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2 Kings 10 - 12



2 Kings - Steve Gregg

In this passage, Steve Gregg presents a detailed account of the events that took place after Elisha commissioned one of the sons of the prophets to anoint Jehu as the king of Israel. Jehu, with the support of the elders, went on to eliminate the leaders of the land and those who worshipped Baal. However, he acted deceptively and continued to tolerate the worship of the golden calves. Eventually, Jehoiada, the high priest, anointed Joash as the new king of Judah, who reigned for forty years, but failed to remove the high places.

Transcript

At 2 Kings 10, and we're in the middle of some action here, because in the previous chapter, Elisha commissioned one of the sons of the prophets to go and pour oil over the head of Israel's military commander Jehu, who was on assignment besieging Ramoth-Gilead, and he anointed him to be king. And it seems like Jehu didn't really take it that seriously initially, but when his men asked him what the whole interview with the prophet had been about, he told them, well, this guy anointed me to be king of Israel. And his, apparently his subordinates, his generals and so forth with him, they stood up and acknowledged him as king.

They blew a trumpet and proclaimed him to be the king of Israel. And so they got on their horses and chariots and started riding toward Jezreel, where the king and also Jezebel were living. The king was in fact recovering from a fall, from injuries.

His name was Joram, the king of the north. Ahaziah at this time was the king of Judah, but he was unfortunately visiting the king of Israel, so he put himself accidentally in harm's way. And Jehu came and just killed the two kings.

And he also killed Jezebel. He actually came into the city. Jezebel appeared at the window, and Jehu asked if there was anyone up there with her who would want to throw her down.

And so two or three of her eunuchs came and threw her out the window. She died. She hit the ground.

Her blood splattered around. It says it splattered on the wall and on the horses. That didn't need to be mentioned, but that was just a little bit of color.

When she hit the ground, her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses. And then Jehu and his men walked over, just walked and trampled over her body as they went down over the threshold of the house, came in. They ate and drank, and then when they came out, they found there was nothing left of Jezebel but her feet and her skull and the palms of her hands.

The rest of her had been eaten by dogs in fulfillment of a prophecy that Elijah had given on an earlier occasion at the vineyard of Naboth. Now chapter 10. Now Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria, and Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to those who reared Ahab's sons, saying, Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons are with you, and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons, choose the best qualified of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

So he's saying, I have killed Joram, I have killed Ahaziah, I am now in competition with Ahab's other sons for the throne. He's got 70 sons, and they're living under the care of the leaders over in Samaria. Pick the best of them to lead your armies to come out against me, because it's going to be him or me.

I'm proclaiming myself king, in other words, and the other people who might feel like they had a claim to that title would be Ahab's sons. And if there's any of them that are kingly and able, let them lead the armies. Well, of course, Ahab's sons were probably effete, pampered princes, not muscular, warlike military men.

I mean, with 70 sons, these guys would probably just live in the life of Riley, just probably fat and sassy, spoiled brats. None of them really capable of being a military leader, and probably none of them fit to be a king. And the elders of Samaria who were in charge of caring for these people, these sons of Ahab, didn't want to fight against Jehu.

It says in verse 4, they were exceedingly afraid and said, look, two kings cannot stand up to him. Then how can we stand? And he who was in charge of the house and he who was in charge of the city, the elders also and those who reared the sons, sent to Jehu saying, we are your servants. We will do all that you tell us, but we will not make anyone king.

Do what is good in your sight. Then he wrote a second letter to them saying, if you are for me and if you obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow. Now the king's sons, 70 persons, were with the great men of the city who were rearing them.

So it was when the letter came to them that they took the king's sons and slaughtered

70 persons, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel. Then a messenger came and told him saying, they have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning.

So this is a rather gruesome rebellion that Jehu is orchestrating. He's doing pretty much what a king would do, who's taking over the kingdom of the north. He's getting rid of all the heirs to the throne.

And he's also fulfilling prophecy because the house of Ahab was said to become like the house of Jeroboam. Every last one would be wiped out. And this is what's happening.

All his sons, Ahab's sons, are being wiped out. Jehu is not doing all the killing himself. He's getting the leaders of the land to do some of the killing.

That way the blood's on their heads and they can't really then accuse him of being a rebel against the king any more than themselves. And it says, so it was in the morning that he went out and stood and said to all the people, you are righteous. Indeed, I conspired against my master and killed him.

