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Israel and Judah: 25. Jehoshaphat and Other Kings

by David Sielaff, August 2017

Read the July 1, 2017 Commentary, "[The Tabernacle of Moloch](#)"

Then read the accompanying [Newsletter for August 2017](#)

Israel and Judah: 25

Jehosaphat
and
Other Kings

THE SITUATION: Ahab, King of Israel, has died, succeeded by his son Ahaziah who reigns for a short time. Ahaziah is followed by his brother Jehoram. All performed evil and idolatry in the eyes of God. Jehoshaphat continues his reign as a good King of Judah reverent toward YHWH. During this time, the prophet Elijah leaves the scene and Elisha, his successor, begins his prophetic ministry. Some miraculous events of Elisha's are reported. In addition, of course, wars are brewing ...

Most of this article is single-source text from Second Kings or Second Chronicles. Only a small section has side-by-side text.

TEXT: Jehoshaphat Prays for Judah's Deliverance

2 Chronicles 20:1–19

¹ It came about afterward when the sons of Moab and the sons of Ammon and with them some of the Meunim had set out against Jehoshaphat in war, ² that people came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "**A vast throng is setting out against you from across the Sea, from Syria. And behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar, that is, En-gedi.**"

³ Jehoshaphat became fearful and set his face to inquire of Yahweh, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. ⁴ So those of Judah were brought together to appeal earnestly to Yahweh. Also they came in from all cities of Judah to seek after Yahweh. ⁵ Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah in Jerusalem at the House of Yahweh before the new court. ⁶ He said:

"O Yahweh Elohim of our fathers, are You not the Elohim of the heavens? You are ruling over all the kingdoms of the nations; vigor and mastery are in Your hand, and no one is able to stand up against You. ⁷ Are not You our Elohim Who evicted the dwellers of this land from before Your people Israel? And You gave it for the eon to the seed of Abraham who loved You. ⁸ They settled in it, and in it they built for You a Sanctuary for Your Name, saying,

⁹ ‘If evil comes upon us, whether sword, judgment, plague or famine, let us stand before this House and before You, for Your Name is called in this House; and we shall cry out to You in our distress, and You shall hear and save us.’

¹⁰ Now, **behold** the sons of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, into whose area You did not let Israel enter when they came from the land of Egypt, but they withdrew from them and did not exterminate them. ¹¹ And now, **behold**, they are requiting [taking revenge against] us by coming in to drive us out from Your tenancy that You let us take over.

¹² O Yahweh our Elohim, will You not judge them? For no vigor is there in us facing this vast throng that has set out against us, and we ourselves do not know what we should do; but our eyes are toward You.”

¹³ All Judah were standing before Yahweh, as well as their little ones, their wives and their sons. ¹⁴ Then in the midst of the assembly the spirit of Yahweh came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah son of Benaiah son of Jeiel son of Mattaniah the Levite, of the sons of Asaph. ¹⁵ He said,

“Pay attention, all Judah, dwellers of Jerusalem, and king Jehoshaphat, thus says Yahweh to you: **Do not you fear**, and **do not you be dismayed** because of this vast throng, for the battle is not yours, but Elohim’s. ¹⁶ Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they are ascending by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the rear of the wadi facing the wilderness of Jeruel.

¹⁷ You will not have to fight in this battle. Stand by; stand and see the salvation by **Yahweh Who is with you**. O Judah and Jerusalem, **do not fear**, and **do not be dismayed**. Tomorrow march forth facing them, and **Yahweh will be with you**.

¹⁸ Jehoshaphat bowed his head low with his brow toward the earth, and all Judah and the dwellers of Jerusalem fell down before Yahweh, worshiping Yahweh. ¹⁹ Then the Levites of the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites rose up to praise Yahweh Elohim of Israel with a surpassingly loud voice.

[end text]

Verse 1. Jehoshaphat is still a good king, mostly making decisions that honor YHWH. The neighboring peoples of Moabites, Ammonites, and the “Meunim” are on the move to attack Judah. This last term is found only in the Greek Old Testament, the LXX. Some commentaries feel “Meunim” a collective term of smaller groups of people related to the Moabites and Ammonites. All the groups lived east of the Dead Sea. The Kingdom of Judah was prosperous because its king and people obeyed God’s laws. The Moabites and Ammonites and Meunim thought they were strong enough to plunder Judah.

“**Afterward ...**” — This event probably occurred within two years after the death of Ahab of Israel in battle against the Syrian army. Jehoshaphat was allied with Ahab, and returned safely with the army of Judah (2 Chronicles 18:28–19:1).

Verse 2. Jehoshaphat was warned and told the route of the enemy troops. They did not attack through the Kingdom of Israel to the north, but from south of Jerusalem, “**from across the Sea,**” meaning that they crossed a very shallow portion of the Dead Sea. En-gedi was on the western side of the Dead Sea in ancient times.^a There was either a path or a ford across the Dead Sea from the eastern to the western shore. It is unlikely they took animals across unless they crossed at a low ford, or they could have amassed a number of boats to float across. (Objects float very well in the Dead Sea, but it would have ruled out animals such as horses for chariots or camels.) An army traveling in that area could soon suffer from lack of water, unless the attack occurred just after a rainstorm. Most wars were fought in summer after spring planting and before fall harvesting.

Verse 3. Whatever method the enemy used to “**cross the Sea,**” Jehoshaphat was alarmed. He learned his lesson from a prior mistake at Ramoth-gilead (1 Kings 22:1–29) and immediately sought YHWH’s advice. He “**proclaimed a fast**” for the people to add appeal to YHWH and show their piety.

^a Today, the tourist stop at En-gedi is several hundred yards away from the waters of the Dead Sea due to extensive evaporation. It is north of the latter Herodian fortress of Masada (dating from just before Christ was born). At En-gedi tourists swim and float in the Dead Sea and spread the mineral rich mud salts on their bodies, then shower it all off.

Verse 4. The people responded and prepared to defend the cities of Judah, particularly Jerusalem.

Verse 5. Jehoshaphat led the prayer and spoke to the people assembled at Jerusalem who responded to his call, and plea to God.

Verses 6–8. He recounted the history of Israel in the land God gave to them.

Verse 9. He also tells about the history of God’s Temple since Solomon, emphasizing God’s presence, God’s name, and God’s promises to save His people when “evil comes upon us.” He points out to God that the people are doing what God commanded, they do so with clean hearts, and they are calling on God to fulfill His promise to protect His people.

