
2KINGS 12: 1 In the seventh year of Jehu began Jehoash to reign; and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba.

Jehoash reigns well under the instructions of Jehoiada the priest, 2Kgs 12:1-3. He directs the repairing of the temple; the account of what was done, 2Kgs 12:4-16. Hazael takes Gath; and, proceeding to besiege Jerusalem, is prevented by Jehoash, who gives him all the treasures and hallowed things of the house of the Lord, 2Kgs 12:17, 2Kgs 12:18. The servants of Jehoash conspire against and slay him, 2Kgs 12:19-21.

2KINGS 12: 2 Jehoash did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

Verse 2

Jehoash did - right in the sight of the Lord - While Jehoiada the priest, who was a pious, holy man, lived, Jehoash walked uprightly; but it appears from 2Chr 24:17, 2Chr 24:18, that he departed from the worship of the true God after the death of this eminent high priest, lapsed into idolatry, and seems to have had a share in the murder of Zechariah, who testified against his transgressions, and those of the princes of Judah. See above, 2Kgs 11:20-21 (note).

O how few of the few who begin to live to God continue unto the end!

2KINGS 12: 3 However the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

Verse 3

The high places were not taken away - Without the total destruction of these there could be no radical reform. The toleration of any species of idolatry in the land, whatever else was done in behalf of true religion, left, and in effect fostered, a seed which springing up, regenerated in time the whole infernal system. Jehoiada did not use his influence as he might have done; for as he had the king's heart and hand with him, he might have done what he pleased.

2KINGS 12: 4 Jehoash said to the priests, "All the money of the holy things that is brought into the LORD's house, in current money, the money of the persons for whom each man is rated, and all the money that it comes into any man's heart to bring into the LORD's house,

Verse 4

All the money of the dedicated things - From all this account we find that the temple was in a very ruinous state; the walls were falling down, some had perhaps actually fallen, and there was no person so zealous for the pure worship of God, as to exert himself to shore up the falling temple!

The king himself seems to have been the first who noticed these dilapidations, and took measures for the necessary repairs. The repairs were made from the following sources:

1. The things which pious persons had dedicated to the service of God.
2. The free-will offerings of strangers who had visited Jerusalem: the money of every one that passeth.
3. The half-shekel which the males were obliged to pay from the age of twenty years (Exo 30:12) for the redemption of their souls, that is their lives, which is here called the money that every man is set at.

All these sources had ever been in some measure open, but instead of repairing the dilapidations in the Lord's house, the priests and Levites had converted the income to their own use.

2KINGS 12: 5 let the priests take it to them, every man from his acquaintance; and they shall repair the breaches of the house, wherever any breach shall be found."

2KINGS 12: 6 But it was so, that in the twenty-third year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

Verse 6

In the three and twentieth year - In what year Jehoash gave the orders for these repairs, we cannot tell; but the account here plainly intimates that they had been long given, and that nothing was done, merely through the inactivity and negligence of the priests; see 2Chr 24:6.

It seems that the people had brought money in abundance, and the pious Jehoiada was over the priests, and yet nothing was done! Though Jehoiada was a good man, he does not appear to have had much of the spirit of an active zeal; and simple piety, without zeal and activity, is of little use when a reformation in religion and manners is necessary to be brought about. Philip Melancthon was orthodox, pious, and learned, but he was a man of comparative inactivity. In many respects Martin Luther was by far his inferior, but in zeal and activity he was a flaming and consuming fire; and by him, under God, was the mighty Reformation, from the corruptions of popery, effected. Ten thousand Jehoiadas and Melancthons might have wished it in vain; Luther worked, and God worked by him, in him, and for him.

2KINGS 12: 7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and for the other priests, and said to them, "Why don't you repair the breaches of the house? Now therefore take no more money from your treasurers, but deliver it for the breaches of the house."

2KINGS 12: 8 The priests consented that they should take no more money from the people, neither repair the breaches of the house.

