

Aim: To choose to follow God all the time and in all ways.

Refer: 2 Kings 11-12, 14-15; Great Controversy chapter 7

As Martin Luther's Bible teachings continued to spread the leaders in Rome became more and more frustrated and no wonder; in one of his papers, Luther compared the riches and magnificence of the Pope – who claimed to be God, to the humble simplicity of Jesus who really was God. He wrote of the Pope, "He is, say they, the lord of the world! But Christ, whose vicar he boasts of being, has said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.'" (From the Great Controversy p140 - D'Aubigne, b. 6, ch. 3)

Some church leaders even said that the man who killed Luther would become sinless! One day a man with a gun hidden under his cloak asked Luther why he went about alone, without a bodyguard. Luther replied that God was his strength and shield. When he heard this, the gunman fled.

Now Luther was given a warning – sixty days to repent and if he did not, he and all his followers would be excommunicated – thrown out of the church, treated as outlaws, hunted to death, and banned from heaven! Although many people were sympathetic to Luther, this was too much for them, but Luther determined to stand firm. Instead of cowering in fear, he burned the Pope's command, his laws, and other writings in front of a crowd of students, doctors, and citizens. He said, "A serious struggle has just begun... I began this work in God's name and God will finish it by His might."

This final separation from the official church was not easy for Luther; as a child he had been taught to respect the authority of the church even while he had been fighting the corruption within the church.

It was at this time that he wrote, "Oh, how much pain it has caused me, though I had the Scriptures on my side, to justify it to myself that I should dare to make a stand alone against the pope and hold him forth as antichrist! What have the tribulations of my heart not been! How many times have I not asked myself with bitterness that question which was so frequent on the lips of the papists: 'Art thou alone wise? Can everyone else be mistaken? How will it be, if, after all, it is thyself who art wrong, and who art involving in thy error so many souls, who will then be eternally damned?' 'Twas so I fought with myself and with Satan, till Christ, by His own infallible word, fortified my heart against these doubts." (The Great Controversy p143, Martyn, pages 372, 373)

God was leading Martin Luther, God was leading him to separate from the organised church which, like the church in the day of Jesus had become totally corrupt.

The story of Joash is often told as a children's story, probably because Joash was still a child when he became the king. The Bible doesn't say a lot more about Joash except for one thing.
2 Kings 12:2-3 and 2 Kings 12:18

Discuss: How was Joash and his kingdom different than David & Solomon and their kingdoms?

- David was known for always seeking God's will.
- Joash did not fully remove idol worship, David did.
- God blessed David & Solomon financially vs. Joash paid gold for freedom.
- God helped David & Solomon against their enemies.
- Israel was one of the great nations in the time of Solomon.

Discuss: What can you learn from Joash?

Turn to 2 Kings 14

Who was the king of Judah after Joash? Verse 1-4

Amaziah's army had some successful battles with surrounding nations and so for some reason he decided to challenge the king of Israel. Jehoash was the king of Israel at that time.

What had God told Jeroboam, the first king of Israel when he wanted to fight Judah? 2 Chronicles 11:4

Jehoash didn't want to fight Judah – what was the message he sent back? Verse 9-10

Amaziah refused to take the warning, so Judah and Israel fought, and Israel won and destroyed part of the wall of Jerusalem and took gold and silver from the temple and the palace.

Discuss: What can you learn from Amaziah?

Read Proverbs 12:15

Use the following verses to learn about the kings of Israel after Jehoash:

- 2 Kings 13:23-24 (Jeroboam II)
- 2 Kings 15:8-9 (Zechariah)
- 2 Kings 15:10-13 (Shallum who assassinated Zechariah)
- 2 Kings 15:14, 17-20 (Menahem who paid Syria to leave them alone)
- 2 Kings 15:23-24 (Pekahiah)
- 2 Kings 15:27-28 (Pekah)

Use the following verses to learn about more of the kings of Judah

- 2 Kings 15:1-3
- 2 Kings 15:32, 34
- 2 Kings 16:1-2

When Ahaz was king, Aram and Israel joined together to attack Judah, so Ahaz sent a message to Assyria requesting his help and took the gold and silver from the temple to pay him. Afterwards, he travelled to Damascus to meet king Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, and when he saw the altar in Damascus, he decided to build one like it in Jerusalem.