Verse 10. Jehoshaphat describes the danger. Near the end of the 40 years in the wilderness, YHWH did not allow Israel to enter and possess the lands of Ammon or Moab, but said for Israel to bypass, and leave them in peace (Numbers 20:17–21; Deuteronomy 2 4–5, 9, 19; Judges 11:15–18).

Verse 11. Now those same peoples are paying God’s people back, Jehoshaphat says, wanting to “**drive us out from Your tenancy that You let us take over,**” the land God promised to Israel, not to Ammon or Moab.

Verse 12. Jehoshaphat makes a formal appeal to the Covenant promises that Israel made with YHWH at Sinai. His words are in formal legal language. He asks YHWH to judge the enemies of His people. Jehoshaphat reiterates the size of the enemy force, so large that they feared the enemy army.^b

Verse 13. The entire nation, all members of all families stood before YHWH. This shows (1) trust in YHWH, (2) a need for YHWH’s deliverance, and (3) a genuine fear of the enemy and their great number.

Verse 14. One Levitical priest, whose lineage goes to David’s priest Asaph, gives a message from YHWH.

Verse 15. YHWH has heard the pleas of king and people. He says for them not to fear or “**be dismayed.**” To “**be dismayed**” enlarges the idea of what Jehoshaphat and the people were feeling. They were intimidated, discouraged, and demoralized about the enemy (“**a vast throng**” as YHWH said). They had little hope about their future. YHWH announces that He will fight on their behalf.

Verse 16. God gives instructions, telling Jehoshaphat and his commanders where the enemy armies are at that moment and where they will be gathered the following day.

Verse 17. Then God gives them hope. They will not have to fight, but they will see YHWH’s salvation. He repeats His admonition for Judah not to fear or be dismayed. These encouragements fulfill what God promised during the Exodus when Pharaoh and his armies came to attack the children of Israel.

“Then Moses said to the people: **Do not fear! Station yourselves and see the salvation of Yahweh which He shall work for you today, for as you see the Egyptians today, you shall not anymore see them again unto the eon. Yahweh, He shall fight for you; as for you, you shall be silent.**”

• *Exodus 14:13–14*

Moses later told the people of Israel just before Joshua was to take them into the land God promised them:

“As for Yahweh, He is the One going before you; He Himself shall come to be with you. He shall neither neglect you nor forsake you. **You shall neither fear nor be dismayed.**”

• *Deuteronomy 31:8*

God’s admonition for His people not to fear or be dismayed is repeated often in the Old Testament with the same two Hebrew words used in the same order.^c

^b Armies do not grow on trees, they are made through a generation of prosperity, producing families with many sons who are able to fight to either protect their own country or go and attack foreign countries. Judah prospered from their adherence to God’s commands, and so did the peoples around Judah, who turned around and attacked the source of their own prosperity.

^c The King James Version translates “dismayed” several ways. Similar phrases of fear or be dismayed in Hebrew are found together in **Genesis 9:2** (about animals fearing human beings); **Deuteronomy 1:21** (Israel entering the land promised to Abraham); **Joshua 8:1, 10:25** (again, God promising help when Israel conquers the land); **1 Samuel 17:11** (Saul and Israel fearing

Verse 18. Jehoshaphat bowed low before YHWH; all the people prostrated themselves in worship.

Verse 19. The songs of praise to YHWH began. The loud singing will be important.

TEXT: God's Victory for Judah

2 Chronicles 20:20–30

²⁰ They rose early in the morning and marched forth to the wilderness of Tekoa. As they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, **“Hear me, Judah and dwellers of Jerusalem! Put faith in Yahweh your Elohim, and you shall be found faithful. Believe in His prophets, and prosper.”**

²¹ After consulting with the people, he recruited singers for Yahweh praising His holy effulgence, as they went forth before the vanguard, saying, **“Acclaim Yahweh, for His benignity is for the eon.”** ²² Now as they started off with jubilant song and praise, Yahweh set ambushers against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir who had set out against Judah, and they were struck down.

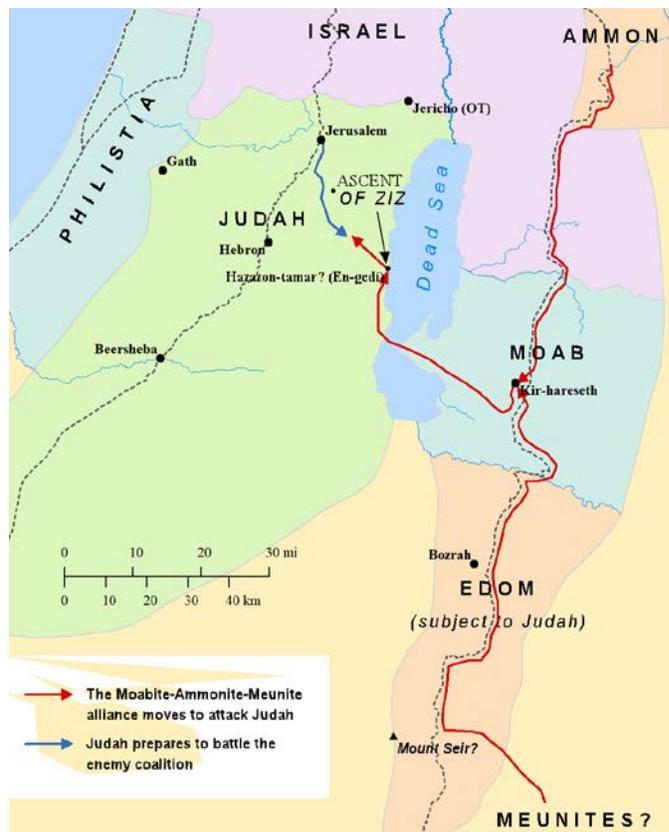
²³ The sons of Ammon and Moab stood up against the dwellers from Mount Seir to doom and exterminate them. And as soon as they finished with the dwellers from Seir, they backed up their own massacre, each man against his associate. ²⁴ When Judah came to the overlook in the wilderness, they viewed the throng, and behold, there they were, corpses fallen to the earth; there had been no deliverance.

²⁵ So Jehoshaphat and his people came to plunder the loot on them. They found domestic beasts in abundance, as well as materiel and clothes and coveted articles. So they despoiled for themselves until they were no longer able to carry it away. For three days they were plundering the loot, for it was abundant.

²⁶ And on the fourth day they assembled in the Vale of Beracah, for there they blessed Yahweh. Therefore they call the name of that place Vale of Beracah until today.

