

# 2 Chronicles 21 Commentary

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SECOND CHRONICLES						
The Kingdom of Israel						
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Splendor			Disaster			
King Solomon of Judah 2 Chronicles 1-9			Successive Kings of Judah 2Chr 10-36			
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Building of the Temple			Decline & Destruction of the Temple			Temple Destroyed
~40 Years			~393 Years			

Click chart to enlarge  
Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[Click Chart from Charles Swindoll](#)

TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES						
1107	1011	971	931	853	722	586
1Samuel	2 Samuel	1Kings	1Kings	2 Kings		

31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25
1 Chronicles 10		1Chr 11-19		1Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36	

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.

SEE ALSO:

[ESV chart - kings of Israel - more information](#)

[ESV chart - kings of Judah - more information](#)

[Another Chart with Variable Dates for Reigns of Kings](#)

**2 Chronicles 21:1 Then Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place.**

- **Jehoshaphat:** 1Ki 22:50
- **was buried:** 2Ch 21:20 9:31 12:16
- **Jehoram:** 2Ki 8:16,17
- CLICK [2 CHRONICLES COMMENTARIES](#) FOR MULTIPLE SERMONS AND COMMENTARIES
- See [BELOW FOR BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR 1-2 CHRONICLES](#) - adapted from [Paul Apple's Bible Outlines](#)

## THE TORCH IS PASSED BUT GODLINESS IS NOT

**Then** - When is **then**? **Walton** writes that "By Thiele's reckoning, Jehoram ruled 853–841 B.C. It has been suggested that he was coregent with his father Jehoshaphat for the first five years of his reign. Contemporary kings in Israel were Ahaziah and Joram. This is a critical period featuring numerous western campaigns by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (see comment on 1 Kings 22:1)." ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

**Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Jehoram his son became king in his place** - The reign of Jehoram can be confusing because it he had been reigning for 5 years as co-regent with his father Jehoshaphat. This passage describes

**BACKGROUND** - King Jehoshaphat apparently raised up Jehoram/Joram to reign with him (853 B.C.) prior to his (Jehoshaphat's) alliance with Ahab of Israel to fight [Aram](#) (Syria) at Ramoth-gilead, as recorded in 1 Kings 22:1-41+. In other words, King Jehoshaphat was "[covering his bases](#)" establishing Jehoram/Joram as co-regent just in case he (Jehoshaphat) did not survive the battle with Aram (and in fact Ahab did lose his life). In summary, the coregency was a strategic move by Jehoshaphat to ensure stable leadership, considering the dangerous nature of the military campaign against Aram. This coregency continued until 848 BC, when Jehoshaphat died. The present passage 2Ki 8:17 marks the beginning of the SOLO reign of Jehoram/Joram. (Borrow Edwin Thiele's [The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings page 98](#))

[Iain Duguid](#): The Chronicler presents Jehoram's reign as a complete aberration, the reversal of the reigns of kings before him.

**Raymond Dillard**: The Chronicler presents Jehoram's reign as the unraveling of the accomplishments of Asa and Jehoshaphat. His handling of this king is a paradigm for his theology of immediate retribution. Each aspect of wrongdoing brought its inevitable consequence in loss of family, territory, and health. Though the writer of the Kings account would mention only that Jehoram died, the Chronicler elaborates at some length on the terrible death he endured as the result of his wickedness. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

[Paul Apple](#)- Irony permeates the account of Jehoram's reign. Rather than enlarging the scope of his power through seizing his brothers' cities, he loses control over Libnah and Edom; rather than securing the succession of his own children by slaughtering his brothers, he sees his children suffer a similar fate; rather than securing life and happiness for himself, he suffers an agonizing and premature death; rather than gaining the devotion of his subjects, he dies unmourned and without the customary honors attending a royal funeral (McConville, 198). So it is for those who forget that the kingdom is God's (1 Chr 10:14; 17:14; 28:5; 29:11; 2 Chr 13:8).

**Andrew Hill:** Jehoram is the first king to receive an entirely negative review by the Chronicler. As Japhet has observed, this is especially noticeable in the dark tone set for his reign by an emphasis on his fratricide at the onset of his rule (2Ch 21:4) and his fatal illness cutting short his tenure on Judah's throne (2Ch 21:19). Two recurring themes are dominant in this entire unit: - Judah's affiliation with Baal because of the alliance with the "house of Ahab" (2Ch 21:6; 22:3, 4, 7, 8), and - The threat to the survival of the royal line of King David (2Ch 21:7; 22:10). (See [The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles](#))

*The kingdom of Judah suddenly  
enters a very dark phase*

**Martin Selman:** The kingdom of Judah suddenly enters a very dark phase (2Ch 21-23). The reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah (2Ch 21-22) and their sequel in Athaliah's overthrow and death (2Ch 23), brought the nation to the brink of internal destruction. The chief cause was the insidious influence of the house of Ahab (2Ch 21:6; 33:4, 5, 7, 8), which was known in contemporary non-Israelite documents as "the house of Omri" (cf. 2Ch 22:2). Ironically, that dynasty had been introduced into Judah's affairs by the godly Jehoshaphat (cf. 2Ch 22:9), but the latter's faith and courage were unfortunately no guarantee of his wisdom. The disastrous nature of his alliance with Ahab has been mentioned already (cf. 2Ch 18:1-2; 19:1-3; cf. 2Ch 20:35-37), but now its consequences begin to unfold. The wider story of the house of Ahab's commitment to Baal worship and conflict with the prophets Elijah and Elisha is assumed to be known to the reader (1 Ki. 17 – 2 Ki. 11), leaving Chronicles to concentrate on their relationship with Judah. (BORROW [2 Chronicles : a commentary](#) page 430)

**Mark Boda:** The Chronicler's account of Jehoram reveals the discipline that awaits the king who disobeys Yahweh. Jehoram's paranoid eradication of the royal house at the outset of his reign came back on his own head; by the end of this story his own court was left with only one heir to the throne. Elijah's prophetic letter reveals that Jehoram was really a northern king within the Davidic dynasty, and the sickness he experienced revealed God's deep displeasure with him. Yet, in spite of this, the Chronicler does not abandon the promise of an enduring dynasty for David, citing the promise of a lamp to burn forever (2Ch 21:7). It is important that the Chronicler notes this during the reign of Jehoram, for the following chapters will describe the descent of the dynasty into its greatest crisis yet. (See [1-2 Chronicles - Page 339](#))

**Ron Daniel** - 2Ch 21:1-3 The Sons Of Jehoshaphat. Yeh-ho-RAWM, the oldest of the seven sons of Jehoshaphat, became king when Jehoshaphat died. His brothers were Az-ar-YAW, Yekh-ee-ALE, Zek-ar-YAW, Az-ar-YAW-hoo, Me-kaw-ALE and Shef-at-YAW. I should point out that "Az-ar-YAW" and "Az-ar-YAW-hoo" are the identical names in Hebrew. Having two sons of the same name is a bit odd. After looking it up in Hebrew, I discovered that the meaning of the name is "Darrel." (kidding!) King Jehoshaphat seems to have been a good dad. He gave all of his sons gifts, and put them in charge of various cities in Judah. Of course Yeh-ho-RAWM was inevitably going to be the king, since he was the firstborn, but he placed his other sons in positions of prominence and authority as well. Was this action good or bad? Well, Jehoshaphat's great-grandfather Rehoboam had done the same thing back in chapter 11, and the Chronicler said it was a wise thing to do:

2Chr. 11:23 He acted wisely and distributed some of his sons through all the territories of Judah and Benjamin to all the fortified cities...

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### Matthew Henry Notes - Chapter: 21

Never surely did any kingdom change its king so much for the worse as Judah did, when Jehoram, one of the vilest, succeeded Jehoshaphat, one of the best. Thus were they punished for not making a better use of Jehoshaphat's good government, and their disaffectedness (or coldness at least) to his reformation, 2Ch 20:33. Those that knew not now to value a good king are justly plagued with a bad one. Here is,

- I. Jehoram's elevation to the throne (2Ch 21:1-3).
- II. The wicked course he took to establish himself in it, by the murder of his brethren (2Ch 21:4).
- III. The idolatries and other wickedness he was guilty of (2Ch 21:5, 6, 11).
- IV. The prophecy of Elijah against him (2Ch 21:12-15).
- V. The judgments of God upon him, in the revolt of his subjects from him (2Ch 21:8-10) and the success of his enemies against him (2Ch 21:16, 17).
- VI. His miserable sickness and inglorious exit (2Ch 21:18-20).
- VII. The preservation of the house of David notwithstanding (2Ch 21:7).

Verses: 2Ch 21:1-11 We find here,

**I. That Jehoshaphat was a very careful indulgent father to Jehoram.**

He had many sons, who are here named (2Ch 21:2), and it is said (2Ch 21:13) that they were better than Jehoram, had a great deal more wisdom and virtue, and lived up to their education, which he went counter to. They were very hopeful, and any of them more fit for the crown than he; and yet, because he was the first-born (2Ch 21:3), his father secured the kingdom to him, and portioned his brethren and disposed of them so as that they would be easy and give him no disturbance; as Abraham, when he made Isaac his heir, dismissed his other children with gifts. Herein Jehoshaphat was very kind and fair to his son, which might have obliged him to be respectful to him, and tread in the steps of so good a father. But it is no new thing for the children that have been most indulged by their parents to be least dutiful to them. Whether in doing this he acted wisely and well for his people, and was just to them, I cannot say. His birthright entitled him to a double portion of his father's estate, Deu. 21:17. But if he appeared utterly unfit for government (the end of which is the good of the people), and likely to undo all that his father had done, it would have been better perhaps to have set him aside, and taken the next that was hopeful, and not inclined as he was to idolatry. Power is a sacred thing, with which men may either do much good or much hurt; and therefore Detur digniori-Let him that deserves it have it. Salus populi suprema lex-The security of the people is the first consideration.

## **II. That Jehoram was a most barbarous brother to his father's sons.**

As soon as he had settled himself in the throne he slew all his brethren with the sword, either by false accusation, under colour of law, or rather by assassination. By some wicked hand or other he got them all murdered, pretending (it is likely) that he could not think himself safe in the government till they were taken out of the way. Those that mean ill themselves are commonly, without cause, jealous of those about them. The wicked fear where no fear is, or pretend to do so, in order to conceal their malice. Jehoram, it is likely, hated his brethren and slew them for the same reason that Cain hated Abel and slew him, because their piety condemned his impiety and won them that esteem with the people which he had lost. With them he slew divers of the princes of Israel, who adhered to them, or were likely to avenge their death. The princes of Judah, those who had taught the good knowledge of the Lord (2Ch 17:7), are here called princes of Israel, as before fathers of Israel (2Ch 19:8), because they were Israelites indeed, men of integrity. The sword which the good father had put into their hands this wicked son sheathed in their bowels. Woe unto him that thus foundeth a kingdom in blood (Hab. 2:12); it will prove a foundation that will sink the superstructure.

## **III. That Jehoram was a most wicked king, who corrupted and debauched his kingdom, and ruined the reformation that his good father and grandfather had carried on:**

He walked in the way of the house of Ahab (2Ch 21:6), made high places, which the people were of themselves too forward to make, and did his utmost to set up idolatry again, 2Ch 21:11.

1. As for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, where he kept his court, he easily drew them into his spiritual whoredom: He caused them to commit fornication, seducing them to eat things sacrificed to idols, Rev. 2:20.
2. The country people seem to have been brought to it with more difficulty; but those that would not be corrupted by flatteries were driven by force to partake in his abominable idolatries: He compelled Judah thereto. He used that power for the destruction of the church which was given him for the edification of it.

## **IV. That when he forsook God and his worship his subjects withdrew from their allegiance to him.**

1. Some of the provinces abroad that were tributaries to him did so. The Edomites revolted (2Ch 21:8), and, though he chastised them (2Ch 21:9), yet he could not reduce them, 2Ch 21:10.
2. One of the cities of his own kingdom did so. Libnah revolted (2Ch 21:10) and set up for a free state, as of old it had a king of its own, Jos. 12:15. And the reason is here given, not only why God permitted it, but why they did it; they shook off his government because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers, had become an idolater and a worshipper of false gods, and they could not continue subject to him without some danger of being themselves also drawn away from God and their duty. While he adhered to God they adhered to him; but, when he cast God off, they cast him off. Whether this reason will justify them in their revolt of no, it will justify God's providence which ordered it so.

## **V. That yet God was tender of his covenant with the house of David, and therefore would not destroy the royal family,** though it was so wretchedly corrupted and degenerated, 2Ch 21:7. These things we had before, 2 Ki. 8:19-22. The tenor of the covenant was that David's seed should be visited for their transgressions, but the covenant should never be broken, Ps. 89:30, etc.

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## QUESTION - [Who was King Jehoram / Joram in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - There are two kings in the Bible referred to as King Jehoram/Joram. The first was the son of King Jehoshaphat, and he ruled in the southern kingdom of Judah from 853 to 841 BC. The other King Jehoram was the son of the wicked King Ahab, and he ruled in the northern kingdom of Israel from 852 to 841 BC. The name *Joram* is a shortened form of *Jehoram*. Complicating matters is the fact that both Jehorams were brothers-in-law to each other.

Jehoram son of [Jehoshaphat](#) was 32 years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for four years with his father and another eight years on his own in Judah (2 Kings 8:16–17)—a total of twelve years. (ED: NOTE MOST OTHER SOURCES SAY 8 YEARS TOTAL REIGN - SEE NOTE AFTER THIS DISCUSSION) Although Jehoshaphat had been a good and godly king, Jehoram did not follow in his father's footsteps. He married [Athaliah](#), daughter of King Ahab (and sister of Ahab's son Joram), and he became an evil ruler. But, in spite of King Jehoram's wickedness, God kept his covenant with David and refrained from destroying Judah (2 Kings 8:19).

Sadly, God's mercy had no effect on Jehoram's behavior. He led his kingdom into idolatry and lewdness, and he caused both Edom and Libnah to revolt against Judah (2 Chronicles 21:8, 11). So God sent word through the [prophet Elijah](#) that, because Jehoram had led the people into sin, there would be a devastating attack on Jehoram's house and Jehoram himself would be struck with an incurable bowel disease (verses 14–15). As part of God's judgment, the Philistines and Arabs "attacked Judah, invaded it and carried off all the goods found in the king's palace, together with his sons and wives. Not a son was left to him except Ahaziah, the youngest" (verse 17). The disease killed Jehoram in a gruesome and agonizing manner at the age of 40. The people did not mourn this wicked king (verses 18–20).

**The other Jehoram (or Joram)**, son of [Ahab](#), took the throne of Israel in the second year of his brother-in-law's reign in Judah, and he was just as corrupt. He certainly had a poor example in his father. Ahab had turned the people to idolatry, leading them away from the true God of their fathers to the worship of his wife Jezebel's god, Baal. Ahab had famously clashed with the Elijah on many occasions, and his wicked rule had led to God's punishment over the whole land in the form of a years-long drought. The consequences of Ahab's choices carried into his son's reign. Ahab had previously taken control of Moab and forced the people to pay tribute, but, when Joram took the throne, Moab rebelled, forcing Joram into war (2 Kings 3:4–5).

King Joram called for help in the battle from King Jehoshaphat of Judah and the king of Edom, and the combined armies set out on a march through the wilderness toward Moab (2 Kings 3:8). Along the way, they ran out of water. Jehoshaphat made inquiries and discovered that [Elisha](#), a prophet of God and Elijah's successor, was nearby. Elisha was brought before the kings, and Joram asked for help from God. Elisha wanted to refuse Joram, but he agreed to help for Jehoshaphat's sake (verse 14). Through God's power, Elisha filled a dry stream bed with water for the troops, and he also promised that God would deliver Moab into their hands (verses 15–18). The prophecy came true, and Moab fled before Israel (verses 20–27).

