

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 11

THE HOUSE OF AHAB IS NO MORE. JEZEBEL IS DEAD. JEHU HAS MADE BAAL WORSHIP A MINORITY RELIGION IN ISRAEL. BUT THERE STILL IS LITTLE FEAR OF THE LORD IN THE LAND. JEHU PROVES (AS WE LEARNED IN 2 KINGS 10) TO BE ZEALOUS IN HIS WORK BUT A DUD IN HIS WORSHIP.

MEANWHILE BACK IN JUDAH, THE KINGDOM ITSELF IS REELING FROM THE DEATH OF THEIR KING, AHAZIAH.

2 KINGS 9:27-29 (NLT) - WHEN KING AHAZIAH OF JUDAH SAW WHAT WAS HAPPENING, HE FLED ALONG THE ROAD TO BETH-HAGGAN. JEHU RODE AFTER HIM, SHOUTING, "SHOOT HIM, TOO!" SO THEY SHOT AHAZIAH IN HIS CHARIOT AT THE ASCENT OF GUR, NEAR IBLEAM. HE WAS ABLE TO GO ON AS FAR AS MEGIDDO, BUT HE DIED THERE. 28 HIS SERVANTS TOOK HIM BY CHARIOT TO JERUSALEM, WHERE THEY BURIED HIM WITH HIS ANCESTORS IN THE CITY OF DAVID. 29 AHAZIAH HAD BECOME KING OVER JUDAH IN THE ELEVENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF JORAM SON OF AHAB.

AHAZIAH WAS THE SON IN LAW OF AHAB AND WAS PART OF THE JUDGMENT UPON AHAB'S HOUSE. WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DECADES FOR SOME GOOD NEWS. FINALLY THOUGH, ON THE HEELS OF CHAOS AND TRAGEDY, HOPE WILL SPRING FORTH.

2 KINGS 11:1-3 - QUEEN ATHALIAH ASCENDS TO THRONE

AHAZIAH'S MOTHER WAS ATHALIAH. LET'S REMEMBER WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE TWO OF THEM ALREADY.:

2 KINGS 8:26-27 - AHAZIAH WAS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OLD WHEN HE BECAME KING, AND HE REIGNED ONE YEAR IN JERUSALEM. AND HIS MOTHER'S NAME WAS ATHALIAH THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF OMRI KING OF ISRAEL. 27 HE WALKED IN THE WAY OF THE HOUSE OF AHAB AND DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, LIKE THE HOUSE OF AHAB HAD DONE, BECAUSE HE WAS A SON-IN-LAW OF THE HOUSE OF AHAB.

NOW WE LEARN THAT UPON THE NEWS OF HER SON'S DEATH SHE "DESTROYED ALL THE ROYAL OFFSPRING" (V. 1), LEAVING HER ALONE AS THE HEIR TO THE THRONE. HOWEVER, WHAT SHE DOES NOT KNOW IS THAT A SISTER OF AHAZIAH (JEHOSHEBA) SNATCHES UP HER LITTLE NEPHEW AND HIDES HIM SAFELY WITH THE PRIESTS IN THE TEMPLE (V. 3). JEHOSHEBA WAS THE DAUGHTER OF JEHORAM (KING OF JUDAH), AHAZIAH'S FATHER. WE ALSO LEARN IN 2 CHRONICLES 22 THAT SHE WAS AHAZIAH'S SISTER AND MARRIED TO ONE OF THE LEADING PRIESTS, JEHOIADA:

2 CHRONICLES 22:11-12 (NLT) - BUT AHAZIAH'S SISTER JEHOSHEBA, THE DAUGHTER OF KING JEHORAM, TOOK AHAZIAH'S INFANT SON, JOASH, AND STOLE HIM AWAY FROM AMONG THE REST OF THE KING'S CHILDREN, WHO WERE ABOUT TO BE KILLED. SHE PUT JOASH AND HIS NURSE IN A BEDROOM. IN THIS WAY, JEHOSHEBA, WIFE OF JEHOIADA THE PRIEST AND SISTER OF AHAZIAH, HID THE CHILD SO THAT ATHALIAH COULD NOT MURDER HIM. 12 JOASH REMAINED HIDDEN IN THE TEMPLE OF GOD FOR SIX YEARS WHILE ATHALIAH RULED OVER THE LAND.

