

2 Chronicles Chapter 21

2 Chronicles 21:1 "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."

Jehoram's sole reign now began (see note on 2 Kings 8:16).

His eight years (2 Chron. 21:5), must be counted from the time of his association, in his father's 23rd year.

Jehoram was the wicked son of Jehoshaphat, who married the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

Jehoshaphat was buried in Jerusalem.

We will quickly find that Jehoram was the opposite of Jehoshaphat.

Verses 2-5

When the co-regency with his father ended at his father's death, Jehoram killed all who might have threatened his throne.

2 Chronicles 21:2 "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."

That is, Jehoram had, who succeeded him.

Their names follow:

"Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah":

Two of them were of the same name.

Though it may be observed, that in the Hebrew text they are somewhat distinguished, the latter is called Azariah.

Jehiel is said, by the Jews, to be the same with Hiel that rebuilt Jericho.

Indeed, it was rebuilt in the times of Jehoshaphat, and was a city of the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:21).

Which was under his jurisdiction; but it can never be thought that he would ever suffer a son of his to rebuild it.

Besides, he is expressly said to be from Beth-el (1 Kings 16:34).

"All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel":

Which generally, since the division of the kingdom, designs the ten tribes.

But cannot be the meaning here, because Jehoshaphat was only king of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin.

They were tribes of Israel indeed, and so he was king of a part of Israel.

And besides, many out of the ten tribes came and settled in his kingdom, and were under his government.

Though some think he is so called, because he concerned himself so much for the kingdom of Israel, and more than for his own.

But the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, all read king of Judah.

Wherefore some are of the opinion that Israel is a mistake of the transcriber.

But this need not be supposed, since he was of right king of Israel, and was in fact king of two tribes that belonged to Israel.

There will be very little written of these brothers of Jehoram, because he murdered them.

2 Chronicles 21:3 "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."

As jewels and precious stones; or precious garments, as the Targum.

In like manner as Abraham gave to his sons, when he sent them from Isaac.

"With fenced cities in Judah":

Not as their own property, but he appointed them governors in them, to defend them against an enemy, and as a mark of honor to them.

"But the kingdom gave he to Jehoram; because he was the firstborn":

Strictly observing the law in (Deut. 21:16), which was not always done.

Though it was reckoned by the Heathens contrary to the law of nations to give the kingdom to the younger.

It was the custom of the land for the eldest son to become king in his father's stead.

There was great wealth in the land that God had given them from their victory over the Ammonites and the Moabites.

It appears that Jehoshaphat gave them cities for their own, and gave them silver and gold so they would have a nice living.

Verses 4-20

The reign of Jehoram (ca. 853 – 841 B.C.; compare 2 Kings 8:16-24).

Most likely, Obadiah prophesied during his reign.

Verses 4-6

Not only did Jehoram, the fifth king of Judah, “slew all his brethren”, but he also walked in the wicked ways of the “house of Ahab, the king of Israel (compare 1 Kings chapters 16 - 22 for more information regarding Ahab).

2 Chronicles 21:4 "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."

Succeeded him in it, and reigned alone.

For he had reigned with his father some years before his death (see notes on 2 Kings 8:16).

"He strengthened himself":

In the kingdom, by some means or another closely attaching the greater part of the princes, and people of the land, unto him, when he thought himself well settled and established on the throne.

Though some understand it of making strong, or hardening his heart to do what is next mentioned.

"And slew all his brethren with the sword":

Either to get their riches into his hands, or lest, being religious princes, they should oppose his restoring idolatry.

And for that reason, the people should depose him, and set up one of them.

And therefore, he dispatched them out of the way to secure himself, and carry his point.

"And divers also of the princes of Israel":

Such who had removed out of the ten tribes, for the sake of religion.

And therefore, would never agree to the introduction of idolatry among them, for which reason Jehoram slew them.

And perhaps they might express their disapprobation and abhorrence of his murder of his brethren.

We can see in this one verse, the extent of Jehoram's wickedness.

He had no human kindness at all.

We must remember that he had married Athaliah, one of the most wicked women in the Bible.

I believe she was even worse than her mother, Jezebel.

She might have helped influence Jehoram to do such a wicked thing as murdering his own brothers.

