



## Athaliah Interprets the Scene, Asserts Treason, & Orders Joash Murdered; Athaliah Seized & Executed; Temple of Baal Destroyed; Joash Enthroned

What about this scene caused Athaliah to immediately calculate that, in her view, treason had occurred? Simple; little Joash was standing by the pillar of Jachin—according to the custom. What custom?

**Walvoord, John F. and Roy B. Zuck (eds.). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*. (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 560:**

The first that Athaliah knew of Jehoiada's plan was when she heard the noise of the celebration. She went from her palace to the temple to find out what was happening. To her amazement, she saw little Joash (the king) with the royal crown on his head standing by the pillar [of Jachin] at the eastern gate of the inner courtyard of the temple, the place the king customarily occupied when he addressed the people in the temple area:

**2 Kings 23:3 - And [Josiah] the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord to walk after the Lord, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to carry out the words of this covenant that were written in this book [ See also the parallel passage at 2 Chronicles 34:31 ].**

An elevated platform was provided for the king to stand on when he visited the temple on festive occasions. This was where Joash stood. The queen immediately understood what was taking place, tore her clothes signifying her distress, and cried, Treason! Treason!

- 27) Athaliah is mean but she is not dumb. She understood the system of primogeniture since she knew that to ascend the throne she had to murder her grandchildren.
- 28) She also understood academically the theological symbolism associated with the columns of Jachin and Boaz and the Jewish belief that their God, **YHWH Elohim**, indwelt the Holy of Holies inside the temple.
- 29) She had seen the coronation of her husband King Jehoram and witnessed his addresses to the people while standing on the platform placed next to the column Jachin. She had also witnessed these same events during the reign of her grandson, Ahaziah.
- 30) When she saw the little boy Joash, standing on the platform by Jachin with the royal crown on his head, the high priest Jehoiada at his side, and guarded by the Cherethites while the people cheered “Long live the King!” she immediately reached the correct conclusions.
- 31) The trumpeters are playing the **חֲצֹצְרָה ha-sōs'rah**, made of a narrow silver tube of about eighteen inches in length and blown on festive occasions such as coronations.
- 32) Quick to conclude that she must have allowed a grandson to avoid the knife she calculated that Jehoiada had successfully pulled off a coup d'état. In a desperate attempt to nol-pros the proceedings she sought to sway the crowd by cries of “Treason!”
- 33) Flavius Josephus informs us that she tried to influence several of her retinue to seize and murder the newly crowned king:

**Josephus, Flavius. “Antiquities of the Jews.” In *The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus*, IX, vii, 3. Translated by William Whiston. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, nd), 287:**



When Athaliah saw the child standing upon a pillar, with the royal crown upon his head, she rent her clothes, and cried vehemently, and commanded her guards to kill him that had laid snares for her, and endeavoured to deprive her of the government.

- 34) Athaliah wanted to mislead the people by crying, “Treason! Treason!” when there was no treason. Jehoiada’s successful conclusion of Operation Joash was not treachery. Joash was the legal occupant of the throne.
- 35) The treasonous one was not Jehoiada or Joash but Athaliah. Lucifer’s fifth column is about to be removed as the line of David resumes its rightful place upon the throne in Jerusalem.
- 36) As the newly anointed King Joash stands upon the platform by the column Jachin, symbolic of the Shekinah Glory as the God of Israel and its inscription a reminder of the perpetuity of the Davidic Covenant, Jehoiada moves quickly to remove all opposition to the cross and the crown:

**2 Kings 11:15 -** Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of hundreds [ Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah, and Elishaphat ] who were appointed over the army, and said to them, “Bring her out between the ranks, and whoever follows her put to death with the sword.” For the priest said, “Let her not be put to death in the house of the Lord.”

**2 Kings 11:16 -** So they seized her, and when she arrived at the horses’ entrance of the king’s house, she was put to death.

- 37) Jehoiada’s order was directed to the Cherethites who were to take Athaliah between two ranks of soldiers outside the Temple complex.
- 38) The Horse Gate was located to the southeast of the Temple and was the gate which led to the royal stables. Whereas Athaliah’s mother, Jezebel, was eaten by dogs and thus became dog dung, Athaliah was slain among horses and died lying in horse dung. They both got their just deserts.
- 39) On Thursday, July 3, we introduced our study with a salute to our Founding Fathers and a recitation of the Declaration of Independence minus its list of grievances. One of the excerpts taken from David McCullough’s *John Adams* is instructive to our study of the fall of Athaliah. In context, McCullough describes some of the celebrations that commenced among the Colonies on hearing that the Declaration had been completed on July 4, 1776. Here is what occurred in New York:

**McCullough, David. *John Adams*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 137:**

As mounted messengers carried the news beyond Philadelphia, celebrations broke out everywhere. In New York the next day, the Declaration was read aloud to Washington’s assembled troops, and it was that night, at the foot of Broadway, that a roaring crowd pulled down the larger-than-life equestrian statue of George III.

- 40) With what did Jehoram and Jehu replace the toppled and broken idols of Baal? Phoenician tyranny was replaced with a renewal of the idolatrous worship of golden calves. With what did the Iraqis replace the toppled and broken statue of Saddam Hussein? The tyranny of a megalomaniac was continued with the ubiquitous tyranny of Islam. With what did the Colonists replace the toppled and broken statue of King George III? British Tyranny was replaced with a resolve to enter the struggle for freedom and independence.
- 41) Now that Athaliah is dead and Joash restores the Davidic line to the throne of Judah, Jehoiada immediately began to put the spiritual life of Judah back in order:



**2 Kings 11:17** -Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people, also between the king and the people.

**v. 18** - And 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 thoroughly, and killed Mattan \mat' an\ the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord.

- 42) As high priest, Jehoiada's first official act was to reestablish the worship of **YHWH Elohim** and the ritual plan of God as mandated by the Mosaic Law. The "covenant" was in essence a revival in which the people renounced the worship of Baal and returned to the worship of Jehovah.
- 43) Having been set free from the tyranny of idolatry in their souls, the people then endeavored to be set free from the presence of idols, idol temples, and idol priests. They destroyed the temple of Baal with its altars and idols and then executed Mattan, the chief priest of Baal.
- 44) To insure that those still loyal to Athaliah and to Baal worship might not retaliate against the house of the Lord, Jehoiada posted guards around the Temple complex.
- 45) With spiritual order restored and idolatry abolished for the moment, Jehoiada then commanded that the king could now be placed on his throne in the palace:

**2 Kings 11:19** -And Jehoiada took the captains of the hundreds [ **the five centurions** ] and the Carites and the guards and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the Lord, and came by the way of the gate of the guards to the king's house. And Joash sat on the throne of the kings.

**v. 20** - So all the people of the land rejoiced and the city was quiet. For they had put Athaliah to death with the sword at the king's house.

**v. 21** - Joash was seven years old when he became king.