

**2 Kings 11:1-21****Athaliah and Joash**

**11** When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. <sup>2</sup> But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah; so, he was not killed. <sup>3</sup> He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

<sup>4</sup> In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the commanders of units of a hundred, the Carites and the guards and had them brought to him at the temple of the LORD. He made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the LORD. Then he showed them the king's son. <sup>5</sup> He commanded them, saying, "This is what you are to do: You who are in the three companies that are going on duty on the Sabbath—a third of you guarding the royal palace, <sup>6</sup> a third at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guard, who take turns guarding the temple— <sup>7</sup> and you who are in the other two companies that normally go off Sabbath duty are all to guard the temple for the king. <sup>8</sup> Station yourselves around the king, each of you with weapon in hand. Anyone who approaches your ranks is to be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."

<sup>9</sup> The commanders of units of a hundred did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each one took his men—those who were going on duty on the Sabbath and those who were going off duty—and came to Jehoiada the priest. <sup>10</sup> Then he gave the commanders the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of the LORD. <sup>11</sup> The guards, each with weapon in hand, stationed themselves around the king—

near the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple.

<sup>12</sup> Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

<sup>13</sup> When Athaliah heard the noise made by the guards and the people, she went to the people at the temple of the LORD. <sup>14</sup> She looked and there was the king, standing by the pillar, as the custom was. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her robes and called out, "Treason! Treason!"

<sup>15</sup> Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops: "Bring her out between the ranks and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "She must not be put to death in the temple of the LORD." <sup>16</sup> So they seized her as she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

<sup>17</sup> Jehoiada then made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people that they would be the LORD's people. He also made a covenant between the king and the people. <sup>18</sup> All the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

Then Jehoiada the priest posted guards at the temple of the LORD. <sup>19</sup> He took with him the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards and all the people of the land, and together they brought the king down from the temple of the LORD and went into the palace, entering by way of the gate of

the guards. The king then took his place on the royal throne. <sup>20</sup> All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was calm, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the palace.

<sup>21</sup> Joash was seven years old when he began to reign.

## **Matthew 2:13-18**

### **The Escape to Egypt**

<sup>13</sup> When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

<sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

<sup>16</sup> When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. <sup>17</sup> Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice is heard in Ramah,  
     weeping and great mourning,  
 Rachel weeping for her children  
     and refusing to be comforted,  
     because they are no more."

## Sermon: The Lady Who Saved Christmas

Please have your **Bibles opened** at **2 Kings 11**

You have an **outline** – if you'd like to take notes. Let me **pray**...

### Intro/Context

One of my **favourite Christmas movies** is ***"How the Grinch Stole Christmas"***

**[Slide 1 – The Grinch]**



The Grinch is a **green furry part human creature** who hates other human beings

The Grinch **decides to steal all the Christmas presents** from the city of **Whoville**

The Grinch is like this - because - apparently **his heart was "two sizes too small"**

I won't spoil the story – but it has a good ending thanks to one little girl called