In spite of this miracle and the victories in subsequent battles God granted, King Joram continued in his evil ways. Although he had brought Baal worship to an end in Israel, "he clung to the sins of Jeroboam" (2 Kings 3:3), and his demise was sure. Joram was injured in a battle with the Arameans (2 Kings 9:15). God charged Jehoshaphat's son [Jehu](#) to destroy the entire house of Ahab (2 Kings 9:6–10). Jehu obeyed, and, after confronting Joram, he shot Joram between the shoulders with an arrow (2Ki 9:24). Unfortunately, Jehu stopped obeying God after he had wiped out Ahab's family. King Jehu became yet another deficient ruler who continued leading the people of Israel into sin (verse 31). [GotQuestions.org](#)

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## ANCHOR BIBLE DICTIONARY - EXCEPT ON JORAM - (c. 853-841 BC)

The chronological statements concerning the time when Joram ascended to the throne are contradictory. According to 2 Kgs 8:16 he began to rule in the fifth year of Joram of Israel. Conversely, 2 Kgs 1:17 says that the Israelite Joram became king in the second year of the reign of Joram of Judah. The discrepancy between these two statements is obvious. This discrepancy is the likely reason why the statement in 2 Kgs 1:17 was simply left out of the translation. The discrepancy can be explained by assuming that Joram took over a regency for his father, Jehoshaphat, while the latter was still alive. For reasons unknown to us (illness? cf. 1 Kgs 15:23; 2 Kgs 15:5), Jehoshaphat transferred the affairs of government to his son Joram in 852 b.c.e. (following Jepsen). The synchronism in 1 Kgs 1:17 must then refer to the time when Joram's regency began. Following the death of his father, Jehoshaphat, in 847 b.c.e. (again following Jepsen), Joram then reigned as sole monarch. It is this latter date which is in mind in 1 Kgs 22:51—Eng 22:50 and 2 Kgs 8:16. The *wihôšâpâṭ melek yêhûdâh* of 2Ki 8:16 ("and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah"—often understood to mean "Jehoshaphat was yet king of Judah") goes back to a scribal error and is to be expunged; it allows the false impression that the numerical statements in the verse refer to a time when Jehoshaphat was still alive. **According to 2 Kgs 8:17 Joram was 32 years old when he began his reign, and he reigned for eight years. These statements should rather be taken as referring to the total length of time that Joram exercised ruling powers, beginning from the start of his regency. He ruled as sole monarch for hardly more than two years.**

HERE IS ANOTHER NOTE BY KEIL AND DELITZSCH - IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS AREA OF JORAM'S REIGN IS UNCLEAR! - 2 Kings 8:16–24. Reign of Joram of Judah (cf. 2 Chron. 21:2–20).—Joram became king in the fifth year of Joram of Israel, while Jehoshaphat his father was (still) king, the latter handing over the government to him two years before his death (see at 2 Kings 1:17), and reigned eight years, namely, two years to the death of Jehoshaphat and six years afterwards. (ED: OTHERS SAY ONLY 2 YEARS AS SOLE MONARCH.)

**2 Chronicles 21:2 He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.**

- **King of Israel:** 2Ch 21:4 12:6 23:2 24:5,16 28:19,23,27 33:18 35:18

King Jehoram husband of Athaliah  
Source: [Mark Morgan at bibletales.org](http://MarkMorgan.at.bibletales.org)

## JEHOSHAPHAT KING OF ISRAEL

**He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.** Jehoshaphat was the king of Judah but for the Chronicler he was the only true king of YHWH's covenant people. Judah was the true "Israel" (cf. 2 Chr. 12:6; 23:2; 28:19,27). The Chronicler deliberately uses "king of Israel" in a covenantal sense. Judah is presented as the legitimate continuation of Israel, because the Davidic dynasty remains in Judah and the Temple, priesthood, and proper worship are in Jerusalem. So Jehoshaphat is called "king of Israel" because he ruled over the covenant people as God intended, not because he reigned over the northern kingdom. The true Israel is not defined by geography or politics, but by covenant faithfulness.

**Jehoshaphat king of Israel** heightens the tragedy of what follows, for it follows that Jehoshaphat's sons are princes of "Israel." Yet the eldest son Jehoram will murder his 6 brothers and marry evil Athaliah ("wicked" 2Ch 24:7+) of Ahab's house (1Co 15:33+). In effect the "king of Israel's" legacy is corrupted by compromise. Indeed, with this evil leaven, we begin to see the gradual degradation in the Southern Kingdom until finally God has to send Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Jerusalem and His Temple and take the people into 70 years of captivity.

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - Calling an king of Judah, the "**king of Israel**" is not an isolated occurrence. In Chronicles, we frequently see Kings of Judah called kings of Israel. E.g., 2 Chr 12:1 – "Rehoboam king of Israel" (though he ruled Judah). 2 Chr 21:4 – Jehoram reigns over "the kingdom of his father" (Davidic line). 2 Chr 30:1–12 – Hezekiah invites "all Israel" to worship in Jerusalem. The Chronicler is rewriting history with theological purpose, not contradicting Kings.

**Bob Utley** - 21:2-3 Jehoshaphat's sons (LXX adds "six") are named. They were given some governmental responsibilities (i.e., control of some fortified cities), as well as much wealth. Their firstborn brother will feel threatened by them and have them killed (cf. 2 Chr. 21:4). This would have damaged the Messianic line and required a son from Jehoram (cf. 2Ch 21:17, "Jehoahaz," also called "Ahaziah"). Jehoshaphat was blessed by God with seven sons but Jehoram was not, having only one son! This fact would have been quickly recognized by ANE hearers/readers. The name Jehoram for a king in Judah shows the influence of Israel. Jehoram was the name of an earlier king of Israel. The abbreviated form is "Joram."

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

- **gave them:** 2Ch 11:23 Ge 25:6 De 21:15-17
- **Jehoram:** 1 Ki 8:16.

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 21:15-17+ "If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other unloved, and both the loved and the unloved have borne him sons, if the firstborn son belongs to the unloved, 16 then it shall be in the day he wills what he has to his sons, he cannot make the son of the loved the firstborn before the son of the



unloved, who is the firstborn. 17 "But he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the unloved, by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the beginning of his strength; to him belongs the right of the firstborn.

## **JEHOSHAPHAT'S SUCCESSION PLAN AND GENEROSITY TO SONS**

**Their father gave them** (7 sons) **many gifts of silver, gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah**, [SPECIAL TOPIC: FIRSTBORN](#). Jehoshaphat lavishly provided for his other sons. One would think that Jehoshaphat's gifting of fortified cities to the other 6 sons would have minimized rivalry over the throne, provided contentment apart from kingship, secured the realm by distributing trusted royal sons throughout Judah thus decreasing the chances of any of them seeking Jehoram's position as king. The **fortified cities in Judah** were not symbolic gifts but were strategic military strongholds. This seems to be a wise move by Jehoshaphat, for by placing his sons in fortified cities Judah's defenses were strengthened, royal authority was extended throughout the land and the potential for rebellion was pre-emptively neutralized. In other words, Jehoshaphat did everything humanly possible to ensure peace after his death. Sadly as the story unfolds we see that none of these safeguards could restrain Jehoram's wicked heart.

**but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn.** Deuteronomy 21:15–17+ required that the firstborn son receive the primary inheritance. The right of kingship normally followed primogeniture. Jehoshaphat was not free to ignore God's order, even if he suspected Jehoram's character deficiencies.

[Bob Utley](#) - "**some of the rulers of Israel also**" This must refer to leaders in Judah who opposed his deviation of YHWH's law (cf. 2 Chr. 21:6). See note at 21:2. Josephus Antiq. 9.5.1., says they were governors appointed by his father Jehoshaphat.

**Walton on many gifts** - Jehoshaphat followed a precedent of Rehoboam by placing his sons in fortified towns where they were well provided for (by means of the gifts, see 2 Chron 11:23). This was a well-known Assyrian practice. For example, Esarhaddon (reigned 681–668 B.C.) placed his elder son, Shamashshumukin, on the throne of Babylon, while his younger son, Ashurbanipal, was given the throne of Assyria. Nonetheless, the elder son did not find this "gift" satisfactory and began a civil war soon thereafter. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

**2 Chronicles 21:4 Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also.**

- **he killed all his brothers** 2Ch 21:17 2Ch 22:8,10 Ge 4:8 Judges 9:5,56,57 1Jn 3:12

**Now when Jehoram had taken over the kingdom of his father and made himself secure, he killed all his brothers with the sword, and some of the rulers of Israel also.**

[Iain Duguid](#): Jehoram's first action was ominous. The phrase translated "ascended" is commonly used in contexts of animosity, meaning "rise against" (e.g., Judg. 9:18; 1 Sam. 17:35), and so here the meaning is probably that he "rose against the kingdom of his father," action to be repeated by Athaliah (2 Chron. 22:10). The killing of potential rivals was not uncommon (cf. Abimelech, Judg. 9:56; Solomon, 1 Kings 2) but was a foretaste of his doing "evil in the sight of the Lord": he adopted the "way of the kings of Israel," emphasized by the double mention of "Ahab." The Chronicler's hearers would have been familiar with the account in 1 Kings 17–2 Kings 10 of the house of Omri, with Omri's son Ahab being the most notorious. The alliance with Tyre had led to militant expansion of the worship of Baal in the north, and the "daughter of Ahab" was representative of that pattern. The current ruler of the "house of David" had become no different from the "house of Ahab."

**Frederick Mabie**: As with Solomon (cf. 1:1), Jehoram "established himself firmly" over the kingdom. However, in the case of Solomon this description is tied to God's presence and blessing, while in Jehoram's case it is tied to his killing of all of his brothers (and/or half brothers). (The Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

**Walton - killing brothers.** The practice of removing all other possible claimants to the throne was a well-known practice in the Old Testament (see Jdg 9:5 and 2 Kings 11:1) and the ancient Near East. Because of monarchs having multiple marriages (or multiple concubines) and therefore many sons, there were often a large number of claimants to the throne. Rameses II of Egypt (reigned c. 1292–1225 B.C.) had over fifty sons, for example. Since most kingdoms did not always employ the practice of primogeniture, the succession to the throne was often in question. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

[Ron Daniel](#) - As soon as King Jehoshaphat died, Jehoram set out to make his position as king secure. He realized that if the people

rejected him, they would kill him and make one of his brothers king in his place. His solution to that problem? Kill all six of his brothers. This act is so absolutely depraved, it boggles the mind. And yet, as horrible as killing one's own brothers seems to us, the crime of fratricide is nearly as old as humanity itself. You may recall that Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. They were only the second generation of creation! What moves a man to kill his own brother? It always seems to come down to hatred that was birthed from envy. - Cain killed Abel because his offering was rejected while his brother's was accepted (Gen. 4) - Esau began to plot Jacob's murder because Jacob received dad's blessing instead of Esau (Gen. 27). - The sons of Israel threw their brother Joseph into a pit. They would have killed him if greed hadn't overruled their envious hatred (Gen. 37:26). - Gideon's son Abimelech killed all 70 of his brothers so that he alone would rule Israel (Judges 9). The list goes on and on. It's no wonder then, that the Apostle John warned us against this sort of hatred: 1John 3:14-15 ...He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer...

**2 Chronicles 21:5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.**

- Jehoram: "In consort, 2 Ki 8:17." 2Ch 21:5

**Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem**

[Ron Daniel](#) - Killing his brothers wasn't Yeh-ho-RAWM's only sin. His wickedness extended to idolatry and rejection of God, in the same way that the kings of Israel in the north did. How did this happen? He had married into a terribly wicked family. King Ahab and Jezebel are renowned in the Bible for their wickedness. Ahab was so evil that the Bible says that he...

1Kings 16:30 ...did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him.

1Kings 16:33 ...Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

His wife Jezebel had destroyed the prophets of God (1Kings 18), tried to kill Elijah (1Kings 19), and had Naboth killed through false accusation (1Kings 21). With wickedness rampant throughout the entire family, Ahab's daughter [Athaliah](#) was a chip off the old block. The Bible describes her as "wicked" (2Chron. 24:7), and in chapter 22, we're going to read of her murdering nearly all the royal offspring of Judah. With Yeh-ho-RAWM united in marriage to this woman, it shouldn't surprise us to read that he took on the nature of her family, walking in the way of the house of Ahab, doing evil in the sight of the Lord.

**2 Chronicles 21:6 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for Ahab's daughter was his wife), and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.**

- in the way: 1Ki 16:25-33
- he had: 2Ch 18:1 22:2 2Ki 8:18 Ne 13:25,26

#### **Related Passages:**

Malachi 2:11 "Judah has dealt treacherously, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD which He loves and has married the daughter of a foreign god.

### **JEHORAM'S CROOKED WALK LED TO CORRUPTION**

**He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab did (for [Ahab's daughter was his wife](#))** - Ahab's daughter [Athaliah](#) was the wife of King Jehoram until his death in 841 BC. She reigned as queen of Judah from 841–835 BC and the only female monarch to sit on David's throne in biblical history. See [Who was King Ahab in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

This is a sad verse because Jehoram had godly role models to follow in his grandfather and father - 2Ch 14:2-5 ("Asa did good and right..."), 2Ch 19:2-3+ (Jehoshaphat - "there is some good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your heart to seek God." ), 2Ch 20:31-32+ (Jehoshaphat - "He walked in the way of his father Asa and did not depart from it, doing right in the sight of the LORD.")

**Walton - Ahab.** Marriage alliances between kingdoms was not only a common custom but was considered indispensable for forging



good relations with potentially hostile neighbors. One can reconstruct the present scenario here in 2 Chronicles. Jehoshaphat was a close ally of Ahab and thus cemented this alliance with the marriage of his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter, [Athaliah](#), daughter of Jezebel. Of course, this also brought in Baalistic worship to Judah from Phoenicia, the homeland of Jezebel. See comment on 18:1. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

**and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.** This is a recurrent phrase. It does not specify the offense but here it is idolatry (cf. 2 Kgs. 8:16-24).

The phrase **did evil in the sight of the LORD** occurs 36x predominantly in the Kings and Chronicles - Jdg. 2:11; Jdg. 3:12; Jdg. 4:1; Jdg. 10:6; Jdg. 13:1; 1 Ki. 14:22; 1 Ki. 15:26; 1 Ki. 15:34; 1 Ki. 16:25; 1 Ki. 16:30; 1 Ki. 22:52; 2 Ki. 3:2; 2 Ki. 8:18; 2 Ki. 8:27; 2 Ki. 13:2; 2 Ki. 13:11; 2 Ki. 14:24; 2 Ki. 15:9; 2 Ki. 15:18; 2 Ki. 15:24; 2 Ki. 15:28; 2 Ki. 17:2; 2 Ki. 21:2; 2 Ki. 21:20; 2 Ki. 23:32; 2 Ki. 23:37; 2 Ki. 24:9; 2 Ki. 24:19; 2 Chr. 21:6; 2 Chr. 22:4; 2 Chr. 33:2; 2 Chr. 33:22; 2 Chr. 36:5; 2 Chr. 36:9; 2 Chr. 36:12; Jer. 52:2

This recalls the statement "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely." The thought is that a person's sense of morality lessens as his or her power increases, especially if there is no moral compass provided by the Word of God!

**Morris** - This daughter of Ahab was [Athaliah](#) the daughter of Jezebel, the Phoenician princess who introduced Baalism into Israel. Athaliah, in turn, introduced it into Judah as the wife of King Jehoram. Jehoram slew all his younger brothers upon becoming king (2 Chronicles 21:4), no doubt on the instigation of Athaliah, thus opening the way for her later to usurp the crown for herself (2 Chronicles 22:10,12). (BORROW [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Frederick Mabie:** Jehoram's wickedness was enhanced and inspired by his close association with the apostate northern kingdom (the "house of Ahab"). Jehoram's wife ([Athaliah](#)) was the daughter of the infamous Ahab and Jezebel of the northern kingdom (cf. 2Ch 22:2; thus Athaliah was the granddaughter of [Omri](#), founder of the Omride dynasty). The marriage of Jehoram and [Athaliah](#) was part of the political marriage treaty orchestrated by Jehoram's father, Jehoshaphat. As noted above, such alliances show trust in human beings and political structures rather than complete trust in God and his ways. Moreover, such acts of spiritual compromise can have unexpected waves of consequences, as seen in the events of this chapter and the next. Athaliah, like her husband Jehoram (v. 4), will kill Davidic heirs to the throne (cf. 2Ch 22:10). (The Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition – [1 and 2 Chronicles](#))

**Bob Utley** - Judah became idolatrous like Israel. Jehoram was influenced by his wife Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab (cf. 2 Kgs. 8:18,26; 2 Chr. 18:1), the king of Israel. Apparently Judah returned to the worship of Ba'al and Asherah. [SPECIAL TOPIC: FERTILITY WORSHIP OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST](#)

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Athaliah in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Athaliah was queen of Judah from 841–835 BC and the only female monarch to sit on David's throne in biblical history. Athaliah was the daughter of [King Ahab](#) and [Queen Jezebel](#) of Israel, and she married Jehoram, the eldest son of Judah's King Jehoshaphat. Her time as queen is nestled amid centuries of evil monarchs who reigned over Judah and Israel. An avid Baal zealot, Athaliah rivaled the wickedness of the kings who came before and after her. Her story can be found in 2 Kings 11 and 2 Chronicles 22–23.

