

Project Runway

Designer Clothes For Disciples

Jehoash: Part 10

Written By
©Pastor Marty Baker
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If God published a book describing your spiritual life, how many chapters would it contain? Would it multiple chapters showing you going back and forth between spiritual obedience and disobedience, or would it be more chapters of you being pretty much faithful to follow Him no matter what?

King Jehoash, also known in the Old Testament books of Kings and Chronicles as Joash (2 Kings 12:1), had just two chapters in his spiritual autobiography. The opening verses of 2 Kings chapter 12 could easily serve as the introduction to chapter one:

“¹ In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem; and his mother’s name was Zibiah of Beersheba. ² Jehoash did right in the sight of the LORD all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him.”

Unlike many of the godless Kings of Judah before him, this young boy from the outset set his mind and heart on leading the country in a God-honoring fashion. He, of course, had the help of his gifted and godly mentor, Jehoiada, the High Priest. Remember, the effectiveness of your spiritual life is, more often than not, intrinsically tied to the quality of godly counselors who personally impact you. Who are yours? Who is your Jehoiada?

You’ll remember the story of his early life and coronation. His wicked grandmother, Athaliah, the daughter of the evil Queen Jezebel of Northern Israel, killed all of his royal siblings

in a twisted quest to forcibly seize control of the throne of Judah despite the fact she didn't qualify to be the king. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* does a fine job at reacquainting us with this geopolitically complex and morally bankrupt time:

11:1. **Athaliah** was the mother of the Judean king **Ahaziah**, whom Jehu had slain (9:27–29; 2 Chron. 22:9) in 841 B.C. Athaliah was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and a sister of Ahaziah and Joram who had reigned successively in Israel after Ahab's death. She was the wife of King Jehoram of Judah who had died of an intestinal illness (2 Chron. 21:18–19). Her other sons had all been killed by the raiding Philistines and Arabians (2 Chron. 21:17). Now she saw the opportunity to seize the throne for herself. So she proceeded to have all her grandsons killed in total disregard for God's will that the descendants of David should rule over Judah forever (2 Sam. 7:16).

11:2–3. **Jehosheba**, a daughter of Athaliah's husband **King Jehoram** (though perhaps not Athaliah's own daughter), was a sister of King **Ahaziah** of Judah. She took one of Ahaziah's sons, **Joash**, and hid him so that he was not put to death with the other children. During Athaliah's six-year reign (841–835 B.C.) this aunt kept the prince safe by hiding him in the temple of the LORD where her husband, Jehoiada, served as high priest (2 Chron. 22:11). (See the chart "Genealogical Table of Queen Athaliah.") Joash was a one-year-old when he was taken by Jehosheba because he was hidden for six years and then was made king at the age of seven (cf. 2 Kings 11:21).¹

Admit it. The lust for power is a dangerous thing in the hands of a person who doesn't know or fear the living God. Ralph Waldo Emerson couldn't have been more on target when he wrote:

Men, such as they are, very naturally seek money or power; and power because it as good as money.²

Athaliah went for the power with a blind, brutal zeal.

Henry Kissinger's sagacious words in the *New York Times* in 1971 could have easily described Athaliah's problem:

Power is the great aphrodisiac.³

The lust of total, unadulterated, unchallenged, unbridled power controlled everything this wild woman said and did, while moving her to the most ruthless actions to make sure it never deserted her. She, like all power-hungry people, could have taken a knee and learned before the great leader of our country we call Thomas Jefferson:

I have never been so well pleased, as when I could shift power from my own, on the shoulders of others; nor have I ever been able to conceive how any

¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition by Dallas Seminary Faculty*, Volume 1, eds. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, Victor Books, 1985): 559–560.

² *The Harper Book Of American Quotations* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988): 454.

³ *Ibid.*, 455.

rational being could propose happiness to himself from the exercise of power over others.⁴

A true leader, like Jefferson, knows the ultimate value of humility, and this unique, lofty virtue, by nature, tempers the power and forges it into a force for truth and good for the sake of the people. Athaliah, unfortunately, didn't even know how to spell the word h-u-m-b-l-e, nor could it be found in her vocabulary.

Fortunately, for Jehoash, his aunt and wife of the High Priest, Jehosheba, caught wind of the select political slaughter and hid the young baby boy, Jehoash in the Temple, placing him under the care and tutelage of her husband, Jehoiada (2 Kings 11). At the age of seven, these courageous people then presented him as the rightful heir of the throne, and Athaliah was then summarily deposed and destroyed (2 Kings 11:9-16).