²⁷ All the men of Judah and Jerusalem turned about with Jehoshaphat at their head, to return to Jerusalem with rejoicing, for Yahweh had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸ They entered Jerusalem with zithers and harps and bugles playing and went to the House of Yahweh.

²⁹ Now the awe of Elohim came upon all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that Yahweh had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰ So Jehoshaphat's kingdom had quietness, for his Elohim had granted him rest round about. **[end text]**



Verse 20. The next day the army and the people of Judah went out into the wilderness. Jehoshaphat encouraged the people to follow through with their faith in YHWH's words.

Verse 21. Select people of Judah were chosen to sing praises of YHWH. **“His holy effulgence,”** means

Goliath); **1 Chronicles 22:13, 28:20** (David stating the benefits to Solomon and Israel of trusting and obeying God); **2 Chronicles 32:7** (YHWH will protect Hezekiah and Judah against the Assyrians); **Isaiah 31:9, 51:7, 54:14** (God will protect Israel); **Jeremiah 23:4, 30:10, 46:5, 27** (After exile, YHWH's future protection, future to us today); and **Ezekiel 2:6, 3:9** (YHWH's encouragement to Ezekiel in his vision of the scroll). These verses are interesting to study.

something that is holy. Whatever the “effulgence” is (it occurs only 3 times in Hebrew), whether splendor, majesty, or beauty, it seems to be related to clothing of some kind. It seems no one is sure what the Hebrew term means, but it is something special.

Verse 22. It is unclear who the “ambushers” of the enemy armies were: human beings or was some supernatural agency causing confusion and murderous responses. See Judges 7:22; 1 Samuel 14:20; and 2 Kings 3:23 for earlier examples of confusion defeating an enemy.

Verse 23. While the people of Judah looked from the hills above, men from the armies of Ammon and Moab attacked the army of those from Mount Seir, killing them all. Then they fought each other. Remember, this took place during the day. There is no indication they buried the thousands of the dead.

Verse 24. Surprisingly, all were dead. Not one was wounded or alive. The text is clear.

Verse 25. The King and the people looted the useful items from the bodies of the dead, which was common practice for most armies throughout history. The domestic animals were still alive and they helped transport the plunder back to Jerusalem. It took 3 days to loot valuables from the bodies.^d

Verse 26. They gathered to praise YHWH for His miraculous victory on their behalf. The “**Vale of Beracah**” means “valley of Blessing.” Judah was blessed by YHWH’s protection at that site.

Verses 27–28. All the men of Judah returned to Jerusalem alive, uninjured, and safe — with great joy. With song and instruments playing, they went to the Temple to thank and praise YHWH for His victory.

Verses 29–30. News of YHWH’s amazing destruction of Judah’s enemies was carried to all nations in the ancient world by trading caravans on land and ships by sea. Judah had a period of peace with its neighbors.

The focus now turns to King Amaziah of the northern Kingdom of Israel. We leave Second Chronicles and deal with the end of First Kings, and the beginning of Second Kings.

TEXT: The Short Reign of Ahaziah, King of Israel

1 Kings 22:51–53 and 2 Kings 1:1–18

⁵¹ As for Ahaziah son of Ahab, he became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel for two years.⁵² He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin.⁵³ He served Baal and worshiped him; he provoked Yahweh Elohim of Israel to vexation according to all that his father had done.

¹ Moab transgressed against Israel after the death of Ahab.

² Then Ahaziah fell through the grating of his upper chamber in Samaria and was ailing. So he sent messengers and said to them, “**Go, inquire of Baal-zebub elohim of Ekron whether I shall remain alive from this illness.**”

³ But a messenger of Yahweh, he spoke to Elijah the Tishbite,

“**Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and speak to them: Is it because there is no Elohim in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-zebub elohim of Ekron?**

⁴ **Therefore (thus says Yahweh), from the couch on which you lie there, you shall not descend from it, for you shall die, yea die.**”

And Elijah went away.⁵ When the messengers returned to him [Ahaziah], he said to them, “**Why is this that you have returned?**”⁶ They replied to him,

“**There was a man, he came up to meet us, and he said to us, ‘Go, return to the king who sent you. And you will speak to him, Thus says Yahweh: Is it because there is no Elohim in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-zebub elohim of Ekron? Therefore, from the couch on which you lie there, you shall not descend from it, for you shall die, yea die.’**”

⁷ Now he asked them, “**What type of man was he who came up to meet you and spoke to you these**

^d In the future it will take seven months to bury the dead from the armies of Gog (Ezekiel 39:12, 14).

words?”⁸ They said to him, “A man possessing a hair garment and a belt of leather belted about his waist.” He replied, “That was Elijah the Tishbite.”

⁹ Then he sent to him a chief of fifty with his fifty. He ascended to him, and behold, Elijah was sitting at the top of the hill. He spoke to him, “Man of Elohim, the king himself has spoken, Do come down!”

¹⁰ Elijah answered and spoke to the chief of the fifty. “Now if I am a man of Elohim, may fire descend from the heavens, and may it devour you and your fifty.” And fire descended from the heavens and devoured him and his fifty.

¹¹ Then he sent again to him another chief of fifty with his fifty. He ascended and spoke to him, “Man of Elohim, thus says the king: Quickly, do come down!”

¹² Elijah answered and spoke to him, “If I am a man of Elohim, may fire descend from the heavens, and may it devour you and your fifty.” And the fire of Elohim descended from the heavens and devoured him and his fifty.

¹³ Then he sent again a third chief of fifty with his fifty. The chief of the third fifty ascended and came and bowed on his knees in front of Elijah. He supplicated to him and spoke to him,

“Man of Elohim, I pray, let my soul and the soul of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your eyes. ¹⁴ Behold, fire descended from the heavens and devoured the two former chiefs of fifty and their fifties. Now let the soul of your servants be precious in your eyes.”

¹⁵ Then a messenger of Yahweh spoke to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not fear because of his presence.” So he arose and went down with him to the king. ¹⁶ And Elijah spoke to him [Ahaziah],

“Thus says Yahweh: Inasmuch as you sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebul elohim of Ekron, is it because there is no Elohim in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore, from the couch on which you lie there, you shall not descend from it, for you shall die, yea die.”

¹⁷ And he died according to the word of Yahweh that He had spoken by means of Elijah. Then Jehoram his brother reigned in his stead (in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah), for he had not come to have a son.

¹⁸ The rest of the affairs of Ahaziah, what he did, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Israel? [end text]

1 Kings 22:51. The focus shifts to King Ahaziah of Israel, his reign as it relates to that of Jehoshaphat and the fact that his reign lasted only 2 years.

