

2 Kings 11-12 - The Power of Influence

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2 Kings, chapter 11. 1 and 2 Kings are the narratives of the kings of Israel, the kings of Israel and Judah. And there was a split in the kingdom and so we now have the kingdom of Israel in the northern province, and we have the kingdom of Judah in the southern. And different kings over different these different areas.

But it's this, you need to know just for the sake of our study tonight, that the southern kingdom of Judah was the kingdom that was under the reign, or the rulership of the lineage of David and his sons, where there was a promise that went along with the sons of David that there would always be a son reigning on the throne of Judah.

And then you have the northern 10 tribes of Israel and the very first king that ruled in that northern region of Israel after the split, was a man named Jeroboam who took the people into apostasy. And the people have gone down that bad road ever since. And so the kingdom of Israel is on a fast track to apostasy, and the kingdom of Judah has for the most part had good kings.

But what's going on right now is something very bad in Judah. Let me give you a little back story for those of you that might need a little refresher. Back when we were going through chapter 9, the prophet Elisha told one of his young protégés to go to Israel and there to anoint a man named Jehu to be king over Israel.

And Jehu was given the responsibility of being the instrument of judgment for the Lord to judge the family of Omri, a very evil king of Israel, whose son Ahab carried on that evil work by marrying a Phoenician princess by the name of Jezebel, who was very instrumental in bringing Baal worship into the northern tribes of Israel.

And the nation of Israel had run after Baal or Baal worship, and now God's judgment was coming upon the land, and He chose to use a man who was one of the commanders of the Israelite military forces, again a man named Jehu, to bring that judgment.

And you'll remember that Jehu was, for the most part, obedient to the Lord and he wiped out the house of Omri and Ahab, in fact, he even went further than

that and he killed the king of Judah as well, so he killed both kings. King of Israel and the king of Judah because, technically, the king of Judah was, at this time, also of the lineage of Ahab because his mother had been the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

You can see now there's been this cross pollination between Israel and Judah of the house of Ahab and so Jehu killed the king of Israel. That's king Joram, and at the same time, he killed the king of Judah, king Ahaziah. So this is the first time, really, in the history of both of these countries, where both of these kings died, really, almost simultaneously.

Now, Jehu took over the role of king in the northern province of Israel, and he was, for the most part, zealous for the Lord, but he did not throw off completely the worship practices that Jeroboam had begun there in the northern kingdom of Israel. He wasn't completely true to the Lord at all. But there's this vacuum in Judah now, and there's no king.

And that is what we begin to read about here in the narrative of 2 Kings, chapter 11, and it says here in verse 1,

“Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal family.” (ESV)

Who's Athaliah? This is the mother of the slain king of Judah, Ahaziah, who is a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. She sees that her son has been killed, and so what does she do? Does she put on her garments of mourning and say, well let's bring up one of my boys here as the next king. No. She begins to systematically murder anybody in the royal family who might possibly be in line for the throne. This is the wickedness of this family of Ahab. Here's a woman that systematically begins to kill her children and her grandchildren, okay. That's how incredibly wicked she was.

But I want you to know something else about this. Not only is she killing off all of her children and grandchildren, but she is killing off all of the remaining descendants of David or at least she thinks so. Now you say, well, why is that significant? It's significant for a lot of reasons.

Number 1., God had promised David that He would not fail to have someone sitting on the throne. In fact, He told them that he would perpetually have one of his descendants sitting on the throne of Israel forever.

Now, we know that is ultimately fulfilled in the Messiah. Yet Athaliah is systematically murdering all of her children and grandchildren, and in so doing, she is attempting to wipe out the lineage of David, but not just the lineage of David, she is attempting to wipe out, I don't believe knowingly at all, but she is attempting to wipe out, through some satanic sort of influence, the potential for the Messiah to come forth because it was prophesied Messiah would come through the lineage of David. He would be of the line of David.