V. 2 - JOASH - IT IS LIKELY THAT JOASH WAS NOT A DESCENDANT OF AHAB, BUT THE SON OF AHAZIAH THROUGH A WIFE OTHER THAN AHAB'S DAUGHTER. WHILE THE LINE OF AHAB IS BEING CUT OFF, THE ROYAL LINE OF DAVID LIVES ON, EVEN IF ONLY IN REMNANT FORM.

V. 3 - SIX YEARS IN HIDING - IT IS PRETTY CLEAR THE KIND OF RULER QUEEN ATHALIAH IS IF JOASH IS ABLE TO BE HID IN THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD FOR 6 YEARS. OBVIOUSLY IT WAS NOT A PLACE SHE OFTEN VISITED.

2 KINGS 11:4-8 - THE PRIESTS GUARD THE YOUNG PRINCE

JEHOIADA THE PRIEST HAS BEEN HIDING THE YOUNG PRINCE IN THE TEMPLE. NOW THAT THE BOY IS 7 YEARS OLD, HE IS MOVING AROUND A BIT MORE AND CLOSELY GUARDED IN THOSE INSTANCES. WE READ A "SECRET SERVICE" LEVEL OF GUARDING BASED ON THE TEXT. THE "CARITES" WERE PART OF THE ELITE ROYAL GUARD DATING BACK TO DAVID'S DAY. THEY ARE LOYAL TO THE LORD AND THE HOUSE OF DAVID AFTER JEHOIADA SHOWS THEM THE KING'S SON (V. 4)

LET'S THINK A LITTLE DEEPER ABOUT THIS RECORD FOR A MOMENT. NOT ONLY IS JOASH THE ONLY REMAINING DESCENDANT OF AHAZIAH, HE MAY BE THE ONLY REMAINING DAVIDIC DESCENDANT! THE LINE THAT GOD COVENANTED WITH TO ENSURE AN ETERNAL LINE IS LEFT TO ITS LAST MEMBER. WERE IT NOT FOR THE SHREWD AUNT AND WISE AND STEALTHY PRIEST, JOASH WOULD HAVE DIED BY HIS GRANDMOTHER'S HAND LIKE THE REST OF HIS SIBLINGS.

HOWEVER, A ONE YEAR OLD CARED FOR BY A FAITHFUL PRINCESS AND HER HUSBAND A FAITHFUL PRIEST IS MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR GOD TO WORK IN AND THROUGH TO ENSURE HIS PROMISES REMAIN SURE.

ZECHARIAH 4:6 - THEN HE SAID TO ME, "THIS IS THE WORD OF THE LORD... 'NOT BY MIGHT NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT,' SAYS THE LORD OF HOSTS.

3 MINOR CHARACTERS IN THE STORY OF GOD WILL BE THE MAJOR REASON THE STORY CONTINUES ON. AND ISN'T THIS JUST LIKE OUR GOD? A SHEPHERD BOY WITH 5 STONES SLAYS THE WARRIOR GIANT. A 90 AND 100 YEAR OLD COUPLE BECOME THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF MANY NATIONS. THE STUTTERING REFUGEE SHEPHERD FACES OFF WITH PHARAOH AND LEADS A NATION OUT OF SLAVERY. A VIRGIN TEENAGER BECOMES THE MOTHER OF THE MESSIAH. AND SO ON AND SO ON.

THIS IS WHEN GOD DOES HIS BEST WORK. IN LIGHT OF THIS REMINDER, LET'S NOT STRIVE TO BE THE BIGGEST AND BEST, LET'S STRIVE TO BE FAITHFUL. FOR IT IS WHEN WE ARE WEAK AND ALLOW HIS STRENGTH TO SHINE THROUGH US, HE WILL RECEIVE THE HONOR AND GLORY!

2 KINGS 11:9-12 - JOASH'S CORONATION

SURROUNDED BY THE ELITE ROYAL GUARD IN THE TEMPLE, THE PRIEST ANOINTS JOASH AS THE NEW KING!

IT IS HEARTWARMING TO SEE THE NAME, ITEMS, AND FAMILY OF DAVID RETURN TO THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE WE'VE BEEN READING. IN FACT THE NAME "DAVID" HAS ONLY APPEARED 3 TIMES BEFORE THIS IN 2 KINGS (8:19, 24 & 9:28). BUT, WHAT WE READ NOW SHOWS US THAT JUST BECAUSE WE HAVEN'T READ ABOUT DAVID OR HIS HOUSE, OR HIS SHIELDS OR HIS BODYGUARDS, DOES NOT MEAN THEY WERE NOT THERE ALL ALONG - BUT LEFT UNUSED AND UNNAMED.

