

Dr. August Konkell, Chronicles, Session 19, Preservation of the Promise

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This is Dr. August Konkell in his teaching on the books of Chronicles. This is session 19, Preservation of the Promise.

While Jehoshaphat's reign ended on a very positive note with his defeat of the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Edom, there was a more negative aspect to everything that was happening, which becomes more evident in the account of his son's reign.

We noted that there was an alliance between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, the king in the north, and the result of that alliance was that the daughter of King Ahab, Athaliah, had married the son of Jehoshaphat. This was kind of all part of a political alliance. Now, all of that is assumed as knowledge by the chronicler, but when we come to the story of Jehoram, we see that this alliance with the north came very close to eliminating all of David's descendants from being on the throne.

The chronicler does not avoid that point, as he tells us about the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. It can be a little bit confusing here because Ahab's son was also Jehoram. This was a practice in which the same name was given, which is another sign of the close relationship that there was between these two kings.

From a political point of view, Israel was the more powerful nation, and it sort of made sense that Jehoshaphat would be in alliance with Israel. But from the viewpoint of the kingdom of