Listen, this is no less satanic than the attempts much later of king Herod to wipe out all the baby boys in and around Bethlehem in an attempt to eradicate this child who was born King of the Jews. This is the enemy. The enemy has long wanted to just eliminate Messiah, get rid of Jesus. And there were these physical attempts in the Bible to do it. Now it's a done deal, in the sense that God preserved the lineage of David, Messiah was eventually born, and Joseph was of the lineage of David. That didn't so much matter because Jesus wasn't born from the seed of Joseph. That's okay.

Mary was from the lineage of David as well, so, the Messiah came in the lineage in the line of David. Well, God preserved it. So, Messiah was there. Didn't mean Satan was done trying to get rid of Him.

Just after His baptism, He went into the wilderness and Satan tempted Him there for 40 days and 40 nights, and Satan tried to do everything he could, eventually literally investing in the person of Judas Iscariot that he might betray and get rid of Jesus completely, and, of course, that played into God's ultimate redemptive program to bring salvation to the Jews and also to the Gentiles through His death on the cross.

It's a done deal, so you think, well, I guess Satan lost, huh? Doesn't mean Satan has stopped trying to get rid of Messiah. Because if he can't do it physically, and he can't obviously do it physically anymore, he's going to try to do it spiritually. We have seen that happening in spades in our country, right here in the United States of America and in Europe, it is a done deal. I'm not saying that God doesn't still have a remnant, because He does. But most European countries, and make no mistake about it, we're all trying to be just like Europe, has essentially and effectively eliminated Messiah.

Satan is still at work, because if he cannot eliminate Messiah physically, and obviously he can't anymore, that whole situation's over. He is at least going to eliminate Messiah from the hearts of mankind. And this he has been very effective doing. And we see this woman, Athaliah, attempting to do it even in her day.

Look what happens in verse 2 though. It says,

“But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom.”

When it says a bedroom, the Hebrew literally means a bed chamber or in other words, a storage place for beds. Literally. It was a place that they assumed, somebody probably wasn't going to look. She literally stole him away during this murderous rampage of Athaliah, and *“hid him... so that* (it says here at the end of verse 2 that) *he* (wouldn't be) *put to death.*” Isn't this interesting?

It says, notice her name, Jehosheba. How many people do you suppose if we said, if we went out, even among Christians I mean, and said, hey, do you know who Jehosheba is? You ever heard of that lady? Most people would say, no, I don't, is it a woman? Yeah, it's a woman. Well, what is she known for? Single handedly rescuing the house of David. Single handedly being used by the Lord to preserve the line of David so that Messiah could come. Jehosheba. Gee, do we even talk about her? Do we remember her? We ought to have T-shirts! Thank you, Jehosheba! This is a neat lady.

This was a very brave woman who risked death to take one, the very last infant descendant of the line of David, and whisk him away at the risk, at great risk to herself to preserve the lineage of David, and through her actions, God preserved the lineage of He who would come after, and that is, of course, Messiah. It's a pretty powerful thing. Isn't this something? You know, just about the time you think God's promises are about to be neglected and even thwarted. I mean, God's promise for the coming of Messiah rests with one little, one year old, baby boy.

Isn't that something? I mean, you and I, to look at that with human eyes, we might look at that and just say, Wow, that's cutting it pretty close there, God. I mean, you got it right down to nubbins on that one. But it's just, the hand of God is just amazing, isn't it? I mean, about that time when you and I think, well, that's it, it's all done, it's over, the curtain's coming down on this thing, God raises up this no name, unknown woman, Jehosheba, and she saves the day. More than the day. You think about something like an action like that and this is the only place that Jehoshaphat has really talked about, except of course, in second Chronicles where this story is repeated.

But and you think God, what could I possibly contribute to the kingdom of God? I don't seem to have any incredible gifts or abilities or talents. I don't, I

haven't been given these great abilities or whatever. You never know, you just never know how God might call upon you in one act of bravery. The grace of God comes upon you to act and to move swiftly, and that simple action goes, extends on to the end of time. I mean, it's just, it's amazing. Don't ever discount what you can do for the Lord. Don't ever think that gee, there's nothing I can do.