Athaliah's husband, Jehoram, was king of Judah until his death in 841 BC. Unlike his father, Jehoram was a wicked king. Athaliah's son, Ahaziah, at the age of 22, ascended to the throne, and proved himself just as evil as his father (2 Kings 8:18, 25–27). Athaliah counseled her son in his devilish schemes (2 Chronicles 22:3). Ahaziah served as king of Judah for less than one year, for he was assassinated along with Israel's ailing king, Joram. Their assassin was Jehu, who had originally been a commander in King Ahab's army (2 Kings 9:5, 25). The prophet Elisha had anointed Jehu as the new king of Israel and commissioned him as an instrument of the Lord to carry out God's judgment on King Ahab and his entire idolatrous family (1 Kings 19:1–17; 2 Kings 9:1–13). Jehu's mission of ending Ahab's dynasty included putting Jezebel and her sons to death. Ahaziah happened to be visiting Joram when Jehu arrived to assassinate Joram, and Ahaziah was killed, too.

When Athaliah received word that her son was dead, she seized the opportunity to usurp the throne by murdering Ahaziah's sons—her own grandsons—thus eradicating the entire royal family so she could take the throne. Unbeknownst to Athaliah, a single grandchild escaped the massacre. Jehosheba, the baby's aunt and the wife of the high priest [Jehoiada](#), took the infant Joash and hid him and his nurse in a bedroom. Joash was later smuggled out of the castle and taken to the temple, where he remained hidden for six years while Queen Athaliah reigned over the land (2 Kings 11:1–3).

As queen, Athaliah used her influence to further establish [Baal worship](#) in Judah, installing priests and building altars for her idol in the very temple of the Lord (2 Kings 11:18; 2 Chronicles 24:7). In this way Athaliah followed the footsteps of her mother, Jezebel.

Interestingly, the name Athaliah means either “God is exalted” or “dealt violently with by God.” Queen Athaliah did not exalt God with her life; instead, God dealt violently with her.

After Athaliah had reigned six years, the high priest Jehoiada set guards around the temple and publicly crowned the young [Joash](#) as the rightful king. As the new king was anointed, “the people clapped their hands and shouted, ‘Long live the king!’” (2 Kings 11:12). Athaliah heard the commotion, realized what was happening, and ran out of the palace shouting, “Treason! Treason!” (verse 13). Jehoiada commanded the troops to capture Athaliah and execute her, and so they killed the queen “where the horses enter the palace grounds” (verse 16). Seven-year-old King Joash, under the direction of the faithful high priest, tore down the temple of Baal, smashed the altars and images of Baal, and killed the priest of Baal. And “all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was calm, because Athaliah had been slain” (verse 20). [GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Chronicles 21:7 Yet the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David because of the covenant which He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.**

- **Yet the LORD was not willing** : 2Ch 22:11 Isa 7:6,7
- **because**: 2Sa 23:5 Ps 89:28-34,39 Jer 33:20-26
- **promised**: 2Sa 7:12-17 1Ki 11:13,36 2Ki 8:19 Ps 132:11,17,18-135:21 Lu 1:69,79

#### Related Passages:

2 Kings 8:19+ However, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah, for the sake of David His servant, since He had promised him to give a lamp to him through his sons always.

Depiction of Lamp and Yahweh's Covenant with David

### A LAMP REMAINS BURNING BECAUSE OF COVENANT

**Yet the LORD ([Jehovah](#)) was not willing ([abah](#)) to destroy ([shachath](#)) the house of David because of the covenant ([beriyth](#); LXX - [diatheke](#)) which He had made ([karath](#) - cut) with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp ([niyr](#); LXX - [luchnos/lychnos](#)) to him and his sons forever** -God's covenant with David ( See [Davidic covenant](#)) was unconditional and was not dependent on the behavior of his descendants, even one as wicked as Jehoram (2Ch 21:4).

**Walton - lamp for David.** Lamps were often used metaphorically in Israel to symbolize life and prosperity. They were often placed in tombs for this reason. The expression “his lamp” is often used in Scripture to symbolize life. As an eternal flame is a symbol of endurance and remembrance, so the reign of a descendant of David in Jerusalem provides a link to God’s promise to David’s dynasty (2 Sam 7:8–16). Similar uses of the word in Ugaritic and Akkadian are tied to perpetuation of rule or divine presence. Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III is referred to as the light of all mankind. An Old Babylonian idiom expresses a family having no descendants by the image of its brazier going out. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

[Believer's Study Bible](#) - The certainty of God's covenants and of His Word is amply illustrated in the life of Jehoram. Although Jehoram was wicked (2Chr 21:6), the Lord did not destroy the house of David, because of the Davidic covenant (cf. Ge 9:13; 2Sa 7:5, 16). This provides further evidence that the covenant was not conditional upon the behavior of David's progeny. The promise of God was unconditional, and David's house would be forever established.

[Bob Utley](#) - YHWH's promises to David (i.e., 2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17) were remembered and honored even during the reign of an evil king.

**Walton in** The [IVP Bible Background Commentary, see page 442](#), has a good suggestion for the meaning of this the meaning of **to give a lamp....**“Lamps were often used metaphorically in Israel to symbolize life and prosperity. They were often placed in tombs for this reason. The expression “his lamp” is often used in Scripture to symbolize life. As an eternal flame is a symbol of endurance and remembrance, so the reign of a descendant of David in Jerusalem provides a link to God's promise to David's dynasty (2 Sam 7:8-16). Similar uses of the word in Ugaritic and Akkadian are tied to perpetuation of rule or divine presence. Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III is referred to as the light of all mankind. An Old Babylonian idiom expresses a family having no descendants by the image of its brazier going out.”

**Raymond Dillard:** Perhaps because of his entirely negative assessment of Jehoram as a Davidic successor, the Chronicler appears to be placing greater emphasis on the unconditionality of the promises to David and his successors, The analogies with his own

historical moment are instructive: though Judah had been restored in the post-exilic period, under Persian rule there would appear no prospect of the restoration of the Davidic dynasty; it is precisely when things look at a low ebb that hope is directed to future generations (cf. Williamson, 305). . . Jehoram is the first king in the Davidic succession of whom the Chronicler's judgment is totally negative (Williamson, 303). Yet it is precisely at this nadir of religious fidelity that the Chronicler reiterates and elaborates on God's promises to David (21:7). The Chronicler's treatment of the validity of the Davidic covenant in the past no doubt spoke also to the dynastic aspirations of his post-exilic audience; it is hard to believe that the author would invoke God's fidelity to this promise to David for the past unless hope of a dynastic restoration was also a feature of his own faith. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** David's "lamp" is a reference to 1 Kgs 11:36. A burning lamp in the home would indicate its occupancy by a resident. To have a lamp suggests that life would continue and the home would be occupied. The promise was that the Davidic line would not be extinguished until the time of the Messiah, who would occupy the throne forever. ([1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Ron Daniel** - 21:7 The Covenant With David. Although no one would have been surprised if God immediately destroyed Ye-ho-RAWM for his wickedness, God had bigger vision. You see, He had made an everlasting covenant (2Sam. 23:5; Isa. 55:3) with King David that his throne would be established forever (1Chron. 17:12). Ye-ho-RAWM will certainly be judged, but not at the expense of the promise made to David.

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**Lamp** ([05216](#)) is the masculine noun *niyr* (ner, neyr) from **nahar** = to shine. It refers to a lamp or light and is used literally and figuratively. Literally - The lamps of the Tabernacle (Ex 27:20), the lamp in the Temple during Samuel's ministry (1Sa 3:3). Metaphorically the Word of God as a guiding light (Ps 119:105). Figuratively **Niyr** describes the virtuous wife who does not let her lamp go out at night (Pr 31:18), symbolizing diligence and vigilance.

Most notably, the term *niyr* is used metaphorically in God's covenant promise to David, assuring him that he would always have a **lamp** before the Lord in Jerusalem—a vivid image of dynastic continuity and divine favor (1Ki 11:36; 2Chr 21:7).

**NIYR/NER/NEYR - 42V** - Exod. 25:37; Exod. 27:20; Exod. 30:7; Exod. 30:8; Exod. 35:14; Exod. 37:23; Exod. 39:37; Exod. 40:4; Exod. 40:25; Lev. 24:2; Lev. 24:4; Num. 4:9; Num. 8:2; Num. 8:3; 1 Sam. 3:3; 2 Sam. 21:17; 2 Sam. 22:29; 1 Ki. 7:49; 1 Ki. 11:36; 1 Ki. 15:4; 2 Ki. 8:19; 1 Chr. 28:15; 2 Chr. 4:20; 2 Chr. 4:21; 2 Chr. 13:11; 2 Chr. 21:7; 2 Chr. 29:7; Job 18:6; Job 21:17; Job 29:3; Ps. 18:28; Ps. 119:105; Ps. 132:17; Prov. 6:23; Prov. 13:9; Prov. 20:20; Prov. 20:27; Prov. 24:20; Prov. 31:18; Jer. 25:10; Zeph. 1:12; Zech. 4:2

Linguistically, this word corresponds to the Aramaic noun *nûr* ([05135](#)), which means fire or flame. In the book of Daniel, *nûr* is associated with fire that does not harm the three Hebrews (Daniel 3:27) and with the fiery description of the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7:9–10), emphasizing both divine presence and power.

**Martin Selman** - *niyr* (ner, neyr)

OT 1. As a familiar symbol of domestic and working life (Jer 25:10), the lamp (נֵר) is a **natural metaphor for life**. It is used primarily as a **symbol for the quality and length of life**. The recurring phrase “**the lamp** (of the wicked) **goes out**,” which occurs several times in the Wisdom literature (e.g., Job 18:5; Prov 13:9; 20:20), appears to mean that life for the wicked is shortened and unfulfilled. This is suggested by Prov 24:20, which affirms that the wicked have no future (Heb. #344 אֶתְרִיתָ).

2. Although the comparable phrase “the lamp of the righteous” does occur (Prov 13:9; Heb. #240 אֱוֵר), the OT seems to assume that without God human lives are in darkness and that even the righteous have no lamp of their own. Only Yahweh can give light to a person's lamp, that is, his life (Ps 18:28 [29]; the parallel verse says simply “You are my lamp, O LORD” (2 Sam 22:29). Yahweh, in fact, gives light to human beings through his own lamp. This idea is applied both to the guidance given by God's word (Ps 119:105) and to the spiritual and physical growth resulting from the gift of Yahweh's life or breath (Prov 20:27, “The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit [breath] of a man”; cf. Gen 2:7).

3. The separate metaphor of a lamp shining in darkness gives rise to two further distinctive concepts. First, the lamps on the tabernacle or temple lampstand were to be kept burning all night (Exod 30:7–8; Lev 24:3–4; contrast 2 Chron 29:7). As with the lampstand, the lamps probably represent the light of God's continuing presence. Second, specific representatives of the Davidic line are described as a lamp (2 Sam 21:17; 1 Kgs 11:36; Ps 132:17; in this sense always נֵר (II) in Kgs and Chron). The context usually refers to some potentially fatal threat (2 Sam 21:17), notably through David's own family (2 Kgs 8:18–19 || 2 Chron 21:4–7). The meaning here is neither life nor “yoke, dominion” (Hanson), but a guarantee that David's house will survive even the darkest days because of God's covenant promise.

P-B נֵר is generally used for the lights on the candlestick in the temple. The expression “God’s lamp” may refer either to the candlestick or to the Law, and “lamp of Israel” is often used to describe a great scholar or teacher.

NT Though Jesus is once called a lamp (Rev 21:23), as is John the Baptist (John 5:35), the NT mainly refers to a lamp to encourage believers not to hide God’s light but give it maximum exposure (Matt 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16). The eye as the lamp of the body enables others to see a person’s inner light (Matt 6:22–23; Luke 11:34–36). The lampstand is used mainly in Revelation as a symbol for individual churches (Rev 1:12–20). However, churches are only light-bearers, for the true light of the Messiah, and their lampstand, may be removed if they do not repent (Rev 2:5).

BIBLIOGRAPHY NIDNTT 2:484–96; TDNT 4:16–28, 324–27; TWOT 2:565–66; P. D. Hanson, “The Song of Heshbon and David’s Nir,” HTR 61, 1968, 297–320.

## 2 Chronicles 21:8 In his days Edom revolted against the rule of Judah and set up a king over themselves.

- the Edomites: Ge 27:40 2Ki 8:20-22
- dominion: Heb. hand
- and made: 1Ki 22:47 2Ki 3:9



Edom Directly South of Judah

## GOD STIRS UP EDM AGAINST JUDAH

In his days [Edom](#) revolted ([pasha](#); Lxx - [atheteo](#)) against the rule ([yad](#) - literally "hand" = speaks of power, authority) of [Judah](#) and set up a king over themselves - Jehoram's [chickens are coming home to roost](#) so to speak (Jehoram's evil deeds are beginning to bite him!) —the consequences of his godless choices are now catching up with him. The evil he embraced, tolerated, and promoted is beginning to turn back upon him like a "boomerang." What he sowed in compromise and rebellion is now being reaped in judgment and suffering (cf Hos 8:7). Scripture repeatedly affirms the moral principle that sin may seem slow to repay, but it never forgets its debt. Jehoram's deeds are no longer theoretical or hidden but are biting him personally, demonstrating that divine patience does not cancel divine justice, but only delays it until the appointed time

David had decisively subdued [Edom](#) and brought it under Israel's control (2Sa 8:13–14; 1Ki 11:15–17) around 1000 BC, Edom remained a vassal state to Judah through the reigns of Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa and Jehoshaphat (ca. 931–853 BC). Edom was clearly still under Judah's authority during Jehoshaphat's reign for 1Ki 22:47 notes "there was no king in Edom; a deputy was king." So now, almost 150 years later, Edom revolted (and remember who is in control Pr 21:1) and crowned its own king.

**Bob Utley** - "Edom revolted" This was just one of several rebellions and invasions. Edom – 2 Chr. 21:8-10 Libnah, 2 Chr. 21:10 Philistines – 2 Chr. 21:16 the Arabs who were allied with the Ethiopians – 2 Chr. 17:11 [SPECIAL TOPIC: EDM AND ISRAEL](#)

**Walton** - **Edom's revolt.** Although this revolt is not described elsewhere in Scripture or in extrabiblical sources, there are destruction levels at Ramet Matred Negev dating from either the raid of Shishak (late tenth century B.C.) or the revolt mentioned in this passage. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

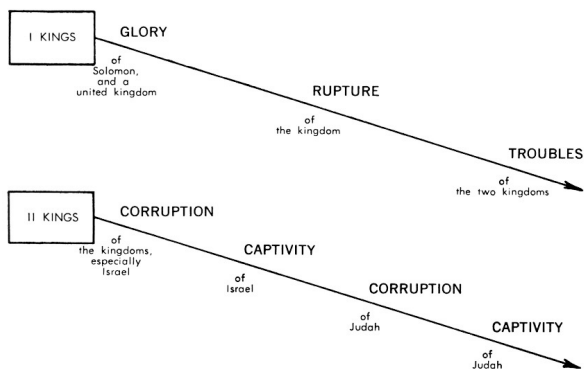
**Believer's Study Bible** - (vv. 8-17) Piecing together the details of this account and its parallel (2 Kin. 8:20-24), it appears that the

Edomites cooperated with an Arabian-Philistine invasion of Judah as their subordinate ally, and that they shared in the booty taken from Jerusalem when the capital of Judah fell as a result of their combined efforts. This particular assortment of enemies did not face Judah after the time of Jehoram's grandson Joash (cf. Joel 3:4, 19). Jehoram is called Joram elsewhere (cf. 2 Kin. 8:21, 29; 9:14-24; 1 Chr. 3:11). Elijah, usually not included with the "writing prophets," did write a letter (vv. 12-15). This is the last act of Elijah recorded in Scripture. Jehoram ruled from 848-841 B.C. This letter was probably received early in his reign, perhaps a short time before Elijah's ascension.

