

CHAPTER 22

We read, in the foregoing chapter, of the carrying away of Jehoram's sons and his wives; but here we find one of his sons and one of his wives left, his son Ahaziah and his wife Athaliah, both reserved to be the shame and plague of his family.

I. Ahaziah was the shame of it as a partaker,

1. In the sin, and,
2. In the destruction, of the house of Ahab (v. 1-9).

II. Athaliah was the plague of it, for she destroyed all the seed-royal, and usurped the throne (v. 10-12).

~~1420E~~ 2 CHRONICLES 22:1-9

AHAZIAH SLAIN BY JEHU

We have here an account of the reign of Ahaziah, a short reign (of one year only), yet long enough, unless it had been better. He was called *Jeho-ahaz* (~~14217~~ 2 Chronicles 21:17); here he is called *Ahaz-iah*, which is the same name and of the same signification, only the words of which it is compounded are transposed. He is here said to be forty-two years old when he began to reign (v. 2), which could not be, for his father, his immediate predecessor, was but forty when he died, and it is said (~~14218~~ 2 Kings 8:26) that he was twenty-two years old when *he began to reign*. Some make this forty-two to be the age of his mother Athaliah, for in the original it is, *he was the son of forty-two years*, that is, the son of a mother that was of that age; and justly is her age put for his, in reproach to him, because she managed him, and did what she would — she, in effect, reigned, and he had little more than the title of king. Many good expositors are ready to allow that this, with some few more such difficulties, arise from the mistake of some transcriber, who put forty-two for twenty-two, and the copies by which the error should have been corrected might be lost. Many ancient translations read it here twenty-two. Few books are now printed without some *errata*, yet the authors do not therefore disown them, nor are the errors of the press imputed to the author, but the candid

reader amends them by the sense, or by comparing them with some other part of the work, as we may easily do this.

The history of Ahaziah's reign is briefly summed up in two clauses, v. 3, 4. His mother and her relations were his counselors to do wickedly, and it was to his destruction.

I. He did wickedly. Though by a special providence of God he was preserved alive, when all his brethren were slain, and reserved for the crown, notwithstanding he was the youngest of them — though *the inhabitants of Jerusalem*, when they had buried his father ingloriously, made him king, in hopes he would take warning by that not to tread in his steps, but would do better for himself and his kingdom — yet he was not influenced by the favours either of God or man, but *walked in the way of the house of Ahab, did evil in the sight of the Lord* like them (v. 3, 4), that is, he worshipped, Baalim and Ashtaroth, supposing (as the learned bishop Patrick thinks) that by these demons, as mediators, they might have easier access to the supreme *Numen*, the God of Israel, or that *these they might resort to at all times and for all matters*, as being *nearer at hand*, and *not of so high a dignity*, but of a *middle nature* between the immortal God and mortal men — deified heroes; so they worshipped them as the church of Rome does saints and angels. That was sufficiently bad; but I wish there was no reason to suspect worse. I am apprehensive that they looked upon Jehovah, the God of their fathers, to be altogether such a one as these Baalim, and them to be as great and as good as he, nay, upon one account, more eligible inasmuch as these Baalim encouraged in their worshippers all manner of lewdness and sensuality, which the God of Israel strictly forbade.

II. He was counselled by his mother and her relations to do so. *She was his counsellor* (v. 3) and so were *they, after the death of his father*, v. 4. While his father lived *he* took care to keep him to idolatry; but, when he was dead, the house of Ahab feared lest his father's miserable end should deter him from it, and therefore they were very industrious to keep him closely to it, and to make him *seven times more a child of hell than themselves*. The counsel of the ungodly is the ruin of many young persons when they are setting out in the world. This young prince might have had better advice if he had pleased from the princes and the judges, the priests and the Levites, that had been famous in his good grandfather's time for teaching in the knowledge of God; but the house of Ahab humoured him,

and *he walked after their counsel*, gave himself up to be led by them, and did just as they would have him. Thus do those debase and destroy themselves that forsake the divine guidance.

III. He was counselled by them to his destruction. So it proved. Those that counsel us to do wickedly counsel us to our destruction; while they fawn, and flatter, and pretend friendship, they are really our worst enemies. Those that debauch young men destroy them. It was bad enough that they exposed him to the sword of the Syrians, drawing him in to join with Joram king of Israel in an expedition to Ramoth-Gilead, where Joram was wounded, an expedition that was not for his honour. Those that give us bad counsel in the affairs of religion, if regarded by us, may justly be made of God our counsellors to do foolishly in our own affairs. But that was not all: by engaging him in an intimacy with Joram king of Israel, they involved him in the common ruin of the house of Ahab. He came on a visit to Joram (v. 6) just at the time that Jehu was executing the judgment of God upon that idolatrous family, and so was cut off with them, v. 7-9. Here,

1. See and dread the mischief of bad company — of joining in with sinners. If not the infection, yet let the destruction be feared. *Come out from Babylon, that falling house,* ^{<6680>}Revelation 18:4.

2. See and acknowledge the justice of God. His providence brought Ahaziah, just at this fatal juncture, to see Joram, that he might fall with him and be taken as in a snare. This we had an account of before, ^{<1327>}2 Kings 9:27, 28. It is here added that he was decently buried (not as Jehoram, whose dead body was cast into Naboth's vineyard, ^{<1326>}2 Kings 9:26), and the reason given is because he was the son (that is, the grandson) of good Jehoshaphat, *who sought the Lord with his heart*. Thus is *he* remembered with honour long after his death, and some respect shown even to his degenerate unworthy seed for his sake. *The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.*

^{<1270>}2 CHRONICLES 22:10-12

PREPARATIONS TO RESTORE JOASH

We have here what we had before, ^{<2100>}2 Kings 11:1, etc.

1. A wicked woman endeavouring to destroy the house of David, that she might set up a throne for herself upon the ruins of it. Athaliah barbarously cut off all the seed-royal (v. 10), perhaps intending to transmit the crown of Judah after herself to some of her own relations, that though her family was cut off in Israel by Jehu it might be planted in Judah.

2. A good woman effectually preserving it from being wholly extirpated. One of the late king's sons, a child of a year old, was rescued from among the dead, and saved alive by the care of Jehoiada's wife (v. 11, 12), that a *lamp might be ordained for God's anointed*; for no word of God shall fall to the ground.