I mean were it not for this woman. Who knows? By the way, it says here that Jehosheba, was the daughter of king Joram and the sister of Isaiah who was the slain king. We know that she was, in fact, his half-sister, so Athaliah, the woman who has been murdering all of her sons and grandsons and so forth is not Jehosheba's mother. They have the same father, but a different mother.

It says in verse 3 that, “...*he remained with her six years, hidden in the house of the Lord...*”

Now, so they obviously came out of the bedchamber eventually when the thing died down. But they ended up hiding this little baby in the temple, in the house of the Lord. “*While (it says)Athaliah reigned over the land.*” And by the way, that is all you're going to find out about Athaliah's reign. Really, I mean, it's almost like the writer doesn't want to even talk about it, but it's going to go on for 6 years, and we do know some things about Athaliah's reign, although we have very little, but we know from 2 Chronicles that she sought to establish Baal worship now more firmly in the southern kingdom.

It had been long established up in the northern kingdom, although Jehu, eradicated it there, but now in the southern kingdom, Athaliah is single-handedly attempting to do that, even to the point of establishing a temple for Baal right in Jerusalem and completely crushing every aspect of the true worship of Yahweh out of the land. Athaliah also maintained a close connection with both Israel and Phoenicia where her mother, Jezebel, was from and so forth. But it tells us in verse 4, look with me there in your Bible.

“*But in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of the Carites and of the guards, and had them come to him in the house of the Lord. And he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the Lord, and he showed them the king's son.*”

Now who is Jehoiada? Jehoiada is the high priest. Guess what else, what the other connection with Jehoiada is. He's married to Jehosheba, the woman who saved the little boy. They're a couple, and so they're working together now. And it tells us here that he sent for the military leaders and the guards and he had them all come to the house of the Lord. And first of all, he entered into a

covenant with them. Now, 2 Chronicles tells us that this didn't happen overnight. This was a process whereby Jehoiada went around the land.

He traveled for a period of time around the land. speaking very privately and carefully to people about the fact that there is a descendant of the line of David who deserves the throne, and there's going to come a day when he's going to be revealed. Are you with us? And slowly but surely Jehoiada gathered this support, because people hated Athaliah and they knew that it was just the kingdom was just spiraling into spiritual depravity, and so eventually it tells us here in verse 4 that, he got them into *the house of the Lord, and he showed them the king's son.*”

So, he brings out this little boy who's 7 years old, okay? 7 year old little boy, and he says this is the son of the king. He wasn't wiped out. He was saved by my wife. Verse 5 goes on, and it says,

“And he commanded them, “This is the thing that you shall do: one third of you, those who come off duty on the Sabbath and guard the king's house⁶ (another third being at the gate Sur and a third at the gate behind the guards) shall guard the palace. ⁷ And the two divisions of you, which come on duty in force on the Sabbath and guard the house of the LORD on behalf of the king,⁸ shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand. And whoever approaches the ranks is to be put to death. Be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in.”

Now, understand what Jehoiada is doing, this is really brilliant. He is choosing a time to reveal the king to all of Judah, but he's deciding on a time when during the Sabbath, the guards are changing places. He knows that this is that one time when all of the guards are present while they're changing. You see? He can have more people there to guard the palace, to guard the temple area, and to protect the king, and so it wouldn't be suspicious. If he called all the guards together at one particular point when they weren't supposed to be there, everybody, Athaliah would be saying, what's going on here?

What's all these guards showing up for? They're not supposed to be here now. She would have become suspicious. Jehoiada picks a time when they're about to change positions, Everybody knows this is just what's going on and he says to them, in confidence ahead of time he says listen, I want you guys to stand guard around the king seven year old boy. It doesn't refer to him as the kid. He refers to him as the king, and he says if anybody enters the temple, kill them, because we are telling those who are on our side, only the priests are going to go into the temple.

Those who minister before the Lord, they're the only ones allowed in there, but the king's going to be in there and his guards are going to be in there. If anybody else comes, you know that they are an unauthorized entrance and you are to put them to death immediately, so he's taking this very seriously. This is the last surviving descendant of David. Verse 9 says,

“The captains 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, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

¹⁰ And the priest gave to the captains the spears and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of the LORD.