**Frederick Mabie:** The perceived weakness of Jehoshaphat's successor Jehoram (Joram) prompts Edom in the southeast and Libnah in the west to rebel against Judah (cf. 2Ki 8:20-22). Libnah (perhaps Tel Zayit or Tel Bornat) was located in the Shephelah about midway between Azekah and Lachish, near the border with Philistia. The Chronicler notes similar hostility from the Philistines to the west and the Arabians to the south (see vv. 16-17). Regardless of perceived weakness on the part of Judah, the ultimate theological reason for this upheaval is that "Jehoram had forsaken the Lord" (v. 10). (The Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition – [1 and 2 Chronicles](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** Edom had been subservient to Judah. David had subdued Edom (2 Sam 8:13-14; 1 Kgs 11:15-17), but rebellion was brewing before Solomon's death (1 Kgs 11:14-22). Under Asa and Jehoshaphat, Judah regained control. In the time of Jehoshaphat, Edom had been ruled by a royal deputy (1 Kgs 22:47; but see 2 Kgs 3:9). Then under Jehoram, Edom rebelled again and set up its own king. Jehoram responded by invading Edom with his officers and chariots but was not able to bring the Edomites under his control. On the contrary, Edomite forces surrounded Jehoram's forces, although he broke out of the trap and escaped, a sign of God's grace and faithfulness to David. There is no evidence that Edom was subdued by Jehoram again. Edom remained in rebellion "to this day." Libnah, possibly to be identified with Tell es-Safi to the west of Judah at the western end of the Valley of Elah, rebelled next, and Jehoram had revolts on two fronts. By Hezekiah's time the city was regained (2 Kgs 19:8). ([1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

This loss of control was more than a military setback for it was a tangible sign of God's chastisement and Judah's weakening under Jehoram's ungodly leadership. What David had secured through faithfulness and reliance on the Lord was forfeited by Jehoram through compromise and rebellion. The rebellion of Edom thus stands as an outward symptom of inward decay and as Judah drifted from the Lord, the stability and strength inherited from David's reign steadily unraveled setting in motion the gradual decline shown in the diagram below.



THE INEXORABLE EFFECT OF UNREPENTANT SIN!

**Ron Daniel** has a **great spiritual application - 2Chr 21:8-10 Edom And Libnah Revolt**. As a result of Jehoram's apostasy, the Edomites rebelled against Judah's rule. You may remember that the Edomites had recently been conquered during the days of King David.

1Chr. 18:12-13 ...Abishai the son of Zeruiah defeated 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. Then he put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David...

*When we are walking with the Lord,  
we gain victory over various areas of our flesh*

But now, the Edomites rebel. I see a spiritual application for us in these events. You see, when we are walking with the Lord, we gain victory over various areas of our flesh. We stop cursing, or smoking, or practicing immorality. We conquer strongholds in the areas of greed and covetousness, of bitterness and unforgiveness. The *Edomites* in our lives are brought into submission. But what happens if we later begin to compromise? If our walk with the Lord isn't as strong? What happens when we begin to desire other things, and pursue riches, or idols?

This is what happens: While we aren't looking, those *Edomites* which had been recently conquered will become strong again. And before we know it, those areas which were previously conquered are rising up and rebelling. Even though they previously had been



made subservient, they suddenly have the ability to surround us. It gets worse! Because as we determine to fight against these enemies again, other rebellions begin to occur. Rebellions in areas that we would never even expect. Remember that the other group who rebelled against King Jehoram was the city of Libnah. Libnah had been conquered hundreds of years before, during the days when

Josh. 10:29-30 ...Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Mak-kay-DAW to Lib-NAW, and fought against Lib-NAW. The LORD gave it also with its king into the hands of Israel...

Libnah had been conquered for well over 500 years now! And yet even they rise up in rebellion. It is interesting to me that the name "Lib-NAW" means "white brick pavement." It speaks of the areas in our life that are rock solid, foundational in our occupation. But even these areas can rebel when we stop walking with the Lord.

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#### QUESTION - [What is the significance of Edom in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - Edom was an ancient kingdom that is mainly associated with Esau and his descendants in the Bible. Being descendants of Abraham, the Edomites were related to the Israelites. But they did not always act as brothers.

Located on the east side of the Arabah and extending down to the Dead Sea, Edom was first occupied by the Horites, who were later driven out by Esau's descendants (M. G. Easton, *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1893, entry for Edom). Numerous verses in the Bible equate the hill country of Seir with Edom, which would "suggest that Seir and Edom comprise an entity that should be viewed as one and the same in terms of their respective geographical locations" (Bruce Crew, "Did Edom's Territories Extend West of Wadi Arabah?" *Bible and Spade* 15:1, 2002, p. 4). Interestingly, the name *Edom* means "red," which is easily linked with Esau, who sold his birthright for red stew and thereby earned the name *Edom* (Genesis 25:30). In spite of the connection with Esau, many scholars believe that the kingdom of Edom was associated with red before Esau took control of it because of the red cliffs located in its area (W. Ewing, "Edom; Edomites," *Bible Study Tools*, 1915, [www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/edom-edomites.html](http://www.biblestudytools.com/encyclopedias/isbe/edom-edomites.html), accessed 3-29-20). [Bozrah](#) and [Petra](#) (or Sela) were notable cities in Edom, with Bozrah being the capital and central city of the kingdom.

The nation of Edom existed before the Israelites left Egypt, and the Lord commanded the Israelites not to attempt to take the land from the Edomites as they passed through, since He had given the land to Esau (Deuteronomy 2:1–5). Moses and the Israelites asked permission to cross through the land of Edom on their journey out of Egypt, but they were refused passage by the Edomite king (Numbers 20:14–21). From this point on in the Bible, Edom is mentioned as Israel's enemy, and the two nations fought frequently.

Both Saul and David fought against the Edomites, with David conquering them and forcing them into labor (1 Samuel 14:47–48; 2 Samuel 8:13–14). During the reign of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up their own independent king (2 Kings 8:20–22). The Edomites continued to be a problem for the Israelites and even raided Judah after it fell to the Babylonians (Ezekiel 25:12–14). Because of Edom's sin in raiding Judah and taking delight in Israel's fall during the Babylonian Captivity, the Lord pronounced judgment on Edom (Jeremiah 49:7–22). God declared that Edom would be a wasteland, occupied only by wild animals (Malachi 1:2–5). This began to come to pass when Edom was pushed out of their land and taken over by the [Nabateans](#) (Craig Blaising, "Malachi," *Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, ed. by J. Walvoord and R. Zuck, David C. Cook, 1983, p. 1,576). God justly dealt with the Edomites because of their actions and attitude toward Israel.

The [book of Obadiah](#) deals specifically with Edom's judgment. The Edomites were proud (Obadiah 1:3), violent (verse 10), and apathetic to the destruction of Israel (verse 11), and God promised a reckoning. After the Edomites were driven from their land by the Nabateans, they migrated to the southern part of Israel and became known as Idumeans. Much later in biblical history, [Herod the Great](#), an Idumean, appears on the scene. It was Herod who tried to kill the infant Jesus in Bethlehem—through Herod, the rebellion of Edom continued.

In AD 70, the Idumeans joined the Israelites in their revolt against Rome, and they were wiped out when Jerusalem was destroyed. At that point, the descendants of Esau disappeared from human history, just as God had said. Although once a mighty kingdom among the red cliffs of its land, Edom was destroyed for its sin. It is the restored Israel who will one day possess the land of Edom and the "mountains of Esau" in the millennial kingdom of Christ (Obadiah 1:19–21).

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**2 Chronicles 21:9 Then Jehoram crossed over with his commanders and all his chariots with him. And he arose by night and struck down the Edomites who were surrounding him and the commanders of the chariots.**

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## JORAM'S FAILED ATTEMPT TO SUBDUE EDMOM

**Then** serves as a narrative hinge, marking a clear progression in the unfolding account, signalling that what follows is not an isolated episode, but a development that flows naturally out of what has already occurred. **THEN** moves the reader forward in time and action, indicating that events are advancing according to a purposeful sequence rather than happening at random. What appears to be a simple chronological marker actually underscores that God is quietly orchestrating events behind the scenes, advancing His agenda. As an aside Jehoram's name means "Yahweh is exalted," yet his life contradicted his name.

**Jehoram** (Jehoram of Judah) **crossed over with his commanders and all his chariots with him**. See Joram's likely route (**blue line --->**) in the map above to **Zair** located south of the Dead Sea and at the northern border of Edom (apparently either inside Edom or on its northern frontier). Joram personally leads an elite force.

Joram Escapes Edomite Encirclement

**And he arose by night and struck down the Edomites who were surrounding him and the commanders of the chariots.** **Chariots** represented Judah's best military assets, suggesting this was a serious, high-stakes attempt to crush the rebellion quickly and decisively. A night attack indicates a surprise night attack, likely intended to break an Edomite encirclement. Night assaults were risky but sometimes effective when an army was trapped or outmaneuvered. Joram's forces are encircled but he manages a breakout, but certainly not a decisive victory. Joram's breaking out and escaping of the Edomite death trap was ultimately a sign of God's grace and faithfulness to David. Joram did not restore Judah's dominion and thus its control of Edom was effectively broken.

**Peter Pett:** Jehoram (now Joram, a shortened form of the same name) went south to quell the rebellion, but seemingly with insufficient forces, with the result that he was outmaneuvered and surrounded by what was probably a much larger force of Edomites. Rather than recording it as a defeat, however, his annalists ignored that idea (in typical Near Eastern fashion) and described the heroic way in which, in a surprise night foray, by means of his chariot force he broke through the ranks of the enemy who considerably outnumbered him, thus allowing many of his people to escape with him. But the truth comes out in 2Ki 8:21 that these then 'fled to their tents (homes)', always a sign of defeat. In other words his defeated army dispersed. 'Fled to their tents' was a technical phrase brought forward from wilderness days.

**Caleb Nelson** comments on the significance of the loss of Edom as a vassal state to Judah - Jehoram's leadership cost Judah its most important vassal ally, and thus access not only to the Red Sea at Ezion Geber but also trade routes to Arabia. Ouch. God is at work for judgment in the lives of those who deliberately and passionately pursue wickedness.

**2 Chronicles 21:10 So Edom revolted against Judah to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.**

- **Libnah:** Jos 21:13 2Ki 19:8
- **because:** 2Ch 13:10 15:2 De 32:21 1Ki 11:31,33 Jer 2:13

### Related Passage:

2 Kings 8:22+ So Edom revolted against Judah to this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time.

## JORAM'S REIGN BEGINS TO LOSE POWER

**So Edom revolted against Judah to this day.** - This is an important time phrase. It marks a decisive and lasting break in the relationship between the two nations. The revolt by Edom was not temporary or symbolic. It resulted in permanent independence, confirmed by the fact that the biblical writer can say **to this day**, which means as long as the historical memory of the author extends, Edom never returned to Judah's rule. Or to say it more chronologically **to this day** means Edom's rebellion that began under Jehoram remained unresolved throughout the entire historical period known to the Chronicler (recalling that Chronicles was written circa 450-425 B.C. roughly **400 years** after Jehoram's evil reign) describing an enduring consequence of covenant unfaithfulness. Sin has consequences, sometimes immediate, but often also long lasting! (Oh, to be able to keep this truth in the forefront of my mind!) In short, Joram's military failure at Zair was not a minor setback but marked a turning point in Judah's history with enduring consequences.

[David Guzik](#) - He thought that the marriage alliance with Ahab and the Kingdom of Israel would make Judah stronger, but this act of disobedience only made them weaker.

**Then Libnah revolted at the same time against his rule-** [Libnah](#) was a Levitical city (Josh 21:13+) located in the [Shephelah](#) (Judah's lowland buffer zone). This revolt was spiritually significant, for it apparently housed priests loyal to the worship of Yahweh. Its priests and leaders were called to uphold true worship of Yahweh. That this sacred city revolted shows how far Jehoram had drifted from the faith of his fathers. Even those consecrated to God could no longer serve under a king who had abandoned the LORD. Spiritually, this represents the separation that occurs when leadership becomes corrupt and idolatrous—those committed to truth cannot coexist in peace under false worship.

**Because** (strategic term of explanation) **he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers-** The revolts by Edom and Libnah were the consequence of Jehoram's apostasy. When Jehoram forsook the covenant relationship with God, his authority began to unravel. What was happening spiritually in his heart was reflected physically in his kingdom.

**THOUGHT-** This applies to our passions; when we are properly submitted to God, our passions are properly submitted to us. When we come out from submission to God, we often find our passions flare up in seemingly overwhelming strength. It also applies to the proper exercise of authority in any sphere – home, government, church, society –those who are submitted to God can be trusted to be submitted unto. ([David Guzik](#)) How are your "passions" dear man of God or woman of God? Are they passionate for Jesus? Are they under the Spirit's control (Eph 5:18+, Gal 5:16+, Gal 5:22, 23+) or are they "out of control"? Perhaps it is time to examine your walk and ask if there is any place where I have turned to the right or to the left on God's straight path of holiness? And if so, then go to war with zeal, remembering that the only way to kill sinful passions is by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit (Ro 8:13+, cf Ro 6:12,13+).

God's warning in Deuteronomy 28:15, 25+ was clear - "But it shall come about, if you do not obey the LORD your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you....<sup>25</sup> "The LORD shall cause you to **be defeated before your enemies**; you will go out one way against them, but **you will flee** (2Ki 8:21) seven ways before them, and you will be an example of terror to all the kingdoms of the earth.

The spiritual significance of the revolts by Edom and Libnah symbolize God's withdrawal of blessing from those who abandon Him. They are a tangible, physical manifestation of Judah's spiritual decay. In God's mercy, they were also a call to repent and return to Him in covenant faithfulness.

**Walton - Libnah.** Libnah was a major fortress city in Judah that was one of the line of defenses of the capital city, Jerusalem. Thus, if the city revolted, the entire land of Judah was left vulnerable. The town of Libnah is usually identified with either Khirbet Tell el-Beida (nine miles northeast of Lachish) or Tell Bornat (about five miles further west), strategically located by the Wadi Zeita guarding the best route to Hebron from the coast. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442](#))

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**LIBNAH [ISBE]** - lib'-na (libnah "whiteness," "transparency," "pavement" (compare Ex 24:10 where libnath, is translated "paved work" or a "compact foundation"); Lebnah): A town in the [Shephelah](#) of Judah (Josh 15:42). "Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah: and Yahweh delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel. .... And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish, and encamped against it, and fought against it" (Josh 10:29-31; 12:15). It was one of the cities given to the "children of Aaron" (Josh 21:13; 1 Ch 6:57). In the reign of **Joram** (Jehoram), Libnah joined the Edomites in a revolt against the king of Judah (2 Ki 8:22; 2 Ch 21:10). In the reign of Hezekiah, Libnah was besieged by Sennacherib (2 Ki 19:8; Isa 37:8). The wife of King Josiah was "Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah," she was the mother of Jehoahaz and Zedekiah (2 Ki 23:31; 24:18; Jer 52:1).

