
2CHRONICLES 21: 1 Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

Jehoram succeeds his father Jehoshaphat; and commences his reign with the murder of his brethren, and of several of the princes of Israel, 2Chr 21:1-5. He walks in the way of Ahab, whose bad daughter, Athaliah, he had married, 2Chr 21:6. God remembers his covenant with David, and does not destroy the nation, 2Chr 21:7. The Edomites revolt, 2Chr 21:8-10. Jehoram restores the high places in the mountains of Judah, and greatly corrupts the morals of the people, 2Chr 21:11. A letter comes to him from Elijah, 2Chr 21:12-15. The Philistines and Arabians come up against him, pillage his house, and take away his wives, with all his sons except Jehoahaz, 2Chr 21:16, 2Chr 21:17. He is smitten with an incurable disease in his bowels; of which, in two years, he dies miserably, after a profligate reign of eight years, 2Chr 21:18-20.

2CHRONICLES 21: 2 He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.

Verse 2

And he had brethren - the sons of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel. - Jehoshaphat certainly was not king of Israel, but king of Judah. **ישראל** Yisrael must be a corruption in the text, for **יהודה** Yehudah; which is the reading of the Syriac, Arabic, Septuagint, and Vulgate: the Chaldee, only agrees with the Hebrew text. And the reading of the versions is supported by thirty-eight of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. The word Judah should therefore be restored to the text.

2CHRONICLES 21: 3 Their father gave them great gifts, of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fortified cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn.

Verse 3

The kingdom gave he to Jehoram - He made him co-partner with himself in the kingdom about three years before his death; so that he reigned only five years after the death of his father Jehoshaphat. See the notes on 2Kgs 8:16, etc.; and on the same, 2Chr 1:17, where an attempt is made to settle this disturbed chronology.

2CHRONICLES 21: 4 Now when Jehoram was risen up over the kingdom of his father, and had strengthened himself, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and various also of the princes of Israel.

Verse 4

Slew all his brethren - What a truly diabolic thing is the lust of power! it destroys all the charities of life, and renders those who are under its influence the truest resemblants of the arch fiend. That he might sit the more secure upon his throne, this execrable man imbrues his hands in the blood of his own brothers! There are more instances of this species of cruelty among bad Asiatic kings than among any other class of men. The history of every country abounds in proofs; even that of our own is not the least barren.

2CHRONICLES 21: 5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

2CHRONICLES 21: 6 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab as wife: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD.

Verse 6

He had the daughter of Ahab to wife - This was Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who was famous for her impieties and cruelty, as was her most profligate mother. It is likely that she was the principal cause of Jehoram's cruelty and profaneness.

2CHRONICLES 21: 7 However the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a lamp to him and to his children always.

Verse 7

To give a light to him - To give him a descendant.

2CHRONICLES 21: 8 In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

Verse 8

In his days the Edomites revolted - See on 2Kgs 8:21 (note).

2CHRONICLES 21: 9 Then Jehoram passed over with his captains, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and struck the Edomites who surrounded him, along with the captains of the chariots.

2CHRONICLES 21: 10 So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah to this day: then Libnah revolted at the same time from under his hand, because he had forsaken the LORD, the God of his fathers.

2CHRONICLES 21: 11 Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and made the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the prostitute, and led Judah astray.

Verse 11

To commit fornication - That is, to serve idols. The Israelites were considered as joined to Jehovah as a woman is joined to her husband: when she associates with other men, this is adultery; when they served other gods, this was called by the same name, it was adultery against Jehovah. This is frequently the only meaning of the terms adultery and fornication in the Scriptures.

2CHRONICLES 21: 12 A letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, "Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,

Verse 12

There came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet - From 2Kgs 2:11, it is evident that Elijah had been translated in the reign of Jehoshaphat, the father of Jehoram. How then could he send a letter to the son? Some say he sent it from heaven by an angel; others, that by the spirit of prophecy he foresaw this defection of Jehoram, and left the letter with Elisha, to be sent to him when this defection should take place; others say that Elijah is put here for Elisha; and others, that this Elijah was not the same that was translated, but another prophet of the same name. There are others who think that, as Elijah was still in the body, for he did not die, but was translated, he sent this letter from that secret place in which he was hidden by the Almighty. All the versions have Elijah, and all the MSS. the same reading. Dr. Kennicott contends that Elisha was the writer; for Elijah had been taken up to heaven thirteen years before the time of this writing. Our margin says, the letter was written before his assumption, and refers to 2Kgs 2:1.

These are all conjectures; and I could add another to their number, but still we should be where we were. I should adopt the conjecture relative to Elisha, were not every Hebrew MS., and all the Oriental versions, against it; to which may be added, that the author of this book does not once mention Elisha in any part of his work. It is certainly a possible case that this writing might have been a prediction of Jehoram's impiety and miserable death, delivered in the time of the prophet, and which was now laid before this wicked king for the first time: and by it the prophet, though not among mortals, still continued to speak. I can see no solid reason against this opinion.

2CHRONICLES 21: 13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the prostitute, like the house of Ahab did, and also have slain your brothers of your father's house, who were better than yourself:

2CHRONICLES 21: 14 behold, the LORD will strike with a great plague your people, and your children, and your wives, and all your substance;

Verse 14

Will the Lord smite - "The Word of the Lord will send a great mortality." - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 21: 15 and you shall have great sickness by disease of your bowels, until your bowels fall out by reason of the sickness, day by day.'"