¹¹ And the guards stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house on behalf of the king. ¹² Then he brought out the king's son and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony. (meaning that was the king's personal copy of the Word of God) And they proclaimed him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, “Long live the king!””

Can you see this going on? There was a place in the outer area of the temple that was traditional for them to crown the king, and so they bring him to this very spot, and they're blowing trumpets and the people are all applauding and they're cheering and they're saying long live the king. And here's this 7 year old with a crown and you've got to wonder if they had to fit it for him. But he's sitting there or standing there presumably, this crown holding this, his own personal copy of the Word of God, which was to be given to the king, and the people are yelling and shouting, and there's all this exuberance and joy over this thing. Well now, they know that Athaliah is going to hear what's going on, and in fact, that's what we read in verse 13.

“When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she went into the house of the Lord to the people. ¹⁴ And when she looked, there was the king standing by the pillar, according to the custom, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, “Treason! Treason!”

¹⁵ “Then Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains who were set over the army, “Bring her out between the ranks, and put to death with the sword anyone who follows her.” For the priest said, “Let her not be put to death in the house of the Lord.” ¹⁶ So they laid hands on her; and she went through the horses' entrance to the king's house, and there she was put to death.”

The end of the reign of Athaliah as she is put to death there by the people and isn't it interesting. We talk about the kings of Israel and Judah, do you ever stop to think about the fact that there was a woman on the throne for 6 years in Judah? We mention all of the kings, we rarely ever even mention Athaliah. But for 6 years, this woman who had no right to the throne, ruled and reigned in Judah, 6 years, but she came to a very bad end. Verse 17 says,

“And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people, that they should be the Lord's people, and also between the king and the people.¹⁸ Then all the people of the land went to the house of Baal and tore it down; (This is what Athaliah had been building) his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest posted watchmen over the house of the LORD.¹⁹ And he took the captains, the Carites, the guards, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the Lord, marching through the gate of the guards to the king's house. And he took his seat on the throne of the kings.

²⁰ So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet after Athaliah had been put to death with the sword at the king's house.”

And then it says in verse 21, “*Jehoash,...*” and by the way don't be confused. That's Joash. It's a variant spelling and you know I don't know if they threw it in just to be confusing or what, but in chapter 12, they're going to use the name Jehoash, even though they're talking about Joash, who is the 7 year old little boy.

And so I'm just for the sake of consistency going to call him Joash. If you've got an NIV, it keeps going with Joash, just for consistency. Anyway, I'm not misreading it, that's just what I'm doing there. But it says, “*Jehoash or Joash was seven years old when he began to reign.*”

Did you notice that it says that the people brought him out and they made him king? An interesting statement, isn't it, that they went through this coronation ceremony and they brought him out and they made him king and there was a covenant made between the people, and the Lord, and the king, and it's interesting.

There's some interesting sort of connections between this and another rightful king who waits to rule and reign in our lives. Joash was the rightful heir to the throne of David, and so when his father passed away, he deserved to be called king from the very beginning, but there was a period of waiting there.

And during that period of waiting, that 6 years Athaliah reigned. I wouldn't be a bit surprised if Jehoiada would have wanted to wait a little bit longer before advancing Joash to the throne. A 7 year old on the throne? That doesn't seem very practical. Why would you advance a 7-year-old to the throne? Well, more than likely they just felt like they couldn't wait any longer. I think Athaliah had brought the kingdom to such a desperate place that it was just like, we've got to move and we've got to move now. This isn't going to get any better. In fact, it's getting worse quickly.

But they brought him to the place and when they did, and when the people were introduced to the king and that's interesting too. They had to be introduced to the king. They had to be shown the king and then when they saw the rightful king they made him king, and they said he's the king. But you know what? He really was the rightful king anyway, wasn't he. Isn't that interesting? The similarity between Joash and Jesus because Jesus is the rightful King. But people don't have Him as the King of their lives until we or someone does, or the Holy Spirit opens their heart to the reality and brings them and shows them the King.