But who killed all these? Now when he says, you are righteous, he may be being sarcastic. You are righteous people. More righteous than me, right? I killed my master.

But then again, you killed all 70 of his sons. So you and I are equally criminals against the house of Ahab. Which means it would make no sense for you to ever rise up against me and say that I was a criminal.

You now have blood on your hands also. Know that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab. For the Lord has done what he spoke by his servant Elijah.

So Jehu killed all who remained at the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his close acquaintances, and his priests until he left him with none remaining. Now that is more or less understandable. It's not really, it's not very, it's not righteous or just, but it's understandable.

It's what kings did. Typically, if one dynasty replaced another, the previous dynasty had to be eliminated because any son of the old king might rear up and get some loyalty of those who were loyal to the old king and say I'm the true heir and might lead a rebellion. So to prevent that from happening, the new dynasty would just purge everyone from the old.

But what's not understandable is why Jehu did the same thing as much as he had power to do toward the house of Judah. Why did he kill Ahaziah, king of Judah? Ahaziah may have been a friend of Joram, but he was no threat to Jehu. I'm sure that had he let Ahaziah go, he would have gladly gone back down to Judah and kept to his place.

And Jehu was not trying to conquer Judah. He was not trying to make himself king over Judah as well, as near as we can tell. Or maybe he did have those aspirations.

Hard to say. There doesn't seem to be any reason for him to kill the king of Judah in order for him to take the throne in Israel. Furthermore, he killed other relatives of the king of Judah, which were not relevant to his position in Israel.

In verses 12 through 14, he arose and departed and went to Samaria on the way at Beth Eched of the shepherds. That's the name of a place, Beth Eched of the shepherds. Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and said, Who are you? And they answered, We are the brothers of Ahaziah.

We have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother. They hadn't heard, of course, about this happening. News didn't travel fast in ancient times.

And so they were coming to visit Joram and Jezebel. These were the brothers of the king of Judah, who had now been killed, and they hadn't heard that he was dead either. But he said, Take them alive.

So they took them alive and killed them at the well of Beth Eched, 42 men, and he left none of them. Now, again, it doesn't seem like Jehu had any business killing off the royal seed of Judah as well as Israel, although it's very clear that the seed of Judah were friendly toward Israel and toward Jezebel. They were coming to honor Joram and the queen mother Jezebel.

So they clearly were not godly men. The people of the Judean dynasty did not honor Yahweh. And Jehu, in his zeal, apparently, decided to wipe them out too because they were on the wrong side.

And this was going to be a very widespread purge. It says, Now when he departed from there, he met Jonadab, the son of Rechab, coming to meet him. And he greeted him and said to him, Is your heart right as my heart is toward your heart? And Jonadab answered, It is.

Now, Jonadab is somebody we don't know anything about up to this point. We've heard nothing about him previously. But we will hear about him in Jeremiah chapter 35.

Not him so much as his descendants, because he was apparently a very godly man, a man of Yahweh, who taught his children to not become city dwellers, because the cities of Israel were given over to idolatry, and not to settle down at all. He taught them to be nomadic people and to be apparently Nazarites, not to drink wine. And you'll see this if you look over at Jeremiah chapter 35.

Now, Jeremiah lived much later than the time we're reading, 200 years later even. So,

this Jonadab of Rechab was no longer alive at this time, but his descendants 200 years removed were. And God says to Jeremiah, in Jeremiah 35.1, The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, Go to the house of the Rechabites.

Now, Jonadab was a Rechabite. Jonadab, that we read about here in 2 Kings, was the son of Rechab, a Rechabite. Go to the house of the Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of Yahweh, into one of the chambers, and give them wine to drink.

Then I took Jeazaniah, the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazaniah, his brothers and his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites. And I brought them into the house of the Lord, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan, the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which was by the chamber of the princes above the chamber of Messiah, the son of Shalom, the keeper of the door. A lot of names that people will never need to know.

Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine and cups, and I said to them, drink wine. But they said, we will drink no wine. For Jonadab, that's this Jonadab that we're reading about here in 2 Kings, who had lived 200 years earlier than this, he said, for Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, meaning our ancestor, commanded us, saying, you shall drink no wine, you nor your sons forever.

You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have any of these, but all your days you shall dwell in tents, that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners. Thus we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father. In all that he has charged us to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, and our daughters, nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in, nor do we have vineyards, fields, or seed.

