



## Second Chronicles - Chapter Twenty Two

### III 2 Chronicles 10:1-36:23 -

#### The Kingdom of Judah Down to the Exile (continues)

#### III.e 2 Chronicles 21:1-22:9 - Jehoram and Ahaziah (continues/concludes)

##### Summary of Chapter Twenty Two

Ahaziah's sole remaining son ruled following his father's death and he continued to rule after the evil fashion of Ahab rather than his own grandfather Jehoshaphat. His mother Queen Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab was his counsellor and he had fought alongside Jehoram son of King Ahab of Israel against the Aramæans. It was this association with the north that would lead to his death as he was taken to Jehu, the man anointed to be king in the north after he had killed all the descendants of Ahab.

After her son's death, Queen Athaliah seized the throne for herself. She did so by destroying all the remaining heirs to the throne of Judah but one of her grandsons Joash was secreted away and hidden in the temple until it would become time to make him the rightful king of Judah.

#### III.e.v 2 Chronicles 22:1-9 - Ahaziah's Reign

Jehoram's remaining son Ahaziah became king following his father's death but he too followed the ways of the evil kings of the north, counselled by his grandmother Athaliah. He made alliances with the north and fought with King Jehoram of Israel in battle. However, he was captured and taken to Jehu who had him put to death.

The Chronicler's account of Ahaziah's brief reign in 841 BC is adapted from 2 Kings 8:24-29, 9:21, 9:28 and 10:13-14. The main interest lies with the malignant influence of the house of Ahab over the young and ineffectual king. Ahaziah's mother Athaliah is a daughter of Ahab and his counsellor in doing evil. As Queen Mother, she held an official position in the court as a royal adviser. Her role was

supplemented by other officials from the house of Ahab, who were Ahaziah's counsellors, to his undoing.

Ahaziah's decision to join Jehoram, a variant spelling of Joram, king of Israel, in his bid to recapture Ramoth-gilead from Hazael, king of Aram, comes at the behest of his Ahabite counsellors. Some years previously, Jehoshaphat had allied himself with Joram's father Ahab in an identical mission, ending in Ahab's death.

In this latest battle King Jehoram was wounded at Ramoth-gilead, and withdrew to Jezreel to recuperate. Ahaziah came to visit his ally there, only to fall into the hands of Jehu, Jehoram's army commander, whom God had chosen to destroy the house of Ahab; refer to 1 Kings 19:15-17. Jehu's violent coup is described in detail in 2 Kings 9:1-28. The Chronicler assumes his readers' acquaintance with this narrative and focuses instead on Ahaziah's fate, which he remarks was ordained by God. Ahaziah falls under the same judgement as the house of Ahab because he followed the ways of that apostate and wicked dynasty.

<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of Jerusalem made his youngest son Ahaziah king as his successor; for the troops who came with the Arabs to the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram reigned as king of Judah. <sup>2</sup> Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he began to reign; he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri. <sup>3</sup> He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counsellor in doing wickedly. <sup>4</sup> He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done; for after the death of his father they were his counsellors, to his ruin.

#### 2 Chronicles 22:1-4

The inhabitants of Jerusalem made his youngest son Ahaziah king as his successor. As will be demonstrated, the son of Jehoram named Ahaziah was an unworthy man. Yet the Chronicler explains why the inhabitants of Jerusalem made him king - because raiding Arabians had killed all the other sons and he was the only one left in the direct dynasty from King David.

Ahaziah son of Jehoram reigned as king of Judah reigned for one year in Jerusalem. The short life and reign of Jehoram: <<*In the fifth year of King Joram son of Ahab of Israel, Jehoram son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah began to reign. He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem*>> (2 Kings 8:16-17), should have warned Ahaziah. His brief one year reign shows he was even less blessed than his father Jehoram. The details in Second Kings reveal that Jehoram was forty when he died which will be commented on below.

Ahaziah succeeded his father Jehoram in the critical year 841 BC. He was not to survive the momentous waves of the political events that were to inundate the ancient Near East in that year. Indeed, in 841 BC King Shalmaneser III of Assyria, who reigned between 859-824 BC, at last was able to break the coalition of western allies with whom he had previously fought a long series of battles in 853 BC, 848 BC and 845 BC).

Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he began to reign: This is at odds with 2 Kings 8:26 which says that Ahaziah took the throne when 22 years old. It is clear that a transcription error has occurred at some point in the Chronicler's record as 42 years old would have made Ahaziah older than his father who was only 40 when he died. Copyist errors, especially of numerals or letters representing numerals, often appear in ancient historic records but they should not be allowed to detract from the accuracy of other parts of the account. The Septuagint translation of Chronicles agrees with Kings that Ahaziah was indeed 22 years old.

He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counsellor in doing wickedly. Ahaziah's mother was the wicked Athaliah, who was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of the northern kingdom of Israel, and she was given in marriage to Jehoram, the king of Judah. She brought her influence to bear upon her son and made him more of a son of Ahab and Jezebel than a son of David and his godly descendants. During the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah and then the usurper Athaliah, the dynasty of Ahab had effective reign over Judah.