Take hope in this divinely inspired historical narrative. No matter how dark the days of a given nation become; no matter how narcissistic, wicked, and mean-spirited the leader or leaders; no matter of how far the leadership leads the people, as a whole, away from the fear of God; no matter of how much darkness is purposefully substituted in a wide variety of social sectors for the advancement of the people, no matter how it seems like the good-old-days have forever been replaced by the bad-old-days masquerading as the best days, God is always at work behind the scenes guiding the people back to a viable, vibrant relationship with Him. And take note usually He does His best work in an out-of-the-way place, with a seemingly unimportant person who, at upon closer analysis, doesn't look like the kind of person who could possibly take the nation out of its death dive.

In Judah, that man was the youth, Jehoash. Young people, listen up. You need to prayerfully consider that God may have just called you to be the next Jehoash to our crumbling, carnal, contentious culture. Yes, you may feel like a novice. Yes, you may feel ill-equipped. Yes, you may think the task is too daunting. Yes, you may feel like saying, "What can I possibly do to stop the social rot?" Think again because since the living God is with you, you have all the providential power at your disposal to accomplish great things for Him. So, as you head off the college, as you start your senior year, as you move up into middle school, begin to ponder the question: Lord, what major spiritual accomplishment do you want me to realize with my life? Show me, guide me, and I will follow."

King Jehoash went on to rid the nation of the worship of the false god, Baal, and to remodel and refurbish the holy Temple, which had been looted and fell into tragic disrepair during Athaliah's idol worshipping reign. And based on the length of time he served as king (40 years (2 Chronicles 24:1), coupled with the death of Jehoiada at 130 years old (2 Chronicles 24:15), we can safely say he remained faithful for probably the majority of those forty years. Remember the emphasis in 2 Kings is on the fact that as long as Jehoiada was alive and influencing him, he walked with God.

Securing radical spiritual change represented the first chapter of the life of Jehoash. His spiritual clothes were quite stylish and God-honoring, resulting in God blessing him. He should have paid more attention, for it is when we reach a zenith of spiritual accomplishment the ol' Devil ratchet's up his cunning, crafty strategy to sideline us.

As with far too many spiritual lives, King Jehoash had a second chapter I'm sure he'd like to forget. Peace rested on the nation. People worshipped God again in His temple in Jerusalem. Take note, again. Yes, it is possible, by the grace and power of God for a nation to move away

⁴ Ibid., 455.

from its love of wickedness to a love of God. The times during the reign of Jehoash were basically good; yet his life took a sudden and unpredicted willful turn for the spiritual worse when his wise mentor, Jehoiada, died when he was at the height of his career probably in his late forties. Put in our terms, Jehoash abandoned everything Jehoiada had built into his heart and mind when he entered mid-life. Shockingly, he took this spiritual coat, which had been so beautiful and God-honoring, and laid it aside so he could put on the duster of desertion.

Ever seen a godly man or woman do this? Ever seen them throw years of spirituality to the proverbial wind for the sake of a few passing, momentary pleasures? Ever seen them cave into evil pressures they had successfully withstood for many years? I have and it's a sad commentary, but one which doesn't have to be. Yes, you and I can make sure there is just one chapter of our spiritual lives. Yes, we can make sure our spiritual coat of obedience is never exchanged for the one called disobedience. How can we protect ourselves? How can we keep from going down the rocky road of King Jehoash? By studying carefully the second chapter of his life. To do this I propose we ask ourselves a timely question:

Am I Wearing A Duster Called Desertion? (2 Chronicles 24)

If Project Runway's fashionistas are anything they are brutally honest ... could we say painfully honest? As I've watched numerous episodes with my wife, when the professional panel starts evaluating, dissecting, and critiquing the would-be designers, I go through several emotions. I feel sorry for some of the designers because they just get decimated. Others are praised for their fine creative efforts, and there are typically those who receive a candid balance between designer praise and pain. It's true. You can't watch the show and not realize that professional designers are skilled at giving fashion tips.

In light of his, I propose we evaluate our opening question by considering spiritual fashion tips to keep us from willfully wearing the duster of desertion. All of our tips, of course, will be gleaned from a close study of King Jehoash, and the book of Second Chronicles, chapter 24 has all the info we need.