But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab, our father, commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came up into the land, that we said, Come, let us go into Jerusalem, for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians. So we dwell at Jerusalem.

Then came the word of the Lord to Jeremiah, saying, Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, Will you not receive instruction to obey my words, says the Lord? The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed. For to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. But although I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, you did not obey me.

And so forth it goes on. The point here is that the Rechabites, descended from Jonadab, this man we're reading about now, had been instructed by him not to settle in to this corrupt culture in Israel. Now these were in the northern kingdom, but their descendants were in the southern kingdom.

They had gone down to Jerusalem, it says, because they were afraid of Nebuchadnezzar. And so Jeremiah, in Jerusalem, encountered the Rechabites 200 years after Jonadab's time, but they were still following the instructions of their father. They were still living as Nazarites, still living as wanderers, they were not intermingling with the corrupt society.

In other words, they were remaining unspotted from the world. Remember, James said, true religion, pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit fatherless orphans in their affliction and to keep themselves unspotted from the world. Jonadab taught his sons, and they apparently taught their sons, and they their sons, and they their sons, for many generations, probably at least five or six generations here, to follow these instructions of Jonadab, and they were still doing it.

And God points this out to Jeremiah, so he can point it out to the people of Judah. These Rechabites are not people of Judah, but they are following their father's instructions 200 years after he gave them. Why don't my people follow my instructions, he's saying.

How does a father have such an impact for righteousness on his family, that his children for five or six generations continue after he's dead to follow his standards, his religious standards? I wish I knew. It would be really a wonderful thing to know what Jonadab's secret was, but one of his secrets certainly was he was an uncompromising man. He was a godly man, and although we have not heard of him prior to 2 Kings chapter 10 and verse 15, it's clear that Jehu knew Jonadab.

Jonadab apparently had a reputation as a man of Yahweh in a land that worshipped Baal. Jehu was now going to profess loyalty to Yahweh. The new king in Israel was supposedly going to be loyal to Yahweh, and he wanted to have the support of a man who had a great reputation as a man of Yahweh.

No doubt if Jonadab was on his side, all that 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal in Israel would also give their support to Jehu. It's sort of like when a Republican candidate wants to get the support of the Evangelical Christians because they're a large voting bloc. So Jehu wanted to have Jonadab's endorsement because Jonadab was a conspicuously godly man, no doubt highly respected among that remnant in Israel who followed Yahweh.

And so he meets Jonadab, the son of Rechab, and he says to Jonadab, is your heart right as my heart is toward your heart, and ours are we friends? And Jonadab answered, it is. This is of course 2 Kings 10, 15. And Jehu said, if it is, give me your hand.

So he gave him his hand and he took him up into his chariot with him. Then he said, come with me and see my zeal for Yahweh. So they had him ride with his chariot.

And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained of Ahab in Samaria till he had destroyed them according to the word of Yahweh, which he spoke to Elijah. Now you

might say, well, why would a godly man approve of this kind of slaughter? This slaughter should never have been necessary because Baal worship was punishable by death under the law. As soon as the first Baal worshipper in Israel had introduced Baal worship, anyone who worshipped Baal should have been slaughtered and there wouldn't be all these people being slaughtered now because these were all Baal worshippers.

And that's what they're being killed for. It's a capital offense. It's like murder.

You worship a false god in Israel, you're a capital criminal and you're on death row even if there's no execution. Well, now comes the execution that these people have been worthy of but have never experienced. And Jonadab apparently is approving this.

Then Jehu gathered all the people together and said to them, Ahab served Baal a little. Jehu will serve him much. Now this almost makes us think, what? I thought he was going to be zealous for Yahweh.

How come he's going to serve Baal much? But this is a ruse. He's trying to persuade the Baal worshippers that he's on their side so he can gather them together and slaughter them all. So he's feigning loyalty to Baal.

He says, Ahab served Baal a little, I'm going to serve him a lot more. Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants and all his priests. Let no one be missing for I have a great sacrifice to make to Baal.

Whoever is missing shall not live. Now this way, you see, if Jehu openly professed his loyalty to Yahweh on this occasion, then the Baal worshippers are going to hide him. And they might remain in the country to pop out later after he was gone and reassert the Baal worship.

But he wanted them to think, he wanted their guard to be down. He didn't want anyone hiding from him. He said, I want everyone who worships Baal to come to this feast or be killed.