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**F B Meyer - 2 Chronicles 21:10** **The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand.**

As long as the kings of Judah remained true to their allegiance to God they were able to keep in subjection the surrounding nations; but just so soon as they revolted from God these peoples revolted from them. It was as though power descended into them from the source of all power; and when the link between themselves and God was broken, that between them and their subordinates was broken also.

This applies very widely: To our passions.— If they master you, rebelling against and revolting from your hand, it is because there is some flaw in your consecration, and you have forsaken to some extent the Lord God.

To our families.— When the heads of a home are in perfect unity with each other and God, they may generally expect that their children will grow up submissive and obedient. Their authority will be recognized and honored. Revolt in the home indicates very

often some lapse in obedience and loyalty to God.

To our influence over men.— When the soul is in blessed fellowship with God, power flows into it from Him, before which strongholds are overthrown. “I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord,” said the prophet. “I am a man under authority, and have soldiers under me,” said the centurion.

Give yourself entirely to Jesus. Obey Him absolutely; receive by faith from Him living power and grace; be a channel through which He may pour Himself; and you will find that men and things will fall into line at your bidding, and you shall receive power. Our Libnahs will not revolt, unless we forsake the Lord God of our fathers.

**2 Chronicles 21:11 Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray.**

- **Moreover:** De 12:2-4 1Ki 11:7 Ps 78:58 Eze 20:28
- **caused:** 1Ki 14:9,16 2Ki 21:11 Hab 2:15 Rev 2:20
- **play the harlot :** 2Ch 21:13 Lev 17:7 20:5 2Ki 9:22 Ps 106:39 Eze 16:15-63 Rev 2:20-22 Rev 17:1-5
- **led Judah astray.** 2Ch 33:9 Da 3:5,6,15 Rev 13:15-17 17:5,6

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 17:6+ He (JEHOSHAPHAT) took great pride in the ways of the LORD and **again removed the high places** ([bamah](#)) and the Asherim from Judah.

Judges 8:33 Then it came about, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the sons of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-berith their god.

1 Chronicles 5:25 But they acted treacherously against the God of their fathers and played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them.

### THE SCOURGE OF HIGH PLACES LEADING TO SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

**Moreover, he made high places** ([bamah](#)) **in the mountains of Judah** - The Hebrew word [bamah](#) literally means a high place or elevated hill, and in Israel's history, it came to describe sites of pagan worship. What made these “high places” sinful was not the elevation itself, but the defiance of God's command that worship was to take place only at the temple in Jerusalem—the place He chose to put His name (Deuteronomy 12:5–6+). By building these [bamah](#), Jehoram was undoing the reforms of his father Jehoshaphat and of earlier kings who removed idolatrous practices (2Chronicles 17:6+). It was a theological rebellion, not just a cultural one. He was reintroducing Canaanite religious customs, the worship of fertility deities such as Baal and Asherah, which were often associated with immorality and ritual prostitution.

[David Guzik](#) - It was the policy of both his father Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 17:6) and his grandfather Asa (2 Chronicles 14:1-5) to work against these high places. Jehoram promoted them instead.

**And caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot** ([zanah](#); LXX - [ekporneuo](#) - indulge in flagrant immorality figuratively but probably literally as Canaanite religions were filled with sexual abominations) **and led Judah astray** ([nadach](#); LXX - [apoplanao](#) - to mislead - Mk 13:22+)- Note the divine accusations are directed personally at Jehoram - (1) **caused** and (2) **led** which together represent bold-faced sin against Yahweh! Scripture does not describe Judah's downhill slide under Jehoram as accidental but as personal and presumptuous! The LORD brings two explicit charges against Jehoram, and together they amount to high-handed (bold-faced) sin against Yahweh. Jehoram was not merely **permissive or negligent** but he was **causative**! The language echoes moral coercion by the king, not passive drift by the nation. Judah did not merely wander but they were driven like cattle.

A leader who sins privately harms himself, but a leader who sins publicly multiplies guilt across a nation. To **‘lead astray’** is covenant language for deliberate misdirection, guiding God's people away from truth they already knew. Remember, unlike the Northern Kingdom, Judah had the holy city of Jerusalem, the holy Temple and the holy priesthood, so they were hardly ignorant of God's ways! Jehoram and Judah sinned against greater light which always brings greater divine discipline!

As an aside, the people of Judah did not get a pass! Yes, Jehoram “caused” and “led” but the people could refuse to follow a wicked king as seems the case of the people of Libnah proved (2Ch 21:10).

**Iain Duguid**: Previous kings had sought to remove high places (2Ch 14:3, 5; 17:6; cf. 20:33), but Jehoram was the first in Judah to "[make] high places." The people worshiped there because he "led" them, he "made Judah go astray" (the condemnation in 2Ch 21:10 had similarly been that "he had forsaken"). While previously the people had continued to worship at high places (2Chr 20:33), here responsibility is laid on the king as he incited them to "whoredom" (the image of prostitution, being unfaithful in marriage, is a common OT description of idolatry; e.g., Jer. 3:1–5; Ezek. 16:15–43).

Recall that in Ex 24:7+ Israel had agreed to the stipulations of the Mosaic Covenant and it was ratified with a blood sacrifice, the blood even being sprinkled on the people to underscore the solemn nature of their vow "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" Israel was symbolically the wife of Jehovah and (Jer 31:32+, Isa 54:5) and the covenant they entered into at Mt Sinai was their "marriage covenant" so to speak. Their vows to remain faithful were like the vows of a husband and wife. And so the Spirit rightly depicts Israel's disobedience and specifically Jeroboam's leading Judah astray to other so-called gods was tantamount to **playing the harlot!** (See discussion of Israel: The Wife of Jehovah)

As an aside to play the harlot while primarily referring to spiritual harlotry sadly was also likely a charge against literal adultery as many of the abominable pagan practices involved sexual promiscuity and lewdness.

**David Guzik** - Their idolatry was likened to harlotry for two reasons. First, the worship of these pagan sex/fertility gods and goddesses often involved immorality with a pagan priestess or priest. Second, since Israel was obligated to be faithful to God as a wife is obligated to be faithful to her husband, their idolatry was like harlotry in a spiritual sense.

**Bob Utley** - This is the restoration of the legal status of idolatry. There have been two ways to translate. (1) in the mountains of Judah (most translations), "mountains" – (2) in the cities of Judah (LXX, Vulgate), "cities" Both options would fit **Ba'al worship**, which was worshiped on natural high places and man made rock platforms which were in every village

**Ron Daniel** - 21:11 Jehoram Leads Judah Astray. Ye-ho-RAWM's wicked heart soon seeped out to the people he ruled. It is really sad to read this when you remember that this king's father Jehoshaphat had "removed the high places and the Asherim" (2Chron. 17:6). Even his grandfather King Asa had,

2Chr. 14:3-4 ...removed the foreign altars and high places, tore down the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherim, and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment.

But family tradition meant nothing to Ye-ho-RAWM. He reinstated all that his father and grandfather had removed. We see of course the necessity of each new generation, each new administration, seeking after the Lord. Laws which are righteously instituted may be repealed by an unrighteous man who follows him. A family given to godliness in this generation may be led astray by the next.

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**Play the harlot** (02181) **zanah** is a verb meaning to fornicate, to prostitute and refers to marital infidelity or unfaithfulness. It was word used elsewhere in the OT to describe prostitution (Lev 21:7, Pr 7:10). Many of the uses of zannah are figurative describing Israel's (**Jehovah's "wife"**) commission of "spiritual prostitution" by having "intercourse" so to speak with other gods (cp 1 Co 6:16). Indeed, idolatry is looked upon as prostitution (Isa 50:1-3; 54:6, 7, 8; Jer 2:1-3; 3:1ff; Hos 2:1ff; Jas 4:4+; Rev 2:4+). In addition zannah describes Israel's improper relationships with other nations (Isa. 23:17; Ezek. 23:30; Nah. 3:4). "The thought seems to be of having relations with these nations for the sake of political and monetary benefit, although in the case of Nineveh the added element of alluring, deceitful tactics leading on to oppressive dominance is implied. A third figurative meaning is found in Isa 1:21, where the Israelites' departure from God's approved moral standards is called harlotry." ([link to TWOT online](#)) [CLICK HERE TO SEE THE REMAINDER OF THIS LENGTHY DEFINITION](#)

**High places** (01116) **bamah** Six activities seem to be related to high places -- burning of incense, sacrificing, eating of sacrificial meals, praying, prostitution, child sacrifice (cf. bama in the valley, Je 7:31). The first use in Lev 26:30 is God's declaration to Israel "I will destroy your high places." In Dt 32:13 speaking of Jacob (Israel) He declared "He made him ride on the **high places** of the earth," so clearly some uses of bamah are not negative. In a similar use God says Israel "you will tread upon their (Israel's enemies') **high places**." Another positive use is Psalm 18:33 where David declared Jehovah "makes my feet like hinds' feet, And sets me upon my **high places**." (cp Hab 3:19 - [NET Note](#) = David "compares his agility in battle to the ability of a deer to negotiate rugged, high terrain without falling or being injured.", cp [Isa 58:14](#)) We see the effect of Israel's high places on Jehovah in [Ps 78:58](#) = "For they provoked Him with their high places and aroused His jealousy with their graven images."

A sad phrase that is repeated again and again (speaking of Israel) is "the **high places** were not taken away" (1Ki 15:14, 2Chr 15:17 = King Asa but notice he did remove some of them - 2Chr 14:3, 5, 1Ki 22:43, 2Chr 20:33 = King Jehoshaphat, 2Ki 12:3 = King Jehoash, 2Ki 14:4 = King Amaziah, 2Ki 15:4 = King Azariah, 2Ki 15:35 = King Jotham son of Uzziah and look what his son did in 2Ki 16:1-4!, 2Chr 20:33). In many of these passages the context was of a king doing "spiritual house cleaning" so to speak and yet still failing to remove the high places. Isn't sin that way? We confess one or two sins but we have a little pet sin (better a "venomous viper") that we just don't have the heart to kill! God grant us spiritual eyes and hearts to learn from Israel's mistakes. Amen! Some

kings like **Hezekiah** (1Ki 18:4, 2Chr 31:1, Isa 36:7) and **Josiah** (2Ki 23:4,8, 13, 15, 19-20, 2Chr 34:3 cp prophecy about **Josiah** 300 years earlier = 1Ki 13:2) did destroy the high places, but in Hezekiah's case his own son **Manasseh** rebuilt them (2Ki 21:1-2, 3, 2Chr 33:3) and in Josiah's case the people rebuilt them!

We see the spiritual effect of high places on the people when King Jehoram (2Chr 21:5-10) "made **high places** in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot and led Judah astray." (2Chr 21:11)

One of the most incredible (and saddest) verses in the OT (in my opinion) is "Then Solomon built a **high place** for **Chemosh** the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon." (1Ki 11:7, cp 1Ki 3:3 = Solomon had "half a heart" for God!) This was too much for Jehovah and He declared that the 12 tribes would be split as a result of Solomon's sin! Sin is costly. You may think you are getting away with it, but you are not! You may think you are the wisest man in the world (like Solomon) but you are really the most foolish (as Solomon was)! There was one high place that was not idolatrous (at least not at the outset) - "Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place which was at Gibeon; for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness." (2Chr 1:3, cp 1Chr 16:39-40, 21:29).

**Bamah - 91v** - Lev. 26:30; Num. 22:41; Num. 33:52; Deut. 32:13; Deut. 33:29; 1 Sam. 9:12; 1 Sam. 9:13; 1 Sam. 9:14; 1 Sam. 9:19; 1 Sam. 9:25; 1 Sam. 10:5; 1 Sam. 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:19; 2 Sam. 1:25; 2 Sam. 22:34; 1 Ki. 3:2; 1 Ki. 3:3; 1 Ki. 3:4; 1 Ki. 11:7; 1 Ki. 12:31; 1 Ki. 12:32; 1 Ki. 13:2; 1 Ki. 13:32; 1 Ki. 13:33; 1 Ki. 14:23; 1 Ki. 15:14; 1 Ki. 22:43; 2 Ki. 12:3; 2 Ki. 14:4; 2 Ki. 15:4; 2 Ki. 15:35; 2 Ki. 16:4; 2 Ki. 17:9; 2 Ki. 17:11; 2 Ki. 17:29; 2 Ki. 17:32; 2 Ki. 18:4; 2 Ki. 18:22; 2 Ki. 21:3; 2 Ki. 23:5; 2 Ki. 23:8; 2 Ki. 23:9; 2 Ki. 23:13; 2 Ki. 23:15; 2 Ki. 23:19; 2 Ki. 23:20; 1 Chr. 16:39; 1 Chr. 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:3; 2 Chr. 1:13; 2 Chr. 11:15; 2 Chr. 14:3; 2 Chr. 14:5; 2 Chr. 15:17; 2 Chr. 17:6; 2 Chr. 20:33; 2 Chr. 21:11; 2 Chr. 28:4; 2 Chr. 28:25; 2 Chr. 31:1; 2 Chr. 32:12; 2 Chr. 33:3; 2 Chr. 33:17; 2 Chr. 33:19; 2 Chr. 34:3; Job 9:8; Ps. 18:33; Ps. 78:58; Isa. 14:14; Isa. 15:2; Isa. 16:12; Isa. 36:7; Isa. 58:14; Jer. 7:31; Jer. 17:3; Jer. 19:5; Jer. 26:18; Jer. 32:35; Jer. 48:35; Ezek. 6:3; Ezek. 6:6; Ezek. 16:16; Ezek. 20:29; Ezek. 36:2; Hos. 10:8; Amos 4:13; Amos 7:9; Mic. 1:3; Mic. 1:5; Mic. 3:12; Hab. 3:19

**Led astray** (scattered, seduced)([05080](#)) **nadach** meaning to banish, to drive away, to scatter. It is used in various ways to indicate the idea of forcefully removing, impelling, or driving out: of the dispersion, the **scattering of Israel into exile** (Dt. 30:1, 4; Jer 23:2, 3, 8, 9, Jer. 40:12; 43:5; 46:28; Mic. 4:6, Da 9:7 "have driven them", Isa 56:8 = "**dispersed** of Israel"); of driving out something in a figurative sense (Job 6:13); Zion herself was considered an outcast, one driven out (Jer. 30:17). Dt. 22:1 = "your countryman's ox or his sheep **straying away**". It means to be impelled to do something, e.g., by the lure of idolatry and false gods (Dt. 4:19; 30:17); Pr. 7:21 = "With her many persuasions she **entices** him".

**Vine** - "to drive out, banish, thrust, move." This word is found primarily in biblical Hebrew, although in late Hebrew it is used in the sense of "to beguile."

**Utley** says nadach "means 'thrust.'" The false prophets (Dt 13:1) and supposedly covenant members (Dt 13:6) were trying to impel believers away from YHWH to other national gods. Nadach (cf. Dt 13:5, 12; 4:19; 2 Ki 17:21) is parallel to "entice" of Dt 13:6. It is interesting that this same Hebrew root is used to describe the exile (i.e., scattering).

**2 Chronicles 21:12 Then a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet saying, "Thus says the LORD God of your father David, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah,**

- **Then a letter** 2Ki 2:1 Jer 36:2,23,28-32 Eze 2:9,10 Da 5:5,25-29
- **Elijah the prophet.** 2Ki 2:11
- **in the ways of Jehoshaphat:** 2Ch 17:3,4 1Ki 22:43
- **in the ways of Asa:** 2Ch 14:2-5 1Ki 15:11

### **ELIJAH'S CLEAR WARNING AND CERTAIN PROPHECY**

**Then a letter came to him from [Elijah](#) the prophet saying, "Thus says the LORD God of your father David, 'Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father and the ways of Asa king of Judah** - Regarding how Elijah could have sent this letter, [see notes below](#). Note that Elijah holds Jehoram accountable for the light he had received from his grandfather King Asa and his father Jehoshaphat. He had no excuse for his apostasy.



**Morris** - Elijah prophesied in Israel, but he was also concerned with Jehoram's apostasy in Judah. Apparently, shortly before his translation into heaven, he sent this prophecy by messenger to king Jehoram, predicting his untimely and painful death. ([BORROW The Defender's Study Bible](#))

**Ryrie** has another thought - Elijah had likely been translated into heaven by the time this letter was delivered to Jehoram, though it is possible he was still on earth.

