

# Turning Against a Godly Upbringing

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Date: 30 July 2023

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 00 ] Let's begin our worship now singing in Psalm 100. Psalm 100, that's from the Scottish Psalter, the first version of it on page 362.

This is one of the great rousing psalms that calls upon us, along with all mankind, to give thanks to the Lord and to come before him with cheerful voice.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth, his praise foretell, come ye before him and rejoice.

Sing to tune Old 100. We'll sing the whole psalm. And if you're able to stand, please stand to sing. All people that on earth do dwell. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him serve with mirth, his praise foretell, come ye before him and rejoice.

[ 1 : 29 ] Know that the Lord is God indeed.

With God, I will be. With God, I will be. He did us make. We are heads for, he doth us beat.

And for his sheep he doth us pay. Oh, when turn in his gates with praise, Approach with joy, his courts unto praise, Lord and bless his name always.

For it is, for it is, for it is, for it is, for it is, for it did seemly so, to do.

For why the Lord our God is could, his mercy is, for ever should.

[ 3 : 07 ] sure his truth that all times firm leads to and shall from age to age endure Let's call upon the Lord now in prayer. Let's join together as we pray to God.

O Lord, how gracious God, we give thanks for these great words that have encouraged us to come before you with thanksgiving and even come before you with rejoicing.

And we give thanks, Lord, for the many truths contained in these few verses of this psalm. And we bless you for the many people down through the years that have found their consolation and guidance and support from such great words as these.

And we thank you for the relevance to our own circumstances today, for the way that your word retains that relevance, however many changes may take place in ourselves and in our own lives immediately or in the environment of the nation in which we live or even in our local communities. Lord, help us, we pray, to prize your word again this evening, enable us to come before you knowing that your word is given to us so that we may learn more of yourself, that we may indeed appreciate the extent to which you have revealed yourself to us and the glorious truths that you have set out before us.

[ 4 : 52 ] Lord, you know each one of us here tonight. you know what is lying deep within our hearts, you know the thoughts that are on our mind, you know each and every aspect of the life we live, and so we come to you and ask that you would meet with us as we seek to draw near to you.

And we thank you, Lord, whatever variety of need is evident in this congregation tonight, that your word is adequate and always ready to meet us at the depth of that need.

and at the detail of that need. And we pray that we may come, Lord, to this place each time we come with that conviction about your own word of truth and about the privilege that is ours in drawing near to you.

We have sung about you as our creator, the creator of heaven and earth. We sing about you as the redeemer of your people. And we ask, Lord, tonight that this may be our experience of you, that we may marvel once again that our great God and creator has come to draw near to us in the person of Christ, the person of your son by which you have come to reveal yourself supremely to us in a way that causes us to marvel at the extent of your love to your people.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to learn from every aspect of your word. Give us, we pray, to delight and to have a relish and to have an appetite for your word and all that it comes to us with to teach us.

[ 6 : 29 ] Help us to love the history that your word brings to us even though we may not readily have such a subject foremost in our thoughts or in our likings.

We thank you for the way that your word brings to us the history of your people and for the way that your people have been encouraged down through the years from that history that records from the earliest times how you spoke to your people, how you guided them, how you rebuked them, how you led them even through difficult and dangerous times and how your promises were fulfilled as the years went by.

We thank you too, O Lord, for the many passages in your word that form such wonderful poetic teaching in regard to the love of God and we thank you for the great epistles that we find in terms of our New Testament times and of the way in which you gave such apostles to write these under the direction of your word and we thank you for the psalms from which we sing your praise.

We thank you, Lord, for the breadth and the depth and the height of experience in them and we thank you that whatever things we do experience in this life, your psalms always go before us.

This book always comes to us with a ready experience already lived by those who went before us and so that we can gain from their experience and their conclusions as they were guided by the Lord.

[ 8 : 06 ] We thank you for the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ in your word and we thank you for the way that from the very beginning of time since you began to reveal yourself to people.

They were always directed to think of the coming one, the Messiah, the King, who would come to be in God's time, the one who would fulfill the many prophecies about him and who would come to take our human nature and be in our place as our substitute.

O Lord, we thank you for the rich variety of teaching that your word brings us. Bless us then, we pray, here before you this evening.

