

CHAPTER 21

INTRODUCTION TO 2 CHRONICLES 21

This chapter relates Jehoram's succession to the throne of Judah, and the murders and idolatries committed by him, (^{<4201>}2 Chronicles 21:1-7), the revolt of the Edomites from him, and some of his own people, (^{<4208>}2 Chronicles 21:8-11), a writing of Elijah to him, threatening a great plague to him and his family, (^{<4212>}2 Chronicles 21:12-15), the raising up of several enemies against him, (^{<4216>}2 Chronicles 21:16,17), his sickness, death, and burial, (^{<4218>}2 Chronicles 21:18-20).

Ver. 1. *Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers*, etc.] (See Gill on "^{<1250>}1 Kings 22:50").

Ver. 2. *And he had brethren, the sons of Jehoshaphat*, etc.] That is, Jehoram had, who succeeded him: their names follow,

Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah; two of them were of the same name; though it may be observed, that in the Hebrew text they are somewhat distinguished, the latter is called Azariah; Jehiel is said, by the Jews¹⁷⁵, to be the same with Hiel that rebuilt Jericho; indeed it was rebuilt in the times of Jehoshaphat, and was a city of the tribe of Benjamin, (^{<6182>}Joshua 18:21) which was under his jurisdiction; but it can never be thought that he would ever suffer a son of his to rebuild it; besides, he is expressly said to be a Bethelite, (^{<1168>}1 Kings 16:34),

all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel; which generally, since the division of the kingdom, designs the ten tribes, but cannot be the meaning here, because Jehoshaphat was only king of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin; they were tribes of Israel indeed, and so he was king of a part of Israel; and besides, many out of the ten tribes came and settled in his kingdom, and were under his government; though some think he is so called, because he concerned himself so much for the kingdom of Israel, and more than for his own; but the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, all read king of Judah; wherefore some are of opinion that Israel is a mistake of the transcriber; but this need not be supposed, since

he was of right king of Israel, and was in fact king of two tribes that belonged to Israel.

Ver. 3. *And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things*, etc.] As jewels and precious stones; or precious garments, as the Targum, in like manner as Abraham gave to his sons, when he sent them from Isaac:

with fenced cities in Judah; not as their own property, but he appointed them governors in them, to defend them against an enemy, and as a mark of honour to them:

but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn; strictly observing the law in (⁴⁶²¹⁶Deuteronomy 21:16,17), which was not always done; though it was reckoned by the Heathens contrary to the law of nations to give the kingdom to the younger^{f76}.

Ver. 4. *Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father*, etc.] Succeeded him in it, and reigned alone, for he had reigned with his father some years before his death; (See Gill on “¹²⁸⁶2 Kings 8:16”),

he strengthened himself; in the kingdom, by some means or another closely attaching the greater part of the princes, and people of the land, unto him, when he thought himself well settled and established on the throne; though some understand it of making strong, or hardening his heart to do what is next mentioned:

and slew all his brethren with the sword; either to get their riches into his hands, or lest, being religious princes, they should oppose his restoring idolatry, and for that reason the people should depose him, and set up one of them; and therefore he dispatched them out of the way to secure himself, and carry his point:

and [divers] also of the princes of Israel; such who had removed out of the ten tribes, for the sake of religion, and therefore would never agree to the introduction of idolatry among them, for which reason Jehoram slew them; and perhaps they might express their disapprobation and abhorrence of his murder of his brethren.

Ver. 5-10. *Jehoram was thirty two years old*, etc.] Of these verses, (See Gill on “¹²⁸⁷2 Kings 8:17-22”)

Ver. 11. *Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah,* etc.] Temples and altars for idols, which, being built on mountains, had the name of high places; and these Jehoram made or rebuilt were those which had been pulled down by Asa and Jehoshaphat:

and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication; that is, idolatry, drawing them by his own example to worship Baal, for he did what Ahab and his family did, (⁴²⁰⁵2 Chronicles 21:6), and compelled Judah thereto; the inhabitants of Jerusalem falling into the same idolatrous practice with him, he forced the inhabitants of the cities, and in the country, to do the same, who it seems were not so willing and ready to comply therewith.

