

2 Kings 12

Written by K B Napier

Thursday, 15 September 2016 14:24

How lax Christians are today! In this chapter we see how the upkeep of God's house, the great Temple, was not undertaken, leading to widespread disrepair. In our own day we show a similar lack of respect for what God has given us, by way of laxity and disinterest in the things of God in our lives. Those who teach them and whose lives are governed by God alone, are not shown support either, so the things of God in modern times are thrown into disrepair and have no priority for believers, whose disinterest causes the world to laugh at us and to take advantage. I say it again – we are not couch-children of God! We are warriors who must stand firm with the King, Whose banner is constantly under threat by enemies on all sides. It is better to die loyal to Him, than to kneel to the enemy!

Verse 1

1.

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

After the queen of Judah was put to death for her wickedness, by order of the high priest, the son of Ahaziah, Jehoash, was crowned king, aged just seven. He ruled for forty years, perhaps in recognition of his mainly godly character. It is interesting that God does not support kings or rulers because they are 100% godly – even with flaws, He will allow a man to rule or guide others in a generally godly manner.

Verses 2-6

1.

And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

2.

But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

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And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, the money that every man is set at, and all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

4.

Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

5.

But it was so, that in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

With the help of a godly high priest, Jehoiada, Jehoash was able to rule well and he *“did that which was right in the sight of the Lord”*.

This should be taken as ‘mainly’ – his reign was mostly godly, but with a few problem areas. We cannot debate this, for each one of us is guilty of error and sin at some time in our lives. It is therefore a matter of praise that the Lord saw Jehoshua as one who did what was right “all his days”. In modern days, Christians vote for sinful men, whose lives are mainly bad! We can tolerate unbelievers as rulers, but only if their lives are mainly good and without continual spot. At no time may we vote for homosexuals, paedophiles, or those who openly reject God (including Muslims) and oppose Him (or His people).

One of the ‘spots’ in Jehoash’s rule was that he did not remove all the “high places”, the shrines dedicated to false gods. So many still worshipped the idols and did sacrifices to them. In our day, Christians may not support idolatry in any way. It is why we may not see Muslims as fellow worshippers, nor may we acknowledge their false god, Allah, nor may we say that Mohammed had any good thing about him. We must reject ALL his teachings, and cannot respect the religion of Islam in any way. We must condemn it just as God does.

However, the king did order the priests to rebuild the worn parts of the Temple. The money would come from worshippers who offered money and treasures to the house of God. Each worshipper brought a different amount, according to what he could afford, but all offerings were added to the coffers. The priests were to use these gifts to repair the breaches; leaks in the roof

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or holes in the walls, etc. Though the king had commanded this, the priests did not do any repairs for the next 23 years. That is, from the time the king commanded it, not from his enthronement. The building was not just suffering decay – it was also damaged by Athaliah (see 2 Chronicles 24:7). So, money that accompanied various offerings (redemption; free-will, etc) had to be collected; for two decades this duty of Judah was diminished.

It is possible that Jehoash had many other things to contend with, but surely he would have noticed that repairs were not done over that time, especially as he attended the weekly sabbath ceremonies and other less frequent sacrifices and other rites! Today, I would warn Christians that if they promise to do something for the Lord they should do it promptly and with zeal, for not doing them can result in God's anger or a lessening of His mercies towards them. Never vow unless you mean it.

It is evident that God's spiritual house (the Church) is suffering decay and injury, with few to repair the breaches or to build up the Church. Instead, we witness failure after failure, dishonouring the Lord we claim to follow. Pastors do not fulfill their God-demanded duties and the people thus fail too. It is more than likely that this lack by pastors is a sign that most should not be pastors – they have an office not given to them by God, even if they are able to preach. Men of God are put in place BY God, not by fellow human beings. If most in the churches are not called, it means that the churches are not blessed by God, so nothing is done.

Verses 7-9

1.

Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

2.

And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

3.

But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that was brought into the house of the LORD.

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So it was that the king called the high priest and the attendant priests and demanded to know why the repairs had not been done. From now on, he told the priests, you may no longer keep the offerings for yourselves and your families (here called 'acquaintances'; it also referred to the tribe of Levi): all the money had to be used to repair the Temple. The priests agreed. So that money was not given to those who normally were given it, the high priest obtained a large wooden chest, and cut a hole in the top. All money was then dropped into the chest.

