

# SECOND KINGS

## Chapter 11

Athaliah Reigns in Judah

**Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal family. 2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being put to death, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus they hid him from Athaliah, so that he was not put to death. 3 And he remained with her six years, hidden in the house of the LORD, while Athaliah reigned over the land.**

**11:1** *Athaliah.* Ahab's daughter, the mother of Ahaziah, slain by Jehu (9:27–28). (TLSB)

*destroyed all the royal family.* To secure the throne in Judah for herself. By this time the royal family in Judah had already been reduced to a mere remnant. Jehoram, the late husband of Athaliah and the father of Ahaziah, had killed all his brothers when he succeeded his father Jehoshaphat on the throne (see 2Ch 21:4). Jehu had slain another 42 members of the royal house of Judah, perhaps including many of the sons of Jehoram's brothers (10:12–14; 2Ch 22:8–9), and the brothers of Ahaziah had been killed by marauding Arabs (2Ch 22:1). It is likely that Athaliah's purge focused primarily on the children of Ahaziah, i.e., her own grandchildren. Ahaziah had died at the young age of 22 (see 8:26). This attempt to completely destroy the house of David was an attack on God's redemptive plan—a plan that centered in the Messiah, which the Davidic covenant promised. (CSB)

Made herself sole ruler. She almost succeeded in eliminating all possible contenders for the throne, including her own grandchildren. She may have learned such brutality from her father's wife, the infamous Jezebel. (TLSB)

**11:2** *Jehosheba.* We are not told whether she survived the purge. (TLSB)

*daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah.* It is likely that Jehosheba was the daughter of Jehoram by a wife other than Athaliah, and thus she was a half sister of Ahaziah. She was married to the high priest Jehoiada (see 2Ch 22:11). (CSB)

*Joash.* Ahaziah's infant son escaped the purge because his aunt Jehosheba hid him (vv 1–3). (TLSB)

*king's sons.* Likely the focus of the purge (v 1). (TLSB)

*him and his nurse.* The child was not more than a year old and had not yet been weaned (see vv. 3, 21.) (CSB)

A wet nurse. (TLSB)

*a bedroom.* Hbr denotes an inner chamber at the palace, which may have been used for sleeping, for storing bedding, or even as a restroom. (TLSB)

**11:3** *six years.* He was a mere infant when hidden (cf v 21). Joash would have been weaned at age 3 or 4. (TLSB)

*hidden in the house of the LORD.* Joash stayed in the priestly quarters of the temple. (TLSB)

**11:1–3** The bloody dynastic practices of pagan nations and of the Northern Kingdom of Israel erupt in Judah through Athaliah. Amid this vicious purge, the Lord preserves the house of David and the renewal of faithful worship by protecting Joash through his aunt Jehosheba. As an aunt or uncle, commend your nieces and nephews to the Lord’s care by looking out for their welfare, praying for them, and turning them over to the security of the Lord’s house. As the Lord preserved the house of David, from which Jesus would be born, so He will through the Word preserve and nurture the treasured members of your family • Lord, grant unity and peace in our families on the basis of Your Holy Word and a common confession of Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

*Joash Anointed King in Judah.*

**4** But in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of the Carites and of the guards, and had them come to him in the house of the LORD. And he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the LORD, and he showed them the king's son. **5** And he commanded them, “This is the thing that you shall do: one third of you, those who come off duty on the Sabbath and guard the king's house **6** (another third being at the gate Sur and a third at the gate behind the guards) shall guard the palace. **7** And the two divisions of you, which come on duty in force on the Sabbath and guard the house of the LORD on behalf of the king, **8** shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand. And whoever approaches the ranks is to be put to death. Be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in.” **9** The captains 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, and came to Jehoiada the priest. **10** And the priest gave to the captains the spears and shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of the LORD. **11** And the guards stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, from the south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house on behalf of the king. **12** Then he brought out the king's son and put the crown on him and gave him the testimony. And they proclaimed him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, “Long live the king!” **13** When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she went into the house of the LORD to the people. **14** And when she looked, there was the king standing by the pillar, according to the custom, and the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets. And Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, “Treason! Treason!” **15** Then Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains who were set over the army, “Bring her out between the ranks, and put to death with the sword anyone who follows her.” For the priest said, “Let her not be put to death in the house of the LORD.” **16** So they laid hands on her; and she went through the horses' entrance to the king's house, and there she was put to death. **17** And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people, that they should be the LORD's people, and also between the king and the people. **18** Then all the people of the land 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. And the priest posted watchmen over the house of the LORD. **19** And he took the captains, the Carites, the guards, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, marching through the gate of the guards to the king's house. And he took his seat on the throne of the kings. **20** So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet after Athaliah had been put to death with the sword at the king's house.