And since he claimed to be worshiping Baal, they were unsuspecting. So they came out and were not hiding from him. It says, Whoever is missing shall not live.

But Jehu acted deceptively with the intent of destroying the worshippers of Baal. And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. So they proclaimed it.

Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. So they came into the temple of Baal, and the temple of Baal was full of them from one end to the other. And he said to one in charge of his wardrobe, Bring out the vestments for all the worshippers of Baal.

So he brought out the vestments for them. This way all the worshippers of Baal would be

identifiable from other people. They all had to wear special priestly vestments for this ceremony.

Then Jehu and Jonadab, the son of Rechab, went into the temple of Baal and said to the worshippers of Baal, Search and see that no servants of Yahweh are here with you, but only the worshippers of Baal. So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed for himself eighty men on the outside, and had said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, whoever lets him escape, it shall be his life for the life of the other.

Now it was so, as soon as he had made an end of offering, the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in and kill them. Let no one come out. And they killed them with the edge of the sword.

Then the guards and the officers threw them out and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. And they brought the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. Then they broke down the sacred pillar of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day.

Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel. Now this sounds really encouraging for any of us who are thinking, you know, it's about time Israel got purged of all this perennial idolatry. From the time they were established under Jeroboam, they've had these gold tabs, they've been worshipping other gods.

It got worse when Jezebel became the queen mother and introduced Baal worship as the formal religion and killed the prophets of Yahweh. And ever since that time, Baal, the worst of the gods, is now being worshipped. And we finally say, wow, Israel's finally getting a good king.

Finally getting someone who's going to worship Yahweh and eliminate the idolatry. And he did that with Baal worship, but possibly because it smacked of Jehu's dynasty. You know, it was more perhaps a political reason that Jehu had for getting rid of Baal worship because it had been introduced with Ahab's dynasty and therefore the Baal worshippers had served Ahab and Jezebel and might be thought to be still loyal to that movement.

And so he eliminates anyone who had any religious connection to Ahab and Jezebel as well as any biological or political connection. However, verse 29, Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who had made Israel a sin. That is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan.

And the Lord said to Jehu, because you have done well in doing what is right in my sight and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in my heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart, for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who

made Israel to sin. So Jehu was better than the other kings that Israel had, but he was not good enough.

He had the power to eliminate the gold calf worship, but he simply didn't. It was too well entrenched in the society. He just wasn't zealous enough for the Lord and for righteousness to do it.

He was a reformer of sorts in that he eliminated Baal worship specifically, but not all idolatry, which he should have done. He should have pressed his advantage while he was on a roll like Josiah did in the south at a later time. Well, God did say that Jehu's dynasty would last for four generations.

There had been four kings of the house of Ahab previously, but only three generations. It was Omri, Ahab, and then two of his sons, because the first son that took his throne died, and then another son did. So it's really only three generations, but four kings.

Jehu's dynasty would be the first in Israel to last for four generations, and that was the special blessing God gave him for eliminating Ahab's house and Baal worship, but it wouldn't go on perpetually like David's dynasty in the south, because Jehu was not following God like David had done. In those days, the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel, and Hazael conquered them and all the territory of Israel. Remember, Elisha had visited Hazael, who was a servant of the king of Syria, and had said, I see in the spirit what you're going to do.

You're going to kill so many Israelites. Elisha wept when he looked at him and saw what Hazael was going to do, and Hazael said, why would I do that? I'm a dog. Why would I do those things? And Elisha said, well, you're going to be the ruler of Syria.

And then Hazael actually went and murdered the king, suffocated him in his bed, and then took the rule. So we have not heard of Hazael since then, but he's not a good man. But God has raised him up instead of Ben-Hadad, and now he is waging those wars against Israel that Elisha foresaw and wept about.

They were bloody wars. He said they'd be disemboweling pregnant women and doing horrible things like that, killing women and children. And that made Elisha cry to think about it.

And this is no doubt when that was happening. It says, the Lord began to cut off parts of Israel and Hazael, conquered them in all the territory of Israel. From the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh.

From Aror, which is by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bayshin. So this whole region on the east of the Jordan that had been given to those two-and-a-half tribes was conquered and captured by Syria. Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? So

Jehu rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria.

Then Jehoahaz, his son, reigned in his place. And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was 28 years. Now, we've been focusing on these activities in the northern kingdom, well, because they're exciting.

