



Jehoiada's Plan to Depose Athaliah & Anoint Joash King of Judah, 2 Kings 11:4; 2 Chron 23:1; History of the Carites; The 5 Captains Meet with the High Priest

Jehoiada's Plan to Depose Athaliah and Anoint Joash King of Judah, 2 Kings 11:4-12:

It is interesting to contemplate why Athaliah didn't realize that one of Ahaziah's sons remained alive. She most likely didn't have much to do with them. Any grandmother worth her salt would adore her grandchildren not massacre them. Therefore, it is possible that someone as detached, cold, and calculating as Athaliah didn't really know how many she had.

Another possibility is that she ordered others to slay the children. When the executioners arrived at the palace they killed all the children they could find and reported back that the deed was done not knowing that Jehosheba had hidden the youngest in a utility room where mattresses and bedding were stored.

At the first opportunity Jehosheba and Joash's nurse moved the child to the temple which was next door. This obviously means that the child was sequestered in the high priest's quarters since no one but the priesthood could enter into the temple itself.

It is also apparent that in the murdering of the royal sons that their mother, Zibiah, was also executed. She is never mentioned as being a part of Joash's life and the child was most likely cared for by his aunt, Jehosheba, with the assistance of the nurse.

Believing all the sons were dead, Athaliah usurped the throne that rightly belonged to Joash. Her presence on the throne of Judah was in direct violation of the Davidic Covenant and a clear statement that Lucifer's plan had been extremely successful. Athaliah certainly thought so although Lucifer was aware that Joash had survived.

The number of angels from the Angelic Order of Battle who were assigned to the temple mount to guard the child king was probably legion. There was no way Lucifer was going to penetrate this defense and the Lord surely forbid them to even try. The assault had reduced the line of Christ down to this one solitary life. The integrity of God could not allow anymore bloodshed to occur in the line of David. The Davidic Covenant is backed by a series of promises in:

Psalm 89:34 - "My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips.

v. 35 - "Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David.

v. 36 - "His descendants shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before Me."

Athaliah moved into the palace and assumed the title "Queen of Judah." It was an illegitimate title acquired through murder but she held the position for six years. This entire time the true king, Joash, lived in the temple complex which was adjacent to the palace.

Finally, in the year 835 B.C., the high priest, Jehoiada, organized a plan to depose Athaliah and to replace her with the legitimate heir to the throne, Joash, the lone living son of Ahaziah and the lone survivor in the line of Christ.



The circumstances which Jehoiada faces are rather complex. Athaliah's lust for power knows no bounds. She would not hesitate a moment to kill Jehoiada if his plan were discovered. He was a priest of *YHWH Elohim* who Athaliah did not recognize or accept and would in fact consider it a good excuse to get rid of His high priest.

Further, she most likely had no love lost for the military. She tolerated them as bodyguards but resented the authoritarian structure typical of such organizations. If she found out they had entered into a coalition with Jehoiada to organize a putsch against her regime heads would have rolled, both officers' and non-coms'.

Therefore, we must realize that Jehoiada had to organize his cabal in such a way that neither Athaliah nor her coterie would learn about it. Secrecy demanded that each person involved in pulling off the coup d'état possessed integrity and would maintain it under pressure.

Finally, in the seventh year of Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada determined that the time was now right to rid Judah of Ahab and Jezebel's evil daughter. His plan is revealed in:

2 Kings 11:4 - Now in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds of the Carites and of the guard, and brought them to him in the house of the Lord. Then he made a covenant with them and put them under oath in the house of the Lord, and showed them the king's son.

The parallel passage which names these "captains of hundreds" is:

2 Chronicles 23:1 - Now in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took captains of hundreds; Azariah the son of Jeroham \je-rō' ham\, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan \je-ho-hā' nan\, Azariah the son of Obed \ō' bed\, Maaseiah \ma-a-sē' ya\ the son of Adaiyah \ad-ā' ya\, and Elishaphat \e-lish' a-fat\ the son of Zichri \zik' rī\, and they entered into a covenant with him.

