

Day 154

A View of Two Kingdoms

Generally speaking, the pattern of the two kingdoms is initially that, while Judah follows the Lord more or less, the northern kingdom goes more and more off the rails. This is not to say that the southern Kingdom is flawless – Asa has to remove his mother Ma'acah from power for her idolatry, but there is a clear difference between the apostate north and the more observant south.

Asa Comes to the Throne 2 Chr.14.1 – 8 (mirrored in 1 Kgs 15.8-11)

Asa is seen as an observant King of Judah, and he takes away the idolatry which has sprung up again. He also proscribes the use of high places for worship, something which his descendants seem less strict about. He rules well, and keeps cities well defended.

Jereboam's Death 910BC and What Came Next...

1 Kgs.14.19-20(mirrored in 2 Chr.13.20); 15.25 – 34

Jereboam dies and is succeeded by his son Nadab, who just continues his father's rebellion. In a coup, while Nadab and his army are besieging a Philistine town, Gibbethon, Ba'asha, an Issacharite, assassinates Nadab in 909BC, and takes his throne, killing all of Jereboam's family in the process. Ba'asha does evil and continues the idolatry of Jereboam.

Meanwhile, in Judah... 2 Chr.14.9 – 15

The Lord gives Asa victory after his prayer for God's aid against a large Ethiopian (Cushite) army.

Asa Obeys the Lord's Word 2 Chron.15.1- 19 (mirrored in 1 Kgs. 15.12-15)

Encouraged by the word of the Lord through a prophet named Azariah Ben-Oded, Asa seeks to follow the Lord. He gets rid of any idols he finds in the captured Ephraimite territory, and then renews the covenant with the Lord at a great assembly in Jerusalem. It's a great moment in this turbulent history, as the people renew their oath to be true to the Lord. Because of this they experience peace, and a large number of Israelites desert the northern Kingdom and come south when they see God's hand leading the Judeans under a Godly King.

Asa's no-nonsense stance towards idolatry is seen in his action against his own mother, when he deprives her of her title as queen mother, because of her messing about with an Asherah pole, which Asa destroys.

Asa Makes a Bad Alliance 1 Kgs.15.16- 22; 2 Chr.16.7-10

When Ba'asha of Israel stops any movement out of Judah, Asa uses money from the Temple of the Lord to bribe Ben-Hadad, King of Syria, to the north of Israel to stop supporting Ba'asha and to attack Israel instead, which he agrees to do.

Hanani the seer rebukes Asa for his departure from God's will; God was able to rescue him from the North Africans, why not from Ba'asha? Because of this, there will be continuing war between the two kingdoms.

Asa is so angry that he imprisons Hanani, the first prophet to be punished for his word in the new kingdoms.

The End of Ba'asha of Israel 886BC 1 Kgs.16.7, 1-6, 8, 14, 9&10, 15a, 11-13, 20, 15b-19, 21, 31a, 22-34; 21.25-26.

Hanani the Seer's son, Jehu the prophet, goes to King Ba'asha and prophesies against him because of his continuing in the sin of Jereboam. He predicts a nasty end to Jereboam's dynasty.

Ba'asha is succeeded by his son Elah, who reigns two years in Tirzah, at the palace, but he is assassinated by one of his ministers, Zimri, when Elah was drunk. Zimri then destroys Ba'asha's whole family, as Ba'asha had done to Jereboam's.

However, Zimri lasts a very short time as king. The Israelites hear of his treachery against Elah and his family, and rebel, appointing the army general, Omri as king in place of Elah. When he sees his plans have gone to pot, Zimri goes into the royal palace, and sets fire to it, killing himself in the process.

Now further problems ensue, with factions developing, some supporting Omri, but others supporting another candidate, Tibni Ben-Ginath. However, in the ensuing fight for power, Tibni is killed, and Omri is confirmed as king in 880BC.

Samaria Established

Omri now moves the royal capital to Samaria (Heb שֹׁמְרוֹן *Shom'ron* meaning 'watchpost' from root word meaning to keep or guard, also taken from the name of the landowner *Shemer* from whom it is purchased) but still continues the idolatry of Israel. He dies in 874BC, having reigned for six years.

