

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 23

Joash Made King

But in the seventh year Jehoiada took courage and entered into a covenant with the commanders of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri. 2 And they went about through Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3 And all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And Jehoiada said to them, "Behold, the king's son! Let him reign, as the LORD spoke concerning the sons of David. 4 This is the thing that you shall do: of you priests and Levites who come off duty on the Sabbath, one third shall be gatekeepers, 5 and one third shall be at the king's house and one third at the Gate of the Foundation. And all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6 Let no one enter the house of the LORD except the priests and ministering Levites. They may enter, for they are holy, but all the people shall keep the charge of the LORD. 7 The Levites shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand. And whoever enters the house shall be put to death. Be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out." 8 The Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded, and they each brought his men, who were to go off duty on the Sabbath, with those who were to come on duty on the Sabbath, for Jehoiada the priest did not dismiss the divisions. 9 And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains the spears and the large and small shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of God. 10 And he set all the people as a guard for the king, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house. 11 Then they brought out the king's son and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony. And they proclaimed him king, and Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and they said, "Long live the king."

23:1–24:27 The Chronicler divides the reign of Joash (835–796 B.C.) into three parts: (1) the recovery of the throne for the house of David (ch. 23); (2) Joash and Jehoiada—the good years (24:1–16); (3) Joash alone—the bad years (24:17–27). The last section is largely unique to Chronicles and further develops the theme of immediate retribution: Once again chronological notes provide the framework for cycles of obedience and disobedience (24:15–17, 23). (CSB)

Joash, the sole surviving son of Ahaziah, ascended to the throne at age 7. Ch 23 follows 2Ki 11:4–20 with only a few differences. In both accounts, Joash is initially a good king under the tutelage of Jehoiada the priest. Whereas 2Ki simply reports the events, the Chronicler attempts to explain them. Joash's reign is marked by three periods: (1) reign of Athaliah is brought to an end, and Joash's claim is secured (23:1–21); (2) Joash reigns righteously (24:1–16); (3) Joash's reign becomes wicked, an account largely unique to the Chronicler (24:17–27). (TLSB)

23:1–21 See 2Ki 11:4–20. The Chronicler has followed his source rather closely but has introduced material reflecting his own concerns in three areas: 1. The account in Kings has more to say about the participation of the military in the coup; the Chronicler adds material emphasizing the presence of temple officials and their role (vv. 2, 6, 8, 13, 18–19). 2. The Chronicler stresses the widespread popular support for the coup by mentioning the presence of

large groups of people, such as “all the people” or “the whole assembly” (vv. 3, 5–6, 8, 10, 16–17). 3. The Chronicler shows additional concern for the sanctity of the temple area by inserting notes showing the steps taken to ensure that only qualified personnel enter the temple precincts (vv. 5–6, 19). (CSB)

Ch 23 The Chronicler highlights similarities to Saul and David. As the wicked king Saul had died at the Lord’s command (1Ch 10:13–14), so had Ahaziah (22:7). As David had been declared king by all Israel (1Ch 11:1–3), so Joash is declared king by all Judah (23:2–3) because of the Lord’s promise to David. (TLSB)

23:1 *Azariah ... Elishaphat*. The Chronicler names the commanders, which was not done in Kings, but he does not mention the Carites, mercenaries who served as a royal guard. Verse 20 exhibits the same omission (cf. 2Ki 11:19), the motive for which may have been the Chronicler’s concern that only authorized persons enter the temple precincts. (CSB)

23:2–3 Unique to 2Ch. The Chronicler tells of the national support for Joash, including Levites from every city and the heads of families throughout Israel. This reflects the level of support received by David at the beginning of his reign (1Ch 11–12). (TLSB)

23:2 *the Levites..the heads of Israelite families*. Reflects both the Chronicler’s concerns with the temple personnel and the widespread support for the coup against Athaliah. (CSB)

23:3 *as the LORD spoke*. God’s promise to David (2Sm 7:12, 16; 2Ch 6:16). (TLSB)

23:4–7 The Chronicler uniquely specifies that the Levites and priests are to perform all duties in the house of the Lord. Even in emergency situations, God’s people must not act contrary to their divinely instituted office. (TLSB)

23:4 *gatekeepers*. Cf 1Ch 26:1–19. (TLSB)

23:6 *charge of the LORD*. Areas of the temple complex were restricted by degrees of holiness. (TLSB)

23:8 *divisions*. Levites who acted as temple guards. (TLSB)

23:9 Temple storage rooms, or the treasuries, served as an armory for the temple guards. (TLSB)

23:11 *the testimony*. May refer to the covenant sworn by the assembly (vv. 1, 3; cf. v. 16) or to the law of God, by which the king was to rule (see Dt 17:18–20). (CSB)

Elsewhere translated “covenant” (here understood to be the same covenant referred to in vv 1, 3). Likely refers to the document required to be given to a king (Dt 17:18–20), to which David alluded at the succession of Solomon (1Ch 29:19). (TLSB)

Athaliah Executed

12 When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she went into the house of the LORD to the people. **13** And when she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the celebration. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, “Treason! Treason!” **14** Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains who were set over the army, saying to them, “Bring her out between the ranks, and anyone who follows

her is to be put to death with the sword.” For the priest said, “Do not put her to death in the house of the LORD.” 15 So they laid hands on her, and she went into the entrance of the horse gate of the king's house, and they put her to death there.

23:12 *people running.* The Chronicler adds this detail about the people’s excited support. (TLSB)

23:13 *singers with their musical instruments.* The Chronicler adds a note (not found in 2Ki 11:14) about the presence of Levitical musicians, who were leading the praises. (CSB)

Jehoiada's Reforms

16 And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king that they should be the LORD's people. 17 Then all the people went to the house of Baal and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18 And Jehoiada posted watchmen for the house of the LORD under the direction of the Levitical priests and the Levites whom David had organized to be in charge of the house of the LORD, to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David. 19 He stationed the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean. 20 And he took the captains, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, marching through the upper gate to the king's house. And they set the king on the royal throne. 21 So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet after Athaliah had been put to death with the sword.

23:16–21 See notes, 2Ki 11:17–20. The Chronicler adds that gatekeepers were stationed at the gates (v 19). As with the coronations of David (1Ch 12:38–40) and Solomon (1Ch 29:21–22), Joash’s coronation is met with rejoicing (v 21). (TLSB)

23:17 *house of Baal.* Pagan temple had been furnished with sacred objects from the Lord’s temple (24:7). (TLSB)

23:18–19 The Chronicler adds information on the cultic ritual and the guards at the gates. (CSB)

23:18 *posted watchmen ... Levites.* Or, “placed the offices of the house into the hands of the priests and the Levites.” According to Mosaic prescriptions, the priests were “to offer burnt offerings,” and the Levites were gatekeepers. (TLSB)

23:20 *upper gate to the king’s house.* The palace was apparently near the temple. (TLSB)

23:16–21 On behalf of the boy king Joash, the priest Jehoiada makes a covenant with the people of Judah based on the Law of Moses. Through sound leadership, the Lord renews the mercies of temple service and the good administration of the kingdom. Just as Joash needed the faithful guidance of Jehoiada, children today need faithful guides in life (pastors, teachers, coaches, etc.). Seek such faithful guides and pray for them. Our faithful Lord will raise up godly men and women who know and duly apply His Holy Word for our instruction in righteousness. • Dearest Lord, hear our prayer on behalf of our families and our communities, that we may prosper before You. Amen. (TLSB)