

Who was Jehoiada in the Bible?

The best known of the Jehoiadas in the Bible was a leading priest of Israel who served several of the kings of Judah. After Israel split into two kingdoms, Judah, the southern kingdom, which included Jerusalem, remained more faithful to the Lord. Jehoiada the priest married the sister of King Ahaziah of Judah. King Ahaziah reigned just one year before being killed.

Ahaziah's power-hungry mother, Athaliah, smelled an opportunity. She rounded up all of her son's family, anyone with a potential claim to the throne, and had them all killed so she could become the queen (2 Kings 11:1). She missed only one in the slaughter. When Ahaziah's sister Jehoshabeath, Jehoiada's wife, realized what Athaliah was up to, she hid the youngest of her nephews, Joash, away (verse 2). Just a year old, Joash was too young to claim his rightful throne, but he was protected by Jehoiada and Jehoshabeath in the temple of the Lord (verse 3).

Six years passed, during which the usurping queen mother Athaliah remained in power and the rightful king grew into a boy within the temple courts. Finally, Jehoiada the priest decided the time had come to make the boy king. He called the captains of the guard and influential Levites and other leaders of the people to come to Jerusalem. He let them all in on the secret that one of the king's sons still lived, the rightful heir to the throne as a direct descendant of David. The soldiers and the people agreed, under oath, to provide protection and support for the king while he was being crowned and anointed in the temple (2 Chronicles 23:1-3).

When the day came, every person in the assembly stood ready to defend the young king (2 Chronicles 23:8-10). Jehoiada brought Joash out, placed the crown on the boy, anointed

him with oil, and gave to him the testimony (or royal law). The people clapped and shouted, “Long live the king!” while the trumpets blared (verse 11).

Athaliah, the queen mother and Joash’s grandmother, heard the noise from the temple and came over from the palace (2 Chronicles 23:12). When she saw the scene surrounding a boy wearing the crown of the king, she realized what was going on. She screamed out, “Treason!” and tore her own clothes in grief and fury (verse 13).

Jeohiada commanded the captains of the guard to take Queen Athaliah out of the temple and put her to death, along with anyone who followed her. The guards obeyed, and Athaliah was executed by the Horse Gate on the palace grounds (2 Chronicles 23:15). Serving now as the king’s proxy, Jeohiada made a covenant between the king and the people that they would be the Lord’s people and no longer worship Baal as the queen mother had allowed (verse 16). The people stormed and destroyed the temple of Baal and killed the idolatrous chief priest (verse 17).

Joash, just seven years old, assumed the throne and reigned as king over Judah for 40 years. Thanks to his adviser Jeohiada, Joash was known as one of the good kings of Judah who served the Lord. Together, Joash and Jeohiada oversaw extensive repairs to the Lord’s temple that had gone neglected for far too long. Second Kings 12:1-3 says that Joash “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years Jeohiada the priest instructed him.”

Jeohiada lived to be an impressive 130 years old and blessed the kingdom of Judah with his godly wisdom and able direction. Highly regarded by the people for his service both to the kings of Judah and the house of God, Jeohiada the priest was buried in Jerusalem

in the place of the kings. Unfortunately, after Jehoiada died, King Joash began listening to wicked advisers, and Baal and Asherah worship revived in Judah (2 Chronicles 24:17-19).

You can read more of Jehoiada's story in 2 Kings 11-12 and 2 Chronicles 22:10-24:16.