<sup>5</sup> He even followed their advice, and went with Jehoram son of King Ahab of Israel to make war against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. The Aramæans wounded Joram, <sup>6</sup> and he returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds that he had received at Ramah, when he fought King Hazael of Aram. And Ahaziah son of King Jehoram of Judah went down to see Joram son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

#### 2 Chronicles 22:5-6

He even followed their advice, and went with Jehoram son of King Ahab of Israel to make war against King Hazael of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. Ahaziah's close association with the wicked house of Ahab developed into a war alliance with Israel against Aram. His connection with his mother's family, who was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:18), was so strong and sympathetic that he paid a visit to the injured and sick king of Israel Jehoram.

Jehoram or Joram here was the grandson of King Ahab and the son of the northern King Ahaziah. This can often cause confusion for readers as the account here is of the Judæan King Ahaziah whose father's name was Jehoram

or Joram. Ahaziah of Judah was Athaliah's brother and therefore uncle to her son, the king of Judah with the same name.

Ahaziah son of King Jehoram of Judah went down to see Joram son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick. Second Kings Chapter 8 records the account of how King Jehoram of Israel had been wounded in battle against the Aramæans and had withdrawn to Jezreel for convalescence. Having both kings together in one place makes the task of removing them easier for Jehu.

<sup>7</sup> But it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about through his going to visit Joram. For when he came there he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. <sup>8</sup> When Jehu was executing judgement on the house of Ahab, he met the officials of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers, who attended Ahaziah, and he killed them. <sup>9</sup> He searched for Ahaziah, who was captured while hiding in Samaria and was brought to Jehu, and put to death. They buried him, for they said, 'He is the grandson of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart.' And the house of Ahaziah had no one able to rule the kingdom.

### 2 Chronicles 22:7-9

For when he came there he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. The wicked, compromising Jehoram wanted peace with Jehu. It seems improbable that Jehoram and Ahaziah would have left the safety of Jezreel to meet Jehu if there had been any thought in their minds about his true intentions but they wanted to find out immediately why he came in such haste. Jehoram had sent messengers who did not return with an answer, and so he went out himself to discover what brought Jehu to Jezreel. Perhaps his thought was, "has disaster overtaken Ramoth-gilead, and is this company all that remains of his army?"

Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the Lord had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. According to 2 Kings 9:2, Jehu was in fact the grandson of Nimshi and the son of Jehoshaphat (not the King of Judah by that name). Jehu was a commander in the army of Israel under King Ahab and his son King Jehoram. He was announced as a future king of Israel, who would overthrow the dynasty of Omri and Ahab in 1 Kings 19:16-18.

Jehu is mentioned twice in the cuneiform inscriptions on the Black Obelisk of King Shalmaneser III. The Shalmaneser inscriptions also provide an objective date for this period in Hebrew chronology, i.e. 841 BC.

He searched for Ahaziah, who was captured while hiding in Samaria. When the two kings discovered that Jehu intended to kill them, they both rode away in their chariots. Jehoram was shot dead by Jehu with an arrow but Ahaziah initially made good his escape. According to the parallel account: <<*When King Ahaziah of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. Jehu pursued him, saying, 'Shoot him also!' And they shot him in the chariot at the ascent to Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there*>> (2 Kings 9:27); whereas here he seems to have made it to Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom. The reconciliation of the details of the death of Ahaziah between 2 Chronicles Chapter 22 and 2 Kings Chapter 9 is complicated, but definitely possible. Adam Clarke among other commentators carefully works out the details.



**Jehu Executes Judgement 841 BC**

Second Kings Chapter 9 records how Elisha fulfilled the Lord's prophecy to Elijah by sending someone to Ramoth-gilead to anoint Jehu, one of Jehoram's army commanders, as king of Israel. Jehu promptly headed for Jezreel, where King Jehoram of Israel was recovering from some battle wounds. When Jehoram and King Ahaziah of Judah went out in their chariots to meet Jehu, Jehu mortally wounded Jehoram with an arrow and chased Ahaziah to Beth-haggan, where he wounded him as well. It appears that Ahaziah then fled to Megiddo, where he died, or to Samaria, where he was captured, taken to Jehu and then executed.

Jehu is one of the more interesting men of the OT. God raised him up to bring judgement against the dynasty of Omri, Ahab's grandfather, that ruled the northern kingdom of Israel. In the course of fulfilling that divine commission, he also came against King Ahaziah of Judah. Jehu had no direct command or commission from God to bring judgement upon the king of Judah and his family, but he did anyway. Consciously or unconsciously, he was guided by God and he killed Ahaziah.

Ahaziah was happy to associate himself with the northern kingdom of Israel and their wicked kings. Therefore he died under the same judgement that came upon the king of Israel through Jehu. Ahaziah was also a blood relative of Ahab who was his grandfather, therefore making him liable under the judgement that came upon Ahab and his descendants. By failing to separate himself from Jehoram, he made himself liable to suffer the same punishment that God had previously announced against Ahab's house, which he had chosen Hazael and Jehu to carry out.

