

2 Chronicles 21-25 – Chapter Study

INTRO

I. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON CHS. 1-9

II. THE REIGN OF THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY CHS. 10-36

A. Rehoboam Chs. 10-12

B. Abijah Ch. 13

C. Asa Chs. 14-16

D. Jehoshaphat Chs. 17-20

1. Jehoshaphat's powerful kingdom Ch. 17
 2. Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab 18:1-19:3
 3. Jehoshaphat's appointment of judges 19:4-11
 4. Jehoshaphat's defeat of a foreign alliance 20:1-30
 5. Jehoshaphat's last days 20:31-37
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As we pick up our study tonight, want to begin by recapping what we saw Sunday in ch. 18.

Ahab of Israel asked good king Jehoshaphat of Judah to join him in an alliance to reclaim the city of Ramoth in Gilead from the Syrians.

Ahab then betrayed Jehoshaphat, though God preserved his life.

Jehoshaphat returned to Jerusalem repentant.

The prophet Jehu came out to rebuke him for his foolish alliance with those allied to evil & warned him to not do it again.

Then at the end of ch. 20, as we concluded last Wednesday, we read . . .

20:34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel. ³⁵ After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, [son of Ahab] who acted very wickedly. ³⁶ And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. ³⁷ But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

When Jehoshaphat returned from the battle at Ramoth Gilead, Jehu warned him God's wrath was hovering over him and that he needed to watch his step lest that wrath fall ON him.

Well, late in his life & reign, Jehoshaphat decided to restore the navy that had brought such prestige & wealth to Israel during the days of Solomon.

He wasn't able to pull it off by himself so he made an alliance with the Ahaziah, the wicked king of Israel. It was a bad move but reveals something important about Jehoshaphat.

And there's good reason *why Ezra records* it here at the *end* of Jehoshaphat's story.

Remember who Ezra was writing to – Jews who'd returned from exile in Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and Judah.

As we read in the book of Nehemiah, there were foreigners who offered to help them build, but they had ulterior motives.

They wanted to help rebuild so they could influence what took place in Jerusalem.

Their agenda was **NOT** what the godly leadership of Judah was after.

Ezra wanted to warn them through potent stories from their past that they must not ally themselves with those allied with evil.

God's people must keep their eyes on Him and look to Him for help.

Our insufficiency is God's opportunity.

Our lack is His opening.

Our inability becomes the door through which He enters to show His ability.

His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

We're disturbed by Jehoshaphat's failure here at the end of his life, after having learned the lesson about evil alliances earlier in his life in such a powerful way.

Make no mistake, he was genuinely repentant at the end of ch. 18 after his ill-advised alliance with Ahab.

Yet toward the end of his life, he did it again!

While this bothers us, we can relate to it because most of us have done this.

Our sin may not be the same as Jehoshaphat's; it wasn't that we made a foolish alliance with those allied with evil – it was some other sin.

We were convicted by the Spirit, repented sincerely, & went along for a while; months, maybe even years.

But then we – “Whoops, I did it again.”

God *clearly warned* Jehoshaphat about this specific sin precisely because it was a dangerous weakness & tendency he possessed.

It's not within the scope of our study tonight to try & *dissect* what was going on in Jehoshaphat that caused this weakness.

We're not going to psycho-analyze him or spiritually diagnose his brokenness that moved him to keep making these alliances.

All we need to know is that there was something going on inside him and because he never dealt with THAT, he kept making the same blunder.

What was true for him is true for us.

In dealing with persistent sin, the kind that keeps recurring, keep popping up, coming back, we need to ask God to forgive and heal us at that inner place that allows some root of that sin to persist.

So often in dealing with sin, we only deal with the symptom, the behavior or action that's the manifestation of evil.

It's good & right to do that – to halt sin.

But God *wants & is able to* set us free from the inner brokenness that allows sin to keep coming up.

But here's the thing – we don't find victory over sin by gazing fixedly at our spiritual navels.

Victory isn't found in focusing our attention on ourselves, or by “doing work to dig into our soul to find its psychic wounds.”

By being filled with & walking in the Spirit, God will reveal to us in His time, as we open to Him, what the root cause is, enable us to repent, then heal us. [DL Moody Example of glass – how do we get the air out of this glass? Fill it with water]

E. Jehoram Ch. 21

¹ And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. ² He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. ³ Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.

Earlier we read Jehoshaphat appointed his sons governors over the administrative districts of Judah.

It was an efficient system that resulted in a time of national resurgence during Jehoshaphat's reign.

Though Jehoshaphat had been a good & godly king throughout most of his reign, he gave rise to a very bad king in Jehoram.