I mean, there was some action going on there, something to watch. And because, of course, we have to reach the end of one king's life before we can change venues and go down and see what's going on in Judah. So we have the entire reign of Jehu covered until his death.

But now going back to the south and looking at what's going on down there, we're going back to the beginning of Jehu's reign. When Jehu killed Ahaziah, the king of Judah, his mother, Athaliah, was going to seize the day and make herself queen. To do this, she had to kill all her grandsons who were heirs to the throne.

And so we read, when Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. But Jehoshabab, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash, which was apparently the only surviving son of Ahaziah that Athaliah did not find, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered. And they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom from Athaliah so that he was not killed.

So he was hidden with her in the house of the Lord for six years while Athaliah reigned over the land. Joash was apparently a baby at this time. And although Ahaziah may have had a lot of children, apparently Athaliah didn't keep track of how many there were.

She didn't know how many grandchildren she had. She clearly was not very attached to them. She was not a doting grandmother.

She killed all her grandsons in order to seize the throne from them. And there may have been so many grandchildren she had never really known about the birth of this youngest one, Joash, but he was hidden successfully and she apparently didn't know he existed. And he was hidden for six years.

He was still a little boy at the end of that six years. He must have been a very small baby or toddler. And so in the seventh year of Jehoiada, I'm sorry, in the seventh year of Jehoiada, who was the high priest, sent and brought the captains of the hundreds and the bodyguards and the escorts and brought them into the house of Yahweh with him.

And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of Yahweh and showed them the king's son. Now, in all likelihood, Athaliah was not well loved by the people. After all, she slaughtered her own grandsons.

That's not really a very classy thing to do. And I imagine most people just saw her as

another Jezebel. And rightly so.

She was Jezebel's daughter. She was Jezebel's daughter and the spirit of Jezebel was in her. And the people who, you know, through her treachery, seemed to be forced to acknowledge her as queen for lack of any other rival, didn't love her.

And Jehoiada the priest was one of the few who knew that there was a rival to the throne. There was a seed of David still surviving. She had almost wiped them all out.

If she had succeeded, it would have been the case that David's line would have been cut off, something that God said would never happen. We wouldn't have Jesus, in fact, because Jesus came through this royal seed. But if Athaliah had killed all the seed, including Joash, then the line through which Jesus came would have been cut off.

This was providential that this one son was a survivor and was not found in this purge that Athaliah was conducting. But Jehoiada apparently had no trouble finding sympathetic soldiers and police and bodyguards and escorts and so forth. They probably hated Athaliah anyway, so he took the chance of showing them that there was, in fact, a king's son surviving.

Now, of course, this was a bit of a risk because any of them could have gotten on Athaliah's good graces and maybe gotten some political favors if they had reported this to her, and then she could have killed Joash. But she was apparently hated enough that there wasn't much danger of anyone taking her side. And so the high priest who had been sheltering Joash shows him to important military leaders.

Then he commanded them, saying, This is what you shall do. One-third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king's house. One-third shall be at the gate of Sur, and one-third at the gate behind the escorts.

You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down. The two contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord for the king. But you shall surround the king on all sides.

Every man with his weapons in his hand, and whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in. Now, he's talking about this little boy, Joash.

There apparently were three shifts of guards of the temple, the temple guards. And the ones who would go off duty, he said, Instead of going home, we want you to put in another shift, guarding the king. So that we've got the temple guarded by the regular temple guard, and we've got the king specially guarded by some of the guards that have gone off duty from their normal duty, and so the king will have a bodyguard around him.

Now, the temple of Yahweh was apparently a safe place to hide him from Athaliah,

because Athaliah was no doubt a Baal worshipper like her mother, and not a devotee to Yahweh. So her visits to the temple would probably be very rare, if not non-existent. And so him hiding in the temple was a safe place from her finding out.

But now he's going to have military men defending him, because he's going to come out in the open. So the captains of the hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada, the priest, commanded. Each of them took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

And the priest gave the captains of hundreds the spears and the shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of the Lord. Then the escorts stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, by the altar and the temple. And he brought out the king's son, and put the crown on him, and gave him the testimony.

Now the testimony probably are the Ten Commandments that were in the Ark. Or there may be some other item so being referred to. But the Ten Commandments seem to be what's referred to as the testimony back in the Book of Exodus.