Verse 52. No surprise, Ahaziah was evil like his father Ahab, and the first King of Israel, Jeroboam.

Verse 53. Some details of Ahaziah’s evil acts are presented.

2 Kings 1:1. A brief mention is made that Moab “**transgressed against Israel.**” Moab was a rebellious vassal kingdom that stopped paying tribute money to Israel, its overlord or master kingdom. Nonpayment of this tribute (a “pay tribute or we will attack you” system), usually resulted in war between the vassal kingdom, and the overlord. We read about Moab and its involvement with Israel and Judah later.

Verse 2. The text tells of Ahaziah’s accident, with no hint it was an assassination attempt. In agony and pain, Ahaziah sought information from a prophet serving a pagan elohim of Ekron called Baal-zebul. Every reader or listener to the text being read probably thought, “This will not end well for Ahaziah.”

Note also the use of “messenger” or “messengers” from verse 2 through verse 16.

Verses 3–4. A “**messenger of YHWH,**” a supernatural being, an angel, tells Elijah to intercept Ahaziah’s messengers to tell them what will happen to the Israelite king.

Verse 5. It seems the human messengers of Ahaziah were intercepted by Elijah before they spoke with the prophet of Baal-zebul. Ahaziah asked them why they returned so soon, Ekron was 45 miles from the capital city of Samaria.

Verse 6. Elijah’s message from YHWH to Ahaziah was completely negative. The use of the name YHWH

(the personal name of the God of Israel) gave Ahaziah a clue who the prophet likely was.

Verse 7–8. Ahaziah confirmed it was Elijah when he was described.

Verses 9–14. Ahaziah sent three groups of 50 soldiers each with 1 leader to intimidate Elijah. Two groups were killed by fire from heaven, an obvious sign of divine displeasure. The third group was spared. This miracle was a public event with the remains of the burnt bodies of the first two groups visible to the third group and the people near where Elijah was. Note the sequence:

- Verse 9.** The chief of the first 50 **“ascended”** and ordered Elijah **“Do come down!”**
- Verse 10.** Fire **“descended ... and devoured”** all 51. This linked Elijah with Moses (Leviticus 10:2; Numbers 11:3). Imagine the effect on Ahaziah when he was told of this incident.
- Verse 11.** The chief of the second 50 **“ascended,”** ordering Elijah to **“Do come down!”**
- Verse 12.** Fire **“descended ... and devoured”** all 51.
- Verse 13.** The chief of the third 50 **“ascended,”** bowed his knees, supplicated, and prayed to Elijah that **“the soul of your servants be precious in your eyes.”** He was begging. The chief said he and his men were Elijah’s servants, not King Ahaziah’s servants.
- Verse 15.** A messenger of YHWH told Elijah to go down with the soldiers, not to have fear, meaning that Elijah would be protected from harm. Elijah was afraid of King Ahaziah. Elijah did go down with the soldiers to speak with Ahaziah, in spite of his fear.

Verse 16. We are not told how long Ahaziah lived after Elijah gave him YHWH’s message of death. God loved Ahaziah as much as He loves you and me. Ahaziah will be raised in the Great White Throne judgment and learn the full truth of God’s plan of salvation through the Son of David, Christ Jesus. Ahaziah will be saved and we will have the opportunity to meet Ahaziah and ask him (and all these Old Testament people) what their thoughts were when these events took place.

Verse 17. God’s Word was fulfilled and Ahaziah’s brother, Jehoram, reigned over the Kingdom of Israel.

Verse 18. The formulaic saying is given when a king dies referring to other sources of information that were available when the text was written.

TEXT: The Flying Chariot of Elijah, Elisha’s Sole Ministry Begins

2 Kings 2:1–25

¹ It came to pass, when Yahweh would take Elijah in a tempest up to the heavens, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

² Then Elijah said to Elisha, **“Dwell here now, for Yahweh Himself has sent me unto Bethel.”** Yet Elisha replied, **“As Yahweh lives, and your soul lives, I ought not to forsake you. So they went down to Bethel.”** ³ Now **the sons of the prophets** who were in Bethel came forth to Elisha and asked him, **“Do you know that today Yahweh is taking our lord from headship over you?”** He replied, **“I myself know it too; hush!”**

⁴ Then Elijah said to him, **“Elisha, dwell here now, for Yahweh Himself has sent me to Jericho.”** Yet he replied, **“As Yahweh lives, and your soul lives, I ought not to forsake you.”** So they came to Jericho. ⁵ Now the **sons of the prophets** who were in Jericho, came close to Elisha and asked him, **“Do you know that today Yahweh is taking your lord from headship over you?”** He replied, **“I myself know it too; hush!”**

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, **“Dwell here now, for Yahweh Himself has sent me to the Jordan.”** Yet he replied, **“As Yahweh lives, and your soul lives, I ought not to forsake you.”** So both of them went on. ⁷ There were fifty men, **sons of the prophets**; they went and stayed aloof, far off. Yet both of them stood by the Jordan.

⁸ Now Elijah took his mantle, folded it up and smote the waters; they were divided this way and that way, so that both of them went across on the drained strip. ⁹ It came to be as they had gone across that Elijah himself said to Elisha, **“Ask what I should do for you ere [before] I am taken from you.”** Elisha replied, **“I pray, let a double share of your spirit come to me.”**

¹⁰ Elijah answered, **“You made it hard in asking. If you see me taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if you do not, it shall not come to pass.”**

¹¹ Now it occurred while they were walking, and speaking as they walked that, behold, a fiery chariot with fiery horses appeared; they caused the two of them to part, and Elijah ascended in a tempest to the heavens.

¹² Elisha was seeing it, and he was crying, **“My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!”**

Then he saw him no more. Now he took fast hold of his own garments and tore them into two torn pieces.

¹³ He raised up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen off him, returned and stood on the shore of the Jordan.

¹⁴ He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen off him and smote the waters and said, **“Where is Yahweh Elohim of Elijah?”** When he also had smitten the waters, then they were divided this way and that way, so that Elisha went across.

¹⁵ When the **sons of the prophets** at Jericho saw him from a distance, they said, **“The spirit of Elijah has settled on Elisha. So they came to meet him and prostrated themselves before him to the earth.”**

¹⁶ They said to him, **“Behold now, there are with your servants fifty men, sons of valor. Let them go now and seek your lord, lest the spirit of Yahweh has lifted him up and flung him on one of the mountains or in one of the ravines.”** Yet he replied, **“You should not send them.”**

¹⁷ Now they were urging him until he was ashamed and said, **“Send them.”** So they sent out fifty men who sought for three days; but they did not find him. ¹⁸ When they returned to him, he was dwelling in Jericho.

