

The Rise and Fall of Joash: A Cautionary Tale

Joash was just seven years old when he became king of Judah, and for many years, he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord—as long as the priest Jehoiada was alive. Jehoiada wasn't just a spiritual leader; he was a father figure to Joash, a mentor, and the steady voice of wisdom that kept the young king grounded.

Under Jehoiada's guidance, Joash helped restore the temple of the Lord. He organized giving, ensured repairs were made, and brought back order and worship to the house of God. It was a beautiful time of revival and rebuilding.

But then everything changed.

When Jehoiada died at the age of 130—a long and honorable life—the king lost more than just a priest. He lost his compass. And without that godly influence, Joash began listening to other voices. The princes of Judah came to him, bowed before him, and persuaded him to turn away from the Lord. The people abandoned the temple, turned back to idol worship, and began sacrificing in the pagan groves.

God, in His mercy, didn't give up on them. He sent prophets to call them back—but they refused to listen. They were too far gone.

Then came Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. A man raised in the temple alongside Joash, perhaps even a childhood friend. Zechariah, filled with the Spirit of God, stood before the people and asked the haunting question:

“Why do you disobey the Lord's commands? You will not prosper. Since you have forsaken the Lord, He has also forsaken you.” (2 Chronicles 24:20)

Instead of repenting, the people turned on him. And Joash—the very man who owed his life, his throne, and his legacy to Jehoiada—gave the order to kill his son. Zechariah was stoned to death in the temple courtyard.

As he lay dying, he said, *“May the Lord see this and call you to account.”*

Personal Application:

This is a gut-check moment. Joash started well—but he didn't finish well. His downfall began the moment he started living off someone else's faith. As long as Jehoiada was there to guide him, Joash was steady. But once that voice was gone, he had no roots of his own.

That raises the question: Is your faith yours? Or are you leaning entirely on someone else's walk with God? Maybe it's a pastor, a parent, or a mentor who helps keep you on track. Those people are a gift—but your relationship with God has to be personal. Because there may come a time when you're no longer being led by them—and what you do next will reveal the true depth of your walk with the Lord.

Joash betrayed the very one who had raised and protected him. Bitterness, pride, and bad counsel drove him to commit murder against the house of God. And just as Zechariah had warned, judgment came quickly.

That same year, the Syrians invaded. They weren't a mighty army—just a small force—but God gave them victory. Why? Because Judah had abandoned Him. It wasn't about military strength; it was about spiritual weakness. When the Lord removes His hand of protection, even the weakest enemy can prevail.

Joash was wounded in the attack. And in the end, the people closest to him—his own servants—turned on him and killed him in revenge for what he had done to Zechariah. His body was buried in the city of David, but not in the royal tombs. Even in death, there was no honor.

Personal Application:

Joash's life teaches us that starting strong means little if we don't finish well. Obedience isn't just about a season—it's about perseverance. God isn't looking for a moment of passion; He's calling us to a lifetime of faithfulness.

Are you growing deeper in your own walk with God? Are your convictions yours—or borrowed? What happens when your "Jehoiada" is no longer there? And are you listening to the right voices, or letting flattering influence pull you off course?

May we be people who don't just begin with God—but finish with Him, strong to the end.