

Series: ID: Follow the Leader

November 1, 2015

## **Title: All the King's Men**

**[Slide 1]**

**Text: 2 Chronicles 24**

### **The Boy King**

#### **Humpty Dumpty Sat on a Wall...**

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.

Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.

All the king's horses and all the king's men

Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Of all the stories of the kings of ancient Judah, none is more tragic than that of King Joash. Joash was destined for greatness, but died in disgrace. Like Humpty Dumpty, he climbed to the highest place on the wall. And like Humpty Dumpty, he came crashing down. When he did, there was nothing that anyone in his realm could do to put him back together again.

So what can we learn from this "so good" and "so bad" king?

#### **Reign of Terror**

Joash's story begins in the midst of an horrific reign of terror. His father, King Ahaziah, had been assassinated, leaving his grandmother with the opportunity to take over the Kingdom of Judah. Her next move was to eliminate all threats to her throne:

**[Slide 2]**

*2 Chronicles 22:10 NIV*

*When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family of the house of Judah.*

She almost succeeded in the slaughter of her grandchildren. The one child she failed to kill was the infant Joash. In an act of incredible bravery, his aunt intervened to save the baby:

**[Slide 3]**

*2 Chronicles 22:11 NIV*

*But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes who were about to be murdered and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Because Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of the priest Jehoiada, was Ahaziah's sister, she hid the child from Athaliah so she could not kill him.*

For six long years the priest and his family raised the young prince while Athaliah terrorized the land.

**The Boy King**

When Joash was 7 years old, his protector, Jehoiada, made his move. He secretly gathered generals and clan leaders in Jerusalem, and had them swear allegiance to the young prince. Then he stationed them throughout the palace and temple complex for the moment when Joash would, for the very first time, be brought out of hiding.

When all was ready, we read:

**[Slide 4]**

*2 Chronicles 23:11 NIV*

*Jehoiada and his sons brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; they presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him and shouted, "Long live the king!"*

Caught completely off guard, the wicked queen ran into the temple:

**[Slide 5]**

*2 Chronicles 23:13 NIV*

*She looked, and there was the king, standing by his pillar at the entrance. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and musicians with their instruments were leading the praises. Then Athaliah tore her robes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"*

At Jehoiada's command, Athaliah was taken out of the temple complex and put to death. Jehoiada brought the people back to the LORD, tearing down the pagan idols and altars that Athaliah had brought into the Temple.

The reign of terror was over.

## **The Good Years**

### **Cleaning House:**

The early years of King Joash were dedicated to cleaning house. One of the chief functions of a king was to ensure that God would be in the midst of His people. Queen Athaliah – daughter to the infamous pair of Ahab and Jezebel – had made it her life mission to eradicate the worship of Israel's God and replace it with the pagan gods and goddesses of her homeland. She had built a temple to Baal in Jerusalem and installed a priest of Baal to oversee sacrifices to the pagan god. She had even gone so far as to desecrate the Temple of the LORD and use its sacred objects in Baal worship.

Had she succeeded, not only would David's dynasty have been wiped off the map, but also the worship of the one true God.

The young King Joash, under the guidance of his protector and mentor, Jehoiada, systematically removed all traces of Baal worship from the Temple and the city. Jehoiada's mission was to ensure that the young king would fulfill that vital function of bringing God back to His people, and bringing the people back to their God.

### **Rebuilding God's House**

Joash's next project was to completely restore and rebuild God's House. He reinstated the tax that the LORD had commanded for maintaining the Temple. The money was put to work for the restoration of the Temple:

#### **[Slide 6]**

*2 Chronicles 24:12-13 NIV*

*The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who carried out the work required for the temple of the LORD. They hired masons and carpenters to restore the LORD's temple, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the temple.*

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*The men in charge of the work were diligent, and the repairs progressed under them. They rebuilt the temple of God according to its original design and reinforced it.*

Mission accomplished: the King had done the hard work of cleansing the land and the Temple so that God could once again be welcomed by His people.

