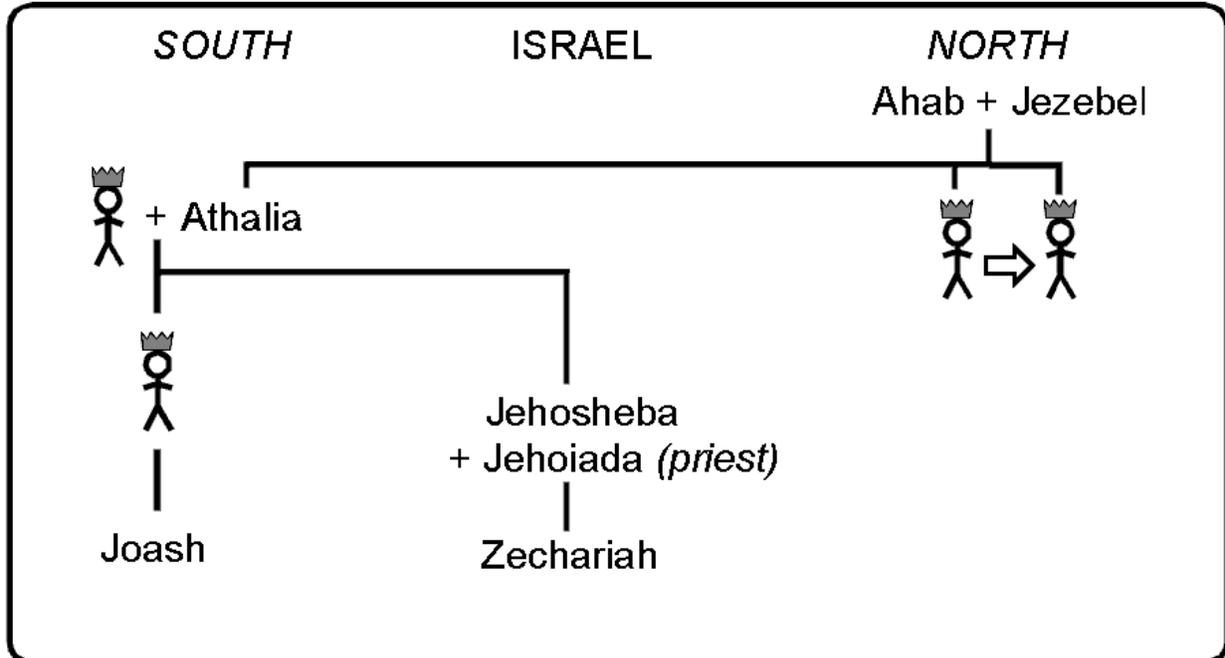


# Joash

*The boy king who fell away*

2 Chronicles 22-24

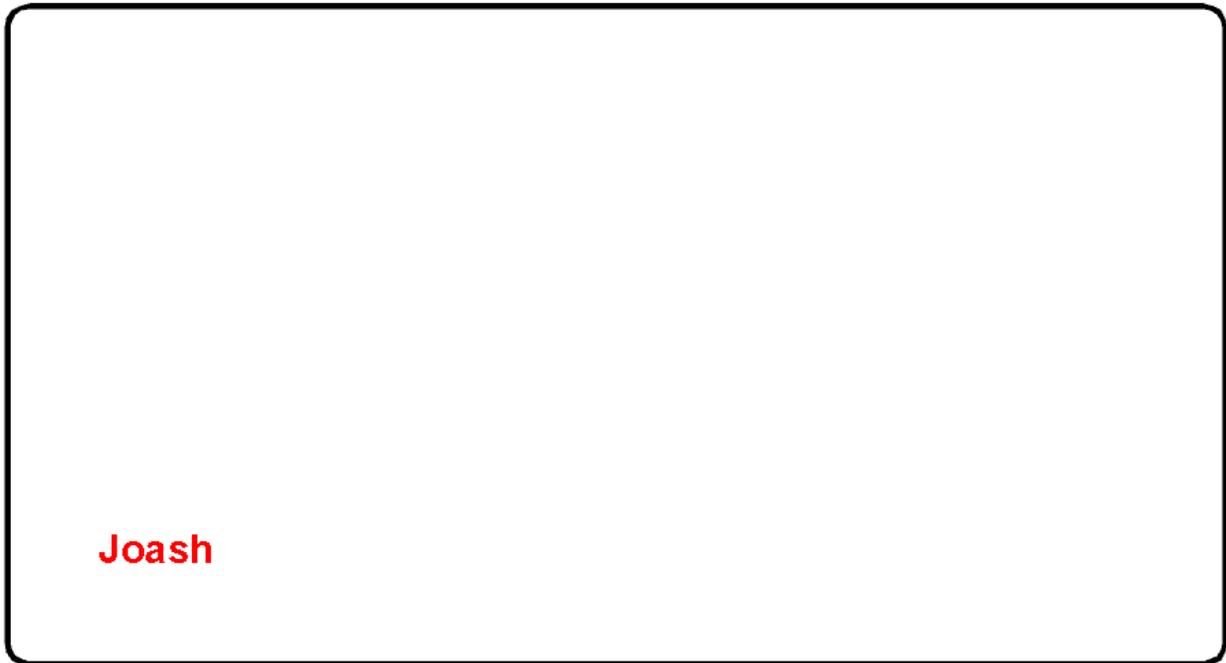
*This story involves a complex family tree, so it may be best to tell the story using a marker board. Do not write ALL the names of the family, but only those who are directly involved in this story. Represent the unimportant members with a symbol representing a king, like this:*



*When I first presented this message, I printed each of these names on my computer printer, Arial bold 135pt, and then taped them to the board while I presented the message.*