To make sure it was safe from tampering, the chest was placed close to the altar, on the right of it, so it could be seen on entry to the Temple. Thus, all money given as offerings were given to the priests who guarded the door to the sanctuary, and they put it into the chest. There are times in the life of Christians when what we do must be set on a strict understanding and action, so that we remain mindful of our duties.

Verses 10-16

1.

And 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 told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

2.

And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD,

3.

And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it.

4.

Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that was brought into the house of the LORD:

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5.

But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

6.

Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

7.

The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: it was the priests'.

When the money in the chest was enough, it was put into bags after being counted in the presence of a secretary designated by the king. The money was given to the Temple priests, who then used it to pay artisans, carpenters and builders, to repair the Temple. Much money is wasted by Christians, who send large donations to ministries not appointed by God – which seems to be most of them. Instead of giving to ministries that build the churches, the money is given to popular causes instead, things that delight the eye and ear, while ministries that oppose evil and deliver truth are avoided. Uncalled pastors are given substantial salaries (called 'stipends' though in reality they are salaries with generous peripheral earnings – house, car, expenses, etc.) that are often greater than the wages earned by most in the congregation. And so the spiritual building of God is allowed to fall into disrepair.

So, repairs to the Temple were underway, and stone masons, buyers of wood, began to do work that should have been done many years before on a continuous basis. In our spiritual lives most Christians only relate to God when there is a perceived emergency. Otherwise, they are silent and merely pray routinely, learning little that helps their souls. Spiritual repairs must be done when breaches appear, continuously, and not a long time later, when the damage has caused spiritual life to suffer. Do you take your duties to God seriously? Do you seek to do His bidding every moment of every day? Or, do you bring shame upon His Name and upon yourself, and put off what truly belongs to God?

The repairs to the structure of the Temple went ahead, but internal items previously stolen or

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sold were not made anew – silver bowls, candle snuffers, basins, trumpets, vessels of gold and silver... none of these were made, leaving the Temple destitute of what was needed for its proper running and worship. How many Christians make an outward show of piety and love for God, and yet, in other things, they are reluctant to live holy lives, read scripture, pray, and generally live their lives in holy and pure fashion? Many, many... because the things missed are not usually seen by anyone else. Outwardly there is piety, inwardly there is sin, failure and even corruption. Have you assessed your spiritual state lately?

At least the money spent on the superstructure was diligently and honestly used. The honesty was taken for granted, such was the ethical honour of the priests who did not need to 'reckon' with the workmen. All monies gifted to the Temple were used to repair it. But, the priests were allowed to keep meat and gifts from trespass and sin offerings, as was originally promised by God. The priests and their families had no other income, hence they kept these donations. Today, pastors who are voluntary are often given no gifts of money, even though Christ said they should be supported. Such is the imbalance in today's churches.

Verses 17-21

1.

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

2.

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

3.

And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

4.

And his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla.

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5.

For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

During this rebuilding work, king Hazael again began to invade Israel and captured Gath. Then, he desired to invade and capture Jerusalem in the south. You will remember that God commanded Elijah to anoint Hazael as king of Syria. Why, when he was always waging war against Israel? It seems Syria was used as a hammer to bring Israel and Judah back to God, after being punished. (It is quite possible that this is the purpose of Israel's enemies in modern days).

When threatened, king Jehoash gathered up all the Temple items of gold and silver given to it by previous kings, plus the newer items and any money in the treasury of both the Temple and the palace, and sent it to Hazael as a payment to go away, which he did. As a modern believer I do not understand this giving-in to an enemy. Once we try to appease an enemy, he keeps on coming relentlessly, so not only do we lose the bribe given to him, but we then live in an uneasy truce, giving us anxiety and restlessness, as we wait for yet another attack. (For more on Joash/Jehoash see references in Chronicles).

Sadly, though generally a good king, he lost his life to disgruntled courtiers who did not approve of his actions with Hazael. They killed him in the great house built into the walls of Jerusalem, next door to the palace (Millo, on the road leading to it). He was killed by trusted servants, Josachar and Jehozabad, who then buried him with previous kings in Jerusalem. His son, Amaziah, then succeeded to the throne. Like his father, his reign was mostly good.

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