Then he said to them, **“Did I not say to you, You must not go?”**

¹⁹ The men of the city said to Elisha, **“Behold, indeed, the location of the city is good, just as my lord is seeing; but the water is bad, and the earth causes bereavement.”** ²⁰ Elisha replied, **“Take for me a new pan and put salt therein.”** So they procured it for him.

²¹ Then he went forth to the flowing well of the water and flung there the salt and said, **“Thus says Yahweh, ‘I have healed this water. No longer shall death come from there or cause bereavement.’”** ²² And the water is healed until this day, according to the word of Elisha that he had spoken.

²³ Then he went from there up to Bethel. As he was going up on the road, there were young lads; they came forth from the city, scoffed at him and said to him, **“Go up, baldhead, go up, baldhead!”** ²⁴ When he turned around behind him and saw them, he maledicted [cursed] them in the Name of Yahweh. Then two she-bears came forth from the wildwood and mangled forty-two boys of them. ²⁵ From there he went to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria. [end text]

Verse 1. This sentence is phrased in a way to show Elijah’s being taken into the air was a well-known event. It is as if Elijah was conducting a farewell tour of all the schools of the prophets.

Verse 2. Elijah tells Elisha to stay. Elisha would not leave his side. They went to Bethel.

Verse 3. Here is a bit of information about **“the sons of the prophets”** excerpted from the larger article “Prophet” in *ISBE, The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1939):

“Samuel constituted them into a permanent order. He instituted theological colleges of prophets; one at Ramah where he lived (1 Sam. 19:12, 20), another was at Bethel (2 Kings 2:3), another at Jericho (2 Kings 2:5), another at Gilgal (2 Kings 4:38, also 2 Kings 6:1). Official prophets seem to have continued to the close of the Old Testament, though the direct mention of ‘the sons of the prophets’ occurs only in Samuel’s, Elijah’s, and Elisha’s time. A ‘father’ or ‘master’ presided (2 Kings 2:3; 1 Sam. 10:12), who was ‘anointed’ to the office (1 Kings 19:16; Isa. 61:1; Ps. 105:15). They were ‘sons.’

The law was their chief study, it being what they were to teach, not that they were in antagonism to the priests whose duty it had been to teach the law; they reprove bad priests, not to set aside but to reform and restore the priesthood as it ought to be (Isa. 24:2, 28:7; Mal. 2:1, 1:14); they supplemented the work of the priests.

Music and poetry were cultivated as subordinate helps (compare Exo. 15:20; Judg. 4:4, 5:1). Elijah stirred up the prophetic gift within him by a minstrel (2 Kings 3:15); so Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun

(1 Chr. 25:5–6). Sacred songs occur in the prophets (Isa. 12:1, 26:1; Jonah 2:2; Hab. 3:2). Possibly the students composed verses for liturgical use in the temple.

The prophets held meetings for worship on new moons and Sabbaths (2 Kings 4:23). Elisha and the elders were sitting in his house, officially engaged, when the king of Israel sent to slay him (2 Kings 6:32). So Ezekiel and the elders, and the people assembled (Ezek. 8:1, 20:1, 33:31). The dress, like that of the modern dervish, was a hairy garment with leather girdle (Isa. 20:2; Zec. 13:4; Mt. 3:4). Their diet was the simplest (2 Kings 4:10, 38; 1 Kings 19:6); a virtual protest against abounding luxury.”

This description of the personal habits of Old Testament prophets seems to fit John the Baptist, who taught but did not give time prophecies. He **“prepared the way”** for the coming of Messiah (Isaiah 40:3, 57:14, 62:10; Malachi 3:1; Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2–3; Luke 3:4).^e

Verses 4–5. They went to Jericho. Many of the same words were said there as at Bethel.

Verses 6–7. This time Elijah went to the Jordan River. Again, many of the same words were said, but the **“sons of the prophets”** stayed back and did not speak.

Verses 8–10. Elijah’s mantle (an outer cloak or serape-like clothing item) strikes the water, both men cross. Elisha’s request is made and Elijah is unsure God will honor the request. God had Moses part water.

Verses 11–12. Walking and talking, both see the fiery chariot appear. The chariot came between the two men. Elijah boarded it. Elisha saw him go; God granted his request. “Tempest” in the KJV is “whirlwind”.

Verses 13–14. He picked up Elijah’s mantle, smote the water like Elijah did, and the waters parted for Elisha also, and he crossed the Jordan River with dry shoes — another proof of Elisha’s receipt of power.

Verses 15–16. Returning to Jericho, Elisha was honored by the **“sons of the prophets,”** who for some reason wanted to go out and find Elijah, thinking that he may have been **“flung”** out of the chariot onto a mountain or in a ravine. (Humans flying in vehicles must be dangerous!) Elisha told them not to do it.

Verses 17–18. They insisted, Elisha said go ahead. They found nothing; Elisha said, “I told you so!”

Verses 19–20. Jericho’s water supply (a well apart from the nearby Jordan River) was polluted, and it affected the earth, perhaps with minerals. Elisha asked for some items, and they brought them to him.

Verses 21–22. The water source is described as a **“flowing well”** perhaps similar to the Gihon Spring. We learn the waters were deadly, the opposite of the **“living waters”** symbolizing God and the Gihon Spring (Song of Solomon 4:15; Jeremiah 2:13, 17:13–14; Zechariah 14:8; John 4:10–11, 7:38).

Verses 23–25. From Jericho Elisha traveled to Bethel (which in former years was a ritual city with pagan temples), where boys mocked him. Elisha cursed **“them in the name of YHWH.”** A curse was a formal appeal to a higher authority, in this case YHWH. The boys disrespected the Lord’s designated spokesmen. Doing such a thing can be deadly, as it was for the two sets of 51 soldiers in 2 Kings chapter 1. YHWH’s authority was rejected (*Net Bible*, 2 Kings 2:24 note 31). Next, more interactions with Moab ...

TEXT: Judah and Israel Attack Moab; God’s Water Miracle Saves the Armies by Elisha

2 Kings 3:1–20

¹ As for Jehoram son of Ahab, he became king over Israel in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah and reigned twelve years. ² He did what was evil in the eyes of Yahweh, but not like his father or like his mother; for he took away the monument of Baal that his father had made. ³ But he clung to the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat with which he caused Israel to sin; he did not withdraw from them.

