

## 2 Kings 11:1-21

### Athaliah Tries to Blot Out David's Line

Athaliah in the southern kingdom of Judah is sort of a mirror image of Jezebel in the northern kingdom of Israel. Both women were responsible for bringing Baal worship to their respective kingdoms. Both were ruthless in their attack on God's people.

Athaliah ("whom Jehovah afflicts or constrains") was from the family of Ahab, and King Jehoshaphat arranged to have her marry his son Jehoram in a bid to bring peace between the two kingdoms. Instead, she polluted Judah by promoting Baal worship.

One scholar describes her: "No character in history, sacred or secular, stands out blacker or more hideous than this daughter-in-law of the godly Jehoshaphat."

When she learns that her son Ahaziah has been killed by Jehu, she engineers a purge by seeking out and murdering all the legitimate royal line, the descendants of King David, who might have a claim on the throne. This allows her to rule as the sole queen.

This is a crisis point in the lineage of the Messiah.

### God's Promise to David

Recall that God through the prophet Nathan had promised David that he would establish a dynasty that would rule forever:

- **2 Samuel 7:12-13** - "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

- **Psalms 132:12** - "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore."

Elsewhere the promise is expanded mysteriously into something even more grand:

- **Psalms 89:36-37** - "His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah."

- **Psalms 2:7** - "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

The rabbis interpreted these passages to point to the Messiah, a savior who would be in the royal line and seed of David.

The New Testament interprets these promises as referring to Christ:

- **Acts 13:32** - "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

- **Revelation 22:16** - "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

### **A Failed Plot**

If Athaliah has succeeded in killing off all the descendants of David, it would have invalidated God's promise and prevented the coming of the Messiah, meaning no cross and no salvation for humankind.

But she failed, as we will see.

There have been many similar "choke points" in history where the line of Christ was threatened.

When Cain killed Abel, the line was saved by the birth of Seth. The Passover Haggadah says that although Pharaoh tried to kill all the Jewish male children, a more serious threat was earlier when Laban had tried to destroy the entire family of Israel.

Laban was an expert in sorcery, according to the Zohar. When Jacob escaped Laban's clutches, "Laban did not pursue Jacob to fight [physically] with him, for Jacob's camp was stronger than his. Rather, [Laban] wished to kill [Jacob] with his mouth and to make him perish from the world." The name of Laban's hometown of Aram is from the same root as the subtle (*ārûm*), conniving serpent in Eden.

Later we see how Haman sought to destroy all the Jews but was thwarted by Esther. Then Herod attempts to kill all the male children, hoping to get rid of the promised King.

The plan of Athaliah would have been successful except for the courage and ingenuity of a woman we've never heard of - Jehosheba.

**2 Chronicles 22:11** tells us that Jehosheba (meaning "Jehovah has sworn" or "she who swears by Jehovah") was the wife of Jehoiada = "Yahweh knows", the high priest. She was a sister, we find, to Ahaziah the son of Athaliah, but probably by a different mother.

**2 Kings 11:1-3** - "And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber

from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land."

This is the only instance we hear of a woman reigning in Israel

Josephus (Antiquities 9.7.1) says that the bedroom where the one-year-old child and his nurse hid was a room where spare furniture and mattresses were stored. Like the boy Samuel, Joash grew up in the temple.

Rashi - {symbolically} in the attic of the Holy of Holies, as it says (v. 3): And he was... with her in the house of the Lord. [It was] concerning him that David said, (Ps. 27:5) "For He will conceal me in His Tabernacle, He will hide me in the secrecy of His tent" [Seder Olam, ch. 18]. He calls it the bedchamber in the manner of (Song of Songs 1:13) "Between my breasts He lodges."

This recalls the baby Moses saved from Pharaoh's decree afloat in the ark-like basket.

### **Planning an Uprising**

**2 Kings 11:4** - "And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son."

The sight of this boy must have caused great joy among these long-suffering people, who had believed that all the royal line had been blotted out. Now they had someone to rally around.

**Verses 4-9** relate the plan to defend Joash and guard the Temple entrances and exits, as well as the passage from the Temple to the Palace where Athaliah resided.

**2 Kings 11:10** - "And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD."

These were the weapons taken in battle by David from his enemies and dedicated to the Temple. It was appropriate that the priests would use these to defend Joash, the last representative of David's house.

### **Armed for Spiritual Warfare**

This can also be seen as our guide for spiritual warfare. The weapons are not ours but King David's and by extension the Messiah's, which we take up and put on as priests.

- **Ephesians 6:11-18** - "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God,

that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

### Another Anointing

**2 Kings 11:12** - "And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king."

"gave him the testimony" - probably the Book of the Law, the Torah by which he would govern the people.

God save the king; or, "let the king live"; or, "may he prosper", as in the Targum.

In **2 Chronicles 23:11**, it is said; "Jehoiada and his sons anointed him", and said those words; among whom must be his son Zechariah.

**Flash Forward:** Joash started off good but ended up a bad king. At his order, The prophet Zechariah the son of Jehoiada was killed on the Day of Atonement - stoned in the Temple courtyard - whose "seething blood" could never be staunched, according to tradition. (**2 Chronicles 24:20**).

Jesus said of this -

- **Luke 11:51** - "From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation."

For a discussion of the identity of Zechariah - see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zechariah\\_ben\\_Jehoiada](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zechariah_ben_Jehoiada)

### Athaliah's Downfall

**2 Kings 11:13-14** - "And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD. And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason."

**2 Chronicles 23:13** adds that the singers also played on musical instruments.

**2 Kings 11:15-16** - "But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD. And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain."

"Have her forth without the ranges" - take her outside the range of the precincts of the Temple

### **Renewed Covenant and Destruction of Baal**

**2 Kings 11:17-18** - "And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people. And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD."

### **Joash Installed in the Palace**

**2 Kings 11:19-21** - "And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house. Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign."

Josephus says (Antiqu. I. 9. c. 7. sect. 3.) that Jehoiada ordered Athaliah's body to be cast into the Kidron Valley.

Jehoiada died at the age of 130, "and was buried in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house" (**2 Chronicles 24:16**).

In this chapter we saw the "lamp of David" was almost quenched, and only this single, young and vulnerable life was left, from whom a line of kings proceeded and eventually produced the King Messiah.

**Summary:** We must be like Jehosheba to protect and preserve Christ within us from the persecution that our evil and fallen old nature directs toward Him. She did this for six years, with no evidence that things would be different. She maintained hope in the face of despair.

And we must be like the priest Jehoiada, to equip ourselves with the full armor of God, engage in spiritual warfare and then "bring Him forth" to be revealed for who He is before people in our world - people who have lost hope and see no alternative but slavery to Satan. And then to anoint Him as King and Lord over our life. And to re-establish the son of David on the throne of our hearts and in control of our lives. Then

the false gods will be seen as powerless, and the idols can be torn down.

Finally we cast the lifeless body of Athaliah - another picture of the Great Whore of Babylon like Jezebel - into the Kidron Valley which runs beside the Temple and empties into the Hinnom Valley, where we get the name Gehenna. It was the garbage dump of Jerusalem and a cursed place of impurity and uncleanness..

- **Mark 9:42-44** - "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell (*gehenna*), into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

The adversary is still trying to cut off Messiah's lineage, but it happens internally

- **Matthew 13:18-23** - "Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."