⁴ Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also *others* of the princes of Israel.

Though we read of no conspiracy on the part of his brothers to usurp his rule, he was so power-hungry, he had them all killed.

⁵ Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned 8 years in Jerusalem. 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.

Jehoram was married to *Athaliah*, the daughter of Ahab & Jezebel who was cut from the same cloth as her mama.

No doubt it was she who persuaded Jehoram to get rid of his brothers.

As a foreigner, she was no doubt concerned that her son would rule after Jehoram's death.

One of Jehoram's brothers who married a Jewish woman might make a claim for his son to be a more fitting heir than the son of a foreign queen.

Oh, the intrigues that swirl round the seat of power both ancient and modern!

⁷ Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, [there's his name again] because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.

The incredible influence of 1 godly, sold-out life!

⁸ In his days [Jehoram's] Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves.

David & Solomon had completed campaigns on Judah's southeastern border to

subjugate the Edomites, distant relatives of Israel.
During Jehoram's reign, when Judah grew politically, militarily & economically weak, they saw their opportunity to throw off their yoke of vassal status.

Jehoram couldn't let the revolt go unanswered without losing face.

⁹ So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots.

Though Jehoram was able to escape with a minor victory in this skirmish, he was unsuccessful in putting down the rebellion.

¹⁰ Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

Libnah was a city along the border with the Philistines.

Because this area had gone back & forth so many times over the years, both Jews & Philistines lived there – kind of like many cities in Israel today where both Jews & Palestinians live.

The sad thing is during Jerhoram's reign, things were so bad in Judah, though Libnah was in Jewish territory, the Jews living there said they'd *rather* be ruled by the Philistines than the king of Judah.

Imagine if today a Jewish city near the border with Gaza was so upset with the corrupt government in Israel they appealed to Hamas to join them!

That's what Libnah did. Yeah – *Jehoram was a really bad king.*

¹¹ Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray. ¹² And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the LORD God of your father David:

Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, [you dad & granddad] ¹³ but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, *who were* better than yourself, ¹⁴ behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction—your children, your wives, and all your possessions; ¹⁵ and you *will become* very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.

Well that's just lovely.

¹⁶ Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. ¹⁷ And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

So the man who began his reign by killing his brothers, ends up losing his sons & wives in a fate many would consider even worse than death – they were carried away as captives to suffer humiliation & slavery.

Only one son remained, probably because he was too young to be known by the raiders & someone hid him.

What's interesting is that in Jehoram's father's reign – the Philistines & Arabians were bringing gifts to him!

How far things have fallen in just a couple decades, because Jehoram knowingly, purposefully turned his back on God.

18 After all this [on top of losing his wives & kids] the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19 Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of 2 years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers.

The spiritual rottenness that pervaded his soul was symbolized by the physical rotting of his flesh

Jehoram was *despised* by his subjects.

There was little grief at his passing – it was a relief.

They knew the distress & loss that had occurred during his reign was due to his eager godlessness.

20 He was 32 years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem 8 years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Because he was a king, they placed his body near the royal tombs, but not in them because they didn't want to dishonor the other kings with Jehoram's presence.

The people felt this guy wasn't fit to carry David's name.

F. Ahaziah 22:1-9

1 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned.

Couple quick things . . .

1 21:17 the only surviving son was named Jehoahaz. Yet here it says his name was Ahaziah.

Which was it? Both. It was a common practice in the ancient world for a prince to change his name upon his ascent to the throne.

2 Ezra announces Ahaziah's coronation as being the result of the people of Jerusalem installing him as king.

There was some dispute over the succession of the throne & Ahaziah was the people's choice.

2 Ahaziah was 42 [according to 2 Kings & the LXX of this passage – 22] years old when he became king, and he reigned 1 year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri. 3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly.

That's how she had raised him & once he was king, she continued to urge him to rebellion against God.

Even though it was just those policies that had resulted in Judah's tragic decline.

⁴ Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. ⁵ He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. ⁶ Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick. ⁷ His going to Joram was God's occasion for Ahaziah's downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

There was another alliance between Israel & Judah during the reign of Ahaziah & Jehoram against the Syrians.

Israel was defeated and Jehoram was wounded.

When Ahaziah went to visit him at his palace in northern Israel, one of Jehoram's general's staged a rebellion and wiped out both kings.

⁸ And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. ⁹ Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.

That is, there was no one old enough to take the throne.

Ahaziah did have a son, but he was just a baby.

G. Athaliah 22:10-23:21

¹⁰ Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah.

This was one ruthless woman doing her mama proud here.

