

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

1 Kings 22:29–40

29 The king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah attacked Ramoth Gilead.

30 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and then enter into the battle; but you wear your royal robes.” So the king of Israel disguised himself and then entered into the battle.

31 Now the king of Syria had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders, “Do not fight common soldiers or high-ranking officers; fight only the king of Israel.”

32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, “He must be the king of Israel.” So they turned and attacked him, but Jehoshaphat cried out.

33 When the chariot commanders realized he was not the king of Israel, they turned away from him.

34 Now an archer shot an arrow at random, and it struck the king of Israel between the plates of his armor. The king ordered his charioteer, “Turn around and take me from the battle line, because I’m wounded.”

35 While the battle raged throughout the day, the king stood propped up in his chariot opposite the Syrians. He died in the evening; the blood from the wound ran down into the bottom of the chariot.

36 As the sun was setting, a cry went through the camp, “Each one should return to his city and to his homeland.”

37 So the king died and was taken to Samaria, where they buried him.

38 They washed off the chariot at the pool of Samaria (this was where the prostitutes bathed); dogs licked his blood, just as the LORD had said would happen.

39 The rest of the events of Ahab’s reign, including a record of his accomplishments and how he built a luxurious palace and various cities, are recorded in the scroll called the Annals of the Kings of Israel.

40 Ahab passed away. His son Ahaziah replaced him as king.

2 Chronicles 18:28–19:3

18:28 The king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah attacked Ramoth Gilead.

29 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, “I will disguise myself and then enter the battle; but you wear your royal attire.” So the king of Israel disguised himself and they entered the battle.

30 Now the king of Syria had ordered his chariot commanders, “Do not fight common soldiers or high ranking officers; fight only the king of Israel!”

31 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, “He must be the king of Israel!” So they turned and attacked him, but Jehoshaphat cried out.

The LORD helped him; God lured them away from him.

32 When the chariot commanders realized he was not the king of Israel, they turned away from him.

33 Now an archer shot an arrow at random and it struck the king of Israel between the plates of his armor. The king ordered his charioteer, “Turn around and take me from the battle line, for I am wounded.”

34 While the battle raged throughout the day, the king stood propped up in his chariot opposite the Syrians. He died in the evening as the sun was setting.

19:1 When King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned home safely to Jerusalem,

2 the prophet Jehu son of Hanani confronted him; he said to King Jehoshaphat, “Is it right to help the wicked and be an ally of those who oppose the LORD? Because you have done this the LORD is angry with you!

3 Nevertheless you have done some good things; you removed the Asherah poles from the land and you were determined to follow the LORD.”

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

1 Kings 22:51–53

51 In the seventeenth year of King Jehoshaphat’s reign over Judah, Ahab’s son Ahaziah became king over Israel in Samaria. He ruled for two years over Israel.

52 He did evil in the sight of the LORD and followed in the footsteps of his father and mother; like Jeroboam son of Nebat, he encouraged Israel to sin.

53 He worshiped and bowed down to Baal, angering the LORD God of Israel just as his father had done.

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

2 Kings 1:1

2 Kings 3:4–5

1 After Ahab died,  
Moab rebelled against Israel.

4 Now King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder. He would send as tribute to the king of Israel 100,000 male lambs and the wool of 100,000 rams.  
5 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 Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem. He went out among the people from Beer Sheba to the hill country of Ephraim and encouraged them to follow the LORD God of their ancestors.  
5 He appointed judges throughout the land and in each of the fortified cities of Judah.  
6 He told the judges, "Be careful what you do, for you are not judging for men, but for the LORD, who will be with you when you make judicial decisions.  
7 Respect the LORD and make careful decisions, for the LORD our God disapproves of injustice, partiality, and bribery."  
8 In Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed some Levites, priests, and Israelite family leaders to judge on behalf of the LORD and to settle disputes among the residents of Jerusalem.  
9 He commanded them: "Carry out your duties with respect for the LORD, with honesty, and with pure motives.  
10 Whenever your countrymen who live in the cities bring a case before you (whether it involves a violent crime or other matters related to the law, commandments, rules, and regulations), warn them that they must not sin against the LORD. If you fail to do so, God will be angry with you and your colleagues; but if you obey, you will be free of guilt.  
11 You will report to Amariah the chief priest in all matters pertaining to the LORD's law, and to Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the leader of the family of Judah, in all matters pertaining to the king. The Levites will serve as officials before you. Confidently carry out your duties! May the LORD be with those who do well!"