We pray for the power of your Spirit to open our minds and our understanding to give us a further appetite for your truth. Remember us, we pray, with relevance to our own place in the society we occupy.

Help us to be a faithful living witness and light to the world around us. Enable us, Lord, to show that we are your people and enable us to be burdened to show that this is indeed so with us.

[ 9 : 20 ] We ask that you would bless us as a congregation. Thank you for all that takes place in this congregation from week to week. We thank you, O Lord, for the services of worship that we hold and we pray that these will continue to be blessed to us.

Bless the preaching of your word, the testimony of your people. Bless every activity, Lord, that's designed to further our knowledge of you and to appreciate the gospel and the ways of Christ.

We pray for the forthcoming holiday club. We give thanks for the effort that has gone into all the preparations and we bless you for the dedication of those who will lead the club and we pray for them.

We pray for all the children who are expected. Lord, we pray that it will be of lasting benefit to them and that it will be a means by which they themselves will be brought up further in the knowledge of the Lord and will be garrisoned against the many efforts that are made around us to draw us away from the gospel, away from your truth, away from those basic matters to do with our spiritual integrity and morality.

gracious Lord, bless, we pray, these coming days to the children and enable us to be truly thankful that there has been such a positive, encouraging response to the invitations to come.

[ 10 : 47 ] And so we ask that your blessing now will be with those in need. Lord, again we think of those belonging to us who are ill at this time, those with serious illness, those who have issues of mental health, whether it be in old age or middle years or even in young days as well.

We commend them to you. We ask for every effort made, O Lord, to help them that they will prove successful. And we do pray for thankful hearts when we have so many agencies that are able to attend to our needs from time to time.

So we pray your blessing upon our community, upon our schools, upon our teachers, upon the staff, and all the ways in which we are helped, both in the health service and other ways, Lord, each day we live.

Make us thankful, we pray, that you have provided us with such rich blessings and enable us to return to you not only a verbal thanksgiving, but also a dedication of life.

So we pray these things and seek your blessing in forgiving our sins. For Jesus' sake, Amen. Now we're going to sing again to God's praise.

[12:00] This time we're singing Psalm 119. Psalm 119, page 163, from verse 97 to verse 104.

The tune this time is even tied. O Lord, how much I love your holy law. I meditate upon it all the day. It makes me wiser than my enemies, for your commandments ever with me stay.

To verse 104, how pleasing to my taste are all your words. More sweet they are than honey on my tongue. From your commands I gain enlightenment, so I reject and hate each path that's wrong. These verses to God's praise. Amen. Amen. Amen. O Lord, how much I love your holy law.

I meditate upon it all the day. It makes me wiser than my enemies.

[13:22] For your commandments ever with me stay.

I have more in sight than my teacher's have.

But on your laws I meditated each day. I for discernment than the elders have.

because your righteous respects I obey. I've kept my feet from every world path that I may be obedient into your heart and I have not departed from your laws for you yourself have taught me this O Lord how pleasing to my taste

God all your words more sweet they are than honey on my tongue from your commands I gain enlightenment so I reject and hate each heart that all now we turn to read God's word as we find that in the second book of the chronicles the old testament the second book of the chronicles and chapter 24 we'll read verses 1 to 22 should be around page 448 or thereabouts in your pew bibles second chronicles and chapter 24 joash was seven years old when he began to reign and he reigned for forty years in jerusalem his mother's name was zubiah of be she and joash did what was right in the eyes of the lord all the days of jehoiada the priest jehoiada got for him two wives and yet sons and daughters after this joash decided to restore the house of the lord and he gathered the priests and the levites and said to them go out to the cities of judah and gather from all israel money to repair the house of your god from year to year and see that you act quickly but the levites did not act quickly so the king summoned jehoiada the chief and said to him why have you not required the levites to bring in from judah and jerusalem the tax levied by mooses the servant of the lord and the congregation of israel for the tent of testimony for the sons of athaliah that wicked woman had broken into the house of god and had also used all the dedicated things of the house of the lord for the bales so the lord the king commanded and they made a chest and set it outside the gate of the house of the lord and proclamation was made throughout judah and jerusalem to bring in for the lord the tax that mooses the servant of god laid on israel in the wilderness until they had finished and whenever the chest was brought to the king's officers by the levites when they saw that there was much money in it the king's secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and take it and return it to its place thus they did day after day and collected money in abundance and the king and