Verse 15

Until thy bowels fall out - This must have been occasioned by a violent inflammation: by the same death perished Antiochus Epiphanes, and Herod Agrippa.

2CHRONICLES 21: 16 The LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians who are beside the Ethiopians:

Verse 16

The Philistines, and - the Arabians - We have no other account of this war. Though it was a predatory war, yet it appears to have been completely ruinous and destructive. What a general curse fell upon this bad king; in his body, soul, substance, family, and government!

2CHRONICLES 21: 17 and they came up against Judah, and broke into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

Verse 17

Save Jehoahaz the youngest - This person had at least three names, Jehoahaz, Ahaziah, (2Chr 22:1), and Azariah, (2Chr 22:6).

2CHRONICLES 21: 18 After all this the LORD struck him in his bowels with an incurable disease.

Verse 18

The Lord smote him - "And after all these things the Word of the Lord smote his bowels," etc. - Targum.

2CHRONICLES 21: 19 In process of time, at the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness, and he died of severe diseases. His people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

Verse 19

After the end of two years, his bowels fell out - The Targum seems to intimate that he had a constipation and inflammation in his bowels; and that at last his bowels gushed out.

No burning - "His people made no burning of aromatic woods for him, as they had done for his forefathers." - Targum. See on 2Chr 16:14 (note).

2CHRONICLES 21: 20 Thirty-two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years: and he departed without being desired; and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Verse 20

Departed without being desired - He was hated while he lived, and neglected when he died; visibly cursed of God, and necessarily execrated by the people whom he had lived only to corrupt and oppress. No annalist is mentioned as having taken the pains to write any account of his vile life. This summary mention of him consigns him to the execration of posterity, and holds in the view of every prudent governor, the rock on which he split and wrecked the state.

2CHRONICLES 22: 1 The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place; for the band of men who came with the Arabians to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned.

Ahaziah begins to reign; and reigns wickedly under the counsels of his bad mother, 2Chr 22:1-4. He is slain by Jehu, who destroys all the house of Ahab, 2Chr 22:5-9. Athaliah destroys all the seed royal of Judah, except Joash, who is hidden by his nurse in the temple six years, 2Chr 22:10-12.

Verse 1

Made Ahaziah his youngest son king - All the others had been slain by the Arabians, etc.; see the preceding chapter, 2Chr 21:17 (note).

2CHRONICLES 22: 2 Forty-two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

Verse 2

Forty and two years old was Ahaziah - See the note on 2Kgs 8:26. Ahaziah might have been twenty-two years old, according to 2Kgs 8:26 (note), but he could not have been forty-two, as stated here, without being two years older than his own father! See the note there. The Syriac and Arabic have

twenty-two, and the Septuagint, in some copies, twenty. And it is very probable that the Hebrew text read so originally; for when numbers were expressed by single letters, it was easy to mistake מ mem, Forty, for כ caph, Twenty. And if this book was written by a scribe who used the ancient Hebrew letters, now called the Samaritan, the mistake was still more easy and probable, as the difference between caph and mem is very small, and can in many instances be discerned only by an accustomed eye.

The reading in 2Kgs 8:26 is right, and any attempt to reconcile this in Chronicles with that is equally futile and absurd. Both readings cannot be true; is that therefore likely to be genuine that makes the son two years older than the father who begat him? Apage hae nugae!

2CHRONICLES 22: 3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.

Verse 3

His mother was his counsellor - Athaliah, the wicked daughter of a wicked parent, and the wicked spouse of an unprincipled king.

2CHRONICLES 22: 4 He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab; for they were his counsellors after the death of his father, to his destruction.

2CHRONICLES 22: 5 He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead: and the Syrians wounded Joram.

Verse 5

Went with Jehoram - See on 2Kgs 8:28 (note).

2CHRONICLES 22: 6 He returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which they had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

2CHRONICLES 22: 7 Now the destruction of Ahaziah was of God, in that he went to Joram: for when he had come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

2CHRONICLES 22: 8 When Jehu was executing judgement on the house of Ahab, he found the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brothers of Ahaziah, serving Ahaziah, and killed them.

2CHRONICLES 22: 9 He sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (now he was hiding in Samaria), and they brought him to Jehu, and killed him; and they buried him, for they said, "He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." The house of Ahaziah had no power to hold the kingdom.

Verse 9

He sought Ahaziah - See a different account 2Kgs 9:27 (note), and the note there, where the accounts are reconciled.

2CHRONICLES 22: 10 Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal seed of the house of Judah.

Verse 10

All the seed royal of the house of Judah - Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the Divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy relative to the Messiah. The whole truth of that prophecy, and the salvation of the world, appeared to be now suspended on the brittle thread of the life of an infant of a year old, (see 2Chr 24:1), to destroy whom was the interest of the reigning power! But God can save by few as well as by many. He had purposed, and vain were the counter-exertions of earth and hell.

2CHRONICLES 22: 11 But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were slain, and put him and his nurse in the bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah, so that she didn't kill him.

2CHRONICLES 22: 12 He was with them hidden in God's house six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land.

Verse 12

Hid in the house of God - "In the house of the sanctuary of God." - Targum. Or, as he says on 2Chr 22:11, בקודש קודשיא bekudash kudeshaiya "in the holy of holies." To this place Athaliah had no access, therefore Joash lay concealed, he and his affectionate aunt-nurse. - See on 2Kgs 11:1 (note).