The next three lessons in our study about children in the Bible will focus on three boys. All of them became kings while they were children. And each one of those three answered their challenges in three different ways.

The first boy king is:



We read in our Old Testament lesson:  
Joash became king at age seven.  
How did that happen?

That happened because of his grandmother:

**Athalia**

Joash

You never heard about her?  
You never learned this story in Sunday School?  
That is no surprise.

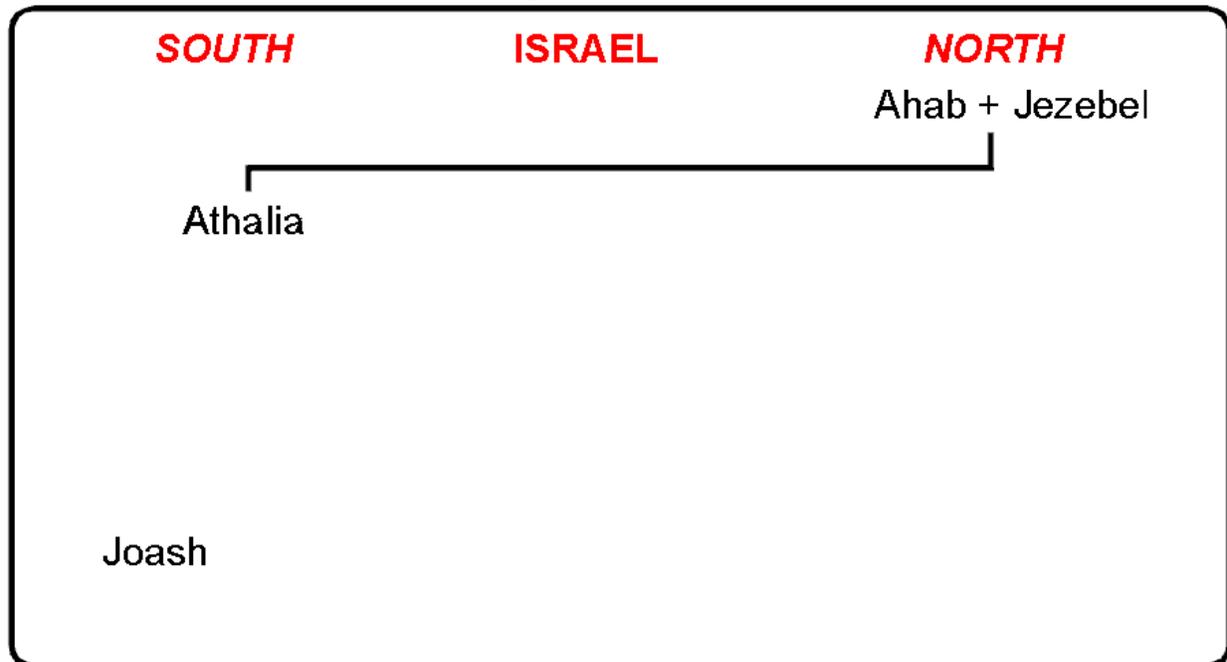
Athalia had very famous parents:

Athalia

**Ahab + Jezebel**

Joash

Remember that during this time, Israel was divided --  
North and South, two countries.  
Each had their own king...



Jezebel --

She was a foreign queen that brought her religion to Israel.  
She spread worship to the idols named BAAL and ASHERAH.  
She killed people who worshipped God.

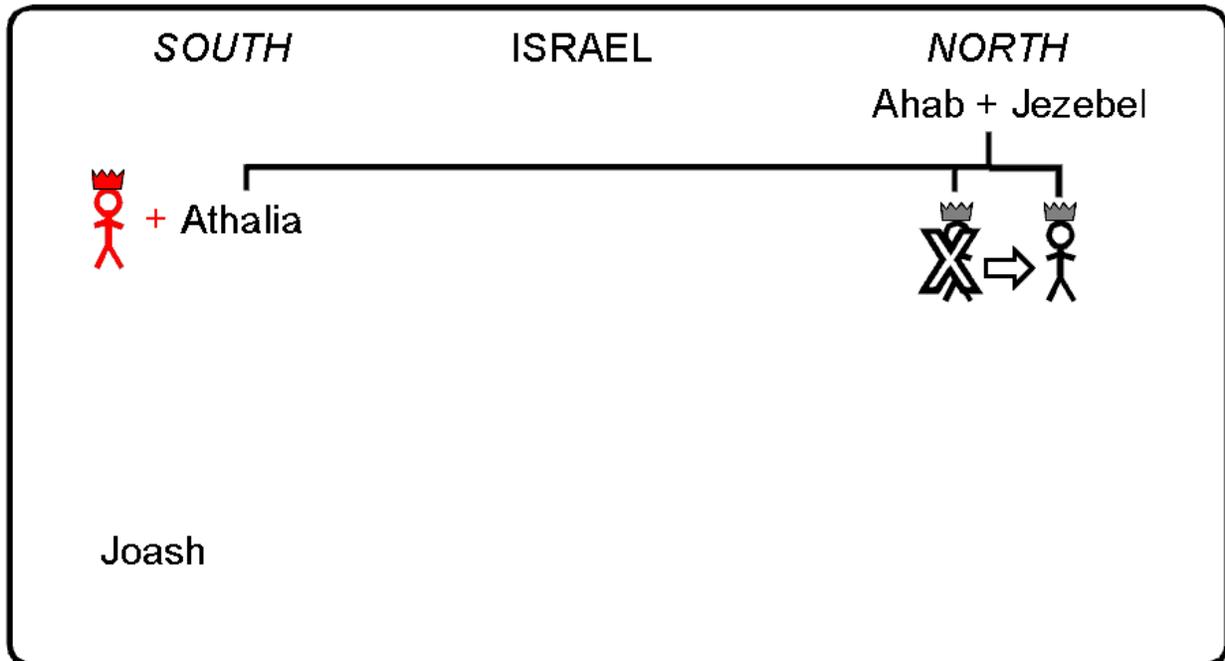
Ahab was the king, but Jezebel really ruled the country.  
She ran the government.  
She was really a terrible woman.

Ahab and Jezebel had two sons that became kings.  
First one, and he died.  
But he had no children.  
So his brother became king for northern Israel.



They were the kings,  
but Queen Mother Jezebel still ran the government.