There now emerges the King who is called in Scripture the worst of Israel's kings, Ahab. Not only does he continue Jereboam's cult of the calves, but his wife, Jezebel sets up Ba'alim and Asherah, and leads the kingdom of Israel after them. To cap it all, Hiel of Bethel rebuilds the cursed city of Jericho.

Asa's Demise, 870BC, the Reign of Jehoshaphat 2 Chron 16.11 – 14 (mirrored in 1 Kgs 15.23,24) ; 1 Kgs.22.41-47; 2 Chr.20.32-33; 2 Chr.17.2 – 19; 18.1; 1 Kgs. 22.44.

Asa continues his lack of calling on God when he falls ill, presumably with gangrene or a similar fatal foot-condition. He consults the physicians, but not the Lord- a salutary reminder to followers of the One who is 'Adonai Ropheh', the Lord healer.

He dies and is succeeded by his son, Jehoshaphat, whose name means 'the Lord right-wises/does justice.' Jehoshaphat rids the land of idolatry, including the male prostitution associated with the Ba'alim, and he finds favour in the Lord's eyes because of his wholehearted integrity. He makes sure the *Torah*, God's rule of life is taught in his kingdom, and as a result, the surrounding nations are in awe of the order and justice of

his land, and they do not make war on him, particularly in light of his strong armed forces. Under him, Judah prospers and is secure. He is also at peace with Ahab, despite the latter's terrible character and practices.

Day 155

Elijah 1 Kings 17.1 – 19.21

As the worst king of Israel's sorry history comes to the fore, with his idolatrous wife, a great prophet of God also emerges, Elijah the Tishbite from Gilead. In a time of great persecution and danger for the people of the Lord (YHWH), Elijah is obedient to the Lord to see the slide into apostasy challenged, and encourages those who are still maintaining faith with the living God in the face of opposition.

17.1 Elijah (Heb. אֵלִיָּהוּ *Eliyahu*, meaning my God, He is the Lord) from Tishbe in Gilead, in the territories east of the Jordan, issues a decree from the Lord that there will be no rain for several years. This strikes directly at the integrity of the Ba'alim and the Asherot, who claim to control the fertility cycle of the year and to provide crops. God will demonstrate who is the certain Lord of Creation.

17.2 – 7 Elijah immediately goes and hides at the wadi Kerit, back in his home territory, where in a miracle of provision, the ravens bring him food and he has a water-supply from the burn. This is a time in Israel of great persecution of anyone who claims to speak for the Lord (YHWH). We will learn shortly that Ahab's wife Jezebel has been having the Lord's prophets murdered to establish the cult of Ba'al, and therefore Elijah conceals himself from her gaze. That the people of the Lord should be pursued in this way so soon after the era of David and Solomon is a comment on the extent to which Israel has turned its back on the Lord who delivered them from Egypt.

17.8-24 Next, the Lord takes leads him to the far north, almost out of Israelite territory, to Zarephath in Sidon, by the coast. Here he stays with a widow and her son, performing a miracle of provision for them all with meal and oil which do not run out. Then, when her son falls ill and dies, the man of God through appeal to God sees him raised from the dead. This is the first resurrection the Bible has witnessed, and will not be the last!

18.1 – 15. After three years of drought, the Lord tells Elijah it is time for him to announce the coming of rain. Elijah has to come out of hiding on the margins, and go to the heart of government, to the evil Ahab himself.

Ahab's chamberlain, Obadiah (Heb. עֹבַדְיָהוּ *Ovadyahu*, meaning, the servant of the Lord (YHWH)) is sent when the drought is at its height to find pasture for Ahab's livestock. He is לְעֵטְהֶן אֵט to the Lord, and has secretly hidden and supplied a hundred Yahwist prophets in caves, when Jezebel was seeking them out to kill them. He meets Elijah, who asks him to announce his arrival to Ahab.

