

SECOND CHRONICLES

Chapter 23

In the seventh year Jehoiada showed his strength. He made a covenant with the commanders of units of a hundred: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zicri.² They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites and the heads of Israelite families from all the towns. When they came to Jerusalem,³ the whole assembly made a covenant with the king at the temple of God. Jehoiada said to them, "The king's son shall reign, as the LORD promised concerning the descendants of David."⁴ Now this is what you are to do: A third of you priests and Levites who are going on duty on the Sabbath are to keep watch at the doors,⁵ a third of you at the royal palace and a third at the Foundation Gate, and all the other men are to be in the courtyards of the temple of the LORD.⁶ No one is to enter the temple of the LORD except the priests and Levites on duty; they may enter because they are consecrated, but all the other men are to guard what the LORD has assigned to them.^{c 7} The Levites are to station themselves around the king, each man with his weapons in his hand. Anyone who enters the temple must be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."⁸ The Levites and all the men of Judah did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each one took his men—those who were going on duty on the Sabbath and those who were going off duty—for Jehoiada the priest had not released any of the divisions.⁹ Then he gave the commanders of units of a hundred the spears and the large and small shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of God.¹⁰ He stationed all the men, each with his weapon in his hand, around the king—near the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple.¹¹ Jehoiada and his sons brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; they presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him and shouted, "Long live the king!"¹² When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and cheering the king, she went to them at the temple of the LORD.¹³ She looked, and there was the king, standing by his pillar at the entrance. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and singers with musical instruments were leading the praises. Then Athaliah tore her robes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"¹⁴ Jehoiada the priest sent out the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops, and said to them: "Bring her out between the ranks^d and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not put her to death at the temple of the LORD."¹⁵ So they seized her as she reached the entrance of the Horse Gate on the palace grounds, and there they put her to death.¹⁶ Jehoiada then made a covenant that he and the people and the king^e would be the

LORD's people. ¹⁷ All the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars. ¹⁸ Then Jehoiada placed the oversight of the temple of the LORD in the hands of the priests, who were Levites, to whom David had made assignments in the temple, to present the burnt offerings of the LORD as written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and singing, as David had ordered. ¹⁹ He also stationed doorkeepers at the gates of the LORD's temple so that no one who was in any way unclean might enter. ²⁰ He took with him the commanders of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people of the land and brought the king down from the temple of the LORD. They went into the palace through the Upper Gate and seated the king on the royal throne, ²¹ and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword.

23:1–24:27 See 2Ki 11:4–12:21 and notes. 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); see notes on 12:2; 14:2–16:14. (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 (see note on 2Ki 11:4). 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 and 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 promised.* See 2Sa 7:11–16. (CSB)

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 *copy of the covenant.* 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)

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

23:13 *singers with 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)

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 (see note on vv. 1–21). (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)