**ESV Study Bible** feels that "The last years of Elijah's ministry overlapped with the beginning of Jehoram's reign (2 Kings 1:17). As he had opposed Ahab (1 Kings 17-18), Elijah now condemns Ahab's spiritual successor (2 Chron. 21:6, 13) for leading Judah into idolatry and for murdering his own brothers. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**Bob Utley - Elijah the prophet**" The ministry of the prophet is covered much more intensively in 1 Kings 17 – 2 Kgs. 2:14. This is the only mention of Elijah in all of Chronicles. He is used to intensify God's message. There is no record in Kings of Elijah dealing with Judean kings.

**Frederick Mabie:** It should be noted that this is the only appearance of Elijah in Chronicles, whose ministry efforts noted in Kings are directed against the wicked ways of the northern kingdom's Omride dynasty, particularly Ahab. However, Elijah's prophetic activity in the northern kingdom does not preclude his engagement with Judean kings, particularly if a king's actions (as here, cf. vv. 6, 13) mimic that of the northern kings. Elijah likely spent some time in the southern kingdom during his flight to Mount Horeb (1Ki 19:3). (The Expositor's Bible Commentary Revised Edition – [1 and 2 Chronicles](#))

**August Konkell:** Elijah was witness to the sins of Jehoram though not personally present in Judah. The letter recounts the sins of Jehoram: he walked in the ways of Israel, led Judah into unfaithfulness, and killed his brothers who were better than him. The indictment of the letter follows the theology of the Chronicler. Jehoram will lose his family and possessions and will personally die of a painful disease. The letter recounts the sins of Jehoram in the first part of the narrative and pronounces the judgment that unfolds against Jehoram in the second part of the account. (SEE [The NIV Application Commentary on the Bible](#)) ([Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**Thomas Constable:** It is significant that the prophet whom God sent to announce judgment on Jehoram was Elijah (v. 12), who was still alive at this time. Elijah's ministry was to condemn Baalism in Israel, but God sent him to Jehoram because Jehoram shared the same guilt as the kings of Ahab's house. This is the only record we have of a prophet from the Northern Kingdom rebuking a king of the Southern Kingdom. All the other prophets whom God sent to the Davidic kings were from Judah. This is also the only reference to a letter that either Elijah or Elisha wrote.

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**Ron Daniel** - 21:12-15 A Letter From Elijah. As Jehoram steeped himself and his nation into unrighteousness, a letter was delivered to him. It had been written by Elijah the prophet, who had prophesied for years up in the northern kingdom of Israel. This letter was a prophetic rebuke, proclaiming that because of the sins he had committed, the Lord was going to judge him.

1. Because Jehoram had killed his own brothers, his own family would be stricken.
2. Because he'd led his nation astray, the nation would be invaded.
3. Because he'd used his riches to build idols, his possessions would be stolen.

**A Disease Of Your Bowels** Elijah's letter forewarned that the judgment for Jehoram's wickedness wouldn't just be against family, nation, and property. It was also going to be personal in his body. He was going to suffer severe sickness. His bowels were going to come out with some sort of terrible disease that would bring about a painful and even terminal prolapse of the bowels. The Hebrew word used for "bowels" here is "meeh" (internal organs, inward parts, belly) It is not altogether specific, but speaks of the inner parts of a person. Its usage throughout the Old Testament includes not only the human digestive tract, but refers to a woman's womb (Ge 25:23; Ruth 1:11; etc.) to a man's reproductive organs (2Sa 7:12; 16:11; etc.), and even to the belly of a fish (Jonah 1:17). Because it refers to the inner parts, the word is also used to speak of the seat of emotions and feelings. In English, we say that emotions fill our heart. Hebrew uses this word instead.

Ps. 40:8 I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart."

The word "heart" there is also "meeh," my "inner parts," "my bowels." Now this doesn't always translate into English well.

In Song of Solomon, the NAS version says,

Song 5:4 ...my feelings were aroused for him.

But the King James translators tried to communicate this idea by writing,



Song 5:4 ...my bowels were moved for him.

So, it would seem that a literal translation isn't always the best choice!

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### **Matthew Henry Notes: Verses: 2Ch 21:12-20**

Here we have,

#### **I. A warning from God sent to Jehoram by a writing from Elijah the prophet.**

By this it appears that Jehoram came to the throne, and showed himself what he was before Elijah's translation. It is true we find Elisha attending Jehoshaphat, and described as pouring water on the hands of Elijah, after the story of Elijah's translation (2 Ki. 3:11); but that might be, and that description might be given of him, while Elijah was yet on earth: and it is certain that that history is put out of its proper place, for we read of Jehoshaphat's death, and Jehoram's coming to the crown, before we read of Elijah's translation, 1 Ki. 22:50. We will suppose that the time of his departure was at hand, so that he could not go in person to Jehoram; but that, hearing of his great wickedness in murdering his brethren, he left this writing it is probable with Elisha, to be sent him by the first opportunity, that it might either be a means to reclaim him or a witness against him that he was fairly told what would be in the end hereof. The message is sent him in the name of the Lord God of David his father (v. 12), upbraiding him with his relation to David as that which, though it was his honour, was an aggravation of his degeneracy.

1. His crimes are plainly charged upon him-his departure from the good ways of God, in which he had been educated, and which he had been directed and encouraged to walk in by the example of his good father and grandfather, who lived and died in peace and honour (2Ch 21:12)-his conformity to the ways of the house of Ahab, that impious scandalous family-his setting up and enforcing idolatry in his kingdom-and his murdering his brethren because they were better than himself, 2Ch 21:13. These are the heads of the indictment against him.

2. Judgment is given against him for these crimes; he is plainly told that his sin should certainly be the ruin,

**(1.) Of his kingdom and family** (2Ch 21:14): "With a heavy stroke, even that of war and captivity, will the Lord smite thy people and thy children," etc. Bad men bring God's judgments upon all about them. His people justly suffer because they had complied with his idolatry, and his wives because they had drawn him to it.

**(2.) Of his health and life:** "Thou shalt have great sickness, very painful and tedious, and at last mortal," 2Ch 21:15. This he is warned of before, that his blood might be upon his own head, the watchman having delivered his soul; and that when these things so particularly foretold, came to pass, it might appear that they did not come by chance, but as the punishment of his sins, and were so intended. And now if, as he had learned of Ahab to do wickedly, he had but learned even of Ahab to humble himself upon the receipt of this threatening message from Elijah-if, like (1 Ki. 21:27), he had rent his clothes, put on sackcloth, and fasted-who knows but, like him, he might have obtained at least a reprieve? But it does not appear that he took any notice of it; he threw it by as waste-paper; Elijah seemed to him as one that mocked. But those that will not believe shall feel.

#### **II. The threatened judgments brought upon him because he slighted the warning.**

No marvel that hardened sinners are not frightened from sin and to repentance by the threatenings of misery in another world, which is future and out of sight, when the certain prospect of misery in this world, the sinking of their estates and the ruin of their healths, will not restrain them from vicious courses.

**1. See Jehoram here stripped of all his comforts.** God stirred up the spirit of his neighbours against him, who had loved and feared Jehoshaphat, but hated and despised him, looking upon it as a scandalous thing for a nation to change their gods. Some occasion or other they took to quarrel with him, invaded his country, but, as it should seem, fought neither against small nor great, but the king's house only; they made directly to that, and carried away all the substance that was found in it. No mention is made of their carrying any away captive but the king's wives and his sons, 2Ch 21:17. Thus God made it evident that the controversy was with him and his house. Here it is only said, They carried away his sons; but we find (2Ch 22:1) that they slew them all. Blood for blood. He had slain all his brethren, to strengthen himself; and now all his sons are slain but one, and so he is weakened. If he had not been of the house of David, that one would not have escaped. When Jeroboam's house, and Baasha's, and Ahab's, were destroyed, there was none left; but David's house must

not be wholly extirpated, though sometimes wretchedly degenerated, because a blessing was in it, no less a blessing than that of the Messiah.

**2. See him tormented with sore diseases and of long continuance, such as were threatened in the law against those that would not fear the Lord their God,** Deu. 28:58, 59. His disease was very grievous. It lay in his bowels, producing a continual griping, and with this there was a complication of other sore diseases. The affliction was moreover very tedious. Two years he continued ill, and could get no relief; for the disease was incurable, though he was in the prime of life, not forty years old. Asa, whose heart was perfect with God though in some instances he stepped aside, was diseased only in his feet; but Jehoram, whose heart was wicked, was struck in his inwards, and he that had no bowels of compassion towards his brethren was so plagued in his bowels that they fell out. Even good men, and those who are very dear to God, may be afflicted with diseases of this kind; but to them they are fatherly chastisements, and by the support of divine consolations the soul may dwell at ease even then when the body lies in pain. These sore diseases seized him just after his house was plundered and his wives and children were carried away.

(1.) Perhaps his grief and anguish of mind for that calamity might occasion his sickness, or at least contribute to the heightening of it.

(2.) By this sickness he was disabled to do any thing for the recovery of them or the revenge of the injury done him.

(3.) It added, no doubt, very much to his grief, in his sickness, that he was deprived of the society of his wives and children and that all the substance of his house was carried away. To be sick and poor, sick and solitary, but especially to be sick and in sin, sick and under the curse of God, sick and destitute of grace to bear the affliction, and of comfort to counter-balance it is a most deplorable case.

**3. See him buried in disgrace. He reigned but eight years, and then departed without being desired** 2Ch 21:20.

Nobody valued him while he lived, none lamented him when he died, but all wished that no greater loss might ever come to Jerusalem. To show what little affection or respect they had for him, they would not bury him in the sepulchres of the kings, as thinking him unworthy to be numbered among them who had governed so ill. The excluding of his body from the sepulchres of his fathers might be ordered by Providence as an intimation of the everlasting separation of the souls of the wicked after death, from the spirits of just men. This further disgrace they put upon him, that they made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers, 2Ch 21:19. His memory was far from being sweet and precious to them, and therefore they did not honour it with any sweet odours or precious spices, though we may suppose that his dead body, after so long and loathsome a disease, needed something to perfume it. The generality of the people, though prone to idolatry, yet had no true kindness for their idolatrous kings. Wickedness and profaneness make men despicable even in the eyes of those who have but little religion themselves, while natural conscience itself often gives honour to those who are truly pious. Those that despise God shall be lightly esteemed, as Jehoram was.

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**Norman Geisler - ([When Critics Ask](#)) - 2 CHRONICLES 21:12—How could Elijah have sent a letter long after his departure into heaven?**

**PROBLEM:** When Jehoram became king in Judah, “he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray” (2 Chron. 21:11). In 2 Chronicles 21:12, we find that, in response to Jehoram’s sin, Elijah sent a letter to Jehoram. However, if Elijah was translated prior to the reign of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, then how could he have sent a letter to Jehoram?

**SOLUTION:** Elijah was not translated until some time during the reign of Jehoram son of Ahab. Jehoram son of Ahab reigned in Israel from about 852 to 841 B.C. Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat reigned in Judah from 848 to 841 B.C. Therefore, since Elijah was not translated until some time in the reign of Jehoram of Israel, it is perfectly reasonable that he could have sent this letter to Jehoram of Judah.

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**QUESTION - [How did Elijah send a letter to King Jehoram, if Elijah had already been taken to heaven?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In 2 Chronicles 21, the wicked [King Jehoram](#) of Judah receives a letter from the [prophet Elijah](#). The letter from Elijah said this, in part: “This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: ‘. . . You have followed the ways of the kings of Israel, and you have led Judah and the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves, just as the house of Ahab did. You have also murdered your own brothers, members of your own family, men who were better than you. So now the Lord is about to strike your

people, your sons, your wives and everything that is yours, with a heavy blow. You yourself will be very ill with a lingering disease of the bowels, until the disease causes your bowels to come out” (verses 12–15).

The account of Elijah’s grim and graphic letter to Jehoram seems fairly straightforward—a prophet of God delivers a divine message of judgment to a wicked ruler. However, matters are complicated by a comparison with 2 Kings chapters 2 and 3. In 2 Kings 2, Elijah is translated to heaven in a chariot of fire. Then, 2 Kings 3 relates the story of King Jehoshaphat taking military action against the Moabites and receiving advice from [Elisha](#), Elijah’s successor. The order of events presents a conundrum: if Elijah was taken to heaven during the reign of Jehoshaphat, then how can he send a letter to Jehoram, who was the king *after* Jehoshaphat?

Today, we are used to having dates of important events clarified. This, however, is not how the Bible is written. Some biblical writers included historical references, such as what king was reigning, and we can use those hints to determine approximate dates, but the Bible rarely goes into specific detail about exactly when events took place. We are used to historical accounts being written in strict chronological order, but, in the Bible, historical events are sometimes grouped thematically, with no real concern for chronology. If we follow the chronology based on the order the events as presented in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, here is what led up to Elijah’s letter to Jehoram:

1. Jehoram is anointed king of Judah (2 Kings 1:17), ruling with his father, Jehoshaphat, for the final 5 or 6 years of his father’s reign.
2. Elijah is translated to heaven (2 Kings 2:1–18).
3. Jehoshaphat, advised by Elisha, teams with the king of Israel in a fight against Moab (2 Kings 3).
4. Jehoshaphat dies, leaving Jehoram to rule alone (2 Chronicles 21:1).
5. Jehoram murders all his brothers (2 Chronicles 21:4) and builds idolatrous high places in Judah (verse 11).
6. Jehoram receives a letter from Elijah that details his judgment (2 Chronicles 21:12–15).

According to the above chronology, Elijah was taken from this world during the joint reign of Jehoshaphat and Jehoram. The question then becomes, how did Elijah send a letter to Jehoram about the evil the king did, when Elijah was not around during that time?

There are several reasonable explanations for how Elijah’s letter was delivered to King Jehoram seemingly after Elijah’s translation to heaven:

First, it’s possible that the author of 2 Kings did not place the account of Elijah’s translation to heaven in chronological order with the surrounding chapters. Elijah could have still been serving as prophet until much later in the reign of Jehoram.

Another possibility is that Elijah wrote the letter to Jehoram *before* his departure to heaven and left it for Elisha or someone else to deliver. Elijah was a prophet, after all. God could easily have given him the words to write ahead of time.

Another possibility is that, before his translation to heaven, Elijah told Elisha what Jehoram would do and what God’s judgment would be. When the time came, Elisha wrote out Elijah’s prophecy and delivered it to King Jehoram.

It’s also been suggested that Elijah was not translated to heaven but was whisked away to another location, much like Philip was in Acts 8:39–40. Elijah then was able to write the letter personally at the time of Jehoram’s sin and have it delivered through a courier. According to this theory, after the whirlwind experience of 2 Kings 2, Elijah lived out the remainder of his days in a secret location.

In any case, the letter from Elijah was prophetic in that it condemned Jehoram’s sin and predicted his judgment before the king became ill. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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### **Gleason Archer - How could Jehoram of Judah receive a letter from Elijah long after his departure from this life (2 Ch 21:12–15)?**

Obviously he could not have done so. But the question presupposes something that never happened, namely the demise of Elijah at some time prior to the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat. The reader is invited to consult W. Crockett, A Harmony of Samuel,

Kings, and Chronicles, p. 247. There he will see that “The Translation of Elijah” is placed in the reign of Jehoram the son of Ahab. Therefore it was perfectly possible for Elijah to compose a letter of warning and rebuke as late as 847 B.C., for the reign of Jehoram of Judah (848–841) largely overlapped the reign of Jehoram of Israel (852–841).

Elijah was certainly still active in the reign of Jehoram’s immediate predecessor, Ahaziah of Israel (853–852), who also was a son of Ahab. We know this because of the exciting encounter Elijah had with Ahaziah’s platoons of soldiers sent to arrest him but who were destroyed by fire from heaven in answer to Elijah’s prayer (2 Kings 1:3–16). In all probability the aged prophet would have lived on for another four or five years until the character and policies of Jehoshaphat’s unworthy son had become apparent. (2 Chronicles 21:4 relates how Jehoram had all his own brothers put to death as soon as he became king. Probably his bloodthirsty wife, Athaliah daughter of Jezebel, encouraged him to this fratricide. She herself later tried to kill off all the survivors of Ahab’s house after her son Ahaziah was slain by Jehu in 841.)