From my study of this pivotal chapter, I believe there are four fashion tips we should use to protect ourselves from becoming spiritual turncoats.

Fashion Tip #1: Enter Adversity Armed (2 Chronicles 24:15-18)

The Chronicler wastes no time introducing us to a storm which rocked King Jehoash's spiritual boat:

“¹⁵ Now when Jehoiada reached a ripe old age he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old at his death. ¹⁶ They buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done well in Israel and to God and His house. ¹⁷ But after the death of Jehoiada the officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king, and the king listened to them. ¹⁸ They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols ...”

Chapter two of Jehoash's life book started *immediately* after the death of his mentor. Wise people will take note of this truth. Just because you stood strong and true for God the first part of your life doesn't mean the second chapter of your life will continue on the same trajectory. Your

adversary is a lion, as Peter remarks, and he is always hungering to see you devoured at some point, be it the first or second chapter (1 Peter 5:8). This reality should logically move us to stay in the Word of God on a daily basis, to stay open and authentic with other saints, and to stay close to Christ's throne in confessional prayer.

Adversity can either chisel your soul, or fracture your soul. It can either deepen your walk with God, or cause you to willfully become shallower with God because you resent this unwanted intrusion into your seemingly peaceful, tranquil life. Wise people, on the contrary, understand the intrinsic value of tough, trying times. They'd all nod their heads in agreement with words like these:

“We are always in the forge, or on the anvil; by trials God is shaping us for higher things” (H.W. Beecher).

“Bless you prison, for having been in my life. The meaning of earthly existence lies, not as we have grown used to thinking, in prospering, but in the development of the soul” (Alexander Solzhenitsyn).

By nature we don't like tragedy, we would never choose misfortune, and we'd certainly never want our trusted mentor of over forty years to die. But it happens and when it does it is divinely designed to test our mettle, to show us where we are spiritually, and to challenge us to walk in a new way with Christ. And all too often God uses the death of a mentor to sift us for his lofty purposes.

After arriving at Twin Oaks in 1989, and being a novice Senior Pastor, I started looking for pastoral mentors. Why? I realized Dallas Theological Seminary had taught me to study, preach, and teach the Scriptures effectively; however, they hadn't adequately prepared me to shepherd and lead sheep. So, I began to search for seasoned shepherds to show me the ropes of biblical leadership. God rewarded me with two stellar men. Dr. Bill Yeager and Dr. Adolph Braun.

Dr. Bill Yeager grew Modesto First Baptist from 169 members to 5,000 members in his thirty year tenure there. His book “Who's Holding The Umbrella” is a must read for would-be shepherds. Dr. Adolf Braun, who had at one point in his life been the pastor of one of my professors at Dallas Seminary, Dr. Norman Geisler. Over the years, had enjoyed a rich and rewarding pastoral ministry prior to his “retirement.” Combined, these men taught me how to be a shepherd and how to lead. They also taught me to expect adversity, personally and corporately, as a saint and as a shepherd because this is what Jesus taught:

“²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also” (John 15).

Sound mentors know how to prepare their mentees for the road ahead; however, in the final analysis it is up to the mentee to take what he has learned and to apply it. Sometimes the hardest times of application come when God removes the mentor. I've been there and done that, several times. Disease and death have a way of hammering away at the truths you've been taught.

I remember the day Dr. Yaeger entered God's glorious presence. I felt his loss in my life, but thanked God for the exposure I had with him. I realized that the Lord took him because He knew I was adequately prepared to move on without this powerful mentor.

I remember the day Dr. Braun entered God's glorious presence. He died when he finished a sermon at Temple Baptist Church in Lodi, CA. As a retired pastor he worked here as an interim pastor. What a man of God. What a way to God out, I thought to myself. Again, I missed his friendship terribly, but, again, thanked God for the opportunity to be next to a humble, godly, gifted shepherd of his caliber.

Eventually, God sovereignly supplied me with another, non-pastoral mentor: Rick Sealy, the Capitan of Homicide in San Joaquin County, CA. He taught me how to lead in and through adversity, how to have a positive impact on your team, how to serve others in a selfless fashion, and how to suffer to God's glory with pancreatic cancer. The day he died, I met his police officer son-in-law, Noe, at Rick's house. A funeral home sent a young man and a young woman to pick up the body upstairs. Physically, they couldn't have done it, so we put him in a body bag and carried him down the staircase. Believe me, that was one of those difficult and surreal times of life. Gone was another mentor, and the grief hit me hard. Yet, I wasted no time giving thanks to God for a life well-lived, one devoted to others, one devoted totally to God, one devoted to his family, and one devoted to shepherding a shepherd.

