see.

II CHRONICLES 23

VERSES 1-7

Here we see Jehoiada the husband of Jehosheba, who was a priest that served in the Temple, and for six years he has been raising Joash, being a godly influence in his life.

And now it was time to bring back the Davidic dynasty and put a descendant of David back on the throne.

He knew God's Word and now it was time to act upon what God has said about the descendant of David. It was time to reveal the true King, but with Athaliah's wicked influence, it had to be done very carefully, or she could destroy this coup attempt just as she had destroyed the sons of Ahaziah, her grandsons, so that she might sit on the throne.

Let me ask you this. Why in the world did the people accept what Athaliah was doing?

Because, for those six years they did not know there was an alternative! I think we see that today, people living under the reign of Satan because they really don't know that there is a legitimate King to reign in their life, Jesus!

We are to point them to the true King, to Jesus, let them taste and see that the Lord He is good!

Now look at all these bodyguards this young man had. I mean, this kid had more bodyguards than our president. Wherever he went he was protected. And if anyone got too close to him, they were to be put to death.

Extreme measures it seems to protect this young child.

Why would they use such extreme measures to protect Joash?

Because Joash was the last remaining descendant of David who could be King and thus, he needed to be protected. And if you remember, it was through the lineage of David that the Messiah was to come.

Thus, if you destroyed the lineage of David, you would prevent the Messiah from coming.

Yes, Athaliah was wicked and responsible for her actions, but behind the scenes you can see the demonic influence going on. Satan was trying to prevent the seed of the woman from being born, the Messiah, who would give Satan a mortal wound.

Thus, in Genesis, we see him go to work and influence Cain, who killed Abel.

But the Messiah was not to come through Cain or Abel, but through another son, Seth.

And every time the Messianic lineage is more defined, Satan comes after it.

You see, Anti-Semitism has Demonic roots, and you can trace this throughout the Old Testament, for every time you see mass murder, check and see if that is where the Messiah was to come from. Chances are it was.

And in the New Testament, we see Herod being used by Satan to destroy all the children from the age of two and under, why?

It is simple. The Messiah was born and he was trying to destroy Him. Herod did not want anyone to usurp his throne, and Satan did not want the Messiah to destroy him!

Athaliah was following suit, and so Joash had to be protected.

VERSES 8-11

No longer did they rotate through, but all the divisions of the priests were present.

And Jehoiada divided them into three groups that would rotate throughout the day and night on shifts, to protect the King, for he was never left alone, day or night.

Listen to what Meyer wrote of Jehoiada the priest, ***“The easiest thing for Jehoiada would have been to shut himself up in the temple, and leave things to take their course. The noblest thing was to come forth, and boldly confront the rampant, evil of his time.”***

You see, Jehoiada was a godly priest, and that may sound strange, but not all the priests loved the Lord. And Jehoiada influenced Joash in a positive manner.

As he is proclaimed King, he is given a copy of the Law of God, the first five books of Moses, so that he can read and apply them to his life.

He was doing what was spoken of in Deuteronomy 17:18-20, where we read, **“Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”**

Now, what is Athaliah going to do when she finds out what is taking place?

Let's read on and see.

VERSES 12-13

As Athaliah sees what has taken place, she yells out, ***“Treason! Treason!”***

I find that interesting from a woman who killed all her grandchildren so that she could sit on the throne. Interesting how she responds when the shoe is on the other foot!

And she knows that she is in trouble here but again, no concern, no remorse or repentance for all the evil she brought to the land for several years!

VERSES 14-15

I find it interesting that even though Athaliah reigned for several years, now that the true King is on the throne, the people don't even recognize her reign. There is a celebration when a descendant of David is on the throne!

So Athaliah and her evil influence were removed from the scene by her death. And thus, as dark as things looked, as hopeless as they seemed, God took care of the situation in His time!

It is as Morgan wrote, *“Her own treason against the true and abiding King of the nation was defeated. Thus, sooner or later, and in ways equally dramatic, the moment arrives when those who plot and plan against Heaven and righteousness, find themselves looking at the evidences of the triumph of God and of goodness over all their wickedness.”*

VERSES 16-17

Jehoiada makes a covenant that they would be the Lord’s people. That they would serve the Lord.

In response to that the false worship places were destroyed, and the true worship of God was brought back into the land.

And how true that is in our own life. Before we can worship the true and living God the false gods have to be destroyed, removed from our lives because God will not share His worship with anyone!

VERSES 18-21

So once the false worship is removed, we see the re-institution of the sacrificial system brought back as God was truly worshipped once again.

Jehoiada was a positive influence on not only Joash, but the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Now we have talked about this before, but it keeps coming up and I think it is important.

We see these gatekeepers, and they were needed not only to prevent anything that was unclean from entering in and defiling the Temple and destroying the worship of God, but also to allow those who belonged in the Temple to freely enter in.

God has also placed pastors, leaders in the church, to be spiritual gatekeepers, keeping out false doctrine that would destroy the true worship of God.

That my friends is not happening much today, and the result of that is all kinds of false doctrine, things contrary to the Word of God, infiltrating the church!

We see alliances being made with unsaved people, associations with false religions. We are to be gatekeepers, and it is not always popular, but it is the right thing to do!

And parents, you are gatekeepers in the home, protecting your family!

Let me close with this because I think the Holy Spirit is painting a picture for us.

We have seen this Athaliah, this usurper, murdering the sons of Ahaziah and usurped the throne. And she reigned for six years but during that time, the true King, Joash, was hidden away.

During her reign the land was filled with evil.

Then, in the seventh year, the true King, Joash, was revealed.

And the usurper, Athaliah was destroyed with the sword as Joash took the throne and peace filled the land.

I love this picture. I think you can see where I am going with this.

Satan is the usurper. He murdered God's children by causing them to sin.

Thus, by his actions Satan usurped the throne; he is the King of this world right now.

And during his 6,000-year reign as King, the true King, Jesus Christ, is hidden away in a sense.

And as we look at the world, we can see that this King, Satan, has filled the land with evil.

But in the 7,000th year the true King, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.

And when Jesus returns, the evil will be destroyed by the sword that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

And when He comes, He will sit upon the throne of David, to rule and reign forever, and true peace will fill the land!

It is as Daniel 7:13-14 tells us, **“I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed.”**

We long for that day, but He is coming soon!

Maranatha or **“Even so, come, Lord Jesus!”** (Revelation 22:20)