Her daughter Athaliah married the prince in southern Israel:



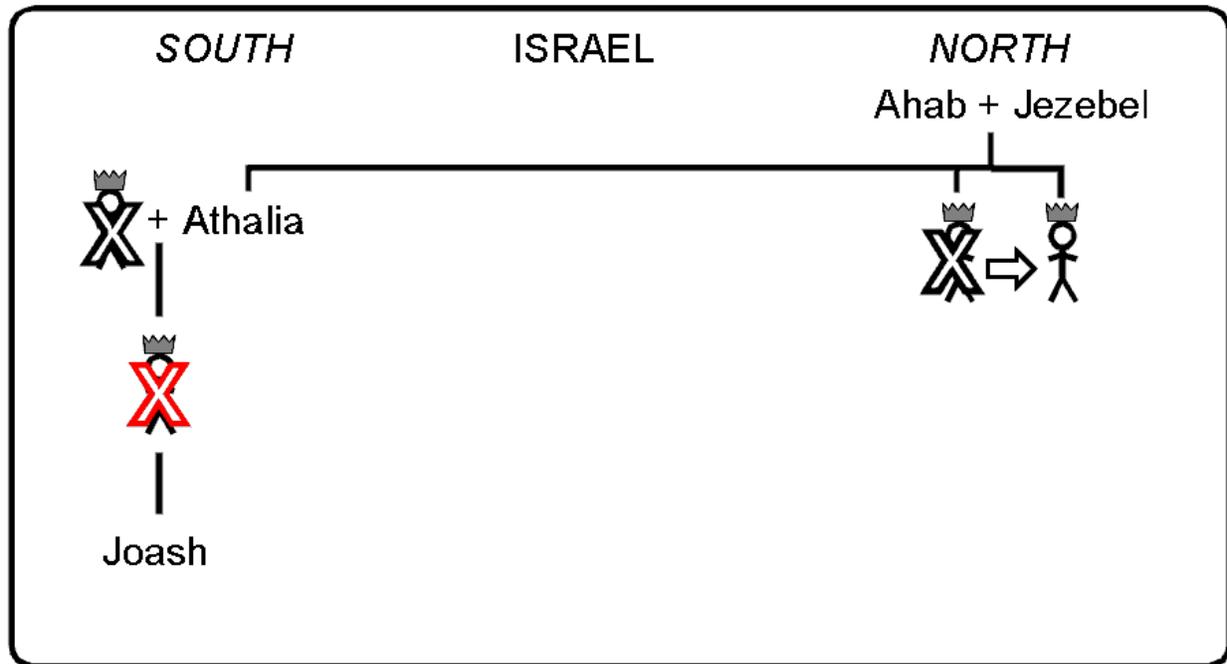
And later he became king for southern Israel.

Athaliah, now a queen, acted same as Mother, but worse.  
Athaliah spread worship for BAAL and ASHERAH in southern  
Israel.

Her husband became sick and died.  
And their only living son became king.  
No problem for Mother.  
Queen Athaliah still ruled the country.



But only in a few months, he died.  
(That is an interesting story... later)

