

### The Death of Ahab (853n BC)

1 Kings 22:29–40

29 Then the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth-Gilead.

30 Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you wear your robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself, and he went into the battle.

31 The king of Aram commanded his thirty-two chariot commanders, saying, “You shall not fight with small or great, but only against the king of Israel, him alone!”

32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, “Surely he *is* the king of Israel,” and they turned to fight against him, so Jehoshaphat called out.

33 When the chariot commanders saw that it *was* not the king of Israel, they turned away from him.

34 But another man drew his bow fully and struck the king of Israel between the armor scales and the breastplate; so he said to his chariot driver, “Turn the chariot and bring me out from the camp, for I am wounded.”

35 The battle intensified on that day, and the king was being propped up in the chariot opposite Aram, but he died in the evening, and the blood of the wound ran out to the floor of the chariot.

36 Then the shout passed through the camp about sunset, saying, “Each man to his city and each to his land!”

37 So the king died, and they brought him to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria.

38 They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked his blood (now, the prostitutes washed themselves *there*) according to the word of Yahweh which he had spoken.

39 The remainder of the acts of Ahab and all that he did, and the ivory palace and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the scroll of the events of the days of the kings of Israel?

40 So Ahab slept with his ancestors, and Ahaziah his son became king in his place.

2 Chronicles 18:28–19:3

18:28 Then the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth-Gilead.

29 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you, wear your garments.” So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went to war.

30 Now the king of Aram had commanded the commanders of his chariots, saying, “Do not fight with the small *or* the great, but only with the king of Israel.”

31 And it happened *that* when the commanders of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, then they said, “It *is* the king of Israel!” And they turned against him to fight. Then Jehoshaphat cried out and Yahweh helped him. God drove them away from him.

32 And it happened *that* when the commanders of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from following him.

33 Now a certain man drew the bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the soldering of *his* breastplate armor. Then he said to the chariot driver, “Turn around; get me away from the *war* camp, for I am wounded.”

34 And the battle went on that day, and the king of Israel was propped up in the chariot facing Aram until the evening. And he died at the time of the going down of the sun.

19:1 Then Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.

2 And Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him. And he said to King Jehoshaphat, “Should you *be* a help to the wicked and love those who hate Yahweh? On account of this, wrath *has come* against you from Yahweh.

3 Nevertheless some good things have been found in regard to you, for you burned the Asherahs out of the land and set your heart to seek God.”

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

1 Kings 22:51–53

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

52 He did evil in the eyes of Yahweh, and he went in the way of his father and his mother and in the way of Jeroboam son of Nebat who caused Israel to sin.

53 He served Baal and bowed down to him; and he provoked Yahweh the God of Israel according to all that his father did.

### Moab Rebels Against Israel (853n BC)

2 Kings 1:1

2 Kings 3:4–5

1 Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

4 Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and he used to deliver to the king of Israel a hundred thousand male lambs and a hundred thousand wool rams.

5 It happened that when Ahab died, Mesha king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

### Jehoshaphat's Judicial Reforms (853n BC)

2 Chronicles 19:4–11

4 And Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem and returned and went out among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to Yahweh, the God of their ancestors.

5 And he appointed judges in the land and in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city.

6 And he said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you are not judging for a man but for Yahweh. Now *he is* with you in speaking justice.

7 So now, let the fear of Yahweh be upon you all. Be careful what you do, for there is neither wickedness nor showing partiality and taking bribes with Yahweh our God."

8 Moreover, Jehoshaphat appointed in Jerusalem some of the Levites and the priests and heads of the families of Israel as judges and to decide legal disputes for Yahweh. And they sat *in* Jerusalem.

9 And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you must do in the fear of Yahweh in faithfulness and with a whole heart.

10 Any legal dispute that comes before you from your brothers who live in their cities concerning bloodguilt, law, commandment, statutes, and justice, you must warn them, so that they do not incur guilt before Yahweh, and that wrath may not come upon you and your brothers. Thus you must do that you do not incur guilt.

11 And behold, Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the word of Yahweh, and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the governor of the house of Judah, in all matters of the king, and the Levites *shall be* before you *as* officials. Be strong and do *well!* May Yahweh be with the upright."

### 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 And it happened *that* afterward, the Moabites, the Ammonites, and some of the Meunites came against Jehoshaphat for war.

2 And they came and reported *it* to Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude from beyond the sea, from Aram, is coming against you. Now behold, *they are* in Hazazon Tamar" (that *is*, En Gedi).