I share these personal stories not to extol myself, but to say I know emotionally what it means to lose a spiritual leader in your life. I know the questions it gives birth to. I know the sadness it causes. I know how you must be extra careful to apply everything these mentors taught you at that critical time of loss so you stay on the course of Christ. King Jehoshaphat, unfortunately, checked out, spiritually speaking when his mentor passed.

Question is, why? We don't know, but we can guess:

- When you lose a significant person in your life there is always the temptation to be bitter and angry at God. Why did you have to do this? Why now? Why him? Why her? Why didn't God take a really wicked person? Once this fracture starts, it can prove quite destructive.
- When you lose a person who has called you onward and upward in your Christian walk, there is a time in your grief where you might feel disoriented, unstable, in a mental fog, as it were. This is when Satan typically steps in and whispers in your ear, "If God really loved you, this wouldn't have happened. Why not show Him who's really boss?"

Whatever the reasons why King Jehoshaphat threw forty years of mentoring to the proverbial wind, one thing is sure: Adversity prompted it.

We can live differently. We can study the ways of God now and embrace His methods with obedience and trust. We can ask our mentors to teach us about how to properly view and come to terms with adversity, pain, suffering, and loss, so when God does remove them, when we do face the inevitable storm (or storms), we shall not be tempted to desert Him, the lover of our souls.

Job, who suffered more than most his share of trials, made a statement we'd all do well to learn from. So deep was his commitment to God, so mature was his understanding of God's ways and methods for shaping and honing him, he exclaims:

"¹⁵ Though He slay me, I will hope in Him" (Job 13).

Amazing statement. We could reword it this way: Though He remove my beloved mentor, I will hope in Him. Can you say that? Can you breathe that prayer? It's the path to keeping your coat on right side out, and it's the very thing King Jehoash lost sight of.

Let me frank. What's your storm right now? What is your point of adversity? What significant person in your life have you lost or might be in the process of losing? What should you do? Decide right now that you will embrace the full value of adversity for your spiritual maturation. Decide right now you will not back down from following Jesus Christ no matter if you are the last man standing in your life.

A second valuable fashion tip shouldn't be overlooked:

Fashion Tip #2: Evaluate Your Friends (2 Chronicles 24:17-18)

I'm all for having friends and for being a friend. Scripture tells us how important they are, especially in the book of Proverbs:

¹⁷“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Proverbs 27).

I have those who sharpen me, and I thank God for each one of them because they help me mature in wisdom and in the knowledge of God and how to walk with Him.

However, one should never check his or her brain at the door with a friend. Why? They are just as human as you, and they may not be the best friends you could possibly have either. They can offer you advice and counsel bathed in the wrong motivations. Their appraisal of a situation can be distorted, just as yours can. Sure, Solomon correctly declares there is wisdom with many counselors (Proverbs 11:14), yet the truly wise man always weighs carefully what his counselors and friends say against the Word of God.

King Jehoash neglected this approach to proper living. Listen again to what his confidants requested:

¹⁷“But after the death of Jehoiada the officials of Judah came and bowed down to the king, and the king listened to them. ¹⁸They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherim and the idols; so wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their guilt” (2 Chron. 24).

What chutzpah! What nerve! What a request! I can just hear them now:

- Honorable King Jehoash, the young people don't get anything of out the Temple service. It's too ritualistic, too predictable, too structured. They like the lively worship service at the typical Baal worship center. Surely it won't hurt to worship God and to also loosen up worship-wise by being a little more progressive in who we worship so we don't lose the youth.
- Honorable King Jehoash, worship in the temple just isn't as emotional and enjoyable as it is in Baal's temple. Why don't we just dump this old fashioned worship altogether?
- Honorable King Jehoash, surely it is unloving and unkind to keep people from worshipping an idol they have benefitted from for countless generations. Why not return back to our spiritual roots?

You get the picture.