**The Accountability Factor**

So what was it that so empowered King Joash to reverse three generations of evil rule and rampant idolatry? The answer is found in a few key notes to the story:

**[Slide 8]**

*2 Chronicles 24:2 NIV*

*Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the years of Jehoiada the priest.*

*2 Chronicles 24:14b NIV*

*As long as Jehoiada lived, burnt offerings were presented continually in the temple of the LORD.*

Jehoiada was the husband of the brave woman that had snatched the baby Joash from the jaws of death. He had been the only father figure that the young prince had ever known. He had laid his own life and the lives of his family on the line every single day until that fateful moment when Joash was crowned king.

And as long as Jehoiada was alive and present in Joash's life, Joash made the right choices. Here's a very important key to being a great leader: make sure that you have the right people around you all the time! Make sure that you are accountable to people who are trustworthy and godly – and who will set you straight when you get off track!

Think about the people in your life.

- In the areas where you make decisions and take the lead, are there others who are the kinds of friends who will pray for you, pray with you, and who will speak truth to you?
- Who is there in your life who is looking for you to be that kind of mentor and prayer partner, and who is counting on you to speak truth to them when they get lost along the way?

Leaders are only as great as the people around them.

## **All the King's Horses and All the King's Men...**

### **Humpty Dumpty had a great fall...**

The story of King Joash begins with such high hopes, but ends in tragedy. No sooner had his mentor Jehoiada died than a new crew of would-be confidants moved in:

#### **[Slide 9]**

*2 Chronicles 24:17-18 NIV*

*After the death of Jehoiada, the officials of Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them. They abandoned the temple of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Because of their guilt, God's anger came on Judah and Jerusalem.*

Turning a country and a culture around is hard work. It is never accomplished in a day. The pagan practices that King Joash had outlawed and still lurked in the shadows. Baal and Asherah – the god of prosperity and the goddess of fertility – offered money, sex and power. As soon as the godly priest of the LORD was gone, the dark side made its move.

The darkest moment in King Joash's fall came when the Spirit of God sent Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada to call the king out for having abandoned the worship of the LORD.

#### **[Slide 10]**

*2 Chronicles 24:20-22 NIV*

*Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why do you*

*disobey the LORD's commands? You will not prosper. Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has forsaken you."*

**[Slide 11]**

*But they plotted against him, and by order of the king they stoned him to death in the courtyard of the LORD's temple. King Joash did not remember the kindness Zechariah's father Jehoiada had shown him but killed his son, who said as he lay dying, "May the LORD see this and call you to account."*

At the king's own order, Zechariah was put to death. This was the man who had been the king's childhood companion. This was the man whose parents had snatched the baby Joash from the hands of his evil grandmother. Now, Joash repaid all of those kindnesses with complete and utter betrayal.

**All the king's horses and all the king's men...**

It was not long before the dying prophet's final wish came true. King Joash and his kingdom were attacked, and Joash was severely wounded in battle. But worse was yet to come.

**[Slide 12]**

*2 Chronicles 24:25 NIV*

*When the Arameans withdrew, they left Joash severely wounded. His officials conspired against him for murdering the son of Jehoiada the priest, and they killed him in his bed. So he died and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.*

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**Never too great to fall**

King Joash's story reminds us that we're never too good or too great to fall. A good leader is a leader who surrounds himself or herself with good people. When King Joash lost his mentor, he had the perfect opportunity to replace him with Zechariah – his mentor's son. They had known each other from

childhood. They had played and prayed together. Had King Joash done so, he never would have fallen from his wall.

So, once again, who is there in your life who will stand with you, pray for you, and call you out when you drift away from the right path?

Who is that person that you will listen to *even if he or she tells you something you don't want to hear?*

And on the flip side of the coin, who is looking for you to be that person?