Obadiah complains to Elijah, on the basis that last time Elijah made an pronouncement from the Lord, he disappeared for three years! Obadiah is afraid that the same will happen this time, and that Obadiah, who has done so much for the Lord, will get it in the neck for Elijah's failure to come, especially knowing how these prophets move by the

inspiration of the Holy Spirit. However, Elijah swears an oath that he will come that very day and appear before the King.

18.16-21 When Ahab finally meets Elijah, he accuses him of being ‘the troubler of Israel’ (Heb. עֲכָר יִשְׂרָאֵל *okher Yisrael*, the root of the word *okher* meaning to stir up or disturb.) Elijah turns the accusation on Ahab and his family, because of the abandonment of the covenant, challenging the Baalist prophets to meet him at Mount Carmel, the summit overlooking the modern Israeli port of Haifa.

As the people are arriving, Elijah exposes their duplicity, their multi-god approach, doing homage to whichever deity seems to be most favourable at any time. He calls for wholehearted commitment to one or the other.

18.22 – 40 In this celebrated story of direct confrontation between the false Ba’alists and the man of God, Elijah is seeking once and for all to expose the futility of the cult of the Canaanites. He presents himself as the only Yahwist prophet left in Israel after Jezebel’s bloody persecution.

As the four hundred and fifty prophets dance and shake and cut themselves, crying on Ba’al to send fire on the sacrifice, Elijah mocks them; ‘Shout louder, perhaps he is having a think, or he’s relieving himself or he’s on the way...’ (The word *sig* (Heb גִּיּוּץ) in Hebrew means to withdraw, usually for the purposes of relieving oneself.)

‘There was no answer, no response’.

Elijah then repairs the altar built on Carmel to the Lord which was in disrepair. He takes twelve stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and builds an altar with a trench dug round it. Then he makes it as difficult for God as he can, by pouring water over the sacrifice (and there would have been precious little water anywhere in Israel at this time!) – in fact, twelve large jars are poured over. This would have been a provocation to the people, in view of the drought. But the number twelve would also have been very significant to the people of Israel, recalling the days of faithfulness to God.

Elijah simply asks God to show Himself, and as at Sinai, the fire comes and completely consumes meat, wood, stone, water and earth! Awesome!

Immediately, Elijah commands the death of the Ba’alist prophets, and they are arrested and massacred in the Kishon valley.

18.41-45 Elijah now sends word to Ahab that the Lord is going to send rain. The prophet climbs up Carmel and waits, crouched down, sending his servant seven times, the mystic number of completion, to look for the promised deluge. Soon, Ahab’s chariot is toiling through the rain and mud to get to Jezreel.

19.1 – 18 The Holy Spirit gives Elijah supernatural power to outrun Ahab’s mired chariot to Jezreel. However, once there, Ahab tells his wife what has happened to her *protégés* and she swears to kill Elijah.

Given that Elijah has just witnessed God’s direct intervention at Carmel, his next action seems strange. But in another sense, it is encouraging to see that even a faithful man of God can be plagued with self-doubt. He flees from Israel, into the relative safety of

Judah, and first to Beer-Sheba; he must have thought there on the patriarchs who named this well. However, he concludes that he would better off dead, and He prays for God to end his life, because he is no different to those ancient ones who also saw God's power, but were just fickle men.

But the angel of the Lord, the pre-Jesus appearance of God's messenger comes and feeds Elijah, equipping him for a special journey. The Lord is taking Elijah way into the Sinai desert, to Horeb, where Moses first met the Lord in Exodus 3.1, to renew his commission.

At Horeb, God gives to Elijah a very similar revelation as that given to Moses in Exodus 33. The Lord passes by Him, and there is wind and earthquake and lightning-fire, but in spite of the power, the Lord does not encounter Elijah in those elements and signs. The Lord comes to Elijah in a 'hushed, weak voice' (Heb קוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה *Qol demamah daqqah* – the word *demamah* being linked to stillness and lack of speech, and the word *daq* coming from a root meaning to be suppressed.) Elijah needs to learn that even when God is not falling from heaven in visible signs, He is with him and protecting him.