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

This section is parallel with (2 Kings 8:17-22).

"And he reigned eight years in Jerusalem":

Which ended in the twelfth year of Joram king of Israel (2 Kings 8:25).

He had a very short reign of just 8 years.

Verses 6-7

For the individual appropriation of the provisions of the unconditional Davidic covenant (see the note on 2 Sam. 7:12-16).

For the sinful nature of Jehoram (see the note on 2 Kings 8:18).

2 Chronicles 21:6 "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."

Imitated them in idolatry.

“For he had the daughter of Ahab to wife”:

Whose name was Athaliah (2 Kings 8:26).

And by her he was drawn into idolatrous practices; of such bad consequence are marriages with idolaters.

It is very much that so good a king as Jehoshaphat could have a son that should contract such an affinity.

He suffered for it in more instances than one.

“And he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD”:

Was guilty of idolatry, of which nothing would have been more displeasing to the LORD.

For he made high places, and compelled his subjects to commit idolatry (2 Chron. 21:11).

This Scripture does indicate that he chose to go the way of his evil wife.

He was just as evil as Ahab and Jezebel.

He was evil in the sight of the LORD.

This should be an encouragement to Christian parents whose children have gone bad.

It is not always the influence they were raised in that causes them to go bad.

In this case, he married an evil woman.

2 Chronicles 21:7 "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 for ever."

Despite the evil ways of Jehoram, God “would not destroy the house of David” because of the promise He had made with David (2 Sam. 7:8-16; 1 Chron. 17:7-14).

Every book in Scripture confirms that God keeps His promises.

The only thing that saved Jehoram from total destruction, was the promise God had made to David.

Jehoram deserved to die.

God had promised that the descendants of David would reign as king of Judah forever.

This of course, was fulfilled in Jesus.

Verses 8-11

Under David and Solomon, Israel had controlled the “Edomites”, Moab, and Libnah.

Moab had revolted from Israel’s King Joram (2 Kings Chapter 3), and now Edom and Libnah revolted from Judah’s king” Jehoram”.

Jehoram lost control of these areas because he had led the people away from the LORD and into pagan practices.

(See the note on 2 Kings 8:22 and compare verses 16 and 17).

2 Chronicles 21:8 "In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king."

Who had been tributary to Judah ever since the times of David, for the space of one hundred and fifty years.

"And made themselves a king":

For though they are said to have kings, those were only deputy kings (as in 1 Kings 22:47).

And now the prediction of Isaac began to be accomplished (Gen. 27:40).

The Edomites had been paying tribute to Judah.

They found a time when they knew that God was not pleased with the king, and revolted against Judah.

They chose themselves a king to lead them.

2 Chronicles 21:9 "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."

"And all his chariots with him":

All the chariots of war he had.

"And he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in":

Who came out of their cities in great numbers, and surrounded him, he having entered into their country in a hostile way, to subdue them.

"And the captains of the chariots":

Which belonged to the Edomites; those he smote (2 Chron. 21:9).

This army that went forth was there in physical strength.

He had to fight his own battles, because the LORD was not with him.

He was strong enough that he smote Edom.

2 Chronicles 21:10 "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."

"Edomites revolted":

For though Joram had given them a defeat, yet it may seem to have been no great slaughter, but only a putting them to flight.

And therefore they might easily rally again.

And Joram could not pursue the victory, because he was recalled by the revolt of his own subjects.

Which had taken the occasion of his absence, and probably feared that others would follow their example, if they had the like occasion.

"The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand":

A considerable city in his own kingdom.

A Levitical one.

This revolt was occasioned, perhaps, by his idolatrous practices, and which he compelled his subjects to.

Of this city (see Joshua 10:29).

They revolted because they knew that he would not get help from the LORD.

They were fighting just a man, and not God.

They would no longer pay tribute to Jehoram.

2 Chronicles 21:11 "Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah [thereto]."

“Compelled Judah”:

Undoubtedly, he was influenced by his marriage to Ahab’s daughter (compare verse 6), and was influenced in the alliance just like his father (2 Chron. 18:1).

They had not learned from Solomon’s sinful example (compare 1 Kings 11:3-4).