⁴ As for Mesha king of Moab, he was a herdsman and rendered the wool of 100,000 butting lambs and 100,000 rams to the king of Israel. ⁵ Now it came to be when Ahab was dead, then the king of Moab transgressed against the king of Israel.

⁶ On that day king Jehoram went forth from Samaria and mustered all of Israel. ⁷ While he went, he sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, **“The king of Moab, he has transgressed against me. Are you going with me to the battle against Moab?”** He [Jehoshaphat] replied, **“I shall go up, I likewise, such as you; my**

^e This information is expanded in Dr. Martin’s article, [“The Elijah to Come.”](#)

people likewise, such as your people; my horses likewise, such as your horses.”

⁸ And he asked, “**Just where is the way that we shall go up?**” He [Jehoram] said, “**The wilderness road of Edom.**” ⁹ So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom. They marched around, a journey of seven days; and there was no water for the force and for the domestic beasts that followed in their footsteps.

¹⁰ Then the king of Israel said, “**Alas, that Yahweh has called these three kings to give them into the hand of Moab!**” ¹¹ Yet Jehoshaphat asked, “**Is there no prophet of Yahweh here that we may inquire of Yahweh through him?**” One of the officials of the king of Israel answered; he said, “**Elisha son of Shaphat is here who poured out water on the hands of Elijah.**”

¹² Jehoshaphat replied, “**The word of Yahweh is with him.**” So they went down to him, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah and the king of Edom.

¹³ Elisha said to the king of Israel, “**What have you to do with me? Go to the prophets of your father and to the prophets of your mother.**” But the king of Israel replied to him, “**Certainly not, for Yahweh has called these three kings to give them into the hand of Moab.**”

¹⁴ Elisha answered,

“As Yahweh of hosts lives, before Whom I stand, except that I am prompted by the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would assuredly not look at you and not see you. ¹⁵ Yet now procure for me a player of music.”

Then it came to pass as the player played, that the hand of Yahweh came over him, ¹⁶ and he said,

“Thus speaks Yahweh: ‘I will provide pools in this wadi, yea pools.’ ¹⁷ For thus speaks Yahweh, ‘You shall neither see a wind, nor shall you see a downpour. Yet this wadi shall be filled with water, so that you will drink, you and your cattle and your domestic beasts. ¹⁸ And this is but a slight thing in the eyes of Yahweh; for He will also give Moab into your hand. ¹⁹ You will smite every fortress city and every choice city; you shall fell every good tree, stop up all springs of water and mar every good land portion with stones.’”

²⁰ It came to be in the morning when the approach present was offered up that, behold, water was coming from the direction of Edom, and the countryside was filled with water. [end text]

Verses 1–3. Jehoram was now King of Israel, evil like his father Ahab, but verse 2 notes (with a hint of irony?) that he was not quite as evil as his father or mother because “**he took away the monument of Baal.**” Probably a standing stele, like the Moabite Stone (discussed below), telling of Baal’s great deeds (see 1 Kings 14:23). Jehoram was, however, evil like the first King of Samaria, Jeroboam.

Verse 4. The name of the king of Moab — Mesha — means “deliverance” in Hebrew. All the information we know about this Moabite king is in 2 Kings chapter 3 of the Bible and in one artifact, the Moabite Stone (see below). The wool for the King of Israel was not sent, as agreed to by treaty or covenant between the King of Moab (the vassal) and the King of Israel (the overlord). Tribute withheld signals rebellion and war usually follows.^f

The numbers are huge, but that is what the text says. However many lambs and rams gave wool, the numbers indicate great prosperity and a climate able to support a huge number of animals to provide the tribute. Conditions must have been less desert-like than they are today. In addition, recall that the armies of Moab, Ammon, and Seir conspired and combined to attack Judah (2 Chronicles 20:1–30 above). Everyone in

^f When Israel was not honoring and worshipping YHWH, that was a sign of rebellion and violation of Israel’s covenant with YHWH, similar to Moab’s violating their covenant with Israel. While Israel could not give YHWH any physical goods, but they could give what YHWH truly wanted, which is worshipful reverence to His commands. This included sacrifices at the Temple only when the people were faithful in worshipping YHWH alone (Deuteronomy 30:10; Psalm 34:18, 51:16–17; Proverbs 15:8; Isaiah 57:15; Matthew 9:13, 12:7). Recall what Hosea 6:6 says:

“For I desire [1] kindness and [-1] not sacrifice, And [2] knowledge of Elohim [-2] rather than ascent offerings. Yet they, like a human [adam, or Adam], trespass against the covenant; There they are treacherous against Me.”

the three armies died. Obviously Mesha was not at that battle. Yet he still felt powerful enough to rebel against his overlord, Israel. Mesha thought he had the military power to repel any attack.

Verse 5. Recall 2 Kings 1:1 (above). This transgression was probably in the 2nd year of Ahaziah.

Verses 6–7. Jehoram gathered his forces, and sent a message for Jehoshaphat to join him in the attack on a rebellious vassal king. (This was the opposite situation of the cooperation of the kings in 1 Chronicles 20:1–30 attacking wealthy Judah). In the past, Jehoshaphat was willing to cooperate with the northern Kingdom of Israel to the north. Through His prophets YHWH told Jehoshaphat of His disapproval of an alliance with kings like Ahab or Jehoram, but Jehoshaphat again allies Judah with Israel. Why?

Verses 8–9. When the armies meet, the route was south through Judah, around the Dead Sea, then attack Moab from the south (a near opposite of the allied army that attacked Judah). See the map on page 4. That route had limited water. The armies were threatened with thirst. The King of Edom and his army join Judah and Israel. We are told later that the King of Edom was a vassal ruler under Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:47).

Verse 10. Jehoram of Israel makes a bad mistake. He accuses YHWH of wanting the armies to be defeated.

Verse 11. Jehoshaphat asks if a **“prophet of YHWH”** can be found. Perhaps he meant, are any available? An official of Israel felt free to speak and tells them about Elisha.

Verse 12. This is interesting. Apparently Elisha was close by the armies. The three kings did not “summon” Elisha, they probably “asked” him. (Remember, “ordering” Elijah to come did not go well for 102 of Ahaziah’s troops.)

Verse 13. Elisha arrives and does not speak to the King of Judah, he speaks to Jehoram — and insults him. If you love your pagan false gods, go to them. Jehoram again insults YHWH, saying He wants Israel, Judah, and Edom to be defeated.

Verse 14. If not for the righteous king Jehoshaphat, Elisha would not speak to Jehoram.

