

The Death of Ahab (853n BC)

1 Kings 22:29–40

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.
 30 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.
 31 But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.
 32 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it *is* the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out.

33 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.
 34 And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.
 35 And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot.
 36 And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.
 37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.
 38 And *one* washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armor; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake.

39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?
 40 So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 18:28–19:3

18:28 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramothgilead.
 29 And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle.
 30 Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that *were* with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel.
 31 And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It *is* the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him; and God moved them *to depart* from him.
 32 For it came to pass, that, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back again from pursuing him.
 33 And a *certain* man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn thine hand, that thou mayest carry me out of the host; for I am wounded.
 34 And the battle increased that day: howbeit the king of Israel stayed *himself* up in *his* chariot against the Syrians until the even: and about the time of the sun going down he died.

19:1 And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.
 2 And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore *is* wrath upon thee from before the LORD.
 3 Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God.

Ahaziah, Ahab's Son, Assumes the Throne of Israel (853n BC)

1 Kings 22:51–53

51 Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel.

52 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin:

53 For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

Moab Rebels Against Israel (853n BC)

2 Kings 1:1

2 Kings 3:4–5

1 Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

4 And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool.

5 But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

Jehoshaphat's Judicial Reforms (853n BC)

2 Chronicles 19:4–11

4 And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beersheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers.

5 And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city,

6 And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment.

7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do *it*: for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.

8 Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and *of* the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem.

9 And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart.

10 And what cause soever shall come to you of your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgments, ye shall even warn them that they trespass not against the LORD, and so wrath come upon you, and upon your brethren: this do, and ye shall not trespass.

11 And, behold, Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters: also the Levites *shall be* officers before you. Deal courageously, and the LORD shall be with the good.

God Gives Jehoshaphat Victory Over Moab (c. 853n BC)

2 Chronicles 20:1–30; 1 Kings 22:47

War Comes to Judah

2 Chr 20:1 It came to pass after this also, *that* the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them *other* beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

2 Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they *be* in Hazazontamar, which *is* Engedi.

Jehoshaphat's Prayer

3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask *help* of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

6 And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou God in heaven? and rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand *is there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

7 *Art* not thou our God, *who* didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?

8 And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

9 If, *when* evil cometh upon us, *as* the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name *is* in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.

10 And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came

out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;

11 Behold, *I say, how* they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

12 O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes *are* upon thee.

God Speaks Through Jahaziel

13 And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

14 Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;

15 And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle *is* not yours, but God's.

16 To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 Ye shall not *need* to fight in this *battle*: set yourselves, stand ye *still*, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD *will be* with you.

18 And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

19 And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.

Jehoshaphat Follows God's Command

20 And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy *endureth* for ever.

God Gives the Victory

22 And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy *them*: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another.

24 And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they *were* dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.

25 And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.

26 And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day.

27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

28 And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD.

Peace for Judah

29 And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries, when they had heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.

Judah Rules Edom

1 Kgs 22:47 *There was* then no king in Edom: a deputy *was* king.

Jehoshaphat's Unwise Partnership with Ahaziah (852n BC)

1 Kings 22:48–49

2 Chronicles 20:35–37

48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to go to Ophir for gold:

35 And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly:

36 And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish:

<p>but they went not; for the ships were broken at Eziongeber.</p> <p>49 Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not.</p>	<p>and they made the ships in Eziongeber. 37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the LORD hath broken thy works.</p> <p>And the ships were broken, that they were not able to go to Tarshish.</p>
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Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.

Chronological Notes

1) There are enough differences in the accounts of the Moabite wars (2 Kgs 3:4–27; 2 Chr 20:1–30) that commentators typically do not see them as referring to the same event (although some interpret 2 Chr 20 as a midrash of 2 Kgs 3). In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat is alone, aided by Jahaziel (not Elisha), and the conclusion of the story is a resounding victory for God and Judah. By contrast, 2 Kings 3 records an alliance of kings (Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and the king of Edom), the aid of Elisha, and the story ends with a defeat of Mesha’s army while Mesha himself escapes and Israel is forced to withdraw. Given these differences, no attempt will be made to harmonize the two accounts. What remains, however, is to decide which war occurred first.

A) Argument for 2 Chronicles 20:1–30 occurring before 2 Kings 3:4–27:¹

(1) In 2 Kings 3:8, Jehoram proposed that they attack Moab by way of Edom. This would make sense if the 2 Chronicles 20 war had already occurred—Edom had been part of the Moabite army (2 Chr 20:10) and was subjugated to Judah after Jehoshaphat’s victory. The fact that the Moabites and Ammonites had turned on the Edomites (2 Chr 20:23) would explain Edom’s willingness to ally with Judah and Israel against Moab in the 2 Kings 3 war. On this view, 1 Kings 22:47 is understood as a short reference to the result of the 2 Chronicles 20 war: Jehoshaphat placed his deputy as king over Edom and it was that “king” who joined Jehoram and Jehoshaphat in the 2 Kings 3 offensive. Further, if 2 Chronicles 20 occurred soon after Ahab’s death, it would explain how Jehoshaphat later felt free to launch a shipping venture with Ahaziah far to the south in Ezion-geber which was Edomite territory (cf. 2 Chr 8:17; 20:35–36).

B) Argument for 2 Kings 3:4–27 occurring before 2 Chronicles 20:1–30:²

(1) The 2 Kings 3 war did not end in complete victory—Mesha’s army was destroyed, but Mesha himself escaped and such was his “fury” (2 Kgs 3:26–27) that Israel was forced to withdraw. By contrast, the 2 Chronicles 20 war ended in total victory for Judah, and God gave Jehoshaphat “rest all around” (2 Chr 20:29–30). This strong element of finality argues for the 2 Chronicles 20 war being the second and last war of Jehoshaphat. On this view, the 2 Kings 3 war becomes the motivation for a renewed attack in 2 Chronicles 20 by a strengthened Moabite king who attacked Judah first by way of Edom—this gave the element of surprise and meant that Edom, eager to throw off the yoke of Judah, could add their forces to the army.

C) After much dithering, I decided to go with 2 Chronicles 20 occurring before 2 Kings 3. This conclusion may change given new data or further research.

¹ See C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, “1 and 2 Kings,” *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 213; Richard D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, “1 Samuel–2 Kings,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 180; Joe M. Sprinkle, “2 Kings 3: History or Historical Fiction?” *BBR* 9 (1999): 247–270. Also F. LaGard Smith, *The Narrated Bible*, 716–726.

² Martin J. Selman, “2 Chronicles,” *TOTC*, 421–22; Sara Japhet, “I & II Chronicles,” *OTL*, 786; Richard D. Patterson and Hermann J. Austel, “1 Samuel–2 Kings,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Revised Ed.*, 819 n. 9 (Patterson and Austel apparently changed their view and this is reflected in the revised edition of the *EBC*).