His wicked wife, Athaliah, later became ruler over Judah and tried to wipe out David’s royal line (2 Chron. 22:10).

The fornication spoken of here, is spiritual adultery.

They worshipped false gods in the high places.

It appears that not only did Jehoram do this, but he caused the inhabitants to do this also, for fear of losing their lives if they did not.

Verses 12-15

Elijah, best known for his confrontations with Israel’s Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings chapter 17 – 2 Kings 2:11), confronted prophetically Jehoram’s sins of idolatry and murder (21:13).

The consequences from God’s judgment extended beyond himself to his family and the nation (21:14-15).

This event undoubtedly occurred in the early years of Jehoram’s co-regency with his father Jehoshaphat and shortly before Elijah’s departure to heaven (ca. 848 B.C.; compare 2 Kings 2:11-12).

Either “Elijah” has not yet been translated into heaven at this time (compare 2 Kings chapter 2), or his prophecy was delivered after his translation.

Some of Elijah’s duties were carried out by others after his departure (compare 1 Kings 19:15-17 with 2 Kings 8:7-13; 9:6).

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,"

Not what was written by him after his ascension to heaven, and from thence came to Jehoram, even seven years after that, as say some Jewish writers.

Nor was it a writing from another person of the same name in those times, since of such a one we nowhere read.

Nor from Elisha bearing the name of Elijah, having a double portion of his spirit on him.

Since he is never so called; but this was a writing of Elijah's before his ascension.

Who, foreseeing by a spirit of prophecy what Jehoram would be guilty of, wrote this, and gave it to one of the prophets, as Kimchi suggests.

And most probably to Elisha, to communicate it to him at a proper time.

And who might, as the above writer intimates, think it came immediately from heaven.

"Saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father":

And from whose God he had departed, and to which ancestor of his he was so much unlike.

"Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah":

Neither trod in the steps of his father nor grandfather.

The reason Elijah did not come in person, was that he was the prophet to Israel.

This still did not stop him from sending a written warning to Jehoram.

God had spared Jehoram a short time in honor of his father Jehoshaphat, and his grandfather Asa.

Now he would be punished on his own, because he refused to worship God and obey Him.

2 Chronicles 21:13 "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:"

Worshipping the calves, and even Baal, with other idols, as they did.

"And hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab":

Meaning spiritual whoredoms or idolatries.

"And also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself":

More religious, more humane, more prudent, and fitter for government.

Now, we see the charges against him.

First of all, he was not seeking the LORD with all his heart as his father did.

He had picked up the evil habits of Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter.

He had even introduced the false gods of Israel into the land of Judah.

He viciously killed his brothers, who were more like his father than he was.

2 Chronicles 21:14 "Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods:"

They going into the same idolatry with himself willingly, at least great part of them, and therefore deserved to be smitten, and which would be a punishment to him.

"And thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods":

Which should be carried captive, as the event shows.

A plague can be anything from war to disease.

It is speaking of a punishment that God sends on these evil people.

I really believe that A.I.D.S. is a plague on our society for the evil that exists.

God is the only One who can stop the epidemic.

2 Chronicles 21:15 "And thou [shalt have] great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day."

Which was a just retaliation to him, for having no bowels of compassion on his brethren whom he slew.

"Until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day":

That continuing day after day, and even year after year, the space of two years, as appears from (2 Chron. 21:19).

There are two other times in the Bible, when the bowels of a person are affected by their sins.

Judas Iscariot was one, and another was Herod.

This was diarrhea so bad they passed their bowels.

This type of diarrhea will kill you.

Verses 16-20

The consequences of his sin were far-reaching.

He suffered military losses, his country was ravaged, his capital taken, his palace plundered, his wives taken, all his children killed but the youngest, he died with a painful disease, and was buried without honor (21:16 – 22:1).

2 Chronicles 21:16 "Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that [were] near the Ethiopians:"

Which had been depressed in the times of Jehoshaphat, to whom they brought their presents and tribute willingly (2 Chron. 17:11).

"And of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians":

Not the Ethiopians of Africa, as the Targum, for the Arabians were not near them.

But the Chusaeen Arabs or Midianites (see Num. 12:1).

The Targum is, the Word of the LORD did this.

