

The Death of Ahab (853n BC)

1 Kings 22:29–40

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth-gilead.

30 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into the battle, but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into the battle.

31 Now the king of Aram had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, "Do not fight with small or great, but with the king of Israel alone."

32 So when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "Surely it is the king of Israel," and they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat cried out.

33 When the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

34 Now a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the fight; for I am severely wounded."

35 The battle raged that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot in front of the Arameans, and died at evening, and the blood from the wound ran into the bottom of the chariot.

36 Then a cry passed throughout the army close to sunset, saying, "Every man to his city and every man to his country."

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

38 They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood (now the harlots bathed themselves *there*), according to the word of the LORD which He spoke.

39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did and the ivory house which he built and all the cities which 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 became king in his place.

2 Chronicles 18:28–19:3

18:28 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up against Ramoth-gilead.

29 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

30 Now the king of Aram had commanded the captains of his chariots, saying, "Do not fight with small or great, but with the king of Israel alone."

31 So when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "It is the king of Israel," and they turned aside to fight against him. But Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him.

32 When the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him.

33 A certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of the chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the fight, for I am severely wounded."

34 The battle raged that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot in front of the Arameans until the evening; and at sunset he died.

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

2 Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so *bring* wrath on yourself from the LORD?"

3 "But there is *some* good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your 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 became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel.

52 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 caused Israel to sin.

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

Moab Rebels Against Israel (853n BC)

2 Kings 1:1

2 Kings 3:4–5

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

4 Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and used to pay the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams.

5 But when

Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

Jehoshaphat's Judicial Reforms (853n BC)

2 Chronicles 19:4–11

4 So Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem and went out again among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and brought them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers.

5 He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city.

6 He said to the judges, "Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD who is with you when you render judgment.

7 "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe."

8 In Jerusalem also Jehoshaphat appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the heads of the fathers' households of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD and to judge disputes among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

9 Then he charged them saying, "Thus you shall do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and wholeheartedly.

10 "Whenever any dispute comes to you from your brethren who live in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and ordinances, you shall warn them so that they may not be guilty before the LORD, and wrath may *not* come on you and your brethren. Thus you shall do and you will not be guilty.

11 "Behold, Amariah the chief priest will be over you in all that pertains to the LORD, and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all that pertains to the king. Also the Levites shall be officers before you. Act resolutely, and the LORD 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 Now it came about after this that the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon, together with some of the Meunites, came to make war against Jehoshaphat.

2 Then some came and reported to Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, out of Aram and behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar (that is Engedi)."

Jehoshaphat's Prayer

3 Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

4 So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court,

6 and he said, "O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You.

7 "Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

8 "They have lived in it, and have built You a sanctuary there for Your name, saying,

9 'Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver *us*.'

10 "Now behold, the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt (they turned aside from them and did not destroy them),

11 see *how* they are rewarding us by coming to drive us out from Your possession which You have given us as an inheritance.

12 "O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You."

God Speaks Through Jahaziel

13 All Judah was standing before the LORD, with their infants, their wives and their children.

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

15 and he said, "Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not fear or

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

16 'Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel.

17 'You *need* not fight in this *battle*; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the LORD is with you."

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

19 The Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

Jehoshaphat Follows God's Command

20 They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the LORD your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed."

21 When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who praised *Him* in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, "Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

God Gives the Victory

22 When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed.

23 For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying *them* completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 When Judah came to the lookout of the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude, and behold, they *were* corpses lying on the ground, and no one had escaped.

25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their spoil, they found much among them, *including* goods, garments and valuable things which they took for themselves, more than they could carry. And they were three days taking the spoil because there was so much.

26 Then on the fourth day they assembled in the valley of Beracah, for there they blessed the LORD. Therefore they have named that place "The Valley of Beracah" until today.

27 Every man of Judah and Jerusalem returned with Jehoshaphat at their head, returning to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

28 They came to Jerusalem with harps, lyres and trumpets to the house of the LORD.

Peace for Judah

29 And the dread of God was on all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel.

30 So the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God gave him rest on all sides.

Judah Rules Edom

1 Kgs 22:47 Now there was no king in Edom; a deputy was king.

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

1 Kings 22:48-49

48 Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold,

but they did not go for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber.

49 Then Ahaziah the 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 After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel. He acted wickedly in so doing.
36 So he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion-geber.
37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works."
So the ships were broken and could not 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 3:4–27:¹
 - (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*).