

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Your mercy and grace never cease to amaze me. When Jehoahaz, Jehu's son, sought your favor, you listened to him and gave Israel a deliverer and peace from their enemies (2 Kgs 13:3–5). I praise you today as the God of all mercy. You are kind to your enemies, and you always forgive them when they turn to you in true repentance. Amazing grace, indeed! Praise the LORD!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me the tragic story of how Joash went from being a godly king to being the murderer of Jehoiada's son, Zechariah. Joash became king at the age of seven, and he grew up taking his cues from Jehoiada, the godly priest who had saved him from his grandmother Athaliah's bloody purge. Some sixteen years later, at the age of 23, Joash began to restore the temple which had fallen into disrepair during the idolatrous reign of his forefathers. He urged the priests to act quickly, but the Levites dragged their feet, and some six years later, things were at a standstill. Joash called for Jehoiada and the other priests, and he held them accountable for the lack of work (2 Kgs 12:7). He personally involved himself in the collection of money, and he and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the repairs. With his dedication and perseverance, your temple was soon restored and strengthened. About fourteen years passed by and Jehoiada died at the ripe old age of 130. Soon afterward, the officials of Judah came and advised Joash to abandon you and serve idols. He listened to them and led Judah back into apostasy. *Joash had repaired the temple, but he had neglected to repair his people's hearts.* Restoring the temple was a good thing, but its condition was a symptom of a deeper problem—a lack of love for you. This is the mistake we so often make in ministry. We spend so much time and money focusing on improving the work, that we miss the need for a revival of love in our people's hearts. You sent prophets to warn Joash, but he wouldn't listen, and eventually, he gave the approval to kill Jehoiada's son, Zechariah. This teaches me that the moment I stop listening to your word, I'm headed for trouble. A hardening begins, and if I don't repent, my heart can become like stone. As Zechariah died, he said, "May the LORD see and avenge!" (2 Chr 24:22)—and you did. You sent the Syrians (Arameans) against Joash, and all the money he had spent repairing the temple was lost to Hazael (2 Kgs 12:17–18). Not long afterward, his servants conspired against him and murdered him in his bed. Joash died at the age of 47, a tragic reminder of the destruction that comes when we turn away from you.

Reflection

Joash did what was right all the days of Jehoiada (2 Kgs 12:2), but when Jehoiada was gone, he listened to the counsel of his officials. Is my relationship with you based on a solid foundation of faith and love, or is it based on the influence of some godly person? The time will come when I'll have to stand on my own. When it does, I must be securely anchored in your word and your will.

Request

Father, help me to stand firm in the power of your grace. Give me a commitment that will stand the test of time, and enable me to remain true no matter who stands with me.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for sharing with me the story of Joash. Impress the lessons of his life deep on my heart!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: "My Anchor Holds" – William C. Martin.

Meditation Verse: 2 Chronicles 24:23.