2 KINGS 11:13-16 - QUEEN MOTHER IS NOT HAPPY

ATHALIAH IS SHOCKED AND ANGRY UPON HER ENTRANCE INTO THE TEMPLE. SHE COMES IN AND SEES THE CHILD-KING, CROWN AND ALL, STANDING BY ONE OF THE GREAT PILLARS OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. ADDITIONALLY, THE TEXT (V. 14) INDICATES ALL OF THIS WAS IN LINE WITH THE "CUSTOM"

"THE EMPHASIS ON CUSTOM IS IMPORTANT IN A CONTEXT WHERE THE AUTHORS ARE TRYING TO STRESS THE LEGITIMACY OF JOASH'S CLAIM TO THE THRONE; THE CORONATION TAKES PLACE IN LINE WITH LAW AND CUSTOM, AND IN FULL VIEW OF THE PEOPLE OF THE LAND." (ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTE, 2 KINGS 11:14)

JEHOIADA ORDERS THE GUARD TO SEIZE HER AND PUT HER TO DEATH (ALONG WITH ANYONE WHO FOLLOWED HER PER V. 15), ALTHOUGH OUTSIDE OF THE TEMPLE AREA.

2 KINGS 11:17-20 - JOASH'S COVENANT WITH THE LORD & THE PEOPLE

"A COVENANT BETWEEN THE LORD AND THE KING AND THE PEOPLE" - AT LAST! THIS ECHOS BACK TO HOW THE KING SHOULD BE RULING. WE HAVE NEARLY FORGOTTEN AFTER ALL OF THE WICKED KINGS, ESPECIALLY IN ISRAEL. THE COVENANT IS A RENEWAL OF HOW THINGS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE: "THAT THEY WOULD BE THE LORD'S PEOPLE". IN ADDITION, THEY RESUMED ROYALLY-ORDAINED WORSHIP OF THE LORD AT THE TEMPLE. 2 CHRONICLES 23 TELLS US:

2 CHRONICLES 23:18 - MOREOVER, JEHOIADA PLACED THE OFFICES OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE LEVITICAL PRIESTS, WHOM DAVID HAD ASSIGNED OVER THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, TO OFFER THE BURNT OFFERINGS OF THE LORD, AS IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAW OF MOSES-- WITH REJOICING AND SINGING ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF DAVID.

AT LAST, THE SONGS AND PSALMS OF DAVID WERE BEING SUNG IN JERUSALEM ONCE AGAIN.

ALONG WITH THIS COVENANT OF COMMITMENT TO YAHWEH CAME A REJECTION OF IDOLATRY, AS THE PEOPLE TORN DOWN THE HOUSE OF BAAL, KILLED THE PRIEST OF BAAL, AND BROKE THE ALTAR AND IMAGES OF BAAL (V. 18).

REMARKABLE TO THINK OF A SEVEN YEAR OLD KING TAKING THE LEAD ON THIS. HE WAS FORTUNATE TO HAVE A COUNSELOR LIKE JEHOIADA.

2 KINGS 11:21-12:3 - THE REIGN OF JOASH

JOASH (AKA JEHOASH) BECAME KING AND REIGNED FOR 40 YEARS. HE SERVED AND WORSHIPPED THE LORD AND WAS ASSISTED IN THIS BY JEHOIADA THE PRIEST. THOUGH THE ENTIRE NATION DID NOT FULLY STAY COMMITTED TO THE COVENANT THEY MADE (THERE REMAINED "HIGH PLACES" IN THE LAND WHICH FACILITATED IDOL WORSHIP), JOASH DID...AS LONG AS JEHOIADA WAS ALIVE (MORE ON THIS AS WE LOOK AT THE NEXT CHAPTER).

AND AS WE MOVE ON, WE WILL SEE MORE INTO THE HEART OF JOASH AS WE LEARN OF HIS DESIRE TO REPAIR THE TEMPLE. THE EVIL RULERS HAVE CEASED AND THE ANOINTED SON OF DAVID IS SINGING HIS "FATHER'S" SONGS. FOR NOW WE CAN PAUSE, AS JERUSALEM WAS ABLE TO DO, REJOICING AND AT PEACE.