
2CHRONICLES 20: 1 After this, the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them some of the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

The Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, invade Judah, 2Chr 20:1, 2Chr 20:2. Jehoshaphat proclaims a fast, and gathers the people together to seek the Lord, 2Chr 20:3, 2Chr 20:4. His prayer to God, 2Chr 20:5-12. Great and small, male and female, seek the Lord, 2Chr 20:13. Jahaziel predicts the downfall of their enemies, 2Chr 20:14-17. The king, the Levites, and the people take courage; praise and magnify God; and go forth to meet their enemies, 2Chr 20:18-21. The enemies are confounded, and destroy each other, 2Chr 20:22-24. The men of Judah take the spoil, praise the Lord, and return with joy to Jerusalem, 2Chr 20:25-28. The fear of the Lord falls upon all their enemies round about; and the land has rest, 2Chr 20:29, 2Chr 20:30. Transactions and character of Jehoshaphat, 2Chr 20:31-34. He joins with Ahaziah, king of Israel, in building a fleet of ships to go to Tarshish, but they are wrecked at Ezion-geber, 2Chr 20:35-37.

Verse 1

Children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites - Here there must be a mistake; surely the Ammonites are the same as the children of Ammon. Our translators have falsified the text by inserting the words "other beside," which have nothing properly to represent them in the Hebrew. Literally translated, the words are: "And it happened after this, the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them of the Ammonites:" and thus the Vulgate. The Syriac, which the Arabic follows, has felt the difficulty, and translated, Came together with warlike men to fight, etc. The Septuagint have given it another turn: Καὶ μετ' αὐτῶν ἐκ τῶν Μινναίων, And with them people of the Minaïtes; which were a people of Arabia Felix near the Red Sea. The Targum has וְעִמֵּהוֹן מִן אֲדוֹמָאִי Ve-immehon min Edomaey, "And with them some of the Edomites." This is very likely to be the true reading, as we find from 2Chr 20:10, 2Chr 20:22, 2Chr 20:23, that they procured men from Mount Seir; and these were the Idumeans or Edomites. We should, in my opinion, read the text thus: The children of Moab, and the children of common, and with them some of the Edomites.

2CHRONICLES 20: 2 Then some came who told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea from Syria. Behold, they are in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).

Verse 2

On this side Syria - Instead of מֵאֲרָם mearam, from Syria, I would read with one of Kennicott's MSS. (89) מֵאֲדָם meedom, from Edom, which alteration brings it to truth and does not require the change of half a letter, as it consists in the almost imperceptible difference between ר resh and ד dalet. We do not read of any Syrians in this invasion, but we know there were Edomites, or inhabitants of Mount Seir.

Hazazon-tamar - "In the wood of palm trees, that is, in Engedi." - Targum. This is the meaning of the word, and it is probable that they lay hid here.

2CHRONICLES 20: 3 Jehoshaphat was alarmed, and set himself to seek to the LORD. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

Verse 3

Jehoshaphat feared - He found that he could not possibly stand against such a numerous army, and therefore could not expect to be delivered except by the strong arm of God. To get this assistance, it was necessary to seek it; and to get such extraordinary help, they should seek it in an extraordinary way; hence he proclaimed a universal fast, and all the people came up to Jerusalem to seek the Lord.

2CHRONICLES 20: 4 Judah gathered themselves together, to seek help from the LORD. They came out of all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD.

2CHRONICLES 20: 5 Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the LORD's house, before the new court;

2CHRONICLES 20: 6 and he said, "LORD, the God of our fathers, aren't you God in heaven? Aren't you ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in your hand, so that no one is able to withstand you.

Verse 6

Jehoshaphat stood - What an instructive sight was this! The king who proclaimed the fast was foremost to observe it, and was on this occasion the priest of the people; offering in the congregation, without form or any premeditation, one of the most sensible, pious, correct, and as to its composition one of the most elegant prayers ever offered under the Old Testament dispensation.

2CHRONICLES 20: 7 Didn't you, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it to the seed of Abraham your friend forever?

Verse 7

Art not thou our God - "Hast not thou, by thy Word, driven out." - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 20: 8 They lived in it, and have built you a sanctuary in it for your name, saying,

Verse 8

Therein for thy name - "For the name of thy Word." - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 20: 9 'If evil comes on us—the sword, judgement, 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 affliction, and you will hear and save.'

Verse 9

For thy name is in this house - "Thy Majesty is in this house." Several of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., with the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic, add נִקְרָא nikra, "is invoked;" Thy name is invoked in this house - here thou dwellest, and here thou art worshipped.

2CHRONICLES 20: 10 Now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned aside from them, and didn't destroy them;

2CHRONICLES 20: 11 behold, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit.

Verse 11

They reward us - Six of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. add רעה evil: "Behold, they reward us Evil." This is also the reading of the Targum.

2CHRONICLES 20: 12 Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that comes against us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are on you."

Verse 12

Wilt thou not judge them - That is, Thou wilt inflict deserved punishment upon them.

2CHRONICLES 20: 13 All Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.

2CHRONICLES 20: 14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite, of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly;

2CHRONICLES 20: 15 and he said, "Listen, all Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you king Jehoshaphat. Thus says the LORD to you, 'Don't be afraid, neither be dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.