If you have been filling out the Kings of Israel chart, look at your charts, otherwise look at the one below. Orange = idol worshiping kings, green = a kings who followed God.

What do you notice about the kings of Israel? None of them fully worshiped God.

Some of them worshiped God, some of the time, and in some ways, but none of them completely removed idol worship from the land.

Martin Luther had make the hard choice to fully do what God wanted him to, and to separate himself from the church he had always been a part of.

There will be times when we have to choose too, whether we will follow what everyone else is doing, whether we will follow God some of the time, in some ways. Or whether we will be like Martin Luther, and like the apostles who said, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." Acts 5:29^{NLT}

Kings of Israel and Judah according to NLT Bible Note: some Bibles might show different years and some years don't add up depending on how many actual months were involved.

| King | Reign | Reference | King | Reign | Reference |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|-----------------|----------|------------------------|
| Kings of JUDAH | | | Kings of ISRAEL | | |
| Rehoboam | 17 years | 1 Kings 14:21-22 | Jeroboam | 22 years | 1 Kings 13:33 |
| Abijah | 3 years | 1 Kings 15:1, 3 | Nadab | 1 year | 1 Kings 15:25-26 |
| Asa | 41 years | 1 Kings 15:8, 11 | Baasha | 24 years | 1 Kings 15:33-34 |
| Jehoshaphat | 25 years | 1 Kings 22:41, 43 | Elah | 2 years | 1 Kings 16:8, 13 |
| Jehoram | 8 years | 2 Kings 8:16, 18 | Omri | 12 years | 1 Kings 16:23, 30 |
| Abaziah | 1 year | 2 Kings 8:26, 27 | Ahab | 22 years | 1 Kings 16:29-30 |
| Queen Athaliah | 6 years | 2 Kings 11:1, 3 | Ahaziah | 2 years | 1 Kings 22:51, 52 |
| Joash | 40 years | 2 Kings 12:1-3 | Joram | 12 years | 2 Kings 3:1-2 |
| Amaziah | 29 years | 2 Kings 14:1, 3 | Jehu | 28 years | 2 Kings 9:12, 10:30-31 |
| Azariah also known as Uzzuah | 52 years | 2 Kings 15:1, 3 | Jehoahaz | 17 years | 2 Kings 13:1-2 |
| Jotham | 16 years | 2 Kings 15:32, 34 | Jehoash | 16 years | 2 Kings 13:10-11 |
| Ahaz | 16 years | 2 Kings 16:1-2 | Jeroboam II | 41 years | 2 Kings 14:23-24 |
| Hezekiah | 29 years | 2 Kings 18:1, 3 | Zechariah | 6 months | 2 Kings 15:8-9 |
| Manasseh | 55 years | 2 Chronicles 33:1-2, 11-13 | Shallum | 1 month | 2 Kings 15:13 |
| Amon | 2 years | 2 Chron 33:20-22 | Menahem | 10 years | 2 Kings 15:17-18 |
| Josiah | 31 years | 2 Chron 33:25, 34:1-2 | Pekahiah | 2 years | 2 Kings 15:23-24 |
| Jehoahaz | 3 months | 2 Chron 36:1-2 | Pekah | 21 years | 2 Kings 15:27-28 |
| Jehoiakim | 11 years | 2 Chron 36:4-5 | Hoshea | 9 years | 2 Kings 17:1-2 |
| Jehoiachin | 3 months | 2 Chron 36:8-9 | | | |
| Zedekiah | 11 years | 2 Chron 36:11-12 | | | |