**Cindy Lou** – who **intervenes**.

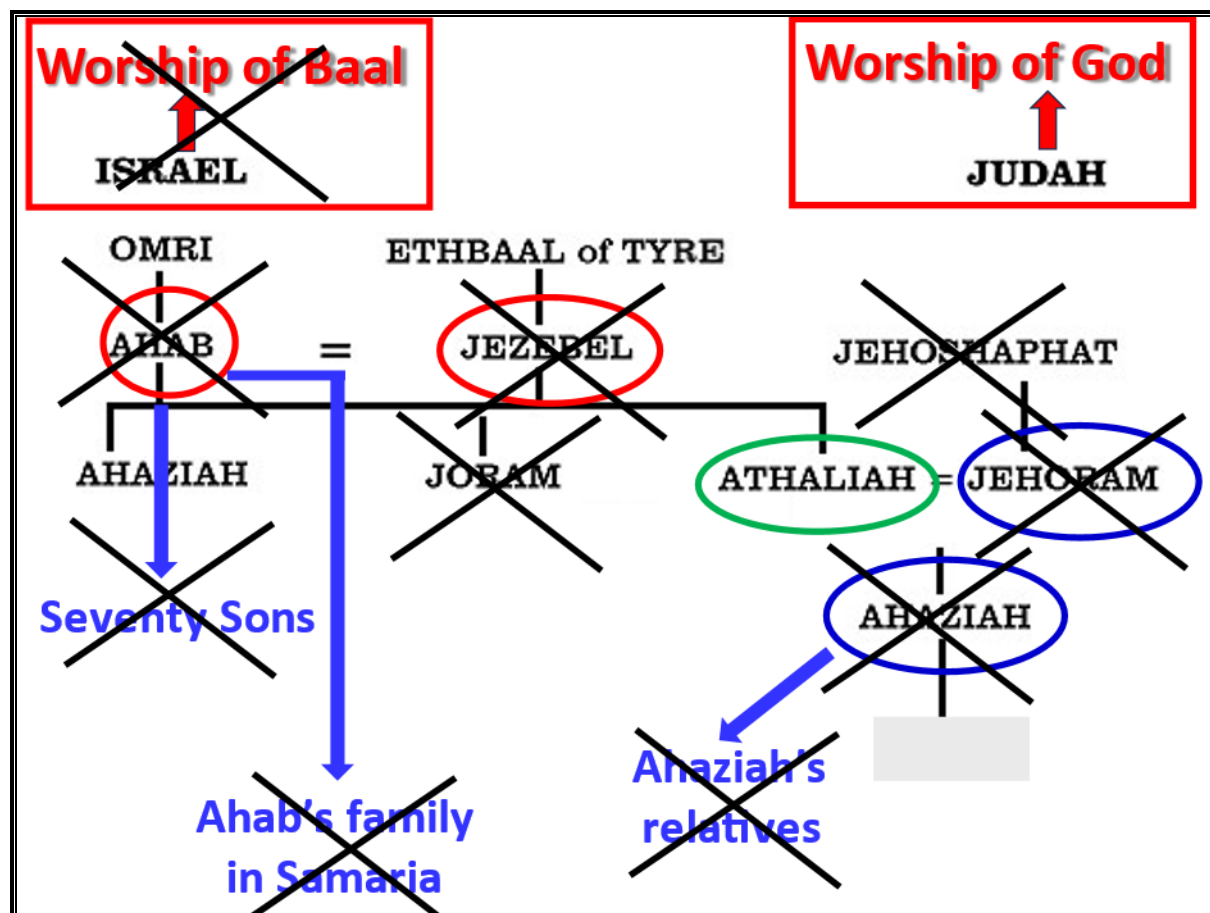
In our two Bible passages this morning from **2 Kings 11** and **Matthew 2** – we have

**two grinch**s

The first grinch is a woman called Athaliah

Let's just **recap** who she is

[Slide 2 – Family Tree]



Athalia [green circle – click] is the granddaughter of Ahab and Jezebel [red circles -click]

It was Ahab and Jezebel who brought in the worship of the false god Baal – to the Northern Kingdom - Israel [red rectangle – click]

Athaliah married King Jehoram of the Southern Kingdom - Judah [blue circle – click]

Now remember the **Southern Kingdom** of Israel (Judah) were **still worshipping the one True God YHWH** [[red rectangle – click](#)]

But by **Athaliah** from the Northern Kingdom - Israel – intermarrying Jehoram from the Southern Kingdom - Judah – she **corrupted the worship of Judah** – and **brought Baal worship in there too!**

This meant her **son Ahaziah** was also corrupted [[blue circle – click](#)]

And we saw last week – that God used another King – **King Jehu** – to wipe out Baal worship [[black crosses – click](#)] – to wipe out Ahab's seventy sons [[blue – click](#)] – to wipe out Ahab's family in Samaria [[blue – click](#)] – and to wipe out King Ahaziah's relatives [[blue – click](#)]

So, as we pick up the story in verse 1 of chapter 11 – the only person out of those people we've talked about – who is still alive - is **Athaliah** – the **Grinch** [[black circles – click](#)]

**[Slide 3 – Athaliah]**



## Athaliah – The Grinch (2 Kings 11:1)

When Athaliah sees that her son Ahaziah is dead – she sees an opportunity for her to claim the throne of Judah for herself – and she decides to destroy the whole royal family of Judah – so she can become Queen.