That's something we have to do with the people that we talk with, that we work with, people that we get to know. We have to show them the king don't we? And then, after they're shown the King they have to then make that further decision to crown Him King. They have to make Him King of their lives personally. It's not like He wasn't King all the time anyway, but He wasn't King in their lives because the King of kings is waiting for us to crown him as king of our lives. That's something we have to do. That's a move, a decision that we have to make.

We have to crown Him King. Sure, he's Lord of all and Lord of heaven and earth, but is He Lord of your life? Sure, He's the King of kings, but is He the King of your life? Is He the King sitting on the throne of your heart, because He will not usurp that throne. He will not do it. He will not take over the throne of your heart unless you invite Him there. That's an important thing to remember.

As we get into chapter 12, 2 Kings 12, it just tells us by the way, that they dated things back in those days, that,

“In the seventh year of Jehu, (that's the King of Israel now, the man whom God raised up to be an instrument of judgment to wipe out the house of Ahab, in the seventh year of Jehu) Jehoash began to reign, (and that's that 7 year old little boy) and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of

Beersheba ² And Jehoash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, (Look at this) because Jehoiada the priest instructed him.”

Now that's an important statement for you to hear because this chapter is all going to be about influence. If you're making notes here tonight, or maybe you want to make a mental note, write down that word influence because it is critical. Influence. Joash was, for the most part, a good king as long as he was being influenced properly.

You can influence properly; you can influence improperly. You can be around people who build you up, or you can be around people who tear you down in your walk with the Lord. You can be around people who speak words of doubt and unbelief, or you can be around where people who speak words of faith and encouragement. It's your choice.

But we can't underestimate the power of influence in our lives. The Bible says that bad company corrupts good character, and so we know that that takes place. We know that there is a danger depending on who we are gathering around ourselves. Who are you gathering around you, and I'm not just talking about people. What are you gathering around you in the way of information? Movies, books, music, you know.

Oh, don't worry about music, pastor Paul. I never listen to the lyrics. Yeah, don't forget, I was a rock and roll disc jockey for a lot of years before I went into the ministry. I know all about the lyrics. Yeah and that's blowing smoke. It affects us. The influence affects us.

It's going to have an effect. People are going to build you up or they're going to drag you down. So I want you to think about that as we look into this chapter because it tells us here very clearly that Joash did well as long as Jehoiada the priest was instructing him. Now, we're told in verse 3,

“Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away; the people continued to sacrifice and make offerings on the high places.”

Let me just remind you of what the high places are. They were just unauthorized places of worship, and they had a very pagan influence even back during the original days of the kings, king Solomon and so forth. Pagans believed that the closer you got in elevation to your god, the closer you were to your god. They did not have a concept of the omnipresence of God, and they believed that gods were very tied to locale and height and to go to a high place

meant to you would get closer to god. So they'd go up on hills and they'd find mountains and any kind of a thing.

That's why they built towers and poles and just things to get closer to their pagan gods. Well, the people of Israel adopted the practice of high places, but they adopted them to worship YAHWEH, and many times during Israel's history, they were genuinely worshiping YAHWEH, but they were doing it in an unauthorized way because God had told them that they were to worship where He told them to worship, remember? And eventually, when the tabernacle came to Jerusalem under David, the people were to go to Jerusalem.

That's where they were to go. That was the prescribed and acceptable place. Do you remember when Jesus was having that conversation with the woman at the well in Samaria? The Samaritans never did accept the reality of you got to go to Jerusalem, that's why Jeroboam made his own religion. Well, even during the days of Jesus, do you remember the one conflict she brought up with Him when she realized that he was a Jew, and that He had some authority. She's like, you Jews say that we have to worship in Jerusalem, but we believe that we should worship on our mountain.