Ver. 12. *And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet,* etc.] Not what was written by him after his ascension to heaven, and from thence came to Jehoram, even seven years after that, as say some Jewish writers¹⁷⁷; nor was it a writing from another person of the same name in those times, since of such an one we nowhere read; nor from Elisha bearing the name of Elijah, having a double portion of his spirit on him, since he is never so called; but this was a writing of Elijah's before his ascension, who, foreseeing by a spirit of prophecy what Jehoram would be guilty of, wrote this, and gave it to one of the prophets, as Kimchi suggests, and most probably to Elisha, to communicate it to him at a proper time; and who might, as the above writer intimates, think it came immediately from heaven:

saying, thus saith the Lord God of David thy father; and from whose God he had departed, and to which ancestor of his he was so much unlike:

because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah; neither trod in the steps of his father nor grandfather.

Ver. 13. *And hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel,* etc.] Worshipping the calves, and even Baal, with other idols, as they did:

and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab; meaning spiritual whoredoms or idolatries:

and hast also slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself; more religious, more humane, more prudent, and fitter for government.

Ver. 14. *Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people*, etc.] They going into the same idolatry with himself willingly, at least great part of them, and therefore deserved to be smitten, and which would be a punishment to him:

and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods; which should be carried captive, as the event shows.

Ver. 15. *And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels*, etc.] Which was a just retaliation to him, for having no bowels of compassion on his brethren whom he slew:

until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day; that continuing day after day, and even year after year, the space of two years, as appears from (⁴²¹⁹2 Chronicles 21:19).

Ver. 16. *Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines*, etc.] Which had been depressed in the times of Jehoshaphat, to whom they brought their presents and tribute willingly, (⁴⁴⁷¹2 Chronicles 17:11)

and of the Arabians that were near the Ethiopians; not the Ethiopians of Africa, as the Targum, for the Arabians were not near them, but the Chusaeen Arabs or Midianites, (see ⁴⁴²¹Numbers 12:1). The Targum is, the Word of the Lord did this.

Ver. 17. *And they came up into Judah, and brake into it*, etc. | In an hostile manner:

and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, his gold, silver, and precious things, the rich furniture of his palace; no mention is made of any other plunder in the city, or the country; so that they seem to have had their principal eye to the king's palace, and the spoil of that; being so directed by the providence of God, who had stirred them up to do this as a punishment of Jehoram:

and his sons also, and his wives; these they also carried away, all but Athaliah, who hid herself; he through his disease not being able to make any opposition, or to get any forces together to withstand them:

so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons; the same that is called Ahaziah and Azariah, (^{<421>}2 Chronicles 22:1,6) so the prophecy in (^{<4214>}2 Chronicles 21:14) was fulfilled.

Ver. 18. *After all this the Lord smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease.*] What it was is not agreed upon; some take it be an “hernia”, or rupture; others, the falling of the “anus”, or a fistula in it; others, the colic, or iliac passion; but generally it is thought to be a dysentery, or bloody flux; the Targum is,

“the Word of the Lord broke him.”

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass that in process of time, after the end of two years*, etc.] So long he was afflicted and tortured with the above disease:

his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness; either in like manner as Judas’s did, (^{<4118>}Acts 1:18) or as in the manner the bowels of Arius are said to do, while sitting on the seat of the vault ^{f78}; or perhaps only what was contained in the bowels is meant, if it was the colic:

so he died of sore diseases; he seems to have had a complication of them, and these very painful and distressing:

and the people made no burning for him, like the burnings of his fathers; as they did for his grandfather Asa, (^{<4164>}2 Chronicles 16:14), they did not burn spices or odoriferous wood, as the Targum; though his body, because of the stench of it, needed it, as Jarchi observes.

Ver. 20. *Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years*, etc.] (see ^{<4187>}2 Kings 8:17),

and departed without being desired; to live, either by himself, being weary of life through the pain he endured; or by his people, he being so wicked a prince, and so ill beloved by them, that nobody wished to have him live, but were glad to hear of his death; the meaning is, he died unlamented; his death is expressed by a departing out of this world into another, a phrase more than once used for death in the New Testament, (see ^{<410>}John 13:1 ^{<4123>}Philippians 1:23),

howbeit, they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings; they showed him some respect for the sake of his father, by burying him in the city of David, but denied him the honour of lying in the royal sepulchres, (see ^{<4184>}2 Kings 8:24).