They made him king, and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, Long live the king. So there's this armed band in the temple, gathering to proclaim him king. Now, when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts, and the people, she came to the people into the temple of the Lord.

She probably never came there to worship, but she came there because she heard of a commotion, that there was someone being proclaimed as king. So she had to come and find out what was going on. And when she looked, there was the king standing by a pillar according to the custom.

And the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. And all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, Treason, treason! Then Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of 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 let her be killed in the house of the Lord. So they seized her, and she went by way of the horse's entrance to the king's house, and there she was killed. Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people, and also between the king and the people.

And all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They thoroughly broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Matan the priest of Baal before their altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.

Then he took captains of hundreds, the bodyguards, the escorts, and all the people of

the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the Lord, and went by way of the gate of the escorts to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the king, so all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword in the king's house. Joash was seven years old when he became king.

Now, Joash actually was a pretty good king, as we can see in the next chapter. Unfortunately, though, he did have a blot on his record, as most of them eventually did. And we'll see that, we find that out from Chronicles, but we don't find that out quite yet.

We're going to have to get into chapter 12 first. And so we have these reforms. We have the temple of Baal is destroyed, the priest of Baal is destroyed in Jerusalem.

In all likelihood, Ahaziah and his 42 brothers that Jehu had killed had been worshippers at the temple of Baal in Jerusalem on a regular basis, as the queen mother had obviously strong influence, and she was Jezebel's daughter. But we read in chapter 12, in the seventh year of Jehu, Joash became king, and he reigned 40 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zebiah of Beersheba.

Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. And the high places were not taken away, but the high places were not taken away. This is so often the case.

The reformers did everything right with the exception of those high places. Apparently, there were a lot of them. Taking away the high places was apparently quite a chore, and perhaps something that they couldn't really monitor that much, since the high places were in various localities where the local people might come there and worship inappropriately there, but it was not easy to police that, because it was all over the country.

So the high places sometimes, they escaped being destroyed when these reforms were taking place. The people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. And Joash, or Jehoash as he's also called, said to the priests, all the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the Lord, each man's census money, each man's assessment money, and all the money that a man purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the Lord, let the priests take it themselves, each from his constituency, and let him repair the damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found.

Joash would be very familiar with where the temple was dilapidated. He'd lived there for six years in hiding, and probably saw that all the funds that were appropriated by Queen Athalia had been used to build up the Temple of Baal, which means that for several years the Temple of Yahweh had been neglected and had become dilapidated, so now he's doing repairs on that. Now it was so that the 23rd year of King Jehoash that the priests had not repaired the damages of the Temple.

So I mean, they really, what they did with the money, we don't know. Maybe they were misappropriating it, but they had not done what he said to do. So King Jehoshaphat called Jehoiada, the priest, and the other priests, and said to them, why have you not repaired the damages of the Temple? Now therefore, do not take any more money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing of the damages of the Temple.

And the priests agreed that they would neither receive any more money from the people nor repair the damages of the Temple. That is, they wouldn't do it themselves. Then Jehoiada, the priest, took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar on the right side as one comes into the house of the Lord.

And the priests who kept the door put there all the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, so it was whenever they saw that there was much money in the chest that the king's scribe and the high priest came up to put it in bags and counted the money that was found in the house of the Lord. In other words, they became more accountable for the money. The money had been being given, apparently just in hands full, to the priests, and it kind of just disappeared.

It didn't build up a treasury to do the repairs. So the king set up a box, apparently a locked chest, with a hole in it, and there was no way anyone could get money out of it except those who had the keys. And so they could look through the hole and see if it was getting full.

Then they'd call not only the high priest, but also the king's scribe, so someone who represented the king's interest, keeping the priests accountable. They'd open it up and they'd take what they found to build the house of the Lord. Then they gave the money which had been apportioned into the hands of those who did the work, 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, and to masons and stone cutters and for buying timber and hewn stone to repair the damage of the house, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple.

However, there were not made for the house of the Lord basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver from the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, but they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the Lord with it. So they didn't repair the paraphernalia or replace it, they just worked on the structure itself with this money. Moreover, they did not require an account from the men in whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to the workmen, for they dealt faithfully.

Now, see, this is an interesting statement about accountability. When they had people who were faithful, they could trust them. That's what faithful means.

Faithful means trustworthy. You can trust them. They didn't have to be made

accountable for what was given to them, because they made sure that they had men who were faithful men doing the work.