Unfortunately, Athaliah has the same evil heart as her mother Jezebel and father Ahab!

Her heart is two sizes too small – like the Grinch!

By killing off the royal family – which includes her grandsons by the way - It's also a way of her keeping Baal worship going in Judah!

Now the reason I'm calling Athaliah – the Grinch - is that - If Athaliah is successful in wiping out the royal family of Judah – then this will mean God's promise to King David that his throne would continue forever and that one of his descendants would always reign on the throne of Judah (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:35-36) - well – that promise can't be kept if all David's descendants are killed by Athaliah

And if Athaliah is successful – then we don't get to see baby Jesus born – some 600 years after this story – and we don't get to celebrate the birth of God's Son – at Christmas – because - there's would be no Jesus –and - no Christmas – and Athalia will have stolen Christmas!

Is God going to stand for this?

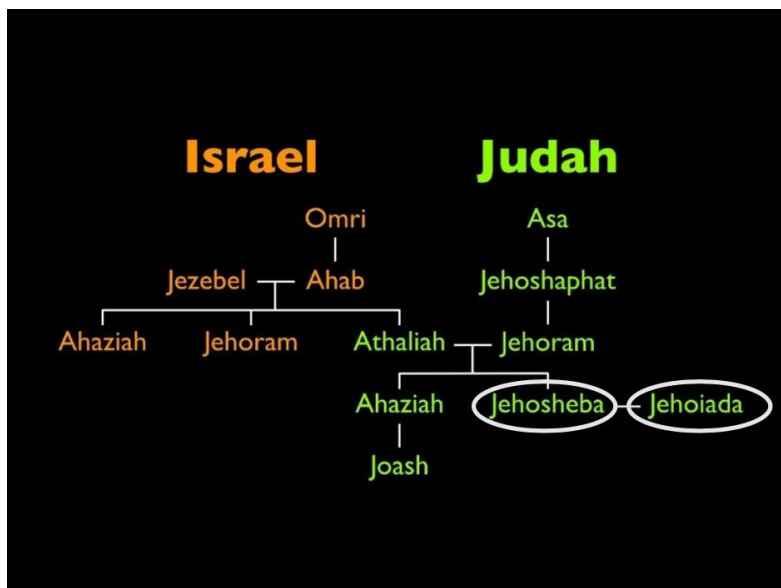
Not at all!

## Jehosheba & Jehoiada – The Unsung Heroes (2 Kings 11:2-19)

There's a saying "*bad things happen when good people stand by and do nothing*"

And we have to understand that **God will always ensure His promises are kept**.

### [Slide 4 – Family Tree]



In turns out, Athaliah's son, **Ahaziah** has a **sister** – called Jehosheba (white circle)

– and she is married to the Priest – **Jehoiada** (white circle)

**Jehosheba and Jehoiada** are the **unsung heroes** of the story!

### [Slide 5 – Jehosheba and Joash]





And we discover in v2 – that **Jehosheba whisks away Ahaziah's son Joash** [who's about one year old] – as Athaliah is in the process of murdering the royal princes!

And **Jehosheba hides Joash for six years!**

Meanwhile Athaliah reigns as Queen for those six years!

In the seventh year – Jehoiada the Priest – **decides it's time to install Joash as King of Judah** – and this is to be done on a Sabbath day.

**Jehoiada is very careful.**

He organizes **three companies of guards** to be posted in **three places** – one at the Royal Palace – one at the Gate between the Palace and the Temple called the **Sur Gate** – and one behind the guards who normally guard the temple.