They buried him, for they said, 'He is the grandson of Jehoshaphat, who sought the Lord with all his heart. In contrast to King Jehoram of Israel, whose body was left exposed on Naboth's field in 2 Kings 9:26, Ahaziah is granted a decent burial out of respect for his grandfather Jehoshaphat.

### III.f 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:7 - Athaliah Seizes the Throne

The wicked Queen Mother ordered all the heirs to her son's throne to be killed so that she could reign following the death of her son Ahaziah. This would have exterminated the line of David and then left the way open to any legitimate king of Israel to take Judah for themselves after her. However, one of her grandsons was saved by a young princess called Jehoshabeath and he was kept secretly by the priest Jehoiada in the temple for six years.

Athaliah was nothing more than a violent usurper who attempted to secure the throne for herself by massacring rivals from the royal family, including her own relatives. Like Jehoram, she brings the Davidic dynasty to the brink of destruction. However, while she ruled the land for six years, probably between 841-835 BC, she

did so without legitimacy: no statements at the beginning or end of her rule make her reign official.

The contrasting figure to her is Ahaziah's sister Jehoshabeath, who courageously conceals the infant heir Joash throughout those six years. The Chronicler adds the comment that Jehoshabeath is also the wife of Jehoiada the high priest, which helps explain how the child could be concealed in the temple buildings throughout Athaliah's rule. Mention of Jehoiada here also prepares the way for the following account of Athaliah's overthrow by the high priest.

<sup>10</sup> Now when Athaliah, Ahaziah's mother, saw that her son was dead, she set about to destroy all the royal family of the house of Judah.

### 2 Chronicles 22:10

Now when Athaliah, Ahaziah's mother, saw that her son was dead. She used the occasion of her son's death to take power for herself, and she reigned over the land for six years; refer to 2 Kings 11:1-3. Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and was given to Jehoram, king of Judah as a bride. She was a bad influence on both her husband King Jehoram of Judah, and her son King Ahaziah of Judah. She would have been one of the key reasons why the country had slipped from the revival under Asa and Jehoshaphat to the state of affairs that existed during the time of her husband's and son's reigns.

She set about to destroy all the royal family of the house of Judah. Athaliah was from the family of Ahab, and Jehu had completely destroyed all of Ahab's descendants in Israel. Now, after Jehu's coup, Athaliah tried to save something for Ahab's family by trying to eliminate the house of David in Judah. Years before, King Jehoshaphat of Judah arranged for his son to be married to this daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, hoping to make a political and military alliance with those wicked and apostate leaders. Peace and prosperity may have been his aim in this misjudgement and this was the fruit of Jehoshaphat's arrangement for his son to marry a daughter of the idolatrous and wicked house of Ahab, even the extirpation of all his posterity but one.

<sup>11</sup> But Jehoshabeath, the king's daughter, took Joash son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's children who were about to be killed; she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus Jehoshabeath, daughter of King Jehoram and wife of the priest Jehoiada — because she was a sister of Ahaziah — hid him from Athaliah, so that she did not kill him; <sup>12</sup> he remained with them for six years, hidden in the house of God, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

## 2 Chronicles 22:11-12

But Jehoshabeath, the king's daughter, took Joash son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's children who were about to be killed. This little-known woman, known as Jehosheba in 2 Kings 11:2, had an important place in God's plan of the ages. Through her courage and ingenuity, she preserved the royal line of David through which the Messiah would come. Evil people like Athaliah will begin their work, but God can always raise up a Jehoshabeath. Whatever humankind may plan, God's plan for humankind will prevail.

She put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Josephus in Jewish Antiquities 9.7.1 says that the bedroom where the child and his nurse hid was a room where spare furniture and mattresses were stored. This was hardly the type of abode for a future king to be nurtured in.

Jehoshabeath was the wife of the priest Jehoiada. This both accounts for how the child was successfully hidden in the temple without the queen finding out and also leads to the account of Jehoiada pronouncing the child as king six years later. Jehoiada became a significant figure in the life of this king.

She was a sister of Ahaziah. It is not likely that Jehoshabeath was the daughter of Athaliah but was the daughter of King Jehoram of Judah by another unnamed wife.

He remained with them for six years, hidden in the house of God, while Athaliah reigned over the land. Although Ahaziah was a bad king who made evil alliances, he was still a descendant of David and the successor of his royal line. For the sake of David, God remembered his promise and spared this one young survivor to the massacre of Athaliah. The line of David was almost extinguished and continued only in the presence of a small boy named Joash, but God preserved that flickering flame.

Like the boy Samuel, Joash grew up in the temple. Like Samuel, he probably found ways to help the priests, whatever could be done without attracting too much attention.

Adam Clarke concludes, "Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy relative to the Messiah. The whole truth of that prophecy, and the salvation of the world, appeared to be now suspended on the brittle thread of the life of an infant of a year old, to destroy whom was the interest of the reigning power! But God can save by few as well as by many. He had purposed, and vain were the counter-exertions of earth and hell."