

The CHRONICLES of the KINGS

Jehoshaphat – King of Judah

2 Chronicles 17:3-5

May 09, 2026

When Asa died in Judah after a reigned of 41 years, his son Jehoshaphat became king – he was 35 years old.

Meanwhile, Ahab had been king over in Israel for 4 years.

Here are some highlights of Jehoshaphat's reign:

- He lived in Jerusalem and kept a core of fighting men in the city.
- He strengthened himself against Israel, built forts and store cities. He stationed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah and put garrisons in Judah and in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured.
- His heart was devoted to the ways of Yahweh and he removed the high places and the Asherah poles from Judah.
- He appointed judges in each of the fortified cities and instructed them to consider their judgments carefully because they were judging for Yahweh, *"Now let the fear of Yahweh be upon you. Judge carefully, for with Yahweh our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery."*
- He also appointed the heads of Israelite families in Jerusalem to administer the law of Yahweh and to settle disputes. *"You must serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear of Yahweh and in every case that comes before you, you are to warn your fellow country not to sin against Yahweh; otherwise, his wrath will come on you and your brothers. Do this, and you will not sin.... Act with courage, and may Yahweh be with those who do well."*

As a result of Jehoshaphat's considerable reforms, he not only became exceedingly powerful, but the surrounding nations, including the Philistines and the Arabs, came to respect him.

The writer of Chronicles, where we get most our information on Jehoshaphat, considers his life and reign to be one of fidelity to God. However, the Chronicler does not shy away from Jehoshaphat's moments of infidelity.

2 major events that occurred in the 3rd year of Jehoshaphat's reign demonstrate both – fidelity and infidelity:

1 – He had rid the land of idolatry, but he was not content, because he understood that spiritual, social and economic renewal was tied directly to the people's knowledge of and obedience to the Law of God, so he promoted religious education. He sent Levites and priests from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim to teach the people the Law and turned them back to Yahweh.

2 – Ahab saw a military alliance with Judah as advantageous, however, Jehoshaphat had military power in abundance, so was not in need of what Ahab had to offer. Regardless, Jehoshaphat allied himself with Ahab by marriage – his son, Jehoram, married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. This will prove to be a marriage made in hell – more on that later..... The consequences for Jehoshaphat were quick in coming. On a visit to Ahab, Jehoshaphat was asked to go to war with Israel, against Aram and because of the ill-advised alliance, was obliged to say yes. He did, however, ask for prophet confirmation first.

Even though the prophet Micaiah would eventually say, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd," Israel and Judah went to war anyway.

While Ahab went in disguise, he told Jehoshaphat that he should wear his royal robes. There seems to be some hinky business going on there and here's why: The king of Aram had given specific instructions to his 32 chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel."

When the commanders saw Jehoshaphat, dressed in his royal robes, they thought he was the king of Israel, so, per instructions, they turned and attacked him. Apparently, Jehoshaphat cried out, maybe something like, "I'm not the king of Israel! NOT THE KING!" because when the commanders realized their mistake, they stopped pursuing him.

Meanwhile, an arrow struck Ahab and he would eventually die that same evening – so much for disguises.

When Jehoshaphat returned Jerusalem, Jehu the seer, went out to meet him and said, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate Yahweh? Because of this, the wrath of Yahweh is upon you. There is, however, some good in you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God."

After this....

The Moabites and Ammonites made war against Jehoshaphat and the Meunites (whose territory was southeast of Judah near Edomite land – Mount Seir) joined them.

This vast army made it all the way to En Gedi, on the Judean side of the Dead Sea, before they were detected. Alarmed, Jehoshaphat determined to seek Yahweh and proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people came together from every town in Judah to seek Yahweh's help.

Jehoshaphat stood up before those assembled at the Temple and said: "O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.' But now here are men from Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory you would not allow Israel to invade when they came from Egypt; so they turned away from them and did not destroy them. See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession you gave us as an inheritance. O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."

Then Yahweh's Spirit came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah (a Levite), "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is what Yahweh says to you: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Tomorrow march down against them. They will be climbing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel. You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance Yahweh will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Go out to face them tomorrow, and Yahweh will be with you.'"

Jehoshaphat and all the people of Judah fell down in worship before Yahweh.

Early in the morning they left for the Desert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat encouraged the people, "Listen to me, have faith in Yahweh your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful." Then he appointed men to go ahead of the army - singing and praising Yahweh. Yahweh set ambushes. The men of Ammon and Moab turned on the men from Mount Seir. After they finished slaughtering them, they destroyed one another.

When the men of Judah came to the place, expecting a vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground; no one had escaped.

There was so much plunder that it took 3 days to collect it all.

On the 4th day the army assembled in the Valley of Beracah, where they praised Yahweh. Then, Jehoshaphat and his army returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for Yahweh had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies. They went to the temple rejoicing with harps and lutes and trumpets.

The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms when they heard how Yahweh had fought against the enemies of Israel and Judah enjoyed peace for the rest of Jehoshaphat's reign.

Concluding remarks

Jehoshaphat reigned in Judah 25 years.

He walked in the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh.

However, despite Jehoshaphat's best efforts, the people were not fully devoted to Yahweh and not all the high places were removed.

Later, he made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel (who was guilty of wickedness) and agreed to construct a fleet of trading ships.

Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "*Because you have made an alliance with Ahaziah, Yahweh will destroy what you have made.*" The ships were wrecked. Lacking their own facilities, it appears that Israel wanted to try again, but this time Jehoshaphat declined.

The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the annals of Jehu son of Hanani, which are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

Jehoshaphat died and was buried in the City of David - Jehoram became king.

Until Next Time.....