Who were these “officials?” Good question. The Hebrew word can be translated three ways: politicians within the government (Numbers 22:8; 2 Chronicles 32:31), military leaders (Genesis 21:22-32; 1 Samuel 12:9), or, and don’t miss this, priests who oversaw and directed other priests (Ezra 8:24-29; 1 Chronicles 15:16-22).⁵ In other words, the “officials” were men who should have known better, plus if they were key priests serving in the Temple of God THEY REALLY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER! Tells you something about the attractive nature of former sins, doesn’t it? God help us when spiritual leaders cave into their own sinful lusts and the pressure of the people in order to embrace an age-old sin which they should have terminated long ago. God help us to evaluate the progressive changes suggested by supposedly well-meaning, gifted, and highly educated leaders. As I’ve said before, too often progression is actually digression in disguise.

Paul teaches us that once we are Christians we are free from the power and chains of sin:

¹¹ Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, ¹³ and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace” (Romans 6).

We don’t have to live shackled to our old sins anymore; however, the fact Paul challenges us to, by God’s power, not let sin have mastery over us, tells us it can if we permit it. Daily, therefore, we must present ourselves to God, seeking His help and strength. Daily, we must seek the Spirit’s assistance in living victoriously by steering clear of our former sins. As Paul told the Galatians:

¹⁶ But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Galatians 5).

To walk in the Spirit means, as Lewis Sperry Chafer teaches, is “...walking by a definite reliance upon the ability and power of the One who indwells” (*He That Is Spiritual*: 96). And that reliance starts in the morning when you read the Word and talk to God.

Note how when these close governmental/priestly associates proposed their godless request that King Jehoshaphat simply listened to them. What should he have done?

- He should have confronted them with rejecting God.
- He should have held them accountable for wanting him to guide the nation into breaking the first two Mosaic commandments.
- He should have dismissed them from their posts.
- He should have stood up for the biblical principles Jehoiada had built into his life over forty years.

⁵ S. R. Driver and Charles A Briggs, *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew-Aramaic Lexicon*, ed. Francis Brown (Lafayette, Indiana: Associated Publishers and Authors, INC, 1981): 978.

- He should have said, “Let me pray about this. Give me some time to seek God’s face about this. Let me talk to the priests and see what they say.”
- He should have said, “Give me a few days to read my Bible to ascertain if this request squares with God’s revelation.”

He should have done a lot of things, but he chose, for unknown reasons, to listen to them with an “open mind” and the next thing you know he turned his coat inside out. Oh, for more leaders, in the political and religious worlds, who stand up against the progressive push to embrace darkness, be what it may, cleverly disguised as light. Wake up! Just because leaders say a given decision is for our good doesn’t make it so.

Stop and take an honest look at your life, and ask yourself, “Do I take the time to evaluate what my friends are telling me, especially when a trial comes my way? Are their people I am listening to I shouldn’t be? Is anyone in my circle of friends, even if they are Christian, guiding me away from that which is holy and right? Am I taking too many cell phone calls from a person who is spiritually dragging me down the wrong path of life? Am I going places and doing things with a person or persons I never thought I’d enter into?”

If the answer is “Yes,” then it’s time to make a necessary course correction. Ask God and He’ll tell you what to do. King Jehoshaphat never asked and it cost him dearly.

Fashion Tip #3: Expect God’s Voice (2 Chronicles 24:19-20)

Because God loves you, He will not let you desert Him without sovereignly seeking to get your attention. King Jehoshaphat is a living example of this:

“¹⁹ Yet He sent prophets to them to bring them back to the LORD; though they testified against them, they would not listen. ²⁰ Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people and said to them, ‘Thus God has said, Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.’”

Underline the word *prophets*. The plural nature of the word tells us God sent the King more than one man to confront him and call him to repent and to turn back to serving Him in holiness. He even went so far as to send his mentor’s prophet of a son, Zechariah. Their collective word couldn’t be missed. Eugene Peterson’s modern day paraphrase catches the essence in terms we all understand:

“Why have you deliberately walked away from GOD’s commandments? You can’t live this way! If you walk out on GOD, he’ll walk out on you.”

Makes your knees weak, doesn’t it? Obedience or disobedience to God is simply a cause and effect thing. Listen to me: If you are slipping your arm into the duster of desertion, you need to pull it out and throw that coat on the ground. Regardless of what you are being told by your friends, it will not benefit you on iota.