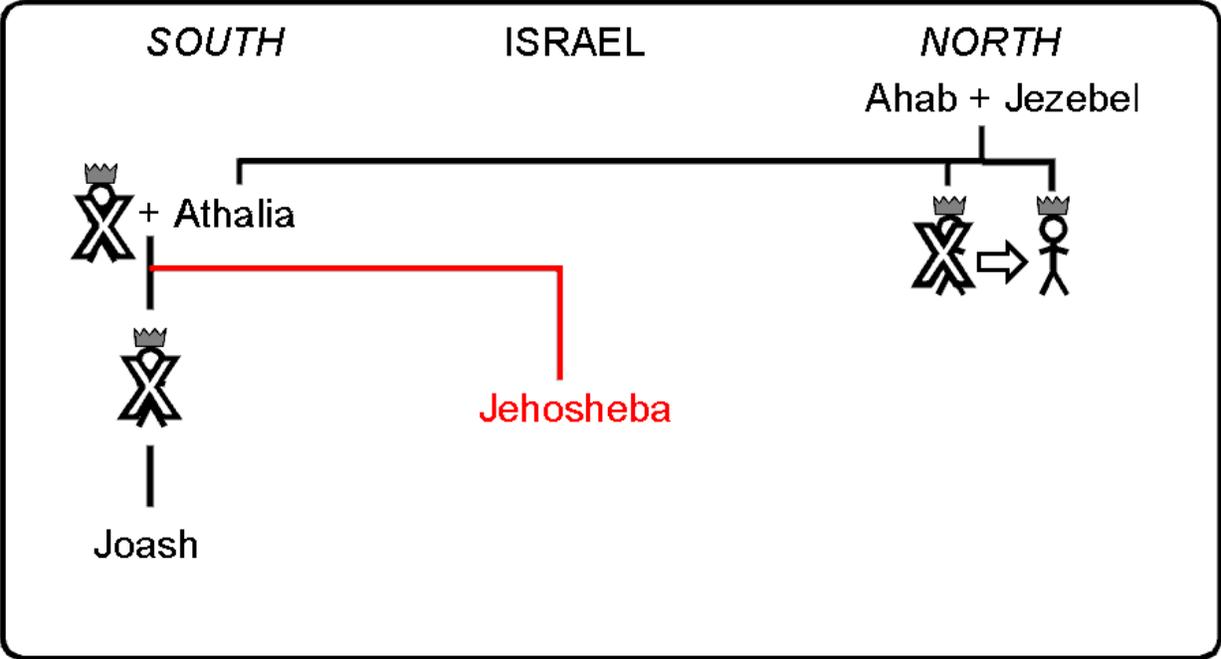


Athaliah understands that the people hate her,  
but she wants to stay in control.

So she kills EVERYONE in her family!  
Only she can reign. No one else.

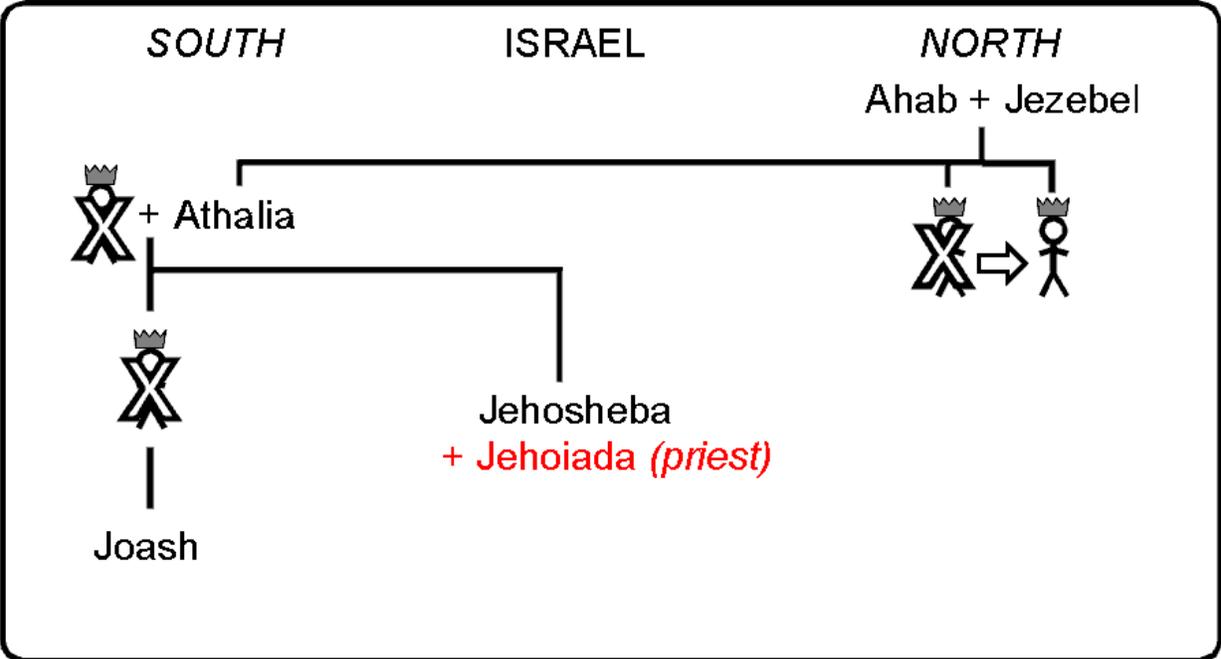
But baby Joash, one year old -- he escapes. How?

His aunt...



She finds baby Joash, and hides him.