¹¹ But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king [not Ahaziah but Ahaziah's father, Jehoram – so Ahaziah's sister], took Joash the son of Ahaziah [her nephew], and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. ¹² And he was hidden with them in the house of God for 6 years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

And what a wicked, desperate time this was as this demonically influenced woman ruled over God's people.

23:1 In the 7th year Jehoiada [the high priest] strengthened himself, and made a covenant with the captains of hundreds:

Jehoiada knew it was not God's will to see Athaliah still ruling now that the rightful heir to the throne was old enough to take on some of the duties of the crown.

He was still very young, only 7 years old & would need a lot of guidance, but after the hideous days of the last 3 rulers, a 7 year old was far preferable to wicked Athaliah.

Then we get a list of 5 military leaders Jehoiada knew were loyal to God who helped lead the conspiracy to seat *Joash* as king.

2 And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3 Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has said of the sons of David. 4 This is what you shall do: 1/3 of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, shall be keeping watch over the doors; 5 1/3 shall be at the king's house; and 1/3 at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6 But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they are holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. 7 And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

In order for the coronation to take place, Jehoiada knew they needed to pack the grounds of the temple with supporters and to protect *Joash* from an attack by the troops loyal to Athaliah.

The plan was to fill the courtyard with people, bring the young prince out after his existence had been kept secret from nearly everyone for 6 years – and present him to the people, who would raise a shout of affirmation as the new king – thus ending Athaliah's reign.

8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions. 9 And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of God. 10 Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. 11 And they brought out the king's son, put the

crown on him, *gave him the Testimony*, and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, “*Long live the king!*”

Note that in the ceremony to install Joash as king, they place a copy of the Law in his hand.

Because the king of Judah was ordained by God to rule on the basis of God’s Word.

Many kings hold a scepter as a symbol of their authority.

For the king of Israel, the scepter was replaced by a scroll, because their authority is derived from the Lord and is bounded by His will as revealed in His Word.

¹² Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD.

¹³ When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters *were* by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, “*Treason! Treason!*”

You gotta’ hand it to her –at least she’s got guts!

Instead of running away in fear, she decided to take a bold public stand and see who would rally to her side.

Thank goodness no one did.

¹⁴ And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, “Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her.” For the priest had said, “Do not kill her in the house of the LORD.” ¹⁵ So they seized her; and she went by way of the entrance of the Horse Gate *into* the king’s house, and they killed her there. ¹⁶ Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the LORD’s people. ¹⁷ And all the people went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down. They broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. ¹⁸ Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, as *it was established* by David. ¹⁹ And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one *who was* in any way unclean should enter. ²⁰ Then he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD; and they went through the Upper Gate to the king’s house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom. ²¹ So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

A time of social tranquility immediately settled over Jerusalem upon Athaliah’s

death.

Her wickedness was a spiritual force that allowed a lot of demonic influence to stir up strife & unrest.

This speaks volumes about the *impact our leaders* have upon our nation, state & cities.

With leadership comes authority.

When rulers are righteous, they bring a positive, healthy spiritual influence.

But when the evil rule, they open the door for the demonic to work.

Proverbs 29:2 - When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan.

H. Joash Ch. 24

1. Joash's temple restoration 24:1-16

¹ Joash was 7 years old when he became king, and he reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. ² Joash did *what was right* in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

Yeah, as you probably guessed, that little qualifier is the bad news.

Joash was a good king as long as Jehoiada was around to advise him, but when he died, Joash went bad – proving that Joash had a heart problem all along. He needed to get his heart right with the Lord and God gave him every opportunity.

But in the end, he needed to see what kind of a man he really was and only Jehoiada's removal could make that clear.

What was true for Joash is true for us.

We need one another and it's part of God's plan for us to have people who can help us grow in Him.

But at some point, we need to come face to face with the reality of *just how sincere our relationship with God alone is.*

The saints of every age have learned that there's a form of spiritual wilderness that's common to all God's people.

While many of our desert experiences are self-inflicted because of sin or disinterest in God,

There's one spiritual wilderness that is God's doing.

It's paralleled by Israel's wilderness after the Exodus and Jesus 40 days in the wilderness.

All supports are pulled away so that all that's left is us and God.

It's crucial we come to that place where we *see* what our heart is really given to.

Until the death of Jehoiada, Joash merely went along with what his mentor said.

But once Jehoiada was out of the way, Joash followed his own path with no regard for God.

³ And Jehoiada took 2 wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.

Why would a priest who was supposed to know God's Word set Joash up with 2 wives?

Well, first of all it shows he wasn't that well versed in the Word.

Second, his thinking was more influenced by the world, which said a king's glory & prestige was revealed by how many wives & kids he had. But there may have been just a purely pragmatic reason why Jehoiada set Joash up with 2 wives.