The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the Lord, it belonged to the priests. Now, Hazael, the king of Syria, went up and fought against Gath and took it. So Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

Now, Gath, of course, was a Philistine city, but it was down in the region near Judah and Jerusalem, so he decided to go ahead and press his advantage down to try to conquer Jerusalem as well, since he was in the area. And Jehoash, king of Judah, took all the sacred things that his father Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and in the king's house, and sent them to Hazael, king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

That is that he bought him off. Jerusalem was being threatened, but he was bought off by all the stuff that was really dedicated to the Lord, which means, of course, it shouldn't have happened, he shouldn't have given it to them because it was for something else. Now, the rest of the acts of Jehoash and all that he did are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And his servants arose and made a conspiracy and killed Jehoash in the house of Melo, which goes down to Silah.

For Jehozezar, the son of Shimeith, and Jehozabath, the son of Shomer, his servants struck him, so he died, and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David. Then Amaziah, his son, reigned in his place. Now, we're going to have more to say about this, and we're going to look at what Chronicles tells us.

I don't know if we have right now the time to get into that, if we should wait. We should at least look at this one passage. In 2 Chronicles 24, verses 15 through 22, we find that King Jehoash, of whom we've been reading, though he did all these good things, he apostatized.

Which, of course, may tell us why he was assassinated, rather than came to a more peaceful end. But in 2 Chronicles 24, verses 11, it says, But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and died. That's the high priest.

He's the one who had raised Jehoash and protected him from Athaliah. This is the priest who had been like a father to King Jehoash, and apparently had been the main influence influencing him to be loyal to Yahweh. Because when Jehoiada grew old and full of days and died, that kind of ended Jehoash's loyalty to Yahweh.

He was 130 years old when he died. That's pretty old in those days. And they buried him in the city of David along with the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both

toward God and his house.

Now after the death of Jehoiada, the leaders of Judah came and bowed to the king, and the king listened to them. 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.

Now Jehoash apparently was not a strong man of strong convictions. When he was under the influence of the high priest Jehoiada, who was a godly priest, and who had raised him like a father, and had protected him from death, he served Yahweh. But when Jehoiada's influence was gone, and the other leaders of Israel who wanted to worship wooden images came to him, he compromised and let them go back to their idolatry.

Yet he sent prophets to them to bring them back to the Lord, it says, and they testified against them, but they would not listen. And there's one particular prophet we read about here. It says, Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest.

Now this was the son of the man who had saved Jehoash's life. This was a priest, but he also had the Spirit of the Lord come upon him. And many times the prophets that were sent were men among the priests upon whom the Spirit came.

And this was one example. And he stood above the people and said, And thus says God, Why do you transgress the commandment of Yahweh so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken Yahweh, he also has forsaken you. So they conspired against him, and at the commandment of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord.

Thus Jehoash 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. As King Jehoash approved of the stoning of this prophet, who was the son of the man to whom he was so indebted, we see that this is how hard Jehoash's heart had become.

We find that this is the case with some of the other kings who were godly also. Godly kings sometimes would not tolerate prophets telling them they were wrong, especially when they were older. They were like the old and foolish king who would no longer be rebuked, it says in Ecclesiastes.

And so sometimes a man of God ceases to be a man of God when he won't receive any more correction. And he thinks he's godly enough. He resents people telling him he's doing the wrong thing.

To the point where he becomes almost so defensive of his position that he wants to eliminate any voices speaking against him. In Matthew chapter 23, Jesus appears to be referring to this incident. In Matthew 23, verses 34 through 36, Jesus is denouncing

Jerusalem.

And he says in verse 34, Therefore indeed I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify. Some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city.

That on you may come all the righteous blood, shed on the earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. Now there's a bit of a problem here because Jesus said that they murdered Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, between the temple and the altar.

Well that is in fact where Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was murdered. He was murdered in the temple. And so most scholars think that Jesus is here referring to this other Zechariah, not the son of Berechiah.

Well who's the son of Berechiah? Well that's another man living much later than this story. Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, is the man who wrote the book of Zechariah and he was among the exiles who had returned from Babylon hundreds of years after the story we're reading in 2 Kings. These are two different Zechariahs.

One's the son of Jehoiada, one's the son of Berechiah. Now we know that the son of Jehoiada died in the manner described by Jesus. He was murdered between the temple and the altar.