Her husband is a priest:



They hide baby Joash in the temple during the next six years.

In the 7<sup>th</sup> year, the priest secretly informs the army officers that Joash is the true king for Israel.

The army officers agree.  
They bring their army and stand around the temple,  
with their swords and spears,  
for protecting the king.

The priest brings Joash, and crowns him as king over Israel.

The people blew the trumpets and celebrated their new king.

Queen grandmother (Atheliah) heard the noise.  
She looked and saw Joash standing near the temple door,  
and Israel's officers standing next to him.

She understood what happened.  
She screamed, "TREASON! Rebellion!"  
She ran to them, but the army officers caught her.  
They took her out and killed her.

(Now you understand why you never got this story in Sunday School! This is a good story for a movie!)

Now... question: How can a seven-year old boy reign as king?  
You can guess correctly that while Joash was young,  
his uncle, the priest, was his advisor.  
His uncle made his decisions.

But later, when Joash grew older, he made decisions himself.

Joash commanded cleaning and improving the temple.

While queen grandmother reigned, her sons stole things from the temple for their idol worship. And they set up idols in the temple,

while the temple was falling apart.

Joash commanded that the priests: *"Collect money from the people and make improvements in the temple of the Lord your God."*

The priests collected the money,  
but they were lazy and didn't do any work for the temple.

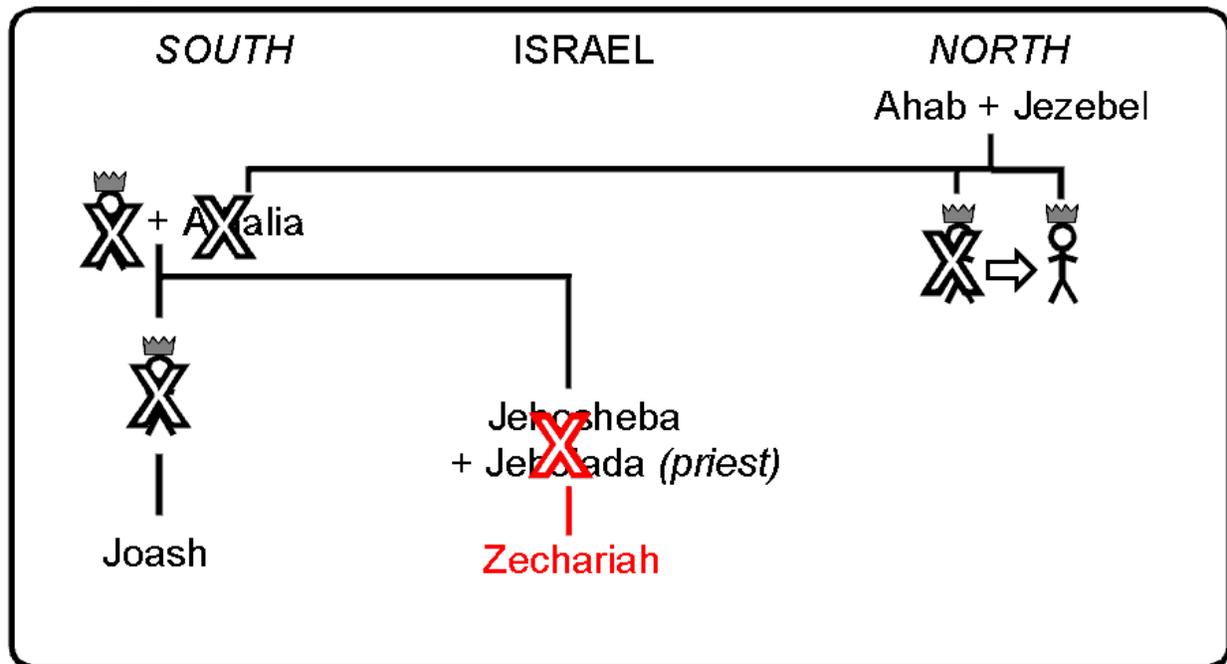
That made Joash angry.  
He took the money and paid professional builders to improve the temple.

Joash made good and right decisions while his uncle lived.  
But after his uncle died, other leaders came to him.  
They flattered him, and they asked him to permit idol worship again.