[18:11] Jehoiada gave it to those who had charge of the work of the house of the lord and they hired masons and carpenters to restore the house of the lord and also workers of iron and bronze to repair the house of the lord so those who were engaged in the work labored and the repairing went forward in their hands and they restored the house of God to its proper condition and strengthened it and when they had finished they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada and with it were made utensils for the house of the lord both for the service and for the burnt offerings and dishes for incense and vessels of gold and silver and they offered burnt offerings in the house of the lord regularly all the days of Jehoiada but Jehoiada grew old and full of days and died he was a hundred and thirty years old at his death and they buried him in the city of David among the kings because he had done good in

Israel and towards God and his house now after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king then the king listened to them and they abandoned the house of the lord the god of their fathers came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the lord these testified against them but they would not pay attention then the spirit of the lord clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest and he stood above the people and said to them thus says God why do you break the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper because you have forsaken the lord he has forsaken you but they conspired against him and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the lord thus

Joash the king did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada Zechariah's father had shown him but killed his son and when he was dying he said may the Lord see and avenge and may God follow again with this blessing this reading of his own word let's sing once again in Psalm 106 this time Psalm 106 from the sing Psalms page 142 verse verse 34 to 43 and the tune this time is Ottawa they they did not destroy the peoples in accords with God's command but they mixed with them and followed all the customs of the land worshipping the idols there which to them became a snare sons they sacrificed and daughters to a

Canaanitish god thus the land was desecrated by the stain of guiltless blood by their acts they were defiled into filthiness beguiled so the lord was angry with them and his people he abhorred gave them over to the nations and their foe became their lord subject to their enemy they were treated cruelly many times he showed his power by delivering his own but they set their heart on sinning and rebelled against his throne in their sin they chose to stay and they wasted quite away these very solemn words going over part of the history of Israel and rebelling against the lord and choosing for themselves the ways of the nations around them the ways of idolatry so to Tsunotawa from 34 they did not destroy the peoples in accord with

God's command they did not destroy the peoples in accord with God's command but they mixed with them and followed all the customs of the land worshipping the idols there which to them became a snare sons they sacrificed and daughters to our king and knighted

[ 23 : 21 ] God thus their blood was desecrated by their sting of guiltless blood by their hearts they were defiled into filthiness they killed so the lord was angry with them and his people he abhorred gave them over to the nations and therefore became their lord subject to their enemy they were treated cruelly they were treated cruelly cruelly many times he showed his power by delivering his own but they set their heart on sinning and repelt against his throne in their sin they chose to stay they chose to stay and they wasted quite away please turn with me now to 2nd chronicles chapter 24 and we'll read again at verse 15 but Jehoiada grew old and full of days and died he was a hundred and thirty years old at his death and they buried him in the city of David among the kings because he had done good in Israel and towards God and his house after the death of Jehoiada the princes of Judah came and paid homage to the king then the king listened to them and they abandoned the house of the Lord the God of their fathers and served the Asherim and the idols and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the Lord these testified against them but they would not pay attention.

following the death of Jehoshaphat following the death of Jehoshaphat where you find a reference to that in chapter 20 the following years after that were very turbulent years in Israel turbulent because they were years when relatively short rains and bad rains bad kings followed Jehoshaphat and indeed that was generally true of this northern kingdom that had been set up after the death of Solomon when Rehoboam took over and caused the division of the kingdoms into the north and the south that remained like that with the south the tribe of Judah especially prominent in that and as you come to these references here in these chapters you'll find a reference there to Jehoram that he reigned for eight years they were bad years if you go back to chapter 21 and verse 20 there describes in very short compass what he was 32 years when he began to reign he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem and he departed with no one's regret they buried him in the city of David but not in the tombs of the kings well that's telling its own story isn't it the kind of king that he turned out to be and then you have

