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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A2335 ~ An Heir Hid in the Temple.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

It's generally believed that 95% of people want to be followers, which leaves the other 5% to be leaders. People who put themselves forward to be leaders often have strong desires to control the activities of other people and have authority over them. This power can become an obsession to some and such people will go to any lengths to maintain their position of power. In today's *Bible Adventure,* two people resorted to murdering all their relatives to ensure that they could hold onto their own power as Judah's leaders.

When King Jehoshaphat of Judah died, his eldest son, Jehoram, became king, but Jehoram only reigned for eight years. Jehoram had six brothers, who each had received many gifts and fortified cities from their father. While he was king, Jehoram murdered all his brothers, as well as some of the princes who could pose a threat to his throne. He had married Athaliah, the daughter of King Ahab of Israel, and together, they did evil in the sight of the Lord, which caused the people of Judah to move away from solely worshipping the Lord God. Yet because the Lord had made a covenant, or a promise, with Jehoram's ancestor, King David, that He wouldn't destroy the house of David, He didn't, even though Jehoram's and the people's rebellion again the Lord was great. This account is listed in 2nd Kings, Chapter 8, and 2nd Chronicles, Chapter 21.

The prophet, Elijah, sent Jehoram a letter, condemning him for the evil things that he'd done. He told the king that as a result, Jehoram would lose his possessions and suffer from a painful disease, which would get worse every day. As Elijah had predicted, the Lord punished Jehoram by sending an army of Philistines and Arabs to invade Judah. They looted Jehoram's palace and took away his wives and children, except for his youngest son, Ahaziah.

Then for two years thereafter, Jehoram suffered from a disease which finally killed him. The people of Judah weren't sad when Jehoram died; nor did they bury him in the royal tombs. He was succeeded by his son, Ahaziah. Ahaziah too, was also heavily influenced to do evil in the sight of God by his mother Athaliah, and others from Ahab's family. He only reigned for one year.

At that same time, King Joram of Israel, Ahab's son, had gone into battle with the new king of Syria, Hazael. Joram of Israel lost the battle and was wounded as a result. Ahaziah went from Jerusalem to Jezreel, near Samaria in Israel, to visit Joram, as they were close relatives. But when they both went out to meet Jehu, the man appointed by the Lord to destroy the house of Ahab, Jehu killed both kings. Who now would rule Judah?

When Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, saw that her son Ahaziah king of Judah was dead, she plotted to seize the throne of Judah for herself. To do this, she set out to see that there were none of the royal family of Judah left. She gave orders to her supporters to have them all murdered. As a strong worshipper of the idol god, Baal, Athaliah desired to destroy the entire line of David; and she was determined to finish God's promise to David that his house and throne would be established forever. Of course, God wasn't going to let that happen; just as he had preserved Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, so He preserved Joash, Ahaziah's youngest son, to become the next king. This is recorded in 2nd Kings, Chapter 11.

God used a brave woman named Jehosheba to save baby Joash from being killed. Jehosheba was the late king Ahaziah's half-sister, and the wife of the high priest, Jehoiada. The little prince Joash was hidden in the high priest's quarters for six years before Jehoiada thought it was time to crown him as the new king of Judah.

While Joash was hidden away and growing up into a young boy, Athaliah had been ruling Judah as queen, and she did so with a rod of iron. Athaliah was the only queen to sit on the throne of Judah throughout its Biblical history, yet she could only claim this position because she killed off all the other royals to do so.

During the six years of Queen Athaliah's reign, Jehoiada, the high priest, gradually built up support for another royal king among the people. When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada organised the officers of the royal guard and the Levites to protect Joash by using armour that had been stored in the Temple of God. At a Sabbath service time, Jehoiada brought Joash out before the people, and crowned and anointed him in front of them as king. The people clapped and cheered, and the musicians blew their trumpets.

When Queen Athaliah heard all the noise, she hurried to the Temple to see what was going on. There she saw Joash standing as king. Jehoiada ordered the army officers there to take Athaliah out of the Temple and kill her. Then Jehoiada led the people into making a covenant with the Lord and another one between the king and the people. After this, the people went and destroyed the temple of Baal and killed its priest. Jehoiada and the guards then took Joash into the palace, with all the people following, and there they seated him on the throne. Joash reigned for forty years, from 835 BC to 796 BC, and while Jehoiada lived, Joash followed his advice and worshipped the Lord wholeheartedly.

What can we learn from the rule of Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah in the southern kingdom of Judah? Short-term gains may bring terrible long-term pains. We must live our lives in the light of eternity. What we do here on earth will affect our place in the hereafter. It's as though this short time on earth is an apprenticeship on how well we devote ourselves to preparing for God's final examination of us. All three of these rulers had lived under a godly king, King Jehoshaphat. It was not as though any of them were ignorant of the living God and His holy requirements.

Instead, they lived in wilful disobedience to God's laws and yet still expected everything to turn out alright for them. In Galatians, Chapter 6, we have the instruction: "Don't be misled – you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature, will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit."

Success and power often walk together. But without God in charge of them and their kingdom, their plans finally all came to nothing. When they didn't follow the Lord God in sovereign obedience, they didn't leave a lasting memory of achieving anything good during their reigns.

Throughout history, there have been people who ruled as though our Creator, the God of heaven and earth doesn't exist. In the years of the early church, the world rulers at that time, who were the caesars or kings of the Roman Empire, declared themselves to be god instead and they expected all the people to worship them. Those who refused to do so because they knew and worshipped the Lord Jesus Christ, lost their lives in remaining loyal to Jesus, God's Son. Where are those Roman kings now? They are in torment in Hades, the place of the departed spirits awaiting God's final judgment on them.

In modern times, most young people who want to go to university anywhere in the world, have to bow intellectually to the rulers of such institutions. Their university officials claim that NOTHING made everything and made it all very well. But this lie is countered by the fact that NOTHING can make NOTHING! Officials demand that every science student must give worship to this belief and without any debate. Even lecturers and professors who write papers about the obvious design in the universe are promptly removed from their teaching positions and their careers are cut down.

Why does this dishonesty persist? Every person who stands on a river bank and watches the water flowing past on its way downstream must wonder at times where all that water comes from. Or when they look up at the night sky, they must wonder how is it that none of the stars crash into each other. The order of the universe stands as a testimony to the living Creator God, who says in Isaiah Chapter 40 He holds it in the palm of His hand. Absolutely nothing happened by chance.

In the beginning, nothing at all existed, except God and His heavenly realms. God has always existed and we who trust Him, accept this by faith, as there are deep things about God that humans can't work out by themselves.

People with academic standing are just like the rest of us. While they may think that they have so much knowledge about their special subjects, they have areas of life that they are totally ignorant in. This often applies to their knowledge of the most published book in the world, the Bible. In Romans, Chapter 1, the Apostle Paul writes: "For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ. It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes … This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight … As the Scriptures say, 'It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

"But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness. They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them. For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God."

In Jeremiah Chapter 29, Verse 13, the Lord said: "You shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart." Some people just don't want to know about being in relationship with God or come to a position of being expected to obey and love Him. In James, Chapter 4, Verse 7, it says: "Humble yourselves before God." So pray to the Lord Jesus and admit that you're done many terrible things that have offended God, bringing separation from Him. Sincerely believe that He, as God the Son, has forgiven and wiped away all your sins; God's Holy Spirit will then guide you into confessing your new-found faith to those willing to listen around you. Don't put off this important decision following Jesus for another day!

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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