It is true that the account of Elijah’s translation to heaven is given in 2 Kings 2:1–11, whereas the reign of Jehoram of Judah is not spoken of until 2 Kings 8:16. But it should be remembered that the narrator of First and Second Kings continually shifts from the careers of reigning kings to the adventures of the principal prophets, Elijah and Elisha. On occasion he carries a theme through in a proleptic way when he is describing the exploits of Elijah, not desiring to leave off that theme until he is through with it. So it was with the story of Elijah’s departure to heaven. This was closely related to the endowment of Elisha with the charismatic power of his revered teacher. Elijah had first called him to discipleship back in the reign of Ahab, after he had symbolically cast his mantle on him (1 Kings 19:19–21), not long after the memorable contest on Mount Carmel.

As Elijah later came near the end of his earthly career during the reign of Jehoram son of Ahab (852–841), the most important theme from the author’s standpoint was the prophetic succession. Therefore he very logically related that first (i.e., the bestowal of Elijah’s cloak and a double portion of his spirit on Elisha at the time of their parting). Not until then was it appropriate for the author of Kings to backtrack and pick up the narration of the national affairs of Israel and Judah in chapter 3. (A similar proleptic procedure is followed in 2 Kings 19:37, which relates the assassination of Sennacherib, which took place in 681 B.C., before the illness of Hezekiah, which occurred in 714.)

So far as the narrative in 2 Chronicles is concerned, there is no notice at all of Elijah’s demise, whether before or after the accession of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat; so there is no problem of apparent anachronism to deal with. In all probability the letter of Elijah to Jehoram was composed in 847 and delivered to him that same year, shortly before Elijah was taken up into heaven by the celestial chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:11). ([Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#))

**2 Chronicles 21:13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot as the house of Ahab played the harlot, and you have also killed your brothers, your own family, who were better than you,**

- **in the way:** 1Ki 16:25,30-33
- **to play the harlot:** 2Ch 21:11 Ex 34:15 De 31:16 2Ki 9:22 Jer 3:8,9
- **killed your brothers:** 2Ch 21:4 Ge 4:10-12 42:21,22 Jud 9:56,57 1Ki 2:31-33 Isa 26:21 Hab 2:12 1Jn 3:12

## **ELIJAH'S PILES US ACCUSATIONS AGAINST JEHORAM**

**but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have caused Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot** ([zanah](#); LXX - [ekporneuo](#) = indulge in flagrant immorality - Jude 1:7+) **as the house of Ahab played the harlot**([zanah](#)), **and you have also killed your brothers** (2Ch 21:4<sup>+</sup>), **your own family, who were better than you** - First Elijah lists off the accusations. Can you imagine Jehoram cringing as he read this letter!

[David Guzik](#) - This was God’s main complaint against Jehoram. He had refused to follow the pattern of his father and grandfather, and instead decided to follow the example of his father-in-law Ahab. **Who were better than you** - God considered the brothers of Jehoram to be more worthy successors to the throne of Judah than Jehoram himself.

**2 Chronicles 21:14 behold, the LORD is going to strike your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity;**

- **the LORD is going to strike** Lev 26:21

- **people:** Many of the people had concurred in Jehoram's idolatry, and some of them must have been instruments in his base, unnatural murders; they were therefore joined in his punishment, and he suffered by the loss of his subjects. Ho 5:11 Mic 6:16
- **sons:** Ex 20:5

## GOD'S JUDGMENT HITS HOME!

**Behold** ([hinneh](#); [Lxx](#) - [idou](#) - used to grab the reader's attention), **the LORD is going to strike** ([nagaph](#)) **your people, your sons, your wives and all your possessions with a great calamity** ([maggephah](#)) - Now Jehoram would really begin to quake! Yahweh Himself would be his Enemy and bring judgment. The prophecy of great calamity began to be filled shortly by the invasion of the Philistines and the Arabs. This judgment was fulfilled to the letter - "your people" → Judah ravaged; "your possessions" → royal wealth plundered; "your wives" → taken captive and "your sons" → all but one removed (likely killed or enslaved). In summary, the **great calamity** was the divinely orchestrated collapse of Jehoram's kingdom, household, and eventually Jehoram's body—foreign invasion stripped him of wealth, wives, and sons, and a lingering, incurable disease finished him in disgrace. **WOE!**

**Andrew Hill:** According to Elijah's letter, God's judgment will reach as far as Jehoram's sin, impacting in reverse order the royal family and the people of Judah (2 Chron. 21:14). The king's punishment, a hideous and lingering disease (21:15), strikes at the heart of Jehoram's sin – his failure to recognize that kingship belongs to God and not to any human being. The humiliating malady exposes his mortality and mocks his dignity as royalty, calling to mind the admonition of the psalmist: "Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save" (Ps. 146:3). (SEE [First and Second Chronicles - Page 166](#))

**John MacArthur** thinks the writing of this letter by Elijah "occurred in the early years of Jehoram's coregency with his father Jehoshaphat and shortly before Elijah's departure to heaven, ca. 848 B.C. (cf. 2Ki 2:11, 12). (SEE [MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** The two consequences of Jehoram's two sins are introduced by the climactic "so now," Hebrew [hinneh](#), sometimes translated "**behold**." The consequences are given in reverse order of the sins. As a result of Jehoram's having murdered his own brothers, the Lord would strike down his sons, his family, and his possessions. The phrase "everything that is yours" is literally "and all your possessions," employing a word (*rekus*) translated "equipment" in 2Ch 20:25. There it refers to the plunder of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites God gave to Jehoshaphat in response to his faith. Here it refers to the "goods" (*rekus*) that the Philistines and Arabs would plunder from Jehoram (2Ch 21:17) in response to his wickedness. Jehoram himself would die with a disease of the bowels that would last (literally) "days upon days" until his bowels came out. As with most illnesses mentioned in the Old Testament, we are left to conjecture about the clinically imprecise vocabulary. Ulcers, colitis, chronic diarrhea, and dysentery have been proposed. (SEE [1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Strike** ([Smite](#)) ([05062](#)) [nagaph](#) means to give a blow, usually from God and either fatal or disastrous (Ex 8:2, Passover - Ex 12:23, 27, smiting Israel after making a golden calf). Prophecy to Israel she would be struck down because of her disobedience (Lev 26:17). Moses warning Israel would be struck down if they went against their enemies after refusing to go into the promised land (Nu 14:42). Lord causes defeat of Israel's enemies if they obey (Dt 28:7) but defeat (striking down) of Israel if the disobey (Dt 28:25)> Striking one's foot (figuratively speaking) is prevented by walking in wisdom (Pr 3:23).

**Calamity** ([04046](#)) [maggephah](#) from [nagaph](#) = to strike or smite) means a blow, pestilence, defeat, plague, slaughter, plague, pestilence, strike, smite. It always denotes a plague sent by God. **Maggephah** frequently describes a blow reflecting divine retribution (as in Zech 14:12, 15, 18). In the first use of **maggephah** describes the plagues of Egypt intended to pierce Pharaoh's heart (Ex 9:14) ultimately did so in the form of the last plague (Ex 12:23). Memory of that divine judgment on human rebellion was enshrined in the Passover (Ex 12:27), national memory (Josh 24:5), and legal system (cf. Lev 26:17; Dt 28:25). Israel, although constantly warned, went astray repeatedly (e.g. Ex 32:25; Nu 14:42) and ultimately was smitten by God with two exiles (northern kingdom to Assyria in 721 B.C. and southern kingdom to Babylon in 586 B.C. the latter including destruction of the Holy Temple, from which the glory of God had departed (see *Glory of God*). This rebellion required atonement for this ever present sinfulness (Ex 30:12) and sin (Nu 16:46ff).

**2 Chronicles 21:15 and you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day.”**

- **disease:** 2Ch 21:18,19 Nu 5:27 De 28:61 Ac 12:23
- **bowels:** Ps 109:18 Ac 1:18
- **the sickness:** 2Ch 21:18 De 28:27,37,59,67

## JEHORAM'S PERSONAL PAIN & SUFFERING

**And you will suffer severe sickness, a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out because of the sickness, day by day.'** - Now he letter gets personal! **You** is singular referring to Jehoram and not the people as in 2 Chr. 21:14 ("your people"), who will also suffer. This is special delivery to his gastrointestinal tract. Many think the phrase **your bowels come out** indicates that he ended his days with [rectal prolapse](#). As a doctor I don't think we can say definitively what this was, but if you have even had severe gastrointestinal issues (as most everyone has had at least acutely), you can just imagine the misery of having that type of affliction for two years and finally your bowels coming out! (cf 2Ch 21:18-19).

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Elijah almost gives us a "THREE POINT OUTLINE" for what would make a pithy sermon!

1. 2Ch 21:12 - CAUSE
2. 2Ch 21:13 - EFFECT
3. 2Ch 21:14-15 - CONSEQUENCES

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**2 Chronicles 21:16 Then the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians;**

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- **the Lord:** 2Ch 33:11 1Sa 26:19 2Sa 24:1 1Ki 11:11,14,23 Ezr 1:1,5 Isa 10:5,6 Isa 45:5-7 Am 3:6
- **Philistines:** 2Ch 17:11



Philistines on West, Arabs on South

**Then** - This is a time phrase that describes the beginning of the reaping of the rotten fruit that Jehoram had sown. I am reminded of the description in Hosea 8:7 which says "they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind." Notice two points - (1) whirlwind is worse than wind! (2) there is a delay between the sowing and the reaping, but in the absence of repentance, the reaping is certain! WOE!

**The LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who bordered the Ethiopians**(Lit., the Cushites.); God's sovereignty of nations is on full display! God can stir up spirits of pagans, kings, paupers Pr 21:1 stating "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes." Keep in mind that all of these adversities could still have elicited a cry of "I repent" from Jehoram (in my opinion), but that does not seem to be on Jehoram's agenda!

**Bob Utley** - **"the Arabs"** This refers to nomadic tribes on the southern border of Palestine who were controlled by the Ethiopian rulers of Egypt (cf. 2 Chr. 14:9-15).

**Walton** - **invasion of Philistines and Arabs.** The invasion here was probably a series of raids from the west (Philistines) and south (Arabs), from well-known enemies of Judah. From the context of the passage it may be assumed that the raid was in response to the vulnerable situation that Judah was in because of the Edomite rebellion. ([IVP Background Commentary page 442-3](#))

**Ron Daniel** - **2Chr 21:16-17 Philistines And Arabs Invade Judah.** True to God's Word through Elijah's letter, the Lord brought the



Philistines and Arabs against the nation of Judah. They were invaded, and Ye-ho-RAWM's wives, sons, and property were all taken from him. But God had postponed His judgment for a reason. He'd waited these years in order that Yeh-ho-aw-KHAWZ would be born. He was the one survivor that would carry on the kingly line of David, as we shall see in chapter 22.

**2 Chronicles 21:17 and they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king's house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.**

- **carried away:** Heb. carried captive, Job 5:3,4
- **his sons :** 2Ch 22:1 24:7
- **Jehoahaz:** 2Ch 22:1, **Ahaziah**, 2Ch 22:6, **Azariah**

### ONLY ONE SON REMAINED

**And they came against Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions found in the king's house together with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except [Jehoahaz](#), the youngest of his sons** - (Jehoahaz = "Yahweh has grasped / held" KNOWN IN 2 KINGS AS Ahaziah = "Yahweh has held / sustained"). Remember what is at stake here! It is the "lamp" of the Davidic Covenant, and this is the last flickering flame. All other royal sons were killed or carried away and only one male heir remained who was in the lineage of David, the lineage of the promised Messiah! The Davidic dynasty hung by a single thread (humanly speaking), but it was a "divinely" held single strand! And even with the preservation of [Jehoahaz](#) the threat is not over, for he will be killed within a year and will leave his infant son Joash who would be hidden for 6 years in the Temple under the protection of Jehoida (2Ch 22:11-12) while Athaliah ruled Judah. This son would be the only living male descendant of David!

**David Guzik** - This was a fitting judgment against Jehoram. In trying to protect his own throne he murdered all his brothers, and eventually found that all his sons were taken except one.

**Payne** says "In the outworkings of God's justice, the man who began by massacring his own brothers ended by suffering the loss of his sons and wives." (See [The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Abridged Edition- Page 50](#))

**Raymond Dillard:** For the Chronicler, if progeny is a measure of divine favor, their loss shows divine anger; see above, vv 2-3, 12-15. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**J.A. Thompson:** Jehoram's inability to prevent the initial rebellions in these areas encouraged other rebellions. These renewed attacks reached as far as the king's palace, from which the attackers carried off booty and took captive his sons and wives. ([1, 2 Chronicles: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

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**QUESTION - [Who was King Jehoahaz in the Bible? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)**

**ANSWER** - There are three kings named Jehoahaz in the Bible. Two were kings of Judah, and one was king of Israel. The name *Jehoahaz* means "Yahweh is sustainer" or "whom Yahweh holds," but, ironically, none of these kings trusted in the Lord or followed Him.

### JEHOAHAZ OF JUDAH SON OF JEHORAM

**Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) son of Jehoram, king of Judah (841 BC).** This Jehoahaz was the youngest son of Jehoram. He is called "**Azariah**" in the NIV, CEV, and NLT; but he is called "**Jehoahaz**" in the ESV, KJV, NKJV, and NASB. The difference is due to the fact that *Ahaziah* is a variant of *Jehoahaz* in Hebrew. The people made him king of Judah since all his older brothers had been killed (2 Chronicles 21:17; 22:1). Although he ruled in the southern kingdom, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) was actually a grandson of [Ahab and Jezebel](#) of the northern kingdom, and he followed in the sins of Ahab (2 Chronicles 22:3-4). Upon the suggestion of his advisors, Jehoahaz helped his uncle, King Joram of Israel, fight against [Hazael](#) king of Aram (2 Chronicles 22:5-6). Joram was injured in the battle, and Jehoahaz went to visit him. During the visit, Jehu showed up on his mission to wipe out the entire house of Ahab. Jehu killed Joram, all of Jehoahaz's relatives who were there, and, after a chase, Jehoahaz himself (2 Chronicles 22:7-9). So, Jehoahaz (Ahaziah) was buried after only one year on the throne of Judah.

### JEHOAHAZ OF ISRAEL

## SON OF JEHU

***Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel (814—798 BC).*** This Jehoahaz reigned for seventeen years over the northern kingdom Israel. “He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit” (2 Kings 13:2). About a century earlier, [Jeroboam I](#) had led the rebellion that split the kingdom into two. After the split, Jeroboam sought to keep the people in his northern kingdom from traveling to the southern kingdom to worship God in Jerusalem. So Jeroboam set up two golden calves in the north: one in Bethel, and one in Dan (1 Kings 11—12). In this way, Jeroboam led the people into idol worship. Ruling about one hundred years later, Jehoahaz persisted in this sin of idolatry.

Interestingly, Jehoahaz’s father, Jehu, had destroyed the [worship of Baal](#) in Israel. But he did not keep God’s law with all his heart or turn away from the sins of Jeroboam (2 Kings 10:28–31). Still, for destroying the house of Ahab, God promised Jehu that his sons would rule to the fourth generation. Jehoahaz was the second in that dynasty.