Ahaziah for a year he was then killed by Jehu and following that Athaliah for six years who ended up killing most of the Davidic family as you find there apart from Joash who was hidden in the temple of the Lord who was hidden so as he was he was actually saved from the slaughter that happened at that particular moment you find that at the previous chapters there especially when you find a reference there in chapter 22 where Jehoshabeath the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of Jehoiada the priest because she was a sister of Ahaziah she hid him from Athaliah Ahaziah the mother of Ahaziah all these names are a bit confusing but she hid him from Athaliah so that she did not put him to death and he remained with them for six years hidden in the house of God while Athaliah reigned over the land so he was spared he was not just spared but he was brought up in such a way as to be brought up in the ways of the Lord brought up by this by this couple but particularly under the teaching of Jehoiada the priest who while he was priest remained as a priest down through these turbulent years until as we read there in chapter 24 and verse 15 at 130 years old he died and then after he died as we'll see tonight the nation basically returned to what it had

been beforehand and it's a very sad story because under the care of Jehoiashabeath and Jehoiada Joash was brought up in these ways of the Lord and gave his time and attention to them and in fact as he was hidden there by them he came to know something of the ways of the Lord so that's going to be our first point tonight that Joash was brought up in the way of the Lord and then secondly our second point is that Joash abandoned the ways of the Lord especially following Jehoiada's death if you turn your mind back to chapter 22 and verse 12 he was brought up in the way of the Lord you can see in verse 12 there of chapter 22 how he remained with them for six years hidden in the house of God while Athaliah reigned over the land in other words this really effectively was six years of good teaching and good training given by Jehoiashabeath and the priest Jehoiada to this young man Joash who was destined to take over the throne so this was his grounding in the teaching of the ways of the Lord they obviously taught him the ways of the Lord they would have gone over many of the ways in which the Lord had dealt with his people had given his people the privilege of a covenant with them how they had abandoned that how they had left in previous times the ways of the Lord and so on and you can see from that that this in fact itself is an example of God actually overcoming the attempts of those who wanted to take the nation away altogether from their roots in covenant theology and in covenant teaching and in covenant relationship with God but God here provided this measure for Joash so that he would be brought up in the ways of the Lord when he began to reign we're thankful for that whenever you find attempts made to wipe out the church whenever you find attempts made such as in the

New Testament itself to the days of the apostle or the days of Jesus you'll find that so often you'll find the Lord providing a means by which his church if they're not altogether preserved then they're certainly protected in a measure against them being completely annihilated and he was hidden therefore in the house of the Lord and you know that's a reminder to us just in passing it's not going to be the main point this evening but it is a reminder to us because it's we're going to see how they abandoned again the ways of the Lord and how Joash abandoned the ways of the Lord despite his upbringing but here he was for these six years brought up in the ways of the Lord being taught by Jehoiada the faithful priest of the Lord and in Ephesians chapter 6 as you know verse 4 fathers especially are given instruction as to how to bring up their children and not to cause them to rebel against the Lord by treating them harshly or whatever they are to actually bring them up in what's called the nurture and discipline of the Lord or to put it another way in the training and discipline of the Lord because that's what the word means it's really a training it's a shaping and it was the same for Joash as he was brought up by Jehoiada for these years these early years of his life he was being trained in the ways of the Lord his life was being shaped by the truth of God by the ways of the Lord by the word of the Lord and that's why in our own setting especially and many others like us as well are concerned to actually have our children under the teaching of the word of God under the teaching of God's word in our homes in church in Sunday school and brought under the way in which the word of God can shape their lives positively because there's so many influences out there that will shape their lives in the wrong way and for you young people tonight be thankful that you have tonight not us just here in church but wherever you come under the word of the Lord if you're taught the word of the Lord at home if you're brought by your parents or grandparents or whoever to be familiar with the gospel with the Bible with the teachings of the Bible all that is designed to shape your life in a good way to bring about the kind of shape to your life and lifestyle and your thinking and your behavior and your way of life that will be approved of by God that will itself be a means by which you will honor the Lord and find in turn that he will honor you the training the shaping by the word of God of our lives and of course that's happening not just in terms of our Sunday school and church services such as these and in our homes as well all the other things that we engage in as well with our young folks with our children even the youngest children take for example the holiday club this coming week

[ 34 : 50 ] God willing that's going to be all built around the teaching of Mark's gospel about the Lord himself and the life of Christ as Mark's gospel presents that to us and our prayer is that these young folks will add that to whatever else they receive of teaching in their lives and even if there are some as there will be that aren't familiar with a church setting aren't familiar with coming to church or to Sunday school that they will actually themselves see something of the importance of Jesus the importance of living by faith in Christ and coming to dedicate their life to the Lord all of that is really together how we try and in all that amalgamation of means and of efforts to have our young children and our older children shaped like ourselves as adults in the ways of the Lord shaped by the truth of God so there is