2KINGS 12: 9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the LORD's house: and the priests who kept the threshold put therein all the money that was brought into the LORD's house.

Verse 9

Jehoiada - took a chest - This chest was at first set beside the altar, as is here mentioned; but afterwards, for the convenience of the people, it was set without the gate; see 2Chr 24:8.

2KINGS 12: 10 It was so, when they saw that there was much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags and counted the money that was found in the LORD's house.

Verse 10

The king's scribe and the high priest - It was necessary to associate with the high priest some civil authority and activity, in order to get the neglected work performed.

2KINGS 12: 11 They gave the money that was weighed out into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the LORD's house: and they paid it out to the carpenters and the builders, who worked on the LORD's house,

2KINGS 12: 12 and to the masons and the stone cutters, and for buying timber and cut stone to repair the breaches of the LORD's house, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

2KINGS 12: 13 But there were not made for the LORD's house cups of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the LORD's house;

Verse 13

Howbeit there were not made - bowls, etc. - That is, there were no vessels made for the service of the temple till all the outward repairs were completed; but after this was done, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels of gold and silver; 2Chr 24:14.

2KINGS 12: 14 for they gave that to those who did the work, and repaired therewith the LORD's house.

2KINGS 12: 15 Moreover they didn't demand an accounting from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to give to those who did the work; for they dealt faithfully.

Verse 15

They reckoned not with the men - They placed great confidence in them, and were not disappointed, for they dealt faithfully.

2KINGS 12: 16 The money for the trespass offerings, and the money for the sin offerings, was not brought into the LORD's house: it was the priests'.

2KINGS 12: 17 Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it; and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem.

Verse 17

Hazael - fought against Gath, and took it - This city, with its satrapy or lordship, had been taken from the Philistines by David, (see 2Sam 8:1, and 1Chr 18:1); and it had continued in the possession of the kings of Judah till this time. On what pretense Hazael seized it, we cannot tell; he had the ultima ratio regum, power to do it, and he wanted more territory.

2KINGS 12: 18 Jehoash king of Judah took all the holy things that Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own holy things, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the LORD's house, and of the king's house, and sent it to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jerusalem.

Verse 18

Took all the hallowed things - He dearly bought a peace which was of short duration, for the next year Hazael returned, and Jehoash, having no more treasures, was obliged to hazard a battle, which he lost, with the principal part of his nobility, so that Judah was totally ruined, and Jehoash shortly after slain in his bed by his own servants; 2Chr 24:23.

2KINGS 12: 19 Now the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

Verse 19

The rest of the acts of Joash - We have already seen that this man, so promising in the beginning of his reign, apostatized, became an idolater, encouraged idolatry among his subjects, and put the high priest Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada his benefactor, to death; and now God visited that blood upon him by the hands of the tyrannous king of Syria, and by his own servants.

2KINGS 12: 20 His servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and struck Joash at the house of Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla.

Verse 20

The house of Millo - Was a royal palace, built by David; (see 2Sam 5:9); and Silla is supposed to be the name of the road or causeway that led to it. Millo was situated between the old city of Jerusalem, and the city of David.

2KINGS 12: 21 For Jozacar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, struck him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Verse 21

For Jozachar - This person is called Zabad in 2Chr 24:26; and Shimeath his mother is said to be an Ammonitess, as Jehozabad is said to be the son, not of Shomer, but of Shimrith, a Moabitess.

They buried him with his fathers in the city of David - But they did not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings; this is supposed to express the popular disapprobation of his conduct. Thus ended a reign full of promise and hope in the beginning, but profligate, cruel, and ruinous in the end. Never was the hand of God's justice more signally stretched out against an apostate king and faithless people, than at this time. Now Hazael had a plenary commission; the king, the nobles, and the people, were food for his sword, and by a handful of Syrians the mighty armies of Israel were overthrown: For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the Lord delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the Lord God, 2Chr 24:24. Thus, as righteousness exalteth a nation, so sin is the disgrace and confusion of any people. Sin destroys both counsel and strength; and the wicked flee when none pursue.