Verse 15. Elisha asks for a musician. The music caused **“the hand of YHWH”** to come over him.

Verses 16–17. Elisha prophesied; they would be saved by water filling the wadi (a dry gulch or arroyo).

Verses 18–19. He prophesied victory. The prosperity of Moab would end; the three armies would devastate its land. Note that God through Elisha did not chastise Jehoshaphat for allying himself with the evil king of Israel at this time.

Verse 20. As Elisha predicted, God provided the water as He did in the wilderness under Moses.

TEXT: Moab Attacks the Combined Israelite-Judah Army

2 Kings 3:21–27

²¹ As for all of Moab, they had heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So they summoned all able to gird on a girdle, and upward; and they were staying on the boundary. ²² When they rose early in the morning, the sun was radiant over the water, so that the Moabites saw the water from the distance red like blood. ²³ They said, **“This is blood! The kings were put to the sword, yea sword; they smote, each man his associate. So now to the loot, Moab!”**

²⁴ When they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites arose and smote the Moabites who fled from before them. They smote them so as to smite Moab altogether. ²⁵ They demolished the cities; as for every good land portion, they flung, each man his stone, and filled it up. They stopped up every spring of water and felled every good tree, until Kir-hareseth alone remained; yet the slingers surrounded it and smote it.

²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle was unyielding against him, then he took with him seven hundred men drawing the sword to break through to the king of Edom; but they did not prevail.

²⁷ Now he took his firstborn son who would become king in his stead and offered him up on the wall as an ascent offering. Then there came to be great wrath against Israel, so that they decamped, withdrew from against him and returned to their own land. **[end text]**

Verse 21–22. The Moabite army met them, intent to defend their homeland.

Verse 23. YHWH caused a strange thing to happen. They saw a red tint in the water God sent the allied armies (apparently flowing near where the Moabites were). They took that as blood and thought the allies had attacked each other, just as the Ammonite, Moabite, and Seir armies had mysteriously attacked and killed each other. They thought they could loot the allied armies.

Verse 24. As usual, only sparse details about the battle are given. “The Israelites” used here represents the entire allied force, the majority of which were “Israelites” descended from the 12 tribes of Israel. The Moabite attack was repulsed and utterly defeated their army, leaving the country defenseless.

Verse 25. The destruction of Moabite cities and lands began, along with plundering all valuables. The details are precise and descriptive. Kir-hareseth was the last remaining defensive strongpoint in the land of Moab. Mesha and some troops barricaded themselves within the fortress. The Israelites besieged it.

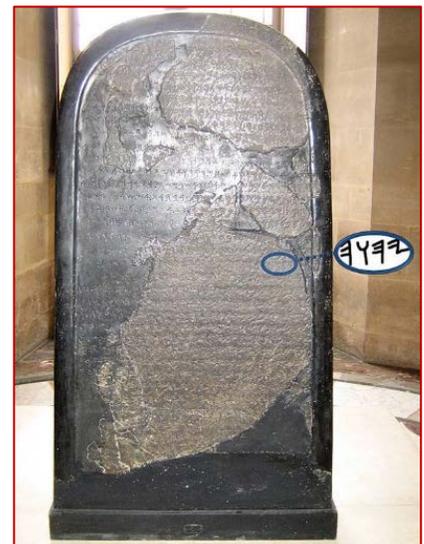
Verse 26. However evil, Mesha was no coward. He led a desperation attack, suddenly rushing from the fortress with 700 swordsmen, trying to reach and kill the King of Edom, disrupt the Edomites, and possibly escape. Mesha’s breakout attack failed. The battle was **“unyielding against him.”** This meant the attack was stalled and the Moabite force was unable to reach their objective to kill the Edomite king. The survivors retreated into the fortress.

Verse 27. Mesha then committed a terrible act. He brought his firstborn to the ramparts of the wall, and ritually performed a human sacrifice to his god Chemosh. It showed he was willing to go to extreme lengths to obtain favors from his god, even to the extent of his own son’s blood and life. The Moabites were known as **“the people of Chemosh”** (Numbers 21:29 and Jeremiah 48:46).

The phrase **“wrath against Israel”** probably meant that the Israelites were horrified by this act. Nothing else makes any sense. Moab’s power was destroyed, the countryside and cities devastated. The allied armies lifted the siege around Kir-hareseth, withdrew from Moab, **“and returned to their own land.”** Mesha now ruled a shattered kingdom, he had murdered his firstborn son and heir, and yet he felt vindicated. How do we know that? Mesha himself tells us.

The Moabite Stone (or the Mesha Stele)

Mesha left a written record called the Moabite Stone, also known as the Mesha Stele discovered in 1868. It is 3.3 feet × 3.6 inches × 23.6 inches. Mesha twice says he sacrificed Israelites soldiers who surrendered. This was likely known to the armies of Israel and Judah when they attacked Moab. When they saw Mesha sacrifice of his own son, it was an even greater horror. Mesha tells of the favor given to him by Chemosh (Kemosh),^g Moab’s chief deity. The pagan god supposedly delivered Moab from the control of its neighbor, Israel. Mesha says he erected the stele at the “high place” in Qarḥoh to venerate Chemosh. The inscription contains many historical details.^h Below is the translation, with emendations of K. Smelik’s translation.ⁱ It tells a different story but it cannot be determined exactly when the events mentioned in the Moabite Stone took place. They seem to be very different than the biblical information.



1. YHWH (in the oval) inscribed on the Moabite Stone

The Moabite Stone / Mesha Stele	Notes
“I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-gad, king of Moab, the Dibonite . My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I have reigned after my father. And I have built this sanctuary for Chemosh in Karchah, a	Dibon was the capital city of Moab at that time.

^g See Numbers 21:29; Judges 11:24; 1 Kings 11:7, 33; 2 Kings 23:13; Jeremiah 48:7, 13, 46 about Chemosh.

^h J. Dearman and Gerald Mattingly, “Mesha Stele,” *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 708–709.

ⁱ “[Mesha Stele](#),” Wikipedia, accessed July 17, 2017. The Smelik translation is in William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, *Context of Scripture* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000), 137–138.