When we are tempted to believe that power demonstrations are what God does to prove His presence, we need to return to this simple story of God's subdued whisper.

Elijah, still in some self-pity, repeats his claim to be the only prophet of the Lord left in Israel, but God corrects him with the news that there are still seven thousand prophets left in Israel, who are working underground! And now Elijah is recommissioned to go and get back to work, anointing the King of Aram (Syria), Jehu to replace the despicable Ahab as king of Israel and then to call Elisha to follow him as his successor.

19.19-21. Elijah now returns and finds Elisha, ploughing his family land. Called by Elijah, he asks just for a goodbye kiss for his parents, at which Elijah rebukes him mildly, but allows him to go, before Elisha sacrifices the plough-ox with its plough, and has a sacrificial farewell party with his family and neighbours. Then he leaves to go with the man of God, destined to be twice as effective as his great mentor.

Perhaps Jesus has Elisha's action in mind when he tells his followers in Luke 9.62, 'Anyone putting his hand to the plough and turning back is not worthy to be my disciple.' Fully following Jesus means burning the plough.

Day 156

Ahab and Jezebel 1 Kings 20.1 – 20.43; 22.1; 21.1-29; 1 Kings 22.51; 1 Kings 22.2 -4; 2 Chron. 18.2-3; 1 Kings 22.5-6, 10 -12; 22.7-9, 13-28 (mirrored 2 Chr. 18.6-8, 12-27.)

20.1-43 This story of victory for Israel over Ben-Hadad of Syria (Hadad and Rimmon are Syrian idol-gods) is a sign of covenant obligation of God at work toward His people even when they are disobedient. Presumably, following the contest at Carmel, Ahab has turned more to the Lord (YHWH) and is sent an encouragement in the shape of a prophet who announces victory over the Arameans (another term for Syrians), which is granted to Ahab. Ben-Hadad attacks again the following year, thinking God's power will be confined to battles in the hills, but the Lord demonstrates His power by defeating the Syrians on the open plain as well. Unfortunately, Ahab shows mercy to Ben-Hadad, when the Lord has earmarked him for destruction. Thus, Ahab is to suffer loss of life himself as recompense for his disobedience.

22.1 However, there are three years of peace between Israel and Syria as a result of the action of the Lord.

21.1-29 In this story of petty jealousy, greed and murder, Ahab is shown to be the weak and craven man-boy tied to the manipulative power of his evil wife. To gain the prize vineyard of Naboth, Jezebel abuses the royal power and has Naboth falsely accused and stoned to death. But God is not blind to this villainy, and He sends Elijah to bring judgement to the royal pair, and to their household, promising that Ahab will be brought down to the grave in violence, and his line cut off, as was Jereboam and Ba'asha's.

When Ahab is filled with remorse and cries out to God, the Lord shows favour, and defers the judgement into the days of his son, Ahaziah, who becomes co-regent with Ahab for the last years of Ahab's life.

22.2 -4, 2 Chr.18.2,3 In an unprecedented move, Jehoshaphat of Judah approaches Ahab of Israel for talks on an alliance. Ahab welcomes this entente, and invites Jehoshaphat to join him in an attack on the Syrians to liberate the occupied city of Ramoth-Gilead, east of the Jordan. The Judean king agrees.

22.5,6; 10-12 Jehoshaphat, being a descendant of David, knows the value of enquiring of the Lord . Thus, Ahab wheels out four hundred assorted prophets, who prophesy victory for the joint venture.

1 Kgs. 22.7-9, 13-28 (mirrored in 2 Chr. 18.6-8, 12-27) Jehoshaphat, however, wants a Yahwist prophet, whom Ahab hates because the Lord never gives words of encouragement. However, they call Micaiah, who is primed by Ahab's messenger to agree with the other prophets who are prophesying victory! Micaiah says he can only prophesy what God gives him.

Micaiah initially agrees with the other prophets, but Jehoshaphat has enough discernment to know that he is just doing what Ahab wants. Eventually, Micaiah prophesies disaster for the Alliance troops, not only that, but recounts a vision of the Lord sending lying spirits to the other prophets to get them to inveigle Ahab into a place of defeat to put an end to him.