Because Jehoahaz worshipped idols and caused Israel to continue in the idolatry of Jeroboam, God began to reduce the size of Israel, allowing Hazael and Ben-Hadad of [Aram](#) to overpower them (2 Kings 13:3, 32). After experiencing Aramian oppression for a period of time, Jehoahaz finally relented and “sought the LORD’s favor” (2 Kings 13:4). God graciously raised up a deliverer, who freed the Israelites from Aram, so that they were able to live in their own homes again (2 Kings 13:5). Many biblical commentators believe the deliverer was either Jehoahaz’s son Jehoash or his grandson Jeroboam II (2 Kings 13:10, 22–23; 14:23, 26–27). The biblical historian cites God’s grace: “Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence” (2 Kings 13:22–23). Inexplicably, after God delivered him from the Aramians, Jehoahaz left standing the wooden [Asherah pole](#) in Samaria, the capital ([2 Kings 13:6](#)). Israel’s army and chariots had been mostly destroyed by the end of Jehoahaz’s reign (2 Kings 13:7), leaving the nation vulnerable to attack. Jehoahaz’s son and grandson ruled after him, completing the dynasty of Jehu. Sadly, these kings followed in the same evil footsteps as Jehoahaz (2 Kings 13:10–11; 14:23–24). Even so, God continued to be faithful to His people (2 Kings 13:24–25; 14:26–27).

## JEHOAHAZ OF JUDAH SON OF JOSIAH

***Jehoahaz son of Josiah, king of Judah (609 BC).*** Although he was the fourth son of Josiah, Jehoahaz was made king over Judah once his father died (2 Kings 23:31; 2 Chronicles 36:1). Also known as Shallum (1 Chronicles 3:15), Jehoahaz only reigned for three months in Jerusalem before being deposed by Pharaoh Necho. The pharaoh installed Jehoahaz’s brother, Eliakim (aka Jehoiakim) as king and deported Jehoahaz in chains. Jehoahaz later died in Egypt (2 Kings 23:31–35). This third and final Jehoahaz also “did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his predecessors has done” (2 Kings 23:32).

The sins of the last Jehoahaz are especially tragic because his father, [Josiah](#), had been an exceptionally good king. Josiah had found the Book of the Law, renewed the covenant, torn down the high places of idol worship, destroyed the priests of false gods, reinstituted the Passover, and turned to the Lord “with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses” (2 Kings 23:25). But his son Jehoahaz did not follow in his steps.

**Sadly, none of the Jehoahazes followed the Lord.** Yet, as their name communicates, the Lord did not abandon His people.

**2 Chronicles 21:18 So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness.**

- **an incurable sickness:** 2Ch 21:15 2Ki 9:29 Ac 12:23

## JEHORAM'S INCURABLE ILLNESS

**So after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable sickness.**

[David Guzik](#) - Again, this was a fitting judgment. There was a sense in which Jehoram was rotten spiritually from within; here, God simply caused the physical condition of his body simply corresponded to the spiritual condition of his soul – so he died in severe pain.

[Bob Utley](#) - The exact disease is not specified but it had to do with his bowels protruding. It is described as very painful and protracted. There are several Judean kings who suffered physical ailments because of their covenant disobedience. Asa – 2 Chr. 16:12-14 Jehoram – here Uzziah – 2 Chr. 26:16-23

Disobedience has consequences (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). YHWH is no respecter of persons. Sin affects all.

[Iain Duguid](#): His bowel sickness was humiliating and fatal (the exact illness is not specified).

[Ron Daniel](#) - Ye-ho-RAWM suffered a long and miserable death, being smitten as Elijah had prophesied. When he finally died, it says that,

2Chr. 21:19 ...his people made no fire for him like the fire for his fathers.

2Chr. 21:20 ...and he departed with no one's regret

Imagine being such a person that when you die, no one mourns your loss. As a pastor, I have done many different kinds of funerals. It is always very telling to see the impact that someone left on this earth. Sometimes the funeral is doubly depressing. First, that the person died, but second, that they made so little impact that there are only a few people at the memorial. You know, when Moses died,

Deut. 34:8 ...the sons of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days...

I also remember a disciple in Joppa named Tabitha.

Acts 9:36 ...this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.

When Peter arrived at the place where she'd died, they were...

Acts 9:39 ...weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that (she) used to make while she was with them.

She had left such a legacy of the works of her hands and the kindness of her heart that people mourned her death. They knew that humanity was poorer for the loss of her. Saints, I can't emphasize this enough: **Make your life count. Make a difference. Invest in eternity by demonstrating God's love to humanity. Remember that the life you live now is the legacy you leave.**

**2 Chronicles 21:19 Now it came about in the course of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels came out because of his sickness and he died in great pain. And his people made no fire for him like the fire for his fathers.**

BGT καὶ γένητο ἡ μερὶς ἐκ τῆς μῆρας καὶ ἡ λήθην καιρὸς τῶν μερῶν μῆρας ὅτι ἔλθεν κοιλία αὐτοῦ μετὰ τῶν σου καὶ πῦρ ἔθεν ἡ μάλακ' ἡ πονηρὴ καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησεν λαὸς αὐτοῦ κφὸρ ἢ καθὼς κφὸρ ἡ πᾶτ' ῥων αὐτοῦ

LXE And it continued from day to day: and when the time of the days came to two years, his bowels fell out with the disease, and he died by a grievous distemper: and his people performed no funeral, like the funeral of his fathers.

CSB This continued day after day until two full years passed. Then his intestines came out because of his disease, and he died from severe illnesses. But his people did not hold a fire in his honor like the fire in honor of his fathers.

ESV In the course of time, at the end of two years, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great agony. His people made no fire in his honor, like the fires made for his fathers.

NIV In the course of time, at the end of the second year, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great pain. His people made no fire in his honor, as they had for his fathers.

NLT The disease grew worse and worse, and at the end of two years it caused his bowels to come out, and he died in agony. His people did not build a great funeral fire to honor him as they had done for his ancestors.

- fire: 2Ch 16:14 Jer 34:5

#### Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 16:14+ They buried him (KING ASA) in his own tomb which he had cut out for himself in the city of David, and they laid him in the resting place which he had filled with spices of various kinds blended by the perfumers' art; and they made a very great fire for him.

## A KING'S PAINFUL DEATH WITHOUT HONOR

**Now it came about in the course of time, at the end of two years, that his bowels came out because of his sickness and he died in great pain** - This is a horrible thought, but what Jehoram had done to Judah was just as horrible. He was the fountainhead of the gradual decline of Judah over the next (approximately) 250 years.

**And his people made no fire for him like the fire for his fathers.** This customary honor was not given him and He was not even buried where kings normally were buried!

**Adam Clarke** - "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." (

**Knapp** writes "'He is one of the most unlovely of all the kings of Judah. **Exalted by Jehovah,**' (THE MEANING OF JEHORAM!) he was for his wickedness thrust down to a dishonoured grave."

**Bob Utley** - **his people made no fire for him**" This seems to refer to a special honorary bonfire, not cremation (cf. 2 Chr. 16:14). 2 Chronicles 21:20 clearly shows how unpopular he was as king. (1) no fire (i.e., Jer. 34:5), (2) no friends (3) no royal burial (cf. 2 Chr. 24:25; 26:23; 28:27; 33:20)

**Walton - fire in his honor.** The funeral rites denied Jehoram were often quite elaborate and include the burning of spices in honor of the dead as well as a general lamentation and internment in the family tomb. The fire does not imply cremation of the body or an attempt to mask the odors associated with a diseased body, but was rather an expensive display of the king's wealth. The practice is well known among Assyrian kings where it was used as an apotropaic ritual. ([IVP Background Commentary page 443](#))

**2 Chronicles 21:20 He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years; and he departed with no one's regret, and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.**

- **Thirty and two:** 2Ch 21:5
- **with no one's regret** 2Ch 23:21 Pr 10:7 Jer 22:18,28

## GOOD RIDDANCE TO A GODLESS RULER

**He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years; and he departed with no one's regret, and they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings** - He is like a soldier who receives a dishonorable discharge and deservedly so! Jehoram was a bad king who received a just end! No one wished him to live any longer. He was hated while he lived, and neglected when he died.

Jehoram's life stands as a sober reminder that spiritual heritage cannot substitute for personal obedience. Though born into the Davidic line and surrounded by godly examples, he rejected the LORD, led Judah into corruption, and died in disgrace. Yet even in judgment, God's faithfulness shines: the king was removed, but the covenant was preserved. God judges rebellion, but He never breaks His promises.

*Jehoram's tragic end warns us that knowing about God is not the same as walking with God.*

**Morgan** - "Strange indeed is the human heart. It turns to evil, and pursues it persistently; and yet it never really loves those who lead it in the way of evil. . . . Love is only inspired by goodness. Men will follow those who lead them in the ways of corruption, but such following is always inspired by evil selfishness, and never by admiration or love."

Jehoram lost the throne, the people's respect, and his life—but God did not lose His covenant. A bad king was removed, yet God's purposes marched on unhindered. Jehoram's reign reveals that persistent sin invites severe discipline, that divine judgment may be delayed but is never denied, and that God's covenant faithfulness stands firm even when His servants fail.

**Walton - tombs of the kings.** The Judahite kings were buried in the City of David, a small ridge bordered by Kidron, Hinnom and Tyropoeon Valleys. The kings from Rehoboam to Ahaz were buried here (except for some notable exceptions). Later kings were either buried in the "garden of Uzziah" (Manasseh and Amon) or in their own tomb (Josiah). The burial place of Hezekiah and the

successors of Josiah is not mentioned. The site of the royal burials in the City of David has not been determined with certainty. Many of the Egyptian kings of the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1050 B.C.) were buried in the Valley of the Kings in separate tombs. There was apparently no such common royal burial place for the kings of Assyria. ([IVP Background Commentary page 443](#))

**Raymond Dillard:** Perhaps it is the measure of the Chronicler's contempt for Jehoram that for the first time he makes no mention of other sources the reader might consult for additional details regarding his reign. (BORROW [2 Chronicles](#))

**Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown:** A series of overwhelming calamities befell this wicked king; because, in addition to the revolts already mentioned, two neighboring tribes (see 2 Chron. 17:11) made hostile incursions on the southern and western portions of his kingdom; his country was ravaged, his capital taken, his palace plundered, his wives carried off, all his children slain except the youngest, himself was seized with a chronic and incurable dysentery, which, after subjecting him to the most painful suffering for the unusual period of two years, carried him off, a monument of the divine judgment; and, to complete his degradation, his death was unlamented, his burial unhonored, by his subjects. This usage, similar to what obtained in Egypt, seems to have crept in among the Hebrews, of giving funereal honors to their kings, or withholding them, according to the good or bad characters of their reign.

**G Campbell Morgan - He departed without being desired. -2 Chr 21.20.** -Strange indeed is the human heart. It turns to evil, and pursues it persistently; and yet it never really loves those who lead it in the way of evil. This fact is remarkably exemplified in the story of the reign of Jehoram, as told in this chapter. With the passing of Jehoshaphat, another period of darkness and degeneracy set in for the kingdom of Judah. Jehoram was of an utterly evil nature. He attempted to make his throne secure by the murder of his brothers. He was strengthened in wickedness by marriage with the daughter of Ahab. This the chronicler makes clear in the declaration: "He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife." Nevertheless the people followed him, going a-whoring at the high places, and wandering from the ways of Jehovah. In the midst of this wickedness a message was brought to him from Elijah, the prophet of fire, who had exercised so powerful an influence against Ahab in the kingdom of Israel. It contained a terrible message of judgment, which was fully carried out. "He departed without being desired." Love is only inspired by goodness. Men Will follow those who lead them in the ways of corruption, but such following is always inspired by evil selfishness, and never by admiration or love. When the evil leader falls, there is no pity for him; he departs without being desired. Thus, even in the midst of the uttermost corruption, God pre-serves a consciousness of the value of goodness, and a witness to the beneficence of His government.

#### **Paul Apple - DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS - page 515:**

- 1) How evil is a ruler who slaughters his brothers just to protect his own kingship from competition?
- 2) How close does Israel come to having the Davidic dynasty completely wiped out?
- 3) Why did Edom and Libnah revolt at this point in time?
- 4) How miserable must Jehoram have been during the last two years of his life?

#### **QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:**

**August Konkell:** Baal religion was a fertility cult. It was a form of materialism under the guise of religious piety. Worship of Baal, the rider of the clouds, ostensibly brought rain that made crops grow. The pedestal of Baal was a calf; his stela depicts him with a club in one hand for thunder and a sprig or lightning bolt in the other. In the days of Ahab, through the aggressive efforts of Jezebel, Phoenician religion permeated Israel to the point that Elijah would feel that he was the only prophet left. The Chronicler says nothing of this influence, other than the observation that Judah came directly under Baal influence through Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel, wife of Jehoram and mother of his son Ahaziah. Materialism has been a destructive force in much of human history, well illustrated in the reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah. ([Multipart Video Series on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**Iain Duguid:** This passage juxtaposes two realities. All too evident throughout human history are violence, despotic actions, battles between different ethnic groups, and threats to what is God-honoring and to God's people. At the same time, working out his purposes is the God who keeps his promises. Before the exile, Isaiah had promised that "light" would come, associated with the Davidic king (Isa. 9:1–7). Now, after the exile, the Chronicler reassures his hearers—who are still under foreign rule and without a Davidic king. In the midst of darkness, they are to remember what God did during the dark reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah; they can persevere in hopeful faithfulness because God will keep his covenant and promise concerning a "lamp."

**Andrew Hill:** The Old Testament historians have equated the "two paths" of the wisdom tradition [cf. Ps. 1; Prov. 4, 12] with the dynasties of the divided monarchies. Thus, the "way of the house of David" is contrasted with the ways of "the house of Ahab" (2 Chron. 21:6; cf. 2 Kings 8:27; 22:2; 2 Chron. 11:17; 22:3). The house of David is characterized as a good way, marked by loyalty to God, obedience to his Word, and righteousness in royal rule (cf. 1 Kings 3:6; 1 Chron. 29:18-19). Conversely, the house of Ahab is characterized as an evil way, given to economic oppression, social injustice, idolatry, and witchcraft (cf. 1 Kings 16:30; 21:19; 2 Kings 9:22). All this confirms the fact that true wisdom is not so much about knowledge and intellect as it is about character and

behavior (cf. Prov. 1:3; 2:9). In the end, only one house will survive – for the Lord’s curse rests on the house of the wicked, but his blessing rests on the home of the righteous (3:33). The Chronicler “spoils” the story of the near annihilation of the Davidic family for his audience by disclosing the resolution of the plot’s conflict at the very beginning of his narrative: “The Lord was not willing to destroy the house of David. He had promised to maintain a lamp for him” (2 Chron. 21:7). The outcome of the rival house is equally assured, as we learn that God had anointed Jehu “to destroy the house of Ahab” (22:7). . . According to the Chronicler’s theology of immediate retribution, there is direct correspondence between a king’s political power and his faithfulness to the tenets of Yahweh’s covenant. Jehoram’s political weakness is attested by his failure to control former Judean satellite states and cities. The author’s theological commentary on the two revolts against Jehoram places blame directly on the king’s sin of idolatry, implied in the references to the “high places” and the activity of the people in “prostituting themselves” (21:10b-11). By way of personal example and public policy, Jehoram is held responsible for leading God’s people astray in their worship. Thus, the rebellion of Jehoram becomes another example in the history of the Davidic monarchy of a successor undoing the work of his predecessor. In this case, the internal decay associated with Jehoram’s apostasy not only nullifies the reforms of his father, Jehoshaphat, but also leads to the loss of gains made in foreign policy by both Asa and Jehoshaphat. (The NIV Application Commentary – 1 & 2 Chronicles.)

**Mark Boda:** This concern of dynastic extinction serves as a consistent leitmotif in the Chronicler’s account throughout these two chapters; it sets the tone for and contributes significantly to the darkness of the narrative. This leitmotif, which De Vries (1989:335) calls “the schema of Dynastic Endangerment,” is introduced in the description of the early phase of Jehoram’s reign, as the new king purges the royal house of all his brothers (21:4), an act that prompts divine judgment in the letter from Elijah (21:13). The motif is reintroduced in the following: (1) the attack of the philistine-Arab coalition, who carried away all of Jehoram’s sons except one (21:17); (2) the reminder of this event in the accession note of Ahaziah (22:1); (3) Jehu’s assassination of Ahaziah and the sons of his brothers (22:8-9); and (4) Athaliah’s purge of the rest of the Judean royal family save one (22:10-12). In an ironic twist, this trend of purging proves positive for the Davidic line since it leads to the removal from the Davidic dynasty of the stain and influence of the Omrides introduced by Athaliah.

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