And Jesus came back, and He affirmed, you guys don't have a clue what you're really even doing. I mean, that's just the fact of the matter. And you are to worship in Jerusalem, but the fact of the matter is, God is now looking for people who are going to worship Him in Spirit and in truth, and that's a whole different expression of worship than what has been seen in the past. In other words, Jesus was saying things they are a changing. But the point is He corroborated and affirmed that there was a unique and specific place where God wanted these people to worship. And that's what these high places were all about. It says in verse 4 that,

“Jehoash said to the priests, “All the money of the holy things that is brought into the house of the Lord, the money for which each man is assessed (That's tax for every male) —the money from the assessment of persons (That's the taxation of people in general) —and the money that a man's heart prompts him to bring into the house of the Lord, (That's a free will offering) ⁵ let the priests take, each from his donor, and let them repair the house wherever any need of repairs is discovered.”

Now, remember, Joash was raised in the temple up through his seventh year of life, so he knew all about the temple and he knew that under Athaliah and even his father and some of the others, the temple of the Lord had fallen into great

disrepair, and so he's concerned about getting it back up to where it needs to be. And he says in verse 6,

“But by (or rather it says rather in verse 6, that, but by) the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, the priests had made no repairs on the house. (So nothing got done) ⁷ Therefore King Jehoash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and said to them, “Why are you not repairing the house? Now therefore take no more money from your donors, but hand it over for the repair of the house.” (in other words, give it to the carpenters and the workers) ⁸ So the priests agreed that they should take no more money from the people, and that they should not repair the house.” In other words, it should not be up to them to get it done because it wasn't getting done.

“⁹ Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest and bored a hole in the lid of it and set it beside the altar on the right side as one entered the house of the LORD. And the priests who guarded the threshold put in it all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD. ¹⁰ And whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest, the king's secretary and the high priest came up and they bagged and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

¹¹ Then they would give the money that was weighed out into the hands of the workmen (notice that) who had the oversight of the house of the LORD. And they paid it out to the carpenters and the builders who worked on the house of the LORD, ¹² and to the masons and the stonecutters, as well as to buy timber and quarried stone for making repairs on the house of the LORD, and for any outlay for the repairs of the house. ¹³ But there were not made for the house of the LORD basins of silver, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, or any vessels of gold, or of silver, from the money that was brought into the house of the LORD.

¹⁴ for that was given to the workmen who were repairing the house of the LORD with it. ¹⁵ And they did not ask for an accounting from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to pay out to the workmen, for they dealt honestly.

¹⁶ The money from the guilt offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD; it belonged to the priests.”

It's just basically telling us how this is going about. Interesting that they just basically took a box and put a hole in it by the entrance of the temple of the Lord and people just dropped their money in there as they walked by, and then the money was taken directly to the work on the repair on the temple, but it tells us that the money from the guilt offerings and sin offerings, that wasn't used for the repairs. That belonged to the priests. That was their money to basically live on. Verse 17.

“At that time Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath and took it. (Gath, of course, is a city of the Philistines) But when Hazael set his face to go up against Jerusalem, ¹⁸ Jehoash king of Judah took all the sacred gifts that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah his fathers, the kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred gifts, and all the gold that was found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and of the king's house, and sent these to Hazael king of Syria. Then Hazael went away from Jerusalem.”

Stop there for just a moment. This is an important statement because this is the very first remark that we've read that showed that Joash is starting to slip. Remember it said that he did good as long as Jehoiada the high priest was influencing him? But now he's being threatened by Hazael, king of Syria, who was a very brutal king, and he was a man to be feared. Do you remember, Elisha is the one who anointed Hazael king over Syria, and he sat and looked at Hazael. Do you remember? And just stared at him until Hazael was embarrassed. And he goes, why are you staring at me?

And suddenly Elisha begins crying. Why are you crying? Because I know what you're going to do to the people of Israel. Very brutal king so he was a man to be feared. But what you see here going on with King Joash is, instead of trusting the Lord when Hazael, king of Syria, begins to come against him, he knows why Hazael is coming. Why does any king come against you. They want your stuff. You know, they want your money. They want your goods. They want, possibly, even your services. Joash, in a proactive sort of a way, just pays him off.

He basically goes into the temple and even brings out some of his own treasures out of his own personal stuff and he sends it to the king of Syria and says hey save your army. I'll just give you what you want. Instead of trusting the Lord, he just paid off the king. Now, we're told in verse 19 that,

“Now the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁰ His servants arose and made a conspiracy and struck down Joash in the house of Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla. ²¹ It was Jozacar the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, who struck him down, so that he died. And they buried him with his fathers in the city of David, and Amaziah his son reigned in his place.”