At this, one of the false prophets, Zedekiah, who has made iron horns as a sign that Ahab will gore the Syrians, slaps Micaiah and asks 'What makes you think the spirit has gone from me to you to prophesy?' Micaiah says he will find out when he ends up hiding in an inside room soon.

For his trouble, Micaiah is put in prison until Ahab's safe return, which Micaiah says will never happen.

Day 157

The End of Ahab 853BC, the Rise of Ahaziah; Godly Jehoshaphat

1 Kings 22.29-36 (mirrored in 2 Chr 18.28-34); 2 Chron. 19.1 – 3; 1 Kings 22.37 – 40, 52- 53; 2 Kings 1.1 & 3.4-5; 2 Chron.19.4 -11; 2 Chron.20.1 – 30, 35-37; 1 Kings 22.48-49; 2 Kings 1.2- 18 & 3.1-3.

1 Kings 22.29-36 Ahab has a cunning plan – he will go in disguise into battle. He suggests Jehoshaphat go in his royal attire, though, which attracts attention to him from the enemy. However, Ahab still dies in the battle, as Israel and Judah scatter like sheep, as Micaiah said.

2 Chron 19.1-3 When Jehoshaphat returns to Jerusalem, he is reprimanded for his alliance with Ahab, and told that the Lord is angry with him, though there is acknowledgement of his attempts to curb idolatry in Judah.

1 Kgs 22.37-40 In a chilling fulfilment of Elijah's earlier prophecy, when the bloodstained chariot of dead Ahab is washed at a pool in Samaria, the dogs come and lick up Ahab's blood...

Ahaziah is now left sole ruler of Israel, succeeding his father.

1 Kgs 22.52-53 Ahaziah is no different to Ahab his father, or to the initiator of this terrible regime, Jereboam. Idolatry prevails in Israel.

2 Kings. 1.1, 3.4-5 Following Ahab's death, the tribute lands of Moab rebel, depriving Israel of meat and wool.

Jehoshaphat's Rule in Judah

2 Chron. 19.4 – 11 Jehoshaphat continues the line of good kings of Judah, and maintains faithfulness to the Lord (YHWH) throughout his diminutive realm. He appoints *right-wiser* judges, and recruits the Levites as officials.

2 Chron. 20.3 – 30 Moab, throwing off the yoke of Israel's overlordship, now attacks neighbouring Judah, coming up to En Gedi on the Dead Sea. Like his ancestor David, Jehoshaphat has a listening heart, and he seeks the Lord for help. The Lord calls Judah to fast and pray, with the result that the Lord speaks through a Levite names Jahaziel, directing the people not to go out with swords, but with worship and praise, trusting God to deliver them.

In reckless obedience, the people of Judah with the Levite singers going ahead go against the Moabites and Ammonites, singing the ancient song of Israel, *Hodu Ladonai, ki le'olam chasdo* (Heb' הודו ליהוה כי לעולם חסדו) - 'Thank the Lord, for His *chesed*-grace obligation lasts forever' - and watch amazed as God sets the enemy fighting among themselves, so much so that by the time they draw near to the foe, they see only dead bodies.

Having plundered the fallen, the people of Judah return to the Valley of Blessing (Heb' עֵמֶק בְּרָכָה *emeq berakhah*) and praise God. They then return to Jerusalem in a triumphant parade. The effect of this on the nations around, and the power of the Lord, is enough to keep Judah free from conflict for a long time.

2 Chron 20.35-37; 1 Kgs 22.48,49. Jehoshaphat seems not to have learned the lesson of alliances with Israel, and makes a joint shipping agreement with Ahaziah to build cargo vessels. At this point, Eliezer the prophet speaks out, and warns of God's displeasure. As a result, Jehoshaphat refuses to sail with Israelis aboard.

Ahaziah in Israel, then Joram.