Joash he was hidden and brought up in the ways of the Lord hidden in the temple for these years and we're applying that to the importance of training up our children as well as we're able to in the ways of the Lord in the nurture and training and discipline of the Lord but then secondly Joash came to abandon the ways of the Lord and this is from chapter 24 and verse 17 also you'll find first of all it mentions that from verse 15 after Jehoiada died he was 130 years old and they buried him in the city of David among the kings now Joash followed the ways of the Lord while Jehoiada lived and as soon as Jehoiada had died the princes of the nation came and influenced Joash in a bad way but you notice what it says there in verses 24 chapter 24 all the way through from verse 1 onwards

Joash did what was right in the days of the Lord in the eyes of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest and then it goes on to describe how Joash dedicated himself to restore the house of the Lord the temple of the Lord that had fallen into serious disrepair and you can see all the way through there that he is actually engaged in obedience to the Lord outwardly he is following the ways of the Lord in his own life he is engaged in following the teaching that he was given by Jehoiada to the extent even of arranging the repair and setting up again of the temple and the ways of the temple of the Lord that had fallen into neglect why had it fallen into neglect well it had fallen into neglect not just because people had just forgotten about its influence or somehow or other just ambled in or casually drifted away into that sort of neglect of the temple of the Lord the neglect of the temple of the Lord is an indication of their spiritual neglect of their spiritual abandonment of the ways of the Lord they neglected the temple of the Lord because they lost interest in the Lord they lost interest in the Lord because they replaced the Lord with these idols the Baals as they are called the gods of the Canaanites the idols of the Canaanites these people who had come to know the Lord's ways who had come to know so much of the benefit of being rescued by the Lord from Egypt led by the Lord through years in the wilderness established by the Lord in the land of Canaan and here they are and what are they doing they're saying let's just follow the Baals let's just follow the ways of the idolaters the Canaanites and let's just leave the temple it's no use to us anymore and the neglect came from spiritual decline but in the days of Joash there was gladness there was actually rejoicing in the repairing of the temple as you find it there described those who were engaged in the work labored repairing what went forward in their hands and they were actually glad to be able to contribute to the repair of the temple of the house of the Lord now you remember that the books of the Chronicles are very late composition in the history of Judah they're actually books written for the encouragement of those who came back from Babylon having been there for many years in captivity under the Babylonians and the many references to the temple that you find in the books of the Chronicles are themselves a way of encouraging the people as they come back to Jerusalem having been in Babylon to get on with rebuilding the temple and rebuilding the ways and the worship of the Lord there that's by the way but that's important to remember that that's the message of the Chronicler of the books of the Chronicles the people were glad to be able to restore the temple in the days of Joash because they read about things that had happened in the past and in the future the same thing happened with those who came back from Babylon so it's important for us always to frequent ourselves with the history of God's people especially the history of God's people that you find written in the Bible itself maybe for some of us history is not really our favorite subject it's maybe something that we found boring while we were in school maybe the teaching of history was just something that went through a whole series of dates and important events in our own nation or whatever but the history you find in the Bible is crucially important it sets out for you the way that God dealt with his people the way that God actually came to rescue his people the way that God dealt them

as they turned their back on him all of these things are so important as the years went by and the people through the prophets were reminded again and again of the importance of their history as God's covenant people by the way so Jehoiada while Jehoiada lived Joash was faithful to the Lord once he died he actually abandoned the ways of the Lord Jehoiada was a great leader and when you see what's spoken about him here in verse 15 he grew old and was full of days and died he was 130 when he died and they buried him in the city of David among the kings very unusual for a priest to be buried among the kings but they did that as it says because he had done so much good in Israel and towards God and his house Jehoiada's lifespan 130 years was the longest recorded lifespan since the life of Jacob many many many years before and that itself is an indicator of his faithfulness to the Lord and how vital he was in his own place in the nation at the time but here the people after the death of Jehoiada the princes came and paid homage to the king and the king