Their job is to **keep Joash completely safe!**

As far as Jehoiada and Jehosheba are concerned – **Joash is the rightful heir to the throne.**

Jehoiada even gives the commanders of the army – the **weapons that belonged to King David** that were in the Temple of the Lord – v10. This is symbolic in **supporting Joash** (as a descendant of David) **as the rightful heir to the throne.**

**[Slide 6 – Joash crowned]**



So v12 – Jehoiada brought out Joash and crowned him King and then Joash is presented with a copy of the God's covenant with His people (God's Law).

This was in accordance with God's law in Deuteronomy 17:18 where it says:

*When he [the King] takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests.*

If you watched the **coronation of King Charles II** of England this year – you may have noticed **King Charles was presented with a Bible.**

The idea is – the King can't lead his people to follow God's Law if the King doesn't know it **God's Law himself!**

Of course, **Queen Athaliah**, (who I'm sure didn't take a copy of God's Law or take any notice of it) – **hears the excitement of the coronation** of King Joash – and she **goes to the temple** – and **tears her clothes in grief** – and shouts "**Treason! Treason!**"

Which is quite **ironic** – because she took the throne illegally and murdered the royal family members – she's the only who should be charged with treason!

Her complaints did her no good and **she and her supporters were put to death.**

But notice Jehoiada doesn't **stop at just crowning King Joash** and **giving him God's Law**

Jehoiada makes the people **recommit to the covenant with the Lord** – as the Lord's people (v17) and Jehoiada **ensured that the King made a covenant with the people too.**

Not only that, Jehoiada made sure the nation was committed to the Lord by tearing down the temple of Baal and anything to do with Baal worship was destroyed (v18)

**Now new King Joash can rule his people under God – the way it was meant to be!**

### Applications for us

There are **several things we can learn** from all of this:

#### **[Slide 7 – Application]**

1. **1<sup>st</sup> - We can trust God that His Word never fails** and what He says will happen will happen – and He always keeps/fulfils His promises. We should be encouraged to know that **even in challenging situations, God is in control, and His plans ultimately prevail.**
2. **2<sup>nd</sup> - We need faith in times of adversity** – like Jehosheba and Jehoiada showed. **God put it in Jehosheba and Jehoiada's hearts** to protect Joash and install him as King. **We must be open to be used by God in whatever ways He sees fit.**  
  
In what ways can we be a Jehosheba and in doing so – we could well lead others to Christ?
3. **3<sup>rd</sup> - This story shows the importance of God's Word** – the **Covenant was given to King Joash** so He knew what God's laws were so he could follow them and lead the people.

Likewise, we have God's Word to follow and guide us – and lead our families!

4. 4<sup>th</sup> - This story shows that **we must stand against anything that is contrary to God's Word** – just as Jehoiada made sure anything to do with the false worship of Baal was removed
5. 5<sup>th</sup> - This story reminds us of **our responsibility to those God has entrusted us to care for** and it's important to have God's wisdom as we make decisions on behalf of those entrusted to us!
- We also have a duty and responsibility under God - **to protect the vulnerable in our society: children; elderly; sick; disabled; oppressed and marginalized.**

The **preservation of young Joash** was a “close call”.

**[Slide 7a-God intervened]**

I think it's a useful exercise for us to reflect on our lives – perhaps at home this afternoon – **reflect back on times in our life – where we faced a difficult situation– and just at the right moment – God intervened – and it changed the course of our life!**

**You'd be surprised how many of these God's incidences there are – and they are NOT coincidences – they are all part of God's plan for our life!**

**King Joash Brings Peace (2 Kings 11:20-21)**

What started off as a precarious situation with Athaliah's plan to butcher the royal family – turns out to have a great ending

**[Slide 8 – 2 Kings 11:20-21]**

Look at verse 20 - *All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was calm, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the palace.*

It's a **wonderful outcome for the nation** – and the **city of Jerusalem was calm** – because **the Grinch – Athaliah** – has been **removed!**

The message is clear that when people follow God's way – and they follow God's Law – given to the King – and they reject evil – reject people like Athaliah – and they remove false worship – like Baal worship – **there is peace with God** – a **peace that surpasses all understanding.**

**King Joash brings peace!**

### Herod – The Grinch (Matthew 2:13-18)

The story of Athaliah – **the Grinch** - and young boy King Joash – **should remind us of another story of another Grinch and another boy King**

If we turn to our **NT reading** from Matthew 2:13-18

The **context** – just a few verses early is that some **wise men – Magi** – from the **East** have come to visit a young boy – born King – His name is **Jesus**.