Joash swallowed their story.  
He stopped work on the temple, and he began worship idols himself.

The Bible says that God sent prophets to the people, telling them,  
"Please stop! Worship God alone, not idols."  
But the people ignored them.

The king's cousin...



...he came to Joash.

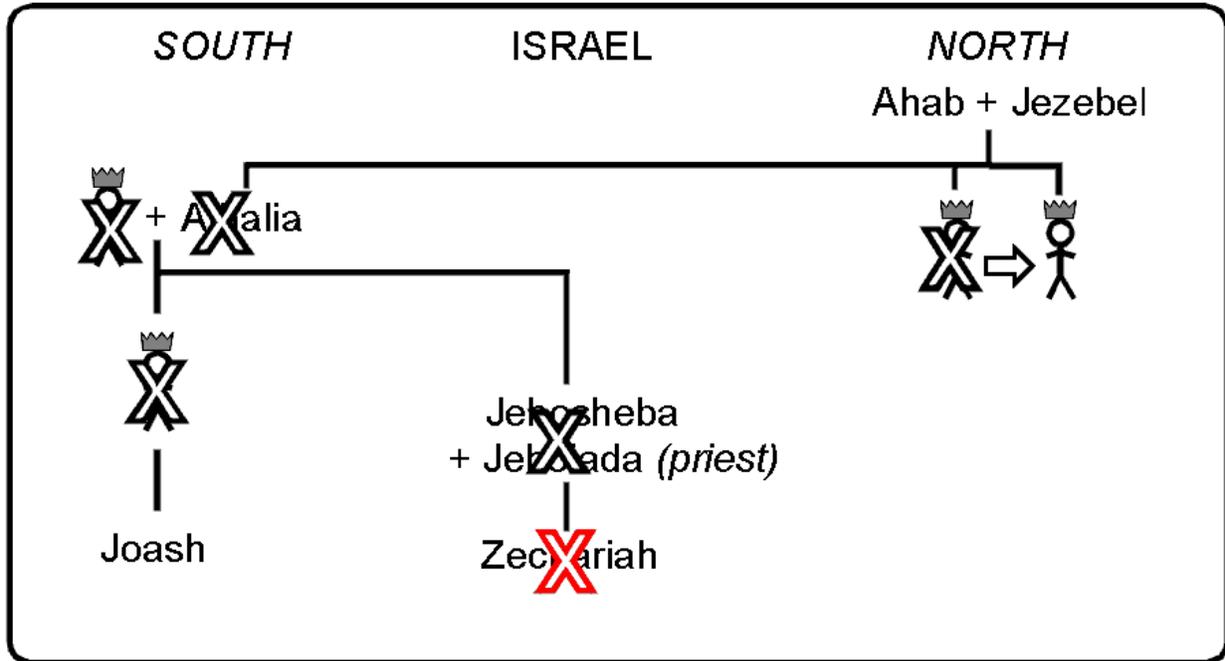
The two of them grew up together.

Now Zechariah is a priest.

He warned Joash,

*"Why did you ignore the Lord and His commands!?"*

Joash became angry, and ordered that the people kill his cousin.  
They threw rocks at him in the temple and killed him.



A short time later Joash got badly hurt in battle.  
Then his own staff killed him.

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That is an exciting story... and a sad story.  
What does this story teach us?

(1)

Think about one person that has the greatest influence  
for your life.  
for your faith [*trust*].  
for your feelings about right and wrong.  
for your important decisions in your life.

Maybe that person is your mother.  
Maybe a teacher.  
Maybe a pastor.

Now imagine that person is gone.  
That person is with you no more.

What will you do?  
Will you continue doing what is good and right?  
Or will you copy Joash and lose your way?

Now, imagine that your time is finished.  
You and that important person for your life,  
the two of you  
are standing before *[in front of]* God.

And God asks you, "What are you doing here?"

What will you answer?

?

"I am with him!"? or "I am with her!"?

Sorry. That person can't save you.  
Your mother and father can't save you.  
Your teacher can't save you.  
Your pastor can't save you.  
I can't save you.  
I can't save myself!

