

EVERY WOMAN IN THE BIBLE:

WOMEN IN THE AGE OF KINGS:

UNNAMMED WOMEN:

NAAMAN'S WIFE'S SLAVE GIRL:

Scripture references: 2Kings 5:2,3.

This young girl is another of the unnamed but special women of the Bible. She was captured as a child when the Syrians raided Israel, and as a young girl she waited on the wife of Naaman, an important Syrian military officer who had leprosy.

One day the girl remarked, "if only my master were with the prophet, who is in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy" (2 Kings 5:3.) The wife told Naaman what the girl had said, and Naaman set out for Israel.

Naaman's miraculous healing led to his becoming a worshiper of the Lord. It all began with the testimony of a young girl who had faith in God and confidence in the power of God's prophet.

THE YOUNG GIRL: AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY:

- How often adults fail to pay attention to children. We need to remember Christ's admonition, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 18:3).

- Often in Scripture the lowly are exalted above the high and mighty. Let's watch out that we do not think of ourselves as better than others.
- Jesus tells us that the first will be last and the last first. If we fail to humble ourselves in this life, we will surely be humbled in the next.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA:

Scripture reference: 2 Kings 6:25-33.

The story of this unnamed woman tears at our hearts. Yet it contains a vital warning we need to heed.

A Syrian army surrounded Samaria, the capital of Israel. All food was gone, and starvation stalked the narrow streets. Desperate, two women (who lived together), agreed to kill and eat their young sons. After the first woman's child had been eaten, the second mother hid her child and refused to fulfill her promise.

The first woman appealed to the king. Horrified, the king directed his anger against God's prophet, Elisha, despite the fact that it was the evils done by the king and his people that caused God's judgment to fall on Israel. When the king reached Elisha, the prophet stunned him by announcing that the very next day food would be so plentiful that it would sell at half-price.

That night the Syrian army was over-come by mindless terror and fled, leaving all supplies behind. Elisha's impossible promise was fulfilled.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA: AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY:

- The woman serves as a warning. Under stress we may be tempted to do something we would never consider under normal circumstances, but it is never right to do wrong.
- The story also encourages us. We cannot know what God might do tomorrow to relieve the situation and the fears that drive us. We need to trust in Him and do right, expecting Him to act.

ATHALIAH:

THE ONLY WOMAN EVER TO RULE OVER JUDAH.

Scripture references: 2 Kings 8:26, 11:[1-3](#), [13-14](#), [20](#).

II Chron. 22:[2](#), [10-12](#), [23](#):12-13, 21,

24:7.

Daughter of Jezebel and wife of Jehoram, king of Judah. Her son succeeds his father to throne. When son is murdered she usurps throne, first destroying all but one of the royal House of Judah. She reigns 6 years. Is murdered and trampled upon by horses.

Women are ever extreme; they are better or they are worse than men”, history has often testified. Athaliah, the only woman ever to sit on the throne of David and rule, was the extreme in wickedness.

Evil ran in her veins. She was the granddaughter of Omri, who waded through slaughter to a throne he never inherited. She was the daughter of Ahab, the legitimate successor of his unscrupulous father, and of Jezebel, whose name is synonymous with

wickedness. Reared in the northern kingdom of Israel, at Samaria, where the palace of her parents was surrounded by groves and idols of Baal worship, Athaliah grew up in an atmosphere that completely denied the one God. Because of the lewd cult worship of Baal, introduced by her mother, the kingdom was swept by immorality and godlessness.

Athaliah, probably for political gain, married to Jehoram, eldest son of the pious Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. She went with him to Jerusalem, capital of the southern kingdom. When he was thirty-two years old, he came to the throne, and Athaliah sat beside him. Just as her mother had done when she came to Samaria from Tyre, Athaliah promoted her Baal worship among the people. Because her husband's brothers were loyal to the faith of their nation, King Jehoram had them murdered. Athaliah, much more determined in character than her husband was, probably who instigated these murders.

Jehoram reigned eight years and died unmourned of an incurable disease foretold by Elijah. The Philistines had captured all his secondary wives and sons, except Ahaziah, Athaliah's own son, who now came to the throne. As queen-mother, Athaliah was more powerful than ever. Her son was young and she had had experience of dictating through her husband. We have the record that Ahaziah "walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. (2 Chron. 22:3).