**11:4** *seventh year.* Of Athaliah’s rule. (CSB)

*Jehoiada.* A faithful priest, perhaps a high priest. (TLSB)

*Carites.* Mercenary soldiers from Caria in southwest Asia Minor who served as royal bodyguards. (CSB)

Name suggests that Athaliah's bodyguards were recruited in Caria in Asia Minor. Hbr consonants composing "Carites" and "Cherethites" are similar. (TLSB)

*put them under oath in the house of the Lord.* 2Ch 23:2 includes the Levites and family leaders of Judah in the conspiracy. (CSB)

**11:5–7** Not every detail of the plot is clear. *off duty.* Jehoiada planned to have on hand a double detachment of Levites (2Ch 23:8) and of temple guards. On a certain Sabbath Day, the groups going off duty were to reinforce the contingents coming on duty. By deploying "the two divisions" (v 7) at strategic places, Jehoiada isolated the surprised queen from her supporters. He was also able to surround the king with a sufficiently strong bodyguard. (TLSB)

**11:6** *gate Sur ... gate behind the guards.* Locations unclear. (TLSB)

**11:7** *the king.* Joash. (TLSB)

**11:8** *out ... in.* No matter where he goes. (TLSB)

**11:10** *spears and shields that had been King David's* David had probably taken the spears and gold shields as plunder in his battle with Hadadezer and then dedicated them to the Lord (see 2Sa 8:7–11). (CSB)

The temple contained a treasury, which here served as an armory. (TLSB)

**11:11** Sizable number lined up in the temple court area. (TLSB)

**11:12** *crown.* The king for God's people was confirmed by God's prophets or priests (cf 1Sm 16:12–13; 1Ki 1:38–39). (TLSB)

*testimony.* Either (1) the Ten Commandments, (2) the entire Mosaic covenant or (3) a document dealing more specifically with the covenant responsibilities of the king (see Dt 17:14–20. The third option is most likely. (CSB)

Copy of the Law. The crown and the Law were the insignia of the royal office (cf 1Ki 2:3). (TLSB)

*Long live the king!* See 1Sa 10:24; 1Ki 1:34, 39. (CSB)

**11:13** *Athaliah ... went.* Without a trace of fear, she faced the crisis as defiantly as Jezebel greeted her executioners (9:30–31). (TLSB)

**11:14** *pillar.* Apparently one of the two bronze pillars of the portico of the temple, named Jakin and Boaz (see 23:3; 1Ki 7:15–22; 2Ch 23:13). (CSB)

Perhaps on a dais. (TLSB)

*all the people of the land.* It is likely that Jehoiada had chosen to stage his coup on a Sabbath during one of the major religious festivals, when many from the realm who were loyal to the Lord would be in Jerusalem. (CSB)

Hyperbole. People were broadly represented. (TLSB)

**11:15** *between the ranks.* Soldiers lined the path. (TLSB)

*not be put to death in the house of the LORD.* To avoid desecrating the sacred place. (TLSB)

**11:16** *horses' entrance.* Apparently the entrance closer to the temple court, where the king or guests brought up their chariots. (TLSB)

*king's house.* The palace, which stood nearby and downhill from the temple. (TLSB)

**11:17** *covenant between the LORD and the king and people that they should be the LORD's people.* A renewal of the Mosaic covenant, by which Israel had been constituted as the Lord's people (see Ex 19:5–6; Dt 4:20). The years of apostasy, involving both the royal house and the people of Judah, necessitated a renewal of allegiance to the Lord at the time of an important new beginning for the southern kingdom. (CSB)

*between the king and the people.* Defined responsibilities and mutual obligations of king and people that were compatible with Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord (see notes on 1Sa 10:25; 2Sa 5:3). (CSB)

They solemnly pledged to observe the provisions by which God had agreed to constitute Israel as His "treasured possession among all peoples." (TLSB)

**11:18** *the house of Baal.* Located in Judah, perhaps even Jerusalem. (TLSB)

*Mattan.* Priest of Baal whom Athaliah had imported from Israel for the promotion of the Phoenician idol worship, which her mother, Jezebel, had introduced from her homeland (1Ki 16:31–33). (TLSB)

*watchmen.* To guard against a reverse coup. Cf Is 21:6–12. (TLSB)

*images.* Stone pillars and Asherah poles. (CSB)

**11:19** *commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards.* (CSB)

*people of the land.* Recurring expression (vv 13, 18) seems to refer to a particular segment of the population, very likely the landowners. Cf 21:24; 23:30, 35; 25:19. (TLSB)

**11:20** *city was quiet.* Revolt against the power of foreign domination had popular support. There was no wholesale bloodshed such as Jehu instituted in Israel (chs 9–10). (TLSB)

**11:4–20** Through a covenant promise, the Lord emboldens Jehoiada, the Carites, and the guards to place David's heir, Joash, on his rightful throne. As the Lord gives you strength, work with His servants to secure the good of His people. God's Word and promise are the basis of our unity and strength in Christ. • Grant Your people, O Lord, unity in faith and purpose to withstand all evil. Amen. (TLSB)

*Jehoash Reigns in Judah*

**21 Jehoash was seven years old when he began to reign.**

**11:21** See v. 3. The Lord had preserved a lamp for David in Jerusalem (see 1Ki 11:36). (CSB)