While the people of Judah were still sick, God stirred up the Ethiopians, Arabians, and the Philistines against them.

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

In a hostile manner.

"And carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house":

His gold, silver, and precious things.

The rich furniture of his palace; no mention is made of any other plunder in the city, or the country; so that they seem to have had their principal eye to the king's palace, and the spoil of that.

Being so directed by the providence of God, who had stirred them up to do this as a punishment of Jehoram.

"And his sons also, and his wives":

These they also carried away, all but Athaliah, who hid herself.

He through his disease not being able to make any opposition, or to get any forces together to withstand them.

"So that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons":

The same that is called Ahaziah and Azariah (2 Chron. 22:1).

So the prophecy (in 2 Chron. 21:14), was fulfilled.

God was not on the side of Judah at this time, because of their great sin.

They were easy prey.

The enemy came in, and took all of valuable things out of the king's house and out of his sons' homes.

The only son that escaped, was a son whose name was Jehoahaz.

Athaliah, his wicked wife, was not taken.

Jehoahaz is called Ahaziah or Azariah, in other Scriptures.

Verses 18-20

Like several other Judean kings, Jehoram was "buried" in Jerusalem "but not in the sepulchers of the kings".

Three kings are buried in Jerusalem but not in the tombs of the kings: Jehoram, Joash (24:25), and Ahaz (28:27).

All three did evil before the LORD although Joash only did so after the priest Jehoiada died.

The priest Jehoiada himself was buried among the tombs of the kings because he did what was good (24:16).

2 Chronicles 21:18 "And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease."

What it was is not agreed upon.

Some take it be an "hernia", or rupture.

Others, the falling of the "anus", or a fistula in it.

Others, the colic, or iliac passion.

But generally, it is thought to be a dysentery, or bloody flux.

The Targum is, "the Word of the LORD broke him."

This is speaking of Jehoram.

His disease was so bad that it was incurable, and he died.

This was an appropriate way for this evil king to die.

2 Chronicles 21:19 "And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers."

So long he was afflicted and tortured with the above disease.

"His bowels fell out by reason of his sickness":

Either in like manner as Judas's did (Acts 1:18), or as in the manner the bowels of Arius are said to do, while sitting on the seat of the vault.

Or perhaps only what was contained in the bowels is meant, if it was the colic.

"So he died of sore diseases":

He seems to have had a complication of them, and these very painful and distressing.

"And his people made no burning for him":

Like the burnings of his fathers.

As they did for his grandfather Asa (2 Chron. 16:14).

They did not burn spices or odoriferous wood, as the Targum.

Though his body, because of the stench of it, needed it, as Jarchi observes.

This disease was a plague from God, so there was no cure that man had for it.

Jehoram suffered with this disease of the bowels for two years, and died when his bowels fell out of his body.

He was not loved of the people, and they did not mourn his death as they would have a king who did right.

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

“Eight years”:

These were the years of his exclusive reign, not including his co-regency with his father.

He was buried at the age of forty in the city of David, Jerusalem.

He was not given an honorable burial, and was not buried with his father, Jehoshaphat.

His was a reign of sin.

He died as he lived, without honor.

2 Chronicles Chapter 21 Questions

1. Who reigned in Jehoshaphat's place?
2. Who had Jehoram married?
3. What were her parents' names?
4. Jehoram is the opposite of _____.
5. Who were the sons of Jehoshaphat?
6. What had Jehoshaphat given the other sons, besides Jehoram?
7. What did Jehoram do to all of his brothers?
8. How old was Jehoram, when he began to reign?
9. How many years did he reign?
10. Jehoram followed in whose ways?
11. Why did God not destroy Judah for these sins?
12. Who revolted from the rule of Judah at this time?

13. Jehoram built high places, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit _____.
14. How did Elijah contact Jehoram?
15. What was the message God sent him through Elijah?
16. What were the charges against him?
17. What can a plague be?
18. What does the author believe is a modern plague?
19. What was the terrible disease that came upon them?
20. The LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the _____.
21. What happened to Jehoram's sons?
22. Which was the only survivor of his sons?
23. What are some other names for Jehoahaz?
24. What happened to Jehoram?
25. How old was he, when he died?