listened to them and they abandoned the house of the Lord the God of their fathers in other words they followed bad advice they followed the advice of the princes rather than just give heed to the teaching that Jehoiada and the example that he had left them and Jehoash especially was involved in leading that abandonment of the ways of the Lord now that is a serious and solemn point just imagine remember what is spoken of in the earlier part of the chapter about Jehoash's leadership in repairing the temple the house of the Lord and how that in fact was something that he made provision for and yet here he is and what's he doing he's now in the leadership of abandoning the house of the Lord of leaving the house of the Lord the God of their fathers why did that happen how could such a thing take place a young man in his youth brought up in the ways of the Lord and here he is now that he's gone on in years and he's coming to abandon the ways of the Lord because he followed the bad advice given by the princes of the nation well it seems that one thing that you can read into that is that

Jehoash had not really learned to apply his own mind to his life and to his leadership and it's always important for you and for me even if we follow the teaching of others like Jehoiada was to Jehoash that we don't just follow what Jehoiada or anybody else says just for the sake of it you don't follow the Lord just out of your respect for human beings you don't follow the Lord just automatically giving a place to whatever teaching you've been given good though it might have been on the part of whoever it is gives you that teaching if you're following the ways of the Lord tonight during the different ministries in this congregation and in the ministries God willing that may follow our ministry here you don't follow the ways of the Lord for the sake of those that have taught you the word of God you do it by applying your own mind to the truth of God as revealed to you in the Bible you learn to think for yourself you learn to think your way through the teaching of the Bible you learn to ask yourself what does Jesus mean to me why did Jesus come into the world why did Jesus die the death he did why was he resurrected from the dead why does the Bible tell me he's at the right hand of God why does the Bible tell me he's coming again you learn to think through the teaching of the Bible about the church of Christ all the way through from the Old Testament into the New Testament church learning about how in fact the church in the days of the apostles came to multiply why did they multiply what is at work there what sort of power was at work you see you apply your own minds to it you don't just rely on somebody else's thinking similar to what Joash did he relied upon Jehoiada and as long as Jehoiada lived he went by the word of Jehoiada who gave him the word of the Lord he had never really considered the word of the Lord really deep in his own heart and mind for himself so when these princes came he was very quickly turned aside and led this abandonment of the house of the Lord you know it's important for you tonight to think for yourself because the Christian faith is not an unthinking faith it's not by any means a faith void of emotion void of that sort of thing there's plenty of that but you have to use your own mind you have to use a mind that is fueled by the word and by the spirit of God you have to ask the Lord as your life goes on

[ 46 : 04 ] Lord teach me your laws teach me your ways lead me into the avenues of your truth help me to exercise my mind for my own sake whatever else anybody says help me to use my mind as it's designed to be to come to a right conclusion so that they are my conclusions not the conclusions of somebody who's taught me things I remember the people of the woman of Samaria the place there Saichar where she lived when she went back to speak of having come to know the Lord that she met at the well and inviting them to come and hear this man who had told her all things that she ever did can this not be must this not be the Christ what does it say later in the chapter they were going out to him in streams from the city they were going out to him in hordes multitudes to hear him and what did they then say now we believe not for your word for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ why do you believe in Christ tonight not because some minister told you even though some minister whoever individual might have led you to Christ might have persuaded you to think seriously about Christ you believe in Christ because you exercise your own mind in regard to what you were taught what the Bible itself presented to you what the person that led you to Christ was saying to you you don't do it for their sake you're doing it because your mind was occupied in thinking through the truth of God

I know if you want and if you and I want to remain in the ways of being faithful to the Lord the way to do it is to exercise your own mind constantly as your life goes on ask yourself the proper questions put the truth of God to your own situation and don't be like Joash who was led away by the princes of Israel and I want to say this to the young folk especially because many of you will be leaving

home some of you have already left home and are expecting to go back either to work or to college or university and there's a lot of benefit in doing that but as you know very well I'm sure there's a lot of danger attached to it as well because they're not necessarily different influences that you're going to meet compared to the influences you have here in the town or on the island but it'll be a different setting you are brought up in the ways of the Lord that's what leaving you here that's why you went through Sunday school that's why you went to youth fellowship that's why all of these ways the ways of the Lord came to be lodged in your heart well I say this to you tonight don't be taken in by those who want you to abandon the ways of the

