

## Adam Clarke:

## Introduction

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

## Verse 2

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

## Verse 3

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

## Verse 4

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

## Verse 6

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

## Verse 7

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

## Verse 8

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

## Verse 11

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

## Verse 12

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

written before his assumption, and refers to 2 Kings 2:1.

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

#### Verse 14

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

#### Verse 15

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

#### Verse 16

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

#### Verse 17

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

#### Verse 18

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

#### Verse 19

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

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

#### Verse 20

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