Verse 15

For the battle is not yours, but God's - God will not employ you in the discomfiture of this great host; he himself will take the matter in hand, deliver you, and destroy them.

2CHRONICLES 20: 16 Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they are coming up by the ascent of Ziz. You shall find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel.

2CHRONICLES 20: 17 You will not need to fight this battle. Set yourselves, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Don't be afraid, nor be dismayed. Go out against them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you."

Verse 17

For the Lord will be with you - "The Word of the Lord shall be your Helper." - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 20: 18 Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.

2CHRONICLES 20: 19 The Levites, of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites, stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with an exceeding loud voice.

2CHRONICLES 20: 20 They rose early in the morning, and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the LORD your God, so you shall be established! Believe his prophets, so you shall prosper."

Verse 20

Believe in the Lord your God - "Believe in the Word of the Lord your God, and believe in his law, and believe in his prophets; and ye shall prosper." Here the Word and the revelation are most pointedly distinguished; the Word being used personally.

2CHRONICLES 20: 21 When he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and give praise in holy array, as they went out before the army, and say, Give thanks to the LORD; for his loving kindness endures forever.

2CHRONICLES 20: 22 When they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushers against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were struck.

Verse 22

The Lord set ambushments - "The Word of the Lord placed snares among the children of Ammon and Moab; and the inhabitants of the mountain of Gibla, who came to fight with Judah; and they were broken to pieces:" so the Targum.

Houbigant translates the place thus: "The Lord set against the children of Ammon and Moab ambushments of those who came from Mount Seir against Judah; and the children of Ammon and Moab were smitten: but they afterwards rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, and utterly destroyed them; who being destroyed, they rose up one against another, and mutually destroyed each other." This is probably the meaning of these verses. Calmet's version is not very different.

2CHRONICLES 20: 23 For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to kill and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, everyone helped to destroy another.

2CHRONICLES 20: 24 When Judah came to the place overlooking the wilderness, they looked at the multitude; and behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and there were no one who escaped.

2CHRONICLES 20: 25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take their plunder, they found among them in abundance both riches and dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in taking the plunder, it was so much.

Verse 25

Both riches with the dead bodies - For פגרים peparim, dead bodies, בגדים begadim, garments, is the reading of eight MSS. in the collections of Kennicott and De Rossi, and in several ancient editions. None of the versions have dead bodies except the Chaldee. The words might be easily mistaken for each other, as the פ pe, if a little faint in the under dot might easily pass for a ב beth; and we know that the ר resh and ד daleth, are frequently interchanged and mistaken for each other, both in Hebrew and Syriac. I believe garments to be the true reading; and as to the clause which they stripped off for themselves, it should be understood thus: Which they seized for themselves, etc.

2CHRONICLES 20: 26 On the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Beracah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of that place was called The valley of Beracah to this day.

Verse 26

Assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah - "The valley of Benediction;" and so in the latter clause. - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 20: 27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in their forefront, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

Verse 27

Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them - He was their leader in all these spiritual, holy, fatiguing, and self-denying exercises. What a noble and persuasive pattern!

2CHRONICLES 20: 28 They came to Jerusalem with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets to the LORD's house.

2CHRONICLES 20: 29 The fear of God was on all the kingdoms of the countries, when they heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

Verse 29

The Lord fought - "The Word of the Lord made war against the enemies of Israel." - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 20: 30 So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet; for his God gave him rest all around.

2CHRONICLES 20: 31 Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah: he was thirty-five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Azubah the daughter of Shilhi.

2CHRONICLES 20: 32 He walked in the way of Asa his father, and didn't turn aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD.

2CHRONICLES 20: 33 However the high places were not taken away; neither as yet had the people set their hearts to the God of their fathers.

Verse 33

The high places were not taken away - The idolatry, as we have seen, was universally suppressed; but some of the places where that worship had been performed were not destroyed. Some of them still remained; and these, to such a fickle people, became the means of idolatry in reigns less propitious to truth and religion.

2CHRONICLES 20: 34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold, they are written in the history of Jehu the son of Hanani, which is inserted in the book of the kings of Israel.

Verse 34

In the book of Jehu - This is totally lost, though it is evident that it was in being when the books of Chronicles were written.

2CHRONICLES 20: 35 After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah joined himself with Ahaziah king of Israel. The same did very wickedly:

2CHRONICLES 20: 36 and he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish; and they made the ships in Ezion Geber.

Verse 36

To go to Tarshish - "In the great sea." - Targum. By which expression they always meant the Mediterranean Sea.

2CHRONICLES 20: 37 Then Eliezer the son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have joined yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." The ships were broken, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Verse 37

The Lord hath broken, etc. - "The Word of the Lord hath broken." - Targum. Concerning Tarshish, Ezion-geber, and Ophir, and the voyage thither, see the notes on 1Kgs 10:22, and at 1Kgs 10:29 (note), and on 2Chr 9:26-28 (note). The Tarshish here is called by the Chaldee Torsos in the great sea, some place in the Mediterranean. On this subject the reader has, no doubt, already seen a great variety of opinions.