Lord look what happened in the days of Joash he listened to these princes of Judah and they led him away from a life that would be good and beneficial to him into the ways of the Canaanites that world out there friends is waiting for you to embrace it it will do everything possible to persuade you that that's the way of life really that's best for you the way of life that lives by the ways of the world by what the world calls its own values not the ways of God's truth not the ways you learn as you're brought up in the church of God not the ways that you learn under the gospel but the ways of sin the ways of sinful behavior the ways of turning against the Lord the ways of being opposed to God and what he's saying to you don't listen to any of those influences because their design is that you will leave the ways of the

Lord and follow the ways of the world don't let Satan persuade you to do that follow the God of your fathers of your mothers of your grandfathers the God of this Bible the God of this church the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ so he left the Lord after the ways of the Lord because he followed bad advice and along with that he rejected God's word look at verse 19 because it's a very interesting verse yet as it says their wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the Lord he sent prophets among them even though it says their wrath came upon Judah whose wrath God's wrath came upon them yet he sent prophets among them to bring them back to the Lord now that tells you a lot tonight about the Lord about this God whom we worship because despite all that he knew had happened and all that he saw that he detested and the idolatry to which they had turned and despite the fact that wrath came upon them he didn't stop speaking to them he didn't say to them go your own way have it your way see how you get on he could have done that they deserved that but that's not how this God operates instead of doing that what did he do he sent prophets to them he sent prophets among them why to bring them back to the Lord and that says so much about God you know if you want to abandon the ways of the Lord the Lord will tell you that's not what I want you to do but if you do that my word is still going to chase you because I want you to come back to the Lord and tonight let's think and pray for those who once used to be here or once used to be in other churches but are not there tonight who are brought up in the ways of the Lord who are persuaded for whatever reason to turn away from the ways of the

[ 52 : 27 ] Lord to go back into the ways of the world have we neglected them perhaps sadly we have have we been faithful in trying to persuade them back perhaps not but one thing's for sure God has not let them out of his sight and this really encourages you and I tonight that even as you find people turning away from the Lord turning their back upon the Lord you can come to this God and say Lord were you not the God in the day of Joash that still sent your word and sent your word with a specific purpose of bringing them back to the Lord Lord will you not speak to them will you not bring them back will you not bring them into the ways of the Lord again here is a great encouragement that God did not abandon these people and allow them just to go their own way he sent prophets they testified against them they brought the mind of the

Lord to them and then what does it say but they would not pay attention do you not find these among the saddest words you could read even in the Bible that here was God burdened to bring them back if you like and sent prophets specifically to preach his word to them to bring his judgment to them to testify against them as to the seriousness of what they had done but they would not pay attention you see when you leave the ways of the Lord you're entering a very very dangerous path when anyone leaves the ways of the Lord they ought never to persuade themselves I can come back in the future when I choose to that may never happen because when you come to harden your heart against the Lord to close your mind against the Lord you have absolutely no guarantee even if the

Lord keeps speaking to you and keeps speaking into your conscience you have no guarantee that you will pay attention that you will listen seriously to God please whatever you do listen seriously

whenever God is speaking to you don't be like these people who would not pay attention even though God went to such effort as to bring these prophets to them to bring his word to bring his will to them and tonight we pray that those who have gone away from the Lord for whatever reason and especially those who maybe were following the Lord before the dreadful days of COVID and all that's associated with COVID and the complications that that caused in people's lives and undoubtedly many people did fall away spiritually but let's pray friends that God will keep sending his word and that he will keep sending us as well to bring his word to them to persuade them that God has not changed that God is still willing to have them back that the reason God still speaks to them through his word is because they will not have him to be abandoned altogether they rejected God's word and so they brought destruction upon themselves I'm not going to go into it tonight because our time is largely gone but from verse 20 there you find how the Lord used Zechariah interesting words the spirit of the Lord clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada here is Jehoiada present as it were through his son and the Lord is using Zechariah the son of Jehoiada to speak to the people to appeal to them why do you break the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper because you have forsaken the Lord he has forsaken you this is not a call to vengeance even though it finishes there may the Lord see and avenge the words there really literally mean may the Lord see and seek it doesn't necessarily mean God's vengeance and judgment brought upon them but may the Lord seek them out may the Lord seek them to do with them as he sees best but obviously burdened for their return as the Lord himself is and then you find the account there of the destruction that came upon them the Syrians came upon them all the things that happened as you read it down from that point onwards in the chapter and then you find there in verse 16 how the burial of Jehoiada was amongst the kings of Israel because he had done good in Israel and towards God and his house and what a contrast that is to what you find elsewhere and the burial and the contrast of others before then who were not buried with the kings because they had done evil against the Lord even though they had been kings so what is this really saying to us if we can conclude briefly with a word about the summary basically of why do we have all these portraits in this gallery of portraits of kings that you find in the books of the chronicles what's the reason for this how can we actually use the books of the chronicles tonight in our own situation in your own life in our own day in our own circumstances well I like to look at the regard the books of the chronicles as a gallery of paintings a gallery of paintings of these kings because it's largely taking you through the history in a way that specifies the various kings the one that followed on from the other all the way through right through to the end when the captivity happened in