Within a year Athaliah's son was wounded in his chariot by Jehu commissioned by Elijah to overthrow the dynasty of Athaliah's father. Her son escaped to Megiddo, where he died. Athaliah seized the throne and resolved to destroy "all the seed royal," her own blood relations, among whom were her own grandchildren. If one of these young princes became king, her place as queen-mother would be gone. She also knew that if she had the power of chief ruler she could further promote her Baal worship.

Judah had six years of unrighteous government under Athaliah. From 2 Chronicles 24:7 it states that she had her sons break into the temple of God, and used some of the sacred objects for the building of the temple of Baal.

Fortunately for the kingdom of Judah, Jehosheba, her step-daughter had rescued Joash, one of the royal infants, from her bloody massacre at the time she came to the throne. Jehosheba had hidden the child for 6 years, and at the proper time her husband, the high priest Jehoiada, brought for the boy, now seven years old. With the aid of mighty men, he proclaimed him king.

When Queen Athaliah heard the people celebrating the young king's accession to the temple, she went there, tore her robes, and screamed "Treason, Treason. (II Chron. 23:13). The high priest ordered her to be killed, not in the house of the Lord, but after

she had left it. She was therefore killed as she was entering the horse's gate by the palace, close by the Temple.

The horses trampled over her body where she lay dead at the gates. In her miserable end, Athaliah bore a singular resemblance to her mother Jezebel, who was abandoned to the dogs. Athaliah was left in the horse-path, to be trampled upon. Like her mother she died a queen, but without a hand to help her or an eye to pity her.

JEHOSHEBA:

Scripture references: 2 Kings 11:2, 2 Chronicles 22:11.

Date: About 850 B.C.

Name: Jehosheba [juh-HUH-shub-buh: “Yahweh is abundance”].

Main Contribution: She saved Joash's life when Athaliah attempted to murder all the heirs to Judah's throne.

JEHOSHEBA'S ROLE IN SCRIPTURE:

When King Ahaziah of Judah was killed, his mother Athaliah determined to seize the throne for herself. So, she ordered all the royal heirs – her own grandchildren! -

executed. While Athaliah was busy seizing the throne for herself, one of Ahaziah's infant sons, Joash, was spared.

The rescue was accomplished by Ahaziah's sister named Jehosheba [called “Jehoshabath” in 2 Chr. 22:11]. Jehosheba was married to the Lord's high priest Jeoiada, sheltered the infant in the Temple itself until he reached seven years old. The Jehoiada organized a coup, executed Athaliah, and placed the seven-year-old Joash on Judah's throne.

EXPLORING JEHOSEBA'S RELATIONSHIPS:

Jehosheba's relationship with the royal family: The Bible tells us that Jehosheba was a “daughter of King Jehoram (2 Chron. 22:11), she was the sister of Ahaziah and the aunt of Jehosheba.

It is significant that, although Jehosheba was part of the royal family, she was not like Athaliah or either of the two kings. Jehosheba had compassion for the infant Joash and risked her own life to hide him.

Jehosheba's relationship with Jehoiada: Jehosheba was married to God's high priest, Jehoiada. Her actions reveal that she worshiped the Lord to whom her husband served. We can credit her as well as her husband with Joash's early commitment to God, expressed in the religious reforms he instituted as a young adult (2 Chr. 24:1-14).

JEHOSHBEA: A CLOSE-UP:

Jehosheba provides a corrective to a misunderstanding shared by too many believers today. While Athaliah reminds us of the powerful influence parents have on their children Jehosheba reminds us that every person makes his or her own choices in life. While parents do influence their children, what parents do cannot and will not determine who their children become.

Jehosheba was a member of the royal family, a sister of King Ahaziah. Yet she chose to go to a different way from that taken by the others. She had married the high priest of the Lord, and in saving the infant Joash, she set herself in opposition to the power-hungry Athaliah. What motivated her was not only her compassion for the infant, but also her commitment to the Lord.

Even as Athaliah took the worst characteristics of the god she worshiped so Jehosheba reflected her best qualities of our God.

JEHOSHEBA: AN EXAMPLE FOR TODAY:

- Sometimes doing the right thing puts us at risk. Jehosheba risked her life to save a life – and in the end saved a generation for the Lord.
- We must all set our sights on living godly lives – whatever those around us may do. God gave each of us the ability to make choices, and we are responsible to Him for the choices we make.

Anymouse