Wow. I mean, this is crazy. We don't really even hear about much, except that now we find out that he was assassinated at the end of his rule. And we're wondering what's up with that? What's going on here? What brought all this up?

Why in the world would the people assassinate King Joash? He was said to be a good king. This is where we have to get some insights from the book of 2 Chronicles, and so I'm going to put some scriptures on the screen here for you. We're going to read them together. We're going to start off here from chapter 24 where we can read a little bit more. It tells us,

2 Chronicles 24:17-19 (ESV)

Now after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king. Then the king listened to them. 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. Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention.

Now after the death of Jehoiada (that's the priest, the high priest) the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king. Then the king listened to them. (obviously it wasn't a good influence, because it says) 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. Yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the LORD. These testified against them, but they would not pay attention.

Isn't this an interesting passage because it tells us some significant things. First of all, Jehoiada passed off the scene. Remember, Jehoiada was the man who provided the positive influence to king Joash. What happens when that positive influence goes away? Immediately, that vacuum gets filled with another influence.

Look what it says. “*Some princes of Judah, they came right away to pay homage to the king.*” We don't even know what they said specifically, but we know what the outcome was. And it says that, “*the king listened to them.*”

Obviously, these princes came and convinced King Joash to throw off the worship of Yahweh and to begin to worship the pagan Canaanite gods, and that's exactly what he did. And so what was God's response? Wrath. But He also, mercifully, kept sending prophets. People to speak to king Joash. Did it do any good? No, it tells us here at the very end that they wouldn't pay attention. So what happens?

2 Chronicles 24:20-22 (ESV)

Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, and 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.’” But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord. 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!”

Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah (look who he is) the son of Jehoiada the priest, (the son of the man who saved and took care of king Joash from his infancy, through his childhood. God raised up Zechariah) and 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.’” But (look at this) they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 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 (and that's Zechariah) said, “May the LORD see and avenge!”

Do you remember the word I gave you at the beginning of chapter 12? Influence. I said influence was going to be critical, and it has been, because instantly this man is being influenced by those who take him to such a place where not only is he willing to disregard the voice of the prophets that God sends telling him to repent and to change his ways, but when the son of the man who saved his life rises up and says, thus says the Lord, you have abandoned God, you have forsaken the Lord.

Some men came to the king and said, what do you think about just getting rid of this Zechariah? He's speaking against the king. This is treason. This is not healthy in your kingdom, king Joash. This man is causing rebels to rise up against you, oh king. Don't you think you should do something about this? Here's what we think. We think we ought to grab this man and arrest him, and let's get rid of him. And eventually the king was worn down and he said, do it. It says there that, *“at the king's command, they killed Zechariah.”*

It goes on in Chapter 24. It says that,

2 Chronicles 24:23-24 (ESV)

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. 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.

At the end of the year the army of the Syrians came up against Joash. They came to Judah and Jerusalem (this is the same king that Joash had paid off. This time though) and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus. Though the army of the Syrians had come with (just a) 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.

Now that is an interesting passage, because not only had Joash been influenced negatively to abandon the Lord and to run after the worship of pagan gods, not only had he been influenced to have Jehoiada's son murdered in the temple courts, but now the king that he paid off, who has now come against him, has brutalized his army with just a few men. The king of Syria came up with just a small army, and so king Joash says we're going to raise all of our men and we're going to go after the king of Syria. We will defend our homeland.

But it didn't work, because God was against him. You know what? When God's against you, you can raise up the biggest army you can possibly imagine it's not going to do any good. It's not going to do any good. And that's exactly what this passage says. Now, it ends here by saying that,

2 Chronicles 24:25 (ESV)

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.

When they (and that's the Syrians) had departed from him, leaving him severely wounded, (so he was wounded in the battle) his servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son of Jehoiada the priest, and (they) 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.