2 Kings 1.2 – 18, 3.1-3. Ahaziah suffers a serious fall, and consults Ba'al-Zebub (Heb בַּעַל-זְבוּב *Ba'al-zebhubh*) known to us as Beelzebub, the Lord of the flies, idol of Ekron in Philistia. However, Elijah challenges him, and says he will die because of his idolatry.

When Ahaziah realises that it is Elijah who is troubling him, he sends two battalions to arrest him, but these are both consumed with fire. The third group, imploring not to be burned up, find Elijah ready to go with them at the Lord's word, and to bring his word personally to Ahaziah, who does, indeed, die of his injuries, because he has not consulted the Lord.

Ahaziah is without an heir, so the crown passes sideways to his brother Joram (also known as Jehoram) , son of Ahab, in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah, around 852BC. Joram is a slight improvement on his father and mother, ridding Israel of the Ba'al stone, but still allowing the golden calf worship to continue. Joram goes on to reign for twelve years.

Day 158

Elijah hands on to Elisha

2 Kings 2.1 – 25; 4.1 – 17, 38 – 44; 4.18-37; 8.1 – 2; 6.1-7

2.1-18 Despite Elijah's words of dismissal to him, Elisha stays close to his mentor and leader. He senses that God is about to do something significant with the old prophet, and he is not going to miss it. The rest of the prophets are aware of this too, but they don't follow Elijah. Perhaps he has such a powerful reputation, that they don't want to hang around him too much.

Elisha is therefore with Elijah when God takes him into the unseen place in a chariot of fire, with flaming horses. Elisha has asked for a double measure of the Spirit that is upon Elijah, and as he steps out in faith, striking the water with Elijah's coat, the prayer is answered. Elisha goes on to have double the effectiveness in anointed ministry which Elijah had.

Meeting Elisha at Jericho, the prophets suggest sending a search party out for Elijah – perhaps the Spirit has dropped him off on a mountain or in a gorge? Elisha tells them not to bother, but they don't listen. Elisha of course is right.

Elisha's Miracles 2.19- 25, 4.1-7. Elisha now begins his ministry in the footsteps of Elijah, with three acts of power. First, he purifies the poison water of a spring, then he curses some boys who are insulting his baldness, and they are killed by bears, and finally he repeats Elijah's miracle with the meal and oil by giving a prophet's widow a miraculous supply of oil to enable her to pay her debts.

4.8-17 At Shunem, a city in Issachar, to the south of modern Nazareth, Elisha prophesies to a well-to-do woman who hosts him that she will have a son, even though her husband is old. She doesn't believe him, but a year later bears a son.

4.38-41 Elisha saves the prophets from food-poisoning by adding a handful of flour and a deal of faith.

4.42-44 The miracle of the multiplication of the bread to a hundred people is of great interest, as it is one of the most well-known of Jesus' miracles. Elisha preshadows the Messiah's action, and gives a sign which points to the provision of God to His people.

4.18-37 In a further reprise of a miracle of Elijah, Elisha now also raises a boy from the dead, the Shunammite's son. An interesting detail is the mention of the seven sneezes, a sign of life returning to him.

6.1-7 Lastly, in an act of compassion, Elisha restores a submerged axehead to one of the prophets in his school, which demonstrates his care for those working with him.

Day 159

Joram, Jehoram and Jehoshaphat c,853BC

2 Kgs.8.16-17 (mirrored in 2 Chron.21.5) ; 2 Chr.21.2-4; 2 Kgs. 3.6 – 27; 2 Chr.20.34, 21 &1a (mirrored in 1 Kgs 22.45,50a) ; 2 Chr. 21.1b, 20a; 2 Chr. 21.6-7, 11 – 17, 8-10 (mirrored in 2 Kgs. 8.20-22)

In Judah

Jehoram becomes co-regent with Jehoshaphat, but has plans to ensure his rivals are put out of action. After his father's death, when he has a hold on the kingdom, he liquidates his brothers, so that they will not cause him any trouble.

Before Jehoshaphat's death, however, Joram calls the Judeans to ally with them again against the Moabites, but as they advance, they run out of water.