Don't forget that they've just narrowly made it through a dangerous time when the line of David could have been wiped out.

The high priest may have just been making sure there'd be plenty a candidate for succession.

4 Now it happened after this [Jehoiada is still alive at this point] that Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. 5 Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly."

Let's get this thing moving.

During the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, & Athaliah, the temple had fallen into serious disrepair.

However the Levites did not do it quickly.

They'd lost a sense of vision for their ministry to the Lord.

They were professionals who were just going through the motions without any real heart for God.

If they had a right heart, they would have been diligent to make the necessary repairs.

6 So the king called Jehoiada the chief *priest*, and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD and of the assembly of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?" 7 For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals.

Not only had the temple suffered the ravages of time, a campaign of vandalism by Athaliah's family had added further damage & loss.

Jehoiada was a good influence on Joash, but he wasn't a very effective leader as the high priest.

He was discouraged by the apathy of the other priests.

He hadn't stepped up and called them to the work of repairing the temple.

8 Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD. 9 And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God had imposed on Israel in the wilderness. 10 Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put *them* into the chest until all had given. 11 So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place. Thus

they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

Turns out the priests were really out of touch with where the people were at.

When the people heard the temple would be repaired & they could participate in the project by giving, they filled that chest as fast as the priests could empty it and set it out again.

12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also those who worked in iron and bronze to restore the house of the LORD. 13 So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it.

14 When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; they made from it articles for the house of the LORD, articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

In 2 Kings we learn that the Levites had mismanaged the support that was given to them.

That's one of the reasons why Joash put this chest next to the altar right there in public for everyone to see then set trustworthy men over it for its safeguarding & accounting.

Every penny went where it was supposed to.

And this diligence with the funds only encouraged the people to give more because they had confidence it was being used as it was supposed to be.

15 But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one 130 years old when he died. 16 And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.

2. Joash's wickedness and assassination 24:17-27

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass.

These leaders knew Joash was basically a weak man & that Jehoiada had been steering the nation.

Now that he was out of the way, they plotted a new course.

They didn't want to go to the bother of having to travel to Jerusalem to worship.

They wanted to renew the old practice of setting up shrines at the high places near their homes.

It made religions so much more convenient.

And hey, while you're at it, why not make an *image* too?

It's so much easier to concentrate when you have an object to look at & talk to.

Oh, but you see, there was a reason, an ulterior motive in these leader's request.

As usual, follow the money trail!!!!

These leaders had seen how lucrative religion could be when handled right.

Athaliah had made the temple to Baal at Jerusalem, into a money machine.

And these guys had seen with the repair fund for the Temple of God how when properly motivated, people would give like made in the name of faith.

So they wanted to build their own shrines and temples and make them into *destinations* people would go to, to worship, knowing that when they got there, they'd drop money in the box.

But here we go again – just as Solomon had prayed decades before, when God's people turn from Him, He chastens them to bring them back.

19 Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

Before the chastening commenced, God first warned them & called them to repentance.

But they wouldn't listen.

20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.' " **21 So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.**

Obviously the king of Judah has fallen very far from the place of his illustrious ancestor David who at a rebuke of the prophet of God repented in the most remarkable & sincere way.

Now we have a king who when he hears a word from God he doesn't like, doesn't just ignore it, but lashes out to kill the messenger – in the temple!

22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on *it*, and repay!" **23 So it happened in the spring of the year *that* the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.** **24 For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.**

In the days of Abijah when outnumbered by Israel 2 to 1, Judah prevailed because they trusted in God.

In the days of his son Asa, when a millions Ethiopians invaded and again they were outnumbered 2 to 1, they were victorious because they looked to God for help.

In *his* sons' day, Jehoshaphat that is, a huge coalition of Eastern nations invaded yet because Jehoshaphat was so devoted to God, they didn't even have to fight. God caused the coalition to fall apart and they turned on each other.

So here we are now a few decades later and a small force of Syrians marches right into the heart of Judah, even into the very center of the capital, and does whatever they want & the army of Judah can do nothing to stop them.

Abijah, Asa, & Jehoshaphat tell us what God can do when we look to Him.

But **THIS**, my friends, is what happens when people turn their backs on God.

25 And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons 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.

Like Jehoram, Joash ended up a despised man because of his insane betrayal of a good man.

26 These are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess. 27 Now concerning his sons, and the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they are written in the annals of the book of the kings. Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Joash's story is disturbing because of the seeming good start he got off to.

He teaches us that we can't count on the glory days of a distant past as being enough; the question is – where is my heart today?