So that's how Joash came to an end. Isn't that terrible? A man who started off was so good and with such promise. 7 years old, brought up by Jehoiada the priest. Influenced in a godly way. Here was a young man who got into his 20s and he was passionate about rebuilding the temple of the Lord. Let's do this! Let's restore the worship of YAHWEH in the land.

But when the influence, the Godly influence of Jehoiada ceased in his life, he was drawn away. And we read this story and we think, wow, what a wimp the guy must've been. You know what though? We can all understand what it means to be dragged away and enticed.

Because that's what James describes as the process of sin in our own lives, whereby we give in to that temptation, and we sin, and that gives birth to death. James talks about this in his epistle. And so, we understand what it is to be dragged away and enticed to do things that you wouldn't otherwise do.

The question is, who's influencing you? Where is the influence of your life coming from? That's the question we really need to ask ourselves. You know, I was sharing on Sunday morning and asking the question about proportionally how much time do we spend in the Word of God in a given day versus just the influence of the world in our lives through whatever, however, that influence comes into your life.

Proportionally, what's the difference? I mean, how much time do you spend in the Word of God or listening to the Scripture, maybe even listening to Godly music with a Scripture message or something like that, versus the amount of influence that you're getting from the world around you? Well, I could see it on the faces of the people when I was sharing that on Sunday. It's not even close.

If you, if like most people, you, well, most people. If like some people, you pick up your Bible, let's say on a daily basis, okay? Let's say you read a chapter in the Bible a day. How long does that take you to read a chapter? 10 minutes? 15 if you're a really slow reader, which is okay.

But what is 10 or 15 minutes? In the scope of an entire day. Well, it's very, very little isn't it? And in the sense of now that doesn't mean you can't read the Bible and then spend more time meditating on it, but how much of us really do. You can see that when it comes to influence, this is a serious subject. How much time we're allowing these other things to impact our hearts and our minds? Does the Lord convict you of this ever? Cause I sure hope so. Cause he sure does me. The Lord convicts me of this on a regular basis and I'm in the Word quite a bit.

But a lot of times I'm in the Word for you, which isn't the same thing as being in the Word for me. I can be in the Word for you and not be in the Word for me. And that's just one of those interesting things about being a teacher. It's good to be in the Word. But if I'm not assimilating this thing for me, then I might as well just be reading Shakespeare. Where's the influence coming from?

Sometimes influence is such that you have to change your circumstances. Sometimes you have to change your relationships. Sometimes you're in a work situation where the influence is so negative, so deteriorating to your spiritual life you have to make a change. You've got to pray and say, Lord, something's got to change here because this is just, this is killing me. Now, there are some circumstances, granted, you can't just change. Some of you are married to unbelievers, and that's not something you can just get rid of.

You have to be incredibly circumspect about the amount of building up you get in a given week because you are being torn down, probably. I mean, some people, some unbelieving spouses are just willing to just let you be the Christian you want to be and I'm not going to mention it. But others are verbally and otherwise antagonistic toward the faith of their partner, and that just wears a person down significantly so what are you going to do? You have to be mindfully, purposefully, building yourself up more than maybe some of the other people who don't have that level of negative influence in their life.

How much influence do you need? That's, and that's a question that only you and the Lord can answer. How much influence do you need to keep moving forward? How much time? How much time in the Word? Maybe you need to change your music preferences and start listening to godly music that has a Scriptural message. Maybe you need to get creative about the way you're listening to the Word of God or hearing the Scripture, either being taught or spoken, or something like that. Do you have time in your car between home and work? You can spend time listening to the Word of God. You can be listening to Godly music.

Do you like to go for a jog or a walk? You can be listening to the Word of God. It's all about influence. This is a huge topic here tonight. Who is influencing you and how? God wants you to be built up. We're supposed to build each other up. We're supposed to be encouraging one another. I hope we do that when we come. I really do. But obviously this is a very, very short period of time in the scope of our entire week. Even if you come to church twice a week. So, let's say you're here, first service, second service on a Sunday. You come on a Wednesday night. Okay, there's two hours. Proportionally speaking, it's important for us to think it through.