

July 4 Answers

- 1) 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 **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, the 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 God 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 God. 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. God sent prophets to warn Joash, but he wouldn't listen, and eventually, he gave the approval to kill Jehoiada's **son**, Zechariah. This teaches us that the moment we stop listening to God's word, we're headed for trouble. A **hardening** begins, and if we don't repent, our hearts can become like stone. As Zechariah died, he said, "May the LORD see and **avenge!**" (2 Chr 24:22)—and God did. God 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 God.