### **[Slide 9 – Wise men and Herod]**

The **Magi inquired of King Herod** – the 2<sup>nd</sup> grinch - this morning – the Magi **inquired where this new baby King had been born so they can worship him** – and **Herod's religious advisers** tell the Magi that this new baby king – according to **scriptures** – **is to be born in Bethlehem**

**King Herod gives the impression** to the Magi that he too is **interested in worshipping this new baby boy King**

But we know from v13 that King Herod – the Grinch – intends to kill baby Jesus!

Is God going to let that happen?

Remember – he’s already intervened to preserve Jesus’ ancestor Joash - 600 years earlier – so that Joash’s descendant - Jesus - could be born!

**God’s not going to let Herod kill Jesus!**

**Jesus has to go to the cross – just as God planned**

Because without Jesus – we have **no forgiveness** of our sins – because He has to die on the cross – and without Jesus – we have **no eternal life** – **no Heaven** – **no hope!**

Just **this broken world** we live in!

(pause)

So, God intervenes in v13 – and **sends an angel to warn Jesus’ earthly father, Joseph, to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt for safety.**

Joseph took Jesus and Mary to Egypt as the angel said and they stayed there until King Herod – the Grinch – died (v15)

And the amazing thing about this little story

Is that **God foretold it:**

In Hosea 11:1 – God says through the prophet Hosea “*out of Egypt I called my son*”

And when King Herod – v16 - ordered for all the boys in the vicinity of Bethlehem who were two years old and under to be killed – this is a fulfilment of what the prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 31:5 “*A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and*

*great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”*

Here Rachel is a representative of all the Bethlehem mothers **weeping over their children killed by Herod!**

So, there we have it – **two stories** – about **two young boys** – **born to be kings** – **Joash and Jesus**

In both stories there is a **plan to kill children**.

In both stories, **one child who is to play a significant role in God’s plan** (i.e.; Joash and Jesus) are **both hidden and protected from death**.

If they were not hidden and protected, **God’s plan to save people could not take place. That is mind-blowing!**

What an amazing God we have!

Let me finish with what it means for Jesus to complete God’s plan to save people by reading these words from the **Apostle Paul** in Romans 5:1

**[Slide 10-Peace with God]**

King Jesus Brings Peace (Romans 5:1)

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*

What Paul is saying is when we believe in Jesus’ death and resurrection

**We are justified**

Justified means - **being made right with God** – think of justified as – **just as if we’d never sinned.**

Jesus makes it possible for God to look at us - as not-guilty of all our sins – and therefore - we don't have to get punished for our sins – instead we get peace with God – because of Jesus!

Jehosheba and Jehoiada could not stand by and let Joash perish – they saved Joash!

In far far greater way - Jesus could not stand by and let us perish – He willingly went to the cross – so we could be saved for Heaven!

Thank you – Jesus!

**Are we going to stand by – and let people perish – when we could tell them how Jesus saves us for Heaven?**

Let us pray...

*Heavenly Father,*

*We thank you for your divine intervention throughout history and particularly in the story of Joash which allowed you Son to come into this World to save people from sin and death – if they care to believe in you.*

*Thank you that we can trust your word and your promises.*

*Help us to have faith in times of adversity.*

*Help us to study and meditate on your Word.*

*Help us to be bold enough to stand against anything that contradicts your Word.*

*And help us to care for those who you have entrusted into our care.*

*Thank you that because of Jesus we are right with you and are saved for Heaven.*

*In His Name, we pray. Amen.*