The captains are the officers who command one-hundred men, similar to the Greek *ἑκατοντάρχης*, *hekatontarches*, translated, centurion, or a "captain of a hundred." Five are mentioned in 2 Chronicles 23:1, Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah, and Elishaphat. This indicates that the cooperation of 500 military personnel was solicited by Jehoiada.

The 2 Kings 11:4 passage identifies these men as Carites. The significance of these men's involvement takes some explanation. It is believed they were the progeny of the **כְּרֵתִים** *Keretim*. Tracking these guys is difficult but it goes something like this.

The *Keretim*, or Carites, originated in a region of southwestern Asia Minor called Caria. Its main cities were Cnidus \nɔ' dus\ and Halicarnassus \ha' le-kar-na' sus\. It was originally settled by Doric and Ionic colonies and thus these men are most likely Greek.

The Carites later migrated to the Levant, settled in Philistia, and became known as the Cherethites. The name means literally "to cut down" and refers to the fact they were executioners. These men formed the elite corps of bodyguards attached to David's army under the leadership of Benaiah \be-nɔ' ya\ who is mentioned among David's mighty men in 2 Samuel 23:20-23.



This chapter contains a listing of those men who received the Israelite equivalent of the Medal of Honor. There are four categories of men listed: (1) Those considered David's crème de la crème were known as "The Three," Joshebbasshebeth \j' shev-vas-sh' veth\ was chief of "The Three," plus Eleazar \el-e' zer\, and Shammah (2 Samuel 23:8-12); (2) Abishai \a-bish' a\ was chief of "The Thirty" (vv. 18-19), those who distinguished themselves in service to Israel; (3) Benaiah who was commander of David's bodyguards (vv. 20-23); and (4) a roll call of "The Thirty" (vv. 24-39).

The men who made up the detachment of bodyguards are identified in:

2 Samuel 8:18 - Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites ...

These men distinguished themselves in service to David. They remained loyal to him during the Absalom-Ahithophel Revolution noted in 2 Samuel 15:18; they are recorded in 2 Samuel 20:7 as assisting David in his pursuit of Sheba; and they supported the crowning of Solomon in 1 Kings 1:38.

It was not uncommon in the ancient world for kings to choose mercenaries as their bodyguards:

Keil, C. F. and F. Delitzsch. *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*. Translated by James Martin. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 369:

Kings and princes have preferred to commit the protection of their persons to foreign mercenaries, having, as they thought, all the surer pledge of their devotedness in the fact that they did not spring from the nation, and were dependent upon the ruler alone.

This same corps of bodyguards that served David until his death in 971 B.C. still functioned in Jerusalem under Athaliah in 835 B.C., some 136 years later. This concept is illustrated by the Household Cavalry started by King Charles II of England:

Lemonfides, Dino. *British Cavalry Standards*. (London: Almark Publishing Co., 1971), 7:

With the return of Charles II and the monarchy, the army of the Commonwealth began to be disbanded and would probably have disappeared completely had it not been for the threat to the throne by the Fifth Monarch Men [an extreme Puritan sect in England who promoted the Fifth Monarchy as that of Jesus Christ's return to rule the world which they hoped to hurry along by dethroning Charles II] in 1661. It was decided that some sort of personal guard for the king was essential and the present Household Cavalry dates its beginning from January 26, 1661.

David's Household Guard was made up of the Carites or Cherethites whose five captains were to be given top-secret instructions about their participation in bringing young Joash to the throne of Judah.

This corps had received great loyalty down from David and the traditions established by him were passed down to the men who were called to meet with Jehoiada. The line of David had been usurped by an interloper, a woman, and a pagan. Now the Household Guard had the opportunity to express loyalty up to David and his line. The chance to do so became obvious when Jehoiada required them under oath to keep secret what he was about to show them. Once introduced to the seven-year-old heir of David they readily agreed to assist the high priest in restoring the throne to its rightful occupant.



All five placed their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor on the line to carry out Jehoiada's plan. Its strategy compartmentalized the five centurions as well as the priesthood into various aspects of the operation. The first order was to gather the Levitical priests into Jerusalem on the occasion of a major feast day.