<p>sanctuary of salvation, for he saved me from all aggressors, and made me look upon all mine enemies with contempt.</p> <p>Omri was king of Israel, and oppressed Moab during many days, and Chemosh was angry with his aggressions. His son succeeded him, and he also said, 'I will oppress Moab.' In my days he said, 'Let us go, and I will see my desire upon him and his house,' and Israel said, 'I shall destroy it for ever.'</p> <p>Now Omri took the land of Madeba, and occupied it in his day, and in the days of his son [Ahab], forty years. And Chemosh had mercy on it in my time. And I built Baal-meon and made therein the ditch, and I built Kiriathaim.</p> <p>And the men of Gad dwelled in the country of Ataroth from ancient times, and the king of Israel fortified Ataroth. I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the warriors of the city for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab, and I removed from it all the spoil, and offered it before Chemosh in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran, and the men of Mochrath.</p> <p>And Chemosh said to me, 'Go take Nebo against Israel,' and I went in the night and I fought against it from the break of day till noon, and I took it: and I killed in all seven thousand men, but I did not kill the women and maidens, for I devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh; and I took from it the vessels of Jehovah [YHWH], and offered them before Chemosh.</p> <p>And the king of Israel fortified Jahaz, and occupied it, when he made war against me, and Chemosh drove him out before me, and I took from Moab two hundred men in all, and placed them in Jahaz, and took it to annex it to Dibon.</p> <p>I built Karchah the wall of the forest, and the wall of the Hill. I have built its gates and I have built its towers. I have built the palace of the king, and I made the prisons for the criminals within the wall. ...</p>	<p>A sanctuary was a "high-place" in the Bible. Chemosh was the national god of Moab.</p> <p>Omri was the first king of a new Israelite dynasty. Aggressions is better rendered "with his land," referring to Israel. See Judges 3:12. His son likely refers to Jehoram, Omri's grandson. Mesha may be describing his account of 2 Kings 3:4–27. Forty years is the total of Ahab and Jehoram's control of Madeba. From ancient times indicates that Mesha did not know that the land of Gad was given to the Israelites. The well-pleasing is better rendered "the sacrifice" to Chemosh.^j I placed therein meant that Mesha moved people to live in Ataroth.</p> <p>I devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh, another Moabite god, perhaps they became temple servants/prostitutes. The vessels of YHWH is the earliest certain instance of YHWH, Israel's God. What the vessels were is uncertain.</p> <p>Mesha, like all aspiring "great" kings, was expected to be a great builder.</p> <p>[<i>The remainder of the inscription has to do with other of Mesha's construction activities.</i>]</p>
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TEXT: Jehoshaphat's Reign of Judah Summarized

1 Kings 22:41–50

⁴¹ As for Jehoshaphat son of Asa, he became king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

⁴² Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king; he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi.

⁴³ He walked in all the way of his father Asa and did not withdraw from it, doing what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh.

However they did not take away the high-places; the people were still sacrificing and fuming

2 Chronicles 20:31–21:1

³¹ Thus Jehoshaphat *reigned* over Judah.

He was thirty-five years old when he became king, *and* he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem; his mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi.

³² He walked in the way of his father Asa and did not withdraw from it, doing what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh.

³³ However, they did not take away the high-places, *and* the people *themselves* had not yet

^j The captives were sacrificed to Chemosh. A man who would sacrifice his own first-born son to Chemosh (2 Kings 3:27) would not hesitate to kill captives as a human sacrifice.

incense on the high-places.

⁴⁴ Jehoshaphat had made peace with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehoshaphat and his masterful deeds that he did and how he fought, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Judah?

⁴⁶ The rest of the cult-prostitutes that had remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out from the land. ⁴⁷ There was no king in Edom; a deputy of Jehoshaphat was king.

⁴⁸ As for Jehoshaphat, he built Tarshish ships to go to Ophir for gold; but he did not go, for the ships were broken up at Ezion-geber. ⁴⁹ Then Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, **“Let my servants go with your servants in the ships”**; yet Jehoshaphat did not comply.

⁵⁰ Jehoshaphat lay down with his fathers and was entombed with his fathers in the city of his father David; and his son Jehoram reigned in his stead.

prepared their heart for the Elohim of their fathers.

³⁴ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehoshaphat, *first and last, behold,* they are written *in the annals of Jehu son of Hanani that were entered in the scroll of the kings of Israel.*

³⁵ Afterward, king Jehoshaphat of Judah joined himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly in what he did. ³⁶ *With him he made a partnership to build with him ships that could go to Tarshish. They built the ships at Ezion-geber.*

³⁷ *Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, “Because you joined yourself with Ahaziah, Yahweh will breach your work.” And so the ships were broken and did not steer to go to Tarshish.*

¹ Jehoshaphat lay down with his fathers; he was entombed with his fathers in the city of David, and his son Jehoram reigned in his stead.

[end text]

Verses 41–42 and 31. A review of Jehoshaphat’s reign begins with his family history.

Verses 43 and 32–33. The righteous acts of his reign to control organized idolatry are told, like his father Asa. Jehoshaphat was unable to influence the people of Judah to do evil in their heart against God.

Verse 34. Jehu son of Hanani, contributor to the annals, is found in 1 Kings 16:1, 7 and 2 Chronicles 19:2.

Verse 44. This negative trait of Jehoshaphat and his father Asa were reported previously, and more below.

Verses 45 and 34. This information about Jehoshaphat was from prior written sources.

Verse 46. A distinction is made between Jehoshaphat and Asa. Jehoshaphat removed the cult prostitutes. Most pagan religions had sexual rites mixed with religious rites with both female and male prostitutes. Most women were required to perform those rites in the cult sanctuaries.^k Asa allowed them to continue operating.

Verse 47. Jehoshaphat placed an unnamed vassal king to rule Edom. The timeframe of the appointment is not known, nor do we know if this appointed king was an Edomite or an Israelite.

Verses 48–49 and 35–37. These are unsynchronized verses. Jehoshaphat’s friendly relationship with Ahaziah, king of Israel and son of Ahab is discussed. See about Ahaziah’s short 2-year reign in 1 Kings 22:51–2 Kings 1:18 above.

David Sielaff, August 2017

^k Ruth the Moabitess (great-grandmother of King David) was a woman of Moab whose religious life, before she married her Judahite husband, included a period of ritual prostitution. During the Exodus Israel encountered the Moabites, Numbers 25:1–3:

“While Israel dwelt in Shittim, the people started to commit prostitution with the daughters of Moab, who called the people to the sacrifices of their elohim. The people ate their sacrifices and bowed themselves down to their elohim. Thus Israel was paired with Baal-peor, and the anger of Yahweh grew hot against Israel.”

This passage is confirmed by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:7–8:

“Nor yet be becoming idolaters, according as some of them, even as it is written, ‘Seated are the people to eat and drink, and they rise to sport.’ Nor yet may we be committing prostitution, according as some of them commit prostitution, and fall in one day twenty-three thousand.”