

2 Kings 11

Written by K B Napier
Thursday, 15 September 2016 13:56

Much of what we read in Kings is covered with blood. It is very different to how modern Christians think of warfare. They are quite content to think only of spiritual warfare... but how would they react to physical warfare against them, by evil enemies? Almost no Christians are willing to stand against an enemy, whether physical or spiritual. How many "fight the good fight" in the spiritual marketplace? Do they run and hide? Do they turn on those who oppose wickedness and express disgust, thus joining the enemy of God?

This kind of evil has occurred throughout history, and today we can see such treachery in 'Christian' support of homosexuality, Islam and even bad environmentalism, all of which hate God and truth. As I say to our church, what happens in 2 Kings is very up to date! Situations and actions are the same in any age, when God is forgotten or treated shabbily.

Verses 1-3

1.

And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.

2.

But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain.

3.

And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah did reign over the land.

We often read of the murderous acts of medieval kings and queens, but what of the equal, or worse, crimes committed by kings and queens of Israel and Judah?

The mother of Ahaziah, was daughter of Ahab and the wicked Jezebel and seems to have had

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the black heart of both. She was married to Jehoram, king of Judah, whose reign was taken by his son, Ahaziah. He was later killed by Jehu's men, but it took time for the news to reach Judah. When Ahaziah's mother heard of the death, she immediately put all his children, her grandchildren, to death! The only logical reason for this was her desire to take her son's place as ruler.

However, in the midst of this carnage, Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba, took the royal child, Joash, just a year old, and hid him along with his nurse, in her own bedroom. He was the only royal child to survive and was later hidden in the Temple at Jerusalem for six years, while his wicked grandmother reigned as queen of Judah. This is reminiscent of the way some brave souls hid Jews from the Nazi regime, or how the Egyptian princess rescued Moses from the river, a faint glimmer of goodness in an otherwise wicked, dark land.

Verses 4-8

1.

And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of the LORD, and shewed them the king's son.

2.

And he commanded them, saying, This is the thing that ye shall do; A third part of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house;

3.

And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down.

4.

And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD about the king.

5.

And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as

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he cometh in.

When the wicked queen had ruled for seven years, the high priest, Jehoiada, acted. The child was now seven. Jehoiada took his life in his hands and called for all the local tribal chiefs and army leaders to meet with him secretly in the Temple confines. When they gathered before him, he presented the young prince and gave them a command. This included several strict actions to protect the boy, both in the Temple grounds and in the palace. The aim was to “compass the king round about”.

He was called ‘king’ because he was the rightful ruler, not the queen. Anyone who tried to cross the tight line of soldiers was to be killed. And the young king was to have a bodyguard night and day, wherever he was. From these texts it would appear that the boy’s presence was made known to everyone, so the high priest expected murderous trouble to come from the queen, who has been called ‘devilish’. This suggests she was hated by her subjects and even by her army.

Verses 9-11

1.

And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest.

2.

And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the LORD.

3.

And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple.

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The army leaders obeyed the high priest and did whatever he commanded, bearing in mind that the high priest held an office almost as powerful as the king's. They guarded the lad every week when he attended the weekly sabbath in the Temple, where guards were given the spears and shields left to the Temple by king David. During the sabbath activities the king was surrounded by guards, heavily armed. The description implies that the number of guards must have been very large.

Today, few Christians would bother to protect what belongs to God: such as our freedom to worship, the necessity to preach the Gospel, and to condemn what is sinful, identifying wickedness in high places, and warning against spiritual enemies. In truth, we should ALL protect God's word and genuine Christian activities (remembering that many activities are traditional and not God-given). Note how guards filled every wall and entrance. Do we protect God's word and activities? Few do! Then we wonder why evil has overcome us!

Verses 12-16

1.

And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, God save the king.

2.

And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the LORD.

3.

And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason.

4.

But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the house of the LORD.

5.

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And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house: and there was she slain.

When the boy was in the middle of this armed crowd, Jehoiada put the royal crown on his head, pronouncing the 'testimony', the godly word that formally made the boy king. He was then anointed and openly was accepted as king, accompanied by loud clapping of all who were present. They all shouted "God save the king"!

The wicked queen heard the loud sound of the ceremony and she rushed from the palace to the Temple to find out what was happening. She saw the young boy standing on a platform (here called a 'pillar'), wearing a crown. As she watched, the trumpeters blasted their clear sound, finalising the ceremony. As is typical of wicked people, the queen shouted out as if she was the offended person! She tore her clothing and yelled "Treason! Treason!" Yet, it was she who committed treason by killing all the king's offspring!

Jehoiada told the captains to follow her outside, and to kill anyone who was loyal to the queen who might have accompanied her. He did not want her to die in the Temple area, and told the men to put her to death by the sword when she was outside the lines of soldiers and the walls of the Temple. When she reached the road used by horsemen going to the palace, she was struck down, a late judicial sentence for her murders seven years previously.

Today, no-one, including Christians, listens to God's command to put killers to death. And so the nation is put under His penalty. In my lifetime I have witnessed murder perhaps once a year, growing to several murders a day. This is a punishment upon the people, and it will get worse, as we allow Islamic idolaters into the country.

Notice how being a true believer in the Lord can involve us in some very distasteful things humanly speaking. Few Christians have the heart or the will to commit to such actions, preferring cowardice and failure. These actions need not be physical or violent – even so, Christians today are weak and forlorn, without courage to do what Christians must and should do.

Verses 17-21

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1.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people.

2.

And all the people of the land went into the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of the LORD.

3.

And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

4.

And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword beside the king's house.

5.

Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

The young king lived a life that was mostly good, and so we see a glimmer of truth and godliness throughout Judah, led by a good high priest, Jehoiada. Jehoiada made a solemn promise to God, sealed between himself, the king, and all the people. They all promised to "be the LORD'S people". Are WE the Lord's people?

Just as the temple to Baal was destroyed by Jehu in Israel, so the people in Judah destroyed the Temple of Baal in Jerusalem, pulling down every stone and altar, and breaking apart every statue and image. The priest of Baal, Mattan, was put to death in front of the altars. Today, a temple of Baal still exists, called the Islamic Dome, which will one day be torn down.

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When I was young I remember that a statue to Mary in the grounds of a local Catholic church was pulled down and smashed. This is what Cromwell did, too. It is what ought to happen today! But, given the way we would be treated by the law, the option is still open to us to bring down idolaters by word of mouth, by preaching and proper teaching, and by prayer to our Lord, Who watches our laxity with concern and anger. His anger will increase when we say nothing about Islamic idolatry in the country and when we willingly help them to gather ground.

All those present in the true Temple then took the young king out of the Temple precincts to his new home, the royal palace, where he sat on the throne. All of Judah rejoiced and there were no schemers to detract from his enthronement. Jehoash (Joash) was only seven when he became king, but his reign, mostly good, lasted for forty years.

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