We have no record of the death elsewhere of the Zechariah, the son of Berechiah. So some feel that, well, since Jesus said Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, died in exactly the same way, he was murdered in the same location as Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, we have to see these as just coincidences of history that two different prophets named Zechariah died essentially in the same manner. It's not impossible since there are more than 36 men in the Bible called Zechariah.

It's a very common name. And many prophets died being murdered by their people. So it's not impossible that both Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, and Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, hundreds of years later, had similar deaths.

What makes it a bit problematic is this. The Scripture does not record how Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the later Zechariah, died. And yet Jesus speaks as if they know this story that he's referring to.

You killed him. As if that story is known. And if it's known, it must be known from somewhere other than Scripture, because the Scripture doesn't tell it.

What's more, it seems really unlikely that Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, would have died this way, because he and Haggai were just about the only two prophets God ever

sent that Israel listened to and did not persecute. When they came to encourage people building the house of the Lord, it says the people's hearts were moved to obey. And they did what the prophets said.

It's very unusual for the people to listen to the prophets. But after the exile, the people were inclined to do so. And they don't seem like the type of people who would kill the prophets.

It would appear that Haggai and Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, received favorable reception from the people, rather than that they were murdered. So, it seems to some very unlikely that Jesus is referring to the Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, but that he is probably referring to Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. There's another reason to think so, and that is that in the arrangement of the Jewish Bible, 2 Chronicles is the last book.

The book of Chronicles is actually the last book in the canon of the Jewish scriptures. Because it's not, as in our Bible, it's among history books. In the Jewish canon, it's among the writings.

And it's the last one collected. That would mean when Jesus says, from Abel to Zechariah, if he means Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, he means from the very first martyr in scripture to the very last martyr in scripture. That is, in the arrangement of the Bible as they had it.

Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, was the last prophet to be killed. And therefore, it sounds like Jesus is probably referring to the son of Jehoiada, not the son of Berechiah. So how would we account for the presence of the words, son of Berechiah, in Matthew 23 and verse 35? Well, one thing I would point out is that in the parallel to this statement, which is in Luke chapter 11, 49 and 50, Jesus makes the same statement, but it just mentions Zechariah, who you slew before the temple and the altar, but doesn't mention son of Berechiah.

That is, Luke's gospel, if taken by itself without any reference to Matthew, we would assume it's referring to Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. It doesn't say in Luke's gospel which Zechariah. And so, just reading Luke, you would think that Jesus meant from Abel to Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada.

It's only Matthew's gospel that has this difficulty, that it's the son of Berechiah. And so, there are many who feel that a scribal error may have entered Matthew's gospel. That some scribe copying an earlier copy of Matthew, wanting to clarify things, but really forgetting the details, stuck in the name of the son of Berechiah, because he'd be a much better known Zechariah, and just made a mistake.

It's not necessary to assume that scribes who made copies were real Bible scholars. They were just men who were paid to copy things. And so, some feel that Jesus is not referring

to the son of Berechiah, but to the son of Jehoiada.

What's interesting, too, is that Jesus said, after he mentioned this, Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. The dying words of Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, were, The Lord will require it. Or, the Lord will look on it and repay.

And so, this prophet died saying, the Lord is going to repay you for this. The Lord is going to punish Jerusalem for this. Now, one could argue that the punishment came on Jerusalem in 586 BC, when the Babylonians destroyed it.

But Jesus said that all the blood of the righteous prophets was going to come on his generation. And so, the final destruction of Jerusalem in history, in AD 70, may be what is referred to here. Obviously, there's no way to prove one way or the other, Whether the term, son of Berechiah, in Matthew 23, belongs there or not.

It would perhaps have to do with whether someone is inclined to believe that the text has been corrupted or not. One is entitled to take the view that Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, also died in this manner. But most scholars don't think so.

But it's not impossible. It's unlikely, it seems. Because Jesus would almost certainly be referring to a story known to his listeners.

And they wouldn't know how Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, died without Jesus telling them. Furthermore, as I said, Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, was well received by the Jews in his day. And we don't have any record of any opposition to him.

So, the likelihood they would have murdered him doesn't seem great. So, that remains an unsolved mystery. Is Jesus referring to this Zechariah, in which case the text has been altered? Or did the other Zechariah die in the same way as this Zechariah did? I suppose a person's choice between those options would depend on certain leanings.

Not, you know, corruption of the text in all likelihood. Alright, well we'll take a break there.