#### Jehoshaphat's Prayer

3 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek Yahweh. And he called for a fast through all Judah.

4 And Judah assembled to seek after Yahweh; even from all the cities of Judah they came to seek Yahweh.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of Yahweh before the new courtyard.

6 And he said, "O Yahweh, God of our ancestors, are you not God in heaven? Now you rule in all the kingdoms of the nations, and in your hand *are* power and might, and there is none *who can* resist against you.

7 O, our God, did you yourself not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham your friend forever?

8 And they lived in it and built for you a sanctuary for your name in it, saying,

9 'If disaster, a sword, punishment, disease, or famine come upon us, we shall stand before this house and before you—for your name *is* in this house—and cry out to you out of our trouble, then you will hear and save *us*.'

10 And now, look, the people of Moab and Ammon and Mount Seir whom you did not allow Israel to come against when they came from Egypt, from whom they turned aside and did not destroy,

11 now behold, they are rewarding us by coming to dispossess us from your possession which you gave us as an inheritance.

12 O our God, will you not judge them, for there is no power in us before this great multitude that is coming against us. Now we do not know what we shall do, for our eyes *are* upon you."

#### God Speaks Through Jahaziel

13 And all Judah was standing before Yahweh, *and* also their little children, their wives, and their children.

14 Then the Spirit of Yahweh came upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite from the descendants of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly.

15 And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat, thus says Yahweh to you: 'Do not be afraid and

do not be dismayed before this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's.

16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they are coming up the ascent of Ziz. And you will find them at the end of the valley facing the desert of Jeruel.

17 *There will be no need* for you to fight in this *battle*. Take your stand! Stand and see the deliverance of Yahweh among you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear and do not be dismayed. Tomorrow go out before them and Yahweh *will be* with you.”

18 Then Jehoshaphat bowed his face down to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before Yahweh to worship Yahweh.

19 Then the Levites, from the Kohathites and from the Korahites stood up to praise Yahweh the God of Israel with an exceedingly loud voice.

#### Jehoshaphat Follows God's Command

20 And they rose up early in the morning and went out to the desert of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, “Hear me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in Yahweh your God, and you shall be established! Believe in his prophets, and you shall succeed!”

21 And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed singers to Yahweh *who were* giving praise to the splendor of *his* holiness when they went out before the army. And they said, “Give thanks to Yahweh, for his loyal love *is* everlasting!”

#### God Gives the Victory

22 And when they began with singing and praise, Yahweh set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who were coming against Judah. And they were defeated

23 when the people of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to destroy and demolish *them*. And when the inhabitants of Seir had made an end of them, each helped to destroy his comrade.

24 And Judah came against the watchtower of the wilderness. And they looked at the crowd, and behold, corpses were lying on the ground. There was none *who had* escaped.

25 When Jehoshaphat came with his people to plunder their booty, they found among them in abundance possessions, corpses, and precious items. And they took plunder for themselves until they could carry no more. And they were three days in plundering the booty, for it *was* abundant.

26 And on the fourth day, they assembled in the Valley of Berakah, for there they blessed Yahweh. Therefore the name of that place is called the Valley of Berakah up to this day.

27 And all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned, and Jehoshaphat *was* at their head in returning to Jerusalem with joy, for Yahweh caused them to rejoice over their enemies.

28 And they came to Jerusalem with harps, stringed instruments, and trumpets to the house of Yahweh.

#### Peace for Judah

29 And the fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the earth when they heard that Yahweh had fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at rest, since his God gave rest to him all around.

#### Judah Rules Edom

1 Kgs 22:47 There was not a king in Edom; a governor *served* as king.

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

1 Kings 22:48–49

48 Jehoshaphat built ships of the Tarshish *type* to go to Ophir for the gold;

but he did not go because the ships were destroyed at Ezion-Geber.

49 Then Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, “Let my servants go with your servants in the ships,” but Jehoshaphat was not willing.

2 Chronicles 20:35–37

35 And afterward Jehoshaphat the king of Judah joined with Ahaziah the king of Israel, who acted wickedly.

36 He joined with him to build ships to go to Tarshish.

And they built the ships in Ezion Geber.

37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because of your joining with Ahaziah, Yahweh will break down your works.”

And the ships were destroyed and were not able to go to Tarshish.

## 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:<sup>1</sup>
    - (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:<sup>2</sup>
    - (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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Martin J. Selman, “2 Chronicles,” *TOTC*, 421–22; Sara Japhet, “1 & 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*).