### 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 Later the Moabites and Ammonites, along with some of the Meunites, attacked Jehoshaphat.  
2 Messengers arrived and reported to Jehoshaphat, "A huge army is attacking you from the other side of the Dead Sea, from the direction of Edom. Look, they are in Hazezon Tamar (that is, En Gedi)."

#### Jehoshaphat's Prayer

3 Jehoshaphat was afraid, so he decided to seek the LORD's advice. He decreed that all Judah should observe a fast.  
4 The people of Judah assembled to ask for the LORD's help; they came from all the cities of Judah to ask for the LORD's help.  
5 Jehoshaphat stood before the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the LORD's temple, in front of the new courtyard.  
6 He prayed: "O LORD God of our ancestors, you are the God who lives in heaven and rules over all the kingdoms of the nations. You possess strength and power; no one can stand against you.  
7 Our God, you drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and gave it as a permanent possession to the descendants of your friend Abraham.  
8 They settled down in it and built in it a temple to honor you, saying,  
9 'If disaster comes on us in the form of military attack, judgment, plague, or famine, we will stand in front of this temple before you, for you are present in this temple. We will cry out to you for help in our distress, so that you will hear and deliver us.'  
10 Now the Ammonites, Moabites, and men from Mount Seir are coming! When Israel came from the land of Egypt, you did not allow them to invade these lands. They bypassed them and did not destroy them.  
11 Look how they are repaying us! They come to drive us out of our allotted land which you assigned to us!  
12 Our God, will you not judge them? For we are powerless against this huge army that attacks us! We don't know what we should do; we look to you for help."

#### God Speaks Through Jahaziel

13 All the men of Judah were standing before the LORD, along with their infants, wives, and children.  
14 Then in the midst of the assembly, the LORD's Spirit came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph.  
15 He said: "Pay attention, all you people of Judah, residents of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says to you:

'Don't be afraid and don't panic because of this huge army! For the battle is not yours, but God's.

16 Tomorrow march down against them as they come up the Ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the ravine in front of the Desert of Jeruel.

17 You will not fight in this battle. Take your positions, stand, and watch the LORD deliver you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Don't be afraid and don't panic! Tomorrow march out toward them; the LORD is with you!"

18 Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face toward the ground, and all the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD and worshiped him.

19 Then some Levites, from the Kohathites and Korahites, got up and loudly praised the LORD God of Israel.

#### **Jehoshaphat Follows God's Command**

20 Early the next morning they marched out to the Desert of Tekoa. When they were ready to march, Jehoshaphat stood up and said: "Listen to me, you people of Judah and residents of Jerusalem! Trust in the LORD your God and you will be safe! Trust in the message of his prophets and you will win."

21 He met with the people and appointed musicians to play before the LORD and praise his majestic splendor. As they marched ahead of the warriors they said: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his loyal love endures."

#### **God Gives the Victory**

22 When they began to shout and praise, the LORD suddenly attacked the Ammonites, Moabites, and men from Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

23 The Ammonites and Moabites attacked the men from Mount Seir and annihilated them. When they had finished off the men of Seir, they attacked and destroyed one another.

24 When the men of Judah arrived at the observation post overlooking the desert and looked at the huge army, they saw dead bodies on the ground; there were no survivors!

25 Jehoshaphat and his men went to gather the plunder; they found a huge amount of supplies, clothing and valuable items. They carried away everything they could. There was so much plunder, it took them three days to haul it off.

26 On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, where they praised the LORD. So that place is called the Valley of Berachah to this very day.

27 Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem with Jehoshaphat leading them; the LORD had given them reason to rejoice over their enemies.

28 They entered Jerusalem to the sound of stringed instruments and trumpets and proceeded to the temple of the LORD.

#### **Peace for Judah**

29 All the kingdoms of the surrounding lands were afraid of God when they heard how the LORD had fought against Israel's enemies.

30 Jehoshaphat's kingdom enjoyed peace; his God made him secure on every side.

#### **Judah Rules Edom**

1 Kgs 22:47 There was no king in Edom at this time; a governor ruled.

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

1 Kings 22:48–49

2 Chronicles 20:35–37

48 Jehoshaphat built a fleet of large merchant ships to travel to Ophir for gold,

but they never made the voyage because they were shipwrecked in Ezion Geber.

49 Then Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my sailors join yours in the fleet," but Jehoshaphat refused.

35 Later King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an alliance with King Ahaziah of Israel, who did evil.

36 They agreed to make large seagoing merchant ships;

they built the ships in Ezion Geber.

37 Eliezer son of Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, "Because you made an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will shatter what you have made."

The ships were wrecked and unable to go to sea.

## 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.

---

<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, “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*).