Only Jesus can save you.  
Only He died for your sins.  
Only He opens heaven for you.  
Only He is the One you can trust for your eternal life.

Remember Joash.  
He told his uncle,

*"Make improvements in the temple of the Lord YOUR God."*  
Notice that he didn't say, *"...the Lord OUR God."*

Joash had religion,  
but he didn't have a relationship [*connect*] with God.  
Joash trusted his uncle,  
but he didn't trust God.

Maybe you learned (*to your head*) from your mentor,  
your special person.  
But that is not enough.  
You must also learn (*to your heart*) from God himself.  
No other person do that for you.  
No other person can believe for you.  
You must connect with God yourself.

(2)

Be careful whom you chose to respect.  
Your attitude can become like their attitude.

While Uncle Jehoiada lived,  
Joash respected him and copied his good attitude.

When the Uncle was gone,  
Joash respected other people.  
He copied their bad attitude.

(3)

Starting well is good and right.  
Starting well is important.

But starting well is not enough.  
We must also FINISH well.

Many kings of Israel did the same as Joash.  
When they began, they felt scared and humble.  
They knew that they must depend on God.

But later, they felt comfortable.  
They felt that they knew enough for themselves.  
They knew how to reign.  
They could make decisions themselves.  
They didn't need God's advice any more.  
They could manage themselves, and they didn't need God's help.

Warning!!

Brothers and Sisters, the same can happen to us!  
We can do as King Joash,  
    and King Saul,  
    and King Solomon,  
    and many others  
        who started well, but ended wrecked.

Don't become satisfied that you started well.  
Don't become lazy and proud.  
Don't become self-satisfied.

Continue trust Him to the end.  
Continue depending on Him to the end.  
Continue obeying Him to the end.

Please!!! Finish well.

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We pray:

*Lord Jesus, we ourselves cannot do good,  
but only You can do good through us.*

*We confess that often we act like Joash,  
acting religious on the outside were people can see,  
but inside we really only think about ourselves.*

*Please forgive us.*

*Come live in us with Your Holy Spirit.*

*Give us true trust.*

*Make us hungry to know You,  
and not only know about You.*

*We trust You alone, and no one else.*

*Amen.*

## **Old Testament Lesson: 2 Chronicles 24:1-2, 17-19**

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<sup>1</sup> JOASH was seven years old when he became king. He ruled forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was ZIBIAH, and she was from the city named BEERSHEBA.

<sup>2</sup> JOASH did as the LORD said was right, while the priest named JEHOIADA lived.

<sup>17</sup> But after the priest died, Jewish officials came and bowed down to King JOASH, and he listened to them.

<sup>18</sup> The king and those leaders stopped worshiping in the Temple of the LORD, the God of their ancestors. They began worshipping the idol named ASHERAH and other idols. God became angry against the people of JUDAH and JERUSALEM, because they did wrong

<sup>19</sup> The LORD sent prophets to the people to turn them back to HIM. And the prophets warned them. But that didn't matter. They refused to obey.

## **Epistle Lesson: Hebrews 3:12-14**

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<sup>12</sup> Brothers and sisters, be-careful. Don't have an evil, unbelieving\* heart. That will turn you away from the living God.

<sup>13</sup> But encourage each other every day, while you still have time. Help each-other. Don't let your hearts become hard because sin tricked you.

<sup>14</sup> That true faith that we had in the beginning, if we keep that faith until the end, Christ will save us.

\*unbelieving = doubting, bent "V" by eyes, as in "I doubt it"

*also see 1 Corinthians 9:24-27*

## **Gospel Lesson: MATTHEW 21:28-32**

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28. Jesus asked, "What do you think about this? A man had two sons. He went to the first son and said, 'Son, go and work in the fields today.'

29. 'I don't-want to work,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went to work.

30. The father went to the other son and told him the same thing. He answered, 'I will go, father,' but he didn't go.

31. Which son obeyed the father?" They answered, "The first son." Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes will enter God's kingdom before you enter.

32. Because JOHN the Baptist told you to show sorrow and change your ways, and you didn't believe him; but the tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. No-matter that you saw that happen, you didn't change your minds later and believe him."