I ask you: Ever seen a saint willingly put on the duster called desertion? Remember Demas in the New Testament, Paul’s former missionary partner? While awaiting his Roman execution, Paul sadly comments “... Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and

gone to Thessalonica” (2 Timothy 4:9). Demas became a turncoat when Paul needed him the most, and he did it for the love of materialistic things. Years ago, Liz and I had godly friends who served alongside us in another church. They were model Christians. Everyone looked up to them. Then one day the lady in question left her husband for a man she had met at a trade convention. Shocking, but willful sin always is.

If you happen to be the person who has slipped on the duster of desertion, I know God is working on you. I know He, the lover of your soul, is calling your name. I know that He, who sent His Son to redeem you, won't let you go quietly into the dark night. I know His voice is speaking to you, calling you home, calling you to repent, calling you to reach out of the morass of your sin for His mighty hand. I know that in the still of the night while everyone is asleep, your desertion haunts you and keeps you up. When that occurs, not if, know it is the voice of the Spirit of God patiently telling you not to live like King Jehoash.

Question is, Will you confess your sin and tell Him to help you to dress the way you used to? The choice is clearly yours.

The final fashion tip for protecting yourself from living contrary to the ways of God is this:

Fashion Tip #4: Efface Sin's Mystic (2 Chronicles 24:21-22)

Sin always lies to you. “Go ahead, eat the forbidden fruit. It's so sweet and juicy.” “What are you waiting for? Stolen bread is good.” “Live and let live for a while. You won't feel any guilt.” “Common, a little compromise never hurt anybody.”

Listen up. Don't be deceived. A little sin is alike a little molecular acid. One drop and you're a gonner. A wise person once noted, “Sin wouldn't be so attractive if the wages were paid immediately.”⁶ Those wages, conversely, are always paid in due time (Romans 6:23). The Puritan Thomas Watson astutely surmised, “The pleasure of sin is soon gone, but the sting remains.”⁷ How true.

King Jehoash learned this lesson the hard way. Not only did he fail to remember how destructive willful sin is, he neglected to recall that sin, by nature, *always* spirals downward toward even greater wickedness. Mark it well. He, who dispensed with Temple worship of God and reinstated Baal worship, soon went so far as to martyr the very son of the High Priest who had made him who he was. He terminated the man he had grown up with. He killed the boy he had played with in the Temple precincts. Don't ever forget that there is no bottom to the dark, deep well called sin. Sinful decisions at one level will, by default, move you to sinful actions at a whole new and darker level.

²¹ So they conspired against him and at the command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. ²² Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which his father Jehoiada had shown him, but he murdered his son. And as he died he said, “May the LORD see and avenge!”

Once you put on the duster of desertion, you'll eventually be engaged in sins which you once would find absolutely shocking. You might need to read that one more time to let it sink into your soul.

⁶ *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000): 946.

⁷ *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000): 951.

King Jehoshaphat bought into the lie that Baal worship needed to replace the worship of the Lord. So he proceeded. God, then, sought to get his attention. He repeatedly resisted the voice of the prophets until in a moment of defiant brutality he did the unthinkable to silence the voice of God. He had Zechariah snuffed out. He even had him martyred in the confines of the holy Temple.

When the leadership of a country starts espousing the worship of other gods and the acceptance of other religions their forefathers didn't worship, when they call for the toleration of all faiths, just know that eventually intolerance for the true faith will surface with an iron fist. Additionally, when the leadership of a country abandons sound Scriptural principles, they, and their adherents, will, by default, logically move to silence the voice of scriptural opposition, and no place will be sacred for their devious activity. In many respects, we live in a time when this type of activity occurs in churches throughout the Middle East. We can also readily see how, anymore, the local church and church leadership are being portrayed as unwanted regulators keeping our nation from achieving true utopia.

Do you really think God's deep, booming voice against sin will be silenced? Think again.

What are we to do? How to we make sure we don't head in the sad, sordid, sinister direction of these ancient Israelites? Take the mystic out of sin. Stealing is never good. Lying is always wrong and detrimental. Flirting when you are married is always dangerous. Surfing questionable sites on the net is never beneficial. Talk with people in chat rooms about things which would make a nun blush is always risky. Please. Understand the call of sin is always, with no exceptions, to a lower plane of existence, and to a place where God's blessing will be removed from your life.

I challenge you, then, take a good look at your coat. Does it look like a duster called desertion? Better get it off as quick as you can. Far wiser to put on a coat of obedience to Christ.