[ 58 : 41 ] Judah in Babylon Babylon why do you have that what is there in this gallery well there's one thing that's missing and I like to think of this as a gallery of pictures of these kings but there's one at the end of the collection that's blank there's no portrait in it why is that because the perfect king is still being awaited the Messiah is not yet here as you read these verses and the perfect king will come and did come and was revealed in Jesus who is the king of kings and the lord of lords and the last word in the scriptures of the old testament I may have mentioned this on another occasion but 2nd chronicles if you have a Hebrew bible

Hebrew text 2nd chronicles is the last book in the Hebrew bible and that's interesting because when you read the last words of 2nd chronicles and think of them as the very last words of the Hebrew old testament scriptures it says this verse 23 thus says Cyrus king of Persia the lord the god of heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah whoever is among you of all his people may the lord his god be with him let him go up now that was spoken to people still in Babylon by the king Cyrus of Persia to go from Babylonians and opened up the way for the Jews to return from captivity in Babylon but think of them spiritually here are the last words of the old testament scriptures in the Hebrew of the text and what's the next thing you find you find the new testament and so when you find these last words let him go up it's really in a sense an anticipation of that king that has not arrived by the time second chronicles closes but came to be born in Bethlehem in the city of David a savior who is Christ the Lord and tonight this is saying to me and it's saying to you god is saying one reason i've given you these scriptures in the books of chronicles is that you too will go up that you too will examine these kings and say now i understand why jesus came who jesus is why he is perfect why i need him and how i must trust in him because i've examined all of these kings you might say and although this is a time of preparation obviously the king of kings has not yet arrived

but he has now so go up to him ascend to where he is in your thoughts in your faith in your lifestyle because that's really what this is saying to us and if you do that you arrive at Jesus and when you arrive at Jesus you realize that's what this whole Bible is intended to bring me to to trust in the savior for myself let's pray Lord our God we thank you for these scriptures for the way that we find them so meaningful in relation to the coming of the messiah the king who is himself perfect in contrast to all who came before him and all who succeeded him also and we thank you that he came into this world not in the splendor of kingly majesty but dressed as a servant and came to give his life a ransom for many and that he came to fulfill those things that were predicted of him over many centuries that he would indeed come to be the sacrifice that would forever deal with sin Lord we confess our sins to you as the one who has come to deal with our sin and to take them to yourself and so we pray tonight that our heart may know you as this king as this altogether lovely king as this great king the saving king the spiritual warrior bless us we pray in Jesus name Amen we're going to conclude our service now singing to God's praise in Psalm 17 Psalm 17 this is in the Scottish psalter page 217 and we're singing verses 5 to 9 tune this time is Salzburg hold up my goings Lord me guide in those thy paths divine so that my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine Psalm 17 verses 5 to 9 hold up my goings Lord me guide in and those thy paths divine so that

my footsteps may not slide out of those ways of thine they need I call in May'st hearken to my speech, To me incline thy ear.

Thy wondrous loving kindness show, Thou that by thy bright hand Saves them, Thou trust in thee, From those that up against them stand.

[ 66 : 09 ] As the apple of the ivy keep, In thy wings shed me close, From these oppressors compassing, May my heart have deadly foes.

I'll go to the door to my left after the benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore. Amen. Amen.

Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.