Jehoshaphat, as he had done with Ahab before, calls for a prophet to come and listen to the Lord for them. Elisha comes, and calls for a musician, since the hearing of God is enhanced through instrumental playing for Elisha. He prophesies that they are to dig ditches, which God will miraculously flood with water. Next day, water was flowing in the desert!

The Moabites see this water, and in the red of dawn, it looks like blood. They assume Israel and Judah have slaughtered each other, as happened with Jehoshaphat's enemies before, but they find the Israelites and Judeans waiting for them, but they fight back. In a terrible moment of evil, the Moabite king sacrifices his eldest son to their gods, redoubling their attack, and this causes the Israelites to draw back in fear.

It is worth noting in 2 Kings 3.12 that Elisha is referred to as the one 'who poured water on the hands of Elijah' – that is, he has been Elijah's personal valet. One who would learn from a teacher must take the place of a servant to them.

Death of Jehoshaphat, Sole Rule of Jehoram. c 848BC

On Jehoshaphat's death, around 848BC, Jehoram is left to rule Judah alone. It is at this point presumably that he does away with his brothers, and walks in the ways of Ahab of Israel. But the Lord maintains his dynasty, for David's sake, so strong is the Lord's *chesed*, His grace-obligation to His covenant.

Jehoram mysteriously receives a posthumous letter from Elijah, or a letter from the unseen realm. It is a word of judgement against Jehoram for his evil ways – he and his family will be afflicted, and he will die a painful death.

In fulfillment of Elijah's word, the Philistines, allied with Arabs from the Upper Nile region attack, and almost wipe out the Judean royal family, with only one, Ahaziah spared.

Also in this time, as Moab before, Edom has successfully rebelled against Jehoram as well as Libnah, because of Jehoram's sin.

Day 160

The Prophecy of Obadiah Obadiah 1 – 21

The prophecy of Obadiah is placed at this point, as he is bringing his word against Edom, a small nation which has now rebelled and broken away from Judah's control, establishing its independence in its mountain safety of Mount Seir, south of Judah.

Edomites are the descendants of Esau, the brother of Jacob. They have been a challenge to Israel for centuries, having refused the migrating Israelites safe passage through their lands at the time of their approach to the promised land, and Saul, David and Solomon all had their skirmishes with the Edomites. Now, under the dubious reign of Jehoram, they have broken away. Not only that, but they are aiding the armies who are seeking to attack Judah, seeing them as allies.

Little is known about Obadiah himself beyond his name (Heb. עֲבַדְיָהוּ *Obhed-yahu*, servant of YHWH) . He is recounting a vision or dream (Heb. חֲזוֹן *chazon* from the root *chazah* meaning to see, dream or contemplate.) The import of his message is that Edom will not survive the consequences of her rebellion or her aiding of Israel's enemies. Although now she is proud of herself and her achievement, God will abase her.

In v.5-7, Obadiah exposes Edom's vulnerability; it will be those she has allied with who prove her ruin.

8-14. The basis of the punishment is their violence against a nation to whom they are related, and with whom they have common descent. Edom has watched and abetted Judah's enemies, and this is to be the basis of her judgment. They have denied God's people their aid.

15-18. The prophet refers here to a coming 'day of the Lord' (Heb. יוֹם יְהוָה *yom Adonai* (YHWH)), a day which will affect all nations, a day of 'settling up' for deeds done. In this day, which will be a day of vengeance for the Lord, Edom will be destroyed, but there will be rescue for Judah and Jerusalem.

19-21 The end result will be that Judah will regain the rule of Edom, not only of Edom, but also of the separated northern kingdom of Israel, with its hills of Ephraim, its city of Samaria, and its territory across the river in Gilead. This will not be because of Judah's power or ability, but because the *Kingdom is the Lord's* (Heb לַיהוָה הַמְּלִיכָה *lAdonai (YHWH) ha-melukhah*, lit, 'to the Lord, the ruled').

This concept of a coming day of God in which His kingship would be revealed is the basis on which Jesus builds His message of the Kingdom of God in the gospel, and is being established in the words of the Old Testament prophets.