

The Kings of Judah
Jehoram: His Evil Ways
2 Chronicles 21:8-15
Lesson II
Written: February 11, 1990

1. 2 CHRONICLES 21:1-3.

We observed that Jehoshaphat had made Jehoram King BECAUSE he was the firstborn.

Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he was the firstborn.

2 Chronicles 21:1-3

2. 2 CHRONICLES 21:4-5 JEHORAM REVEALED.

Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel. Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 21:4-5

"Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father..." There is nothing in the Bible about humanity that is not true to life. This is the record of life in the past, but it is life as it is today. One generation is removed another takes its place. One holds position, is removed by death, and someone takes up that position. Jehoram "strengthened himself." Here is a man, like so many men today, seeking job security. And it is amazing what people will do to secure their position in life!

In this story we have the ultimate. He slew his brothers. ALL of them. That is really stepping on others to promote self. Everything he did was to promote self and secure position. Self-promotion can be dangerous, history has been plagued by such. Church history has its share of this kind of thing too. He strengthened HIMSELF. Position can often reveal the real man. He did not strengthen himself in the Lord, but in military power. He became a mighty dictator. He was another Nebuchadnezzar . He was another Herod. Another Stalin. Another Hitler. Another Daddy Amin. Another Kemini. He now holds the club and is anxious to use it. And in addition to slaying his own brothers, his own flesh and blood, he slew divers of the Princes of Israel.

The Lord does not tell us how many he murdered. Enough for us ,the Lord knows. One cannot help but wonder what the Day of judgment will be like for many a man who has lived on earth, as this man did. His father, as we have seen, was not perfect, none are or have been, but he, none the less, was a God-fearing man. And his son knew that! How he could turn out to be a

murderer, we cannot fully understand. Of this King it could be said: "There was no fear of God before his eyes." Romans 3:18

There is no fear of God before their eyes.
Romans 3:18

2 Chronicles 21:5 tells us that he was 32 years old when he began to reign, and he occupied the throne of Judah for 8 years, 8 wicked years. 8 dreaded, dreadful years.

Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.
2 Chronicles 21:5

3. 2 CHRONICLES 21:6-7 THE CAUSES OF HIS EVIL WAYS.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD. Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons forever.
2 Chronicles 21:6-7

Ahab's daughter was Jehoram's wife. We note again that 2 Chronicles 21:5 tells us Jehoram was 32 years old when he took the throne and that he reigned for 8 years.

Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.
2 Chronicles 21:5

During all of those 8 years he walked in the ways of the wicked kings of Israel. In the ways of Omri. 1 Kings 16:25, "And Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all that were before him." And Jehoram walked in THOSE ways! He walked in the ways of Ahab. 1 Kings 16:30 "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord ABOVE all that were before him."

But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him.
1 Kings 16:25

And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him.
1 Kings 16:30

Apparently he was more evil than his father. And Jehoram walked in his ways!
1 Kings 16:33 "And Ahab made a grove and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings that were before him." And Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son, walked in the ways of Ahab!

And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

1 Kings 16:33

Ahab's son was Ahaziah and in 1 Kings 22:51-53 we read:

Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: For he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

1 Kings 22:51-53

"Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord. And walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother (Jezebel) And in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin; FOR he served Baal, and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done." And Jehoram walked in his ways!

Now look back at 2 Chronicles 21:6 and read these awful words: "For he had the daughter of Ahab to wife and he wrought much evil in the eyes of the Lord."

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 21:6

Parker says, "2 Chronicles 21:6 is given as a fact, but stated as an explanation. Here is a man who did wickedly. WHY? He had Ahab's daughter to wife." Remember, Ahab's wife was Jezebel. Imagine having Jezebel for a mother-in-law! Ahab's daughter's life was set in the wrong direction. What a revelation we have about this woman.

I heard a man say;" As go our women, so goes our nation." As we have seen, Ahab and Jezebel, the parents of Jehoram's wife, were noted for their evil. 1 Kings 21:25: "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." They were a pair! And the daughter of these two evil persons, marries the King of Judah, who was the son of the godly Jehoshaphat.

But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.

1 Kings 21:25

And our text in 2 Chronicles 21:6 indicates that it was this woman who influenced the king to be evil and to do evil. She may have been the one who advised him to murder all his brothers. So Jehoram is evil because his wife is evil. Here is the story of a man led to ruin by his wife.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD.

2 Chronicles 21:6

Parker says: "He was not bound to marry her. He selected her as his wife and companion. And men must reap the harvest. No man is at liberty to drink poison, then say he is in pain, then ask for pity. Cause and effect go together." We cannot pity Jehoram.

Vernon McGee reminds us that, "God does not bless mixed marriages." Jehoram's wife, led him into evil, even as Solomon's wives led old Solomon into idolatry. 1 Kings 11:4

For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father.

1 Kings 11:4

It is a very serious matter to influence any life into the ways of evil. Parents are often guilty. Jesus said in Matthew 18:6, (when talking about children), "But whosoever shall offend (cause to stumble) one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Solemn words!

But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Matthew 18:6

But I think there is another side to this story. And we must not over-look it.

In earlier days, when Jehoram was a young lad, his father Jehoshaphat was in business dealings with wicked Ahab. And while they were wheeling and dealing, doing business, their children were playing together and making friends with each other. And as a result, when they grew up they married. Thus through his own worldliness, Jehoshaphat lost his son to Ahab's daughter. We do not live our lives to ourselves. Parents--take care what you do, lest it have a wrong influence on your children.

Perhaps the last statement in 2 Chronicles 21:6 should be in 2 Chronicles 21:7 thus it would read, " And he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord, Howbeit the Lord would not destroy the house of David because..." First of all, take note of the fact that what the King did was evil in the eyes of the Lord. It is what the Lord sees that matters. It is what the Lord says that matters. It is what the Lord thinks that matters. Here God does not spell out all the evil of Jehoram's doings. He doesn't need to. Enough for us to know and remember, HE sees and knows it all.

2 Chronicles 21:7 "Howbeit, the Lord would not destroy the house of David because..."

Here is an amazing thing. The Lord did not step in and judge immediately. We always think He should. The Lord could have wiped that wicked man from the face of the earth for his evil deeds in a moment.

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A few years ago, by his own confession, Morgentaler confessed that in Canada he had aborted 65,000 babies. Yet to this day, he lives on, in our opinion, "killing babies." God could easily have removed him. Hitler ordered the murder of over 6 million Jews.

Stalin murdered perhaps 12 millions of people. And all these men were given time to do so. We seem to have no answer, we do not know why, But here in the case of Jehoram we are told why. Years before this king was born, the Lord had made an oath to David.

The Lord had made a covenant, He would not break. For the House of David must produce David's Greatest Son. And that plan, that purpose of God, in the wise Providence of God, allowed this evil. The Lord has made a covenant with David, and what He had promised to perform, no human deeds could undo. We will not here discuss the features of the Covenant with David in detail. But it is confirmed in Scripture.

(1) That covenant is forever.

(2) 2 Samuel 7:16 states that, David's house, kingdom and throne are to continue forever.

Acts 2:30 and Luke 1 :32-33 confirm the fact that these promises were made to David and that they will all be fulfilled in Christ and by Christ, that is why they will be forever.

And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

2 Samuel 7:16

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

Acts 2:30

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1 :32-33

5. 2 CHRONICLES 21: 8-10 TROUBLE FOR THE KING.

Verse 8 In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king. **Verse 9** Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots. **Verse 10** So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers.

2 Chronicles 21:8-10

A revolt. Jehoram finds himself in trouble. Peace is taken from his kingdom and insurrection is the result. This was a judgment in time, from the Lord.

McGee: "I get a little impatient with people who say the Bible doesn't teach God's judgment on sin. What they mean is, they don't believe the Bible." The later part of 2 Chronicles 21:10 tells us why this particular trouble came. "Because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers." He turned his back on the teaching of his godly fathers. Like many are doing in Canada today. He turned his back on that which he knew was right and therefore he did wrong.

Again I apply that.

In our land, people know that immorality is wrong, but they have turned their back on morality. People know that abortion is wrong, that homosexuality is wrong, but they have accepted them as being right because, like Jehoram, they have turned their back on God. You will notice, it does not say that he had forsaken the Lord HIS God, but rather, he had forsaken his father's God. Moses said, "I serve my father's God" but Jehoram said, "I will not serve my father's God." There is no evidence that Jehoram was ever a man of faith. He knew the truth. He knew the way. He had heard his father pray that great prayer as recorded in 2 Chronicles chapter 20. He had witnessed the miraculous hand of God in saving the Nation. He had seen God unbear his arm in the days of his father. He knew about the battle fought and won by God Himself on Israel's behalf. He had all the opportunities any man could or has ever had. But he chose to deliberately turn his back on God. He was an apostate. And all apostates eventually do what Jehoram did. What a sad story it is!

But perhaps it is sadder still, when some genuine believer, some person like Lot, who has a righteous soul, even when they know better, turn their back on God. To forsake the Lord is a dreadful thing whether it be in 800 B.C. or 1990 A.D. If miracles would or do bring a man to God, Jehoram is without excuse. And he who can see the hand of God on or in his own family and not turn to God will have no excuse.

5. 2 CHRONICLES 21: 11-15 THE GREAT WRITING FROM ELIJAH.

Verse 11 Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto. **Verse 12** And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, **Verse 13** But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: **Verse 14** Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: **Verse 15** And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day.

2 Chronicles 21:11-15

In 2 Chronicles 21:11 we read; "The king made high places in the mountain. These were official places for idol worship. Perhaps the idols had been brought from Israel by his wife from her mother Jezebel. For remember Jezebel supported 400 prophets of Baal at her own table daily. We can hardly imagine the extent to which idolatry had taken over the Northern Kingdom in those days.

2 Chronicles 21:1 continues, "and he compelled the inhabitants of the land to worship these idols."

The king actually led the people into idolatry and forced them to become idol worshippers. Again it is almost beyond our imagination. The son of good King Jehoshaphat compelling his people to openly sin against God. God calls idolatry spiritual adultery. Of course today, when we no longer look upon adultery as sin, we can hardly see idolatry as God sees it. To Him it is a horrible thing. To Him it is abomination. To Him it is wickedness. Idolatry is basically ungodliness and therefore it progresses into unrighteousness. When Jehoram reigned, nothing was sin. But in God's sight Jehoram had led the people from the ways of God into the ways of the heathen. He led them from paths of righteousness into paths of wickedness. Later on, Jeremiah was to cry out to these same people of a later generation, "Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen." Jeremiah 10:2 .

Now to 2 Chronicles 21:12.

And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,
2 Chronicles 21:12

And then came a writing from Elijah! The letter was written by Elijah and delivered at a later date. Here is, what to unbelief, is an incredible story. Elijah had been translated in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. 2 Chronicles 20:31 tells us that Jehoshaphat reigned for 25 years. In other words, he reigned for seven years AFTER Elijah's translation. Therefore Elijah was not on earth during any part of Jehoram's reign. This letter was either post-marked "hades" or Elijah had written it before his translation, given it to someone to keep and be delivered to Jehoram when he became King.

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

An Old Divine states: "This letter was post-marked "paradise" for that is where Elijah was when Jehoram read the letter." We do not know where Elijah wrote this paper. We do not know when he wrote it. We are inclined to think that it was written by Elijah before his translation, but we really don't know, nor have we any way of knowing. We are not told. The origin of this letter is as miraculous as the origin of all the Sacred writings of the Bible. Elijah did the writing, but the message in the writing was from God, not from Elijah. Remember, Elijah was a prophet in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He did battle with Ahab and Jezebel at Samaria. Elijah was never sent to the southern kingdom of Judah. There is no record that he ever communicated or spoke to Jehoshaphat. The letter was, in the main, a prophecy. A prophecy at the time of its writing. A prophecy when it was delivered to king Jehoram. A prophecy, not then, but now, fulfilled. A prophecy, which like all prophecy, merged into actual history.

The letter from Elijah, received after Elijah's translation, reveals that even though Elijah was no longer on earth, his work was not yet finished. Writings, written by a man of God in his life-time can be fruitful after the man has departed. (That is one reason rewards will not be given until after the Lord comes.) We need to be reminded that Malachi 4:5 promises to bring Elijah back to earth. And we believe Revelation 11 describes some of his ministry when he returns. But that is another subject.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

Malachi 4:5

Use your sanctified imagination. Jehoram receives this letter. He opens it and reads, "Elijah to Jehoram." In our intelligent progressive society, we write letters and sign them at the conclusion, not at the beginning. But when you receive a letter, the first thing you do is look at the end to see the name of the writer! In Bible times, a letter always began with the name of the writer. Did Jehoram know about Elijah? Of course. Elijah and Ahab, Jehoram's father-in-law, were always in conflict. So were Elijah and Jezebel, Jehoram's mother-in-law. Did Jehoram know about Elijah's translation? There is more reason to believe that he did than that he didn't. In any event, he would know that the man who had troubled Ahab was no longer on the scene. And now, he receives this letter, Elijah to Jehoram. Elijah! He had tried to forget him! Elijah! Why he has been gone and forgotten! Elijah! What does he have to say to me? And what right has he to say it? After all, I am King of Judah!

We have no hint as to his re-action. But from what we learn about this man later, makes us believe we know how he acted. He would curse and swear. And perhaps, like another king, burn the letter. He may have destroyed the scroll but he could not and he did not destroy the message.

The letter begins: "Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father..." "David thy father" ..those words must have captured and cut into Jehoram's heart. He may not have had any fear of the Lord God, but being a Jewish boy and being a direct descendent of David, he would know all about David. That alone should have been enough to change his heart and bring him to repentance. But he is unmoved.

The letter continues: "Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa King of Judah but.. Pause here: What a stinging introduction to a very solemn message. Remember Jehoram; you knew the ways of David. You knew the ways of Jehoshaphat your own father. You knew the ways of Asa your grandfather. Notice the emphasis on the word : "ways". "In all thy ways " says the Proverbs, "acknowledge him". "When a mans "ways" please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him"

Jehoram you knew the WAYS of your godly fathers. They were not perfect men, but you knew and know their ways were right. But you have turned your back on their godly ways and chosen the ways of the wicked Kings of Israel.

And especially have you chosen to walk in the ways of ungodly Ahab. And because you made choice of their evil ways, you slew your own brothers and they were better than you! Jehoram ,you have revealed what a worthless wretch you really are! But stop and think again. When did Elijah write this? Long before Jehoram became king. What the King had done was history when he read the letter but it had not yet happened when the letter was written.

Did Elijah know what Jehoram would do? No, but God did. Did Elijah know that Jehoram would murder his brothers? No, but God did. Did Elijah know that these boys would be more upright than Jehoram? No, but God did!

I admit, the implications of this story are too many and too much for my puny little mind. God knew, in His foreknowledge, exactly what Jehoram would do, and He had Elijah write it down. And more: This foreknowledge did not make Jehoram murder, nor did God's foreknowledge hinder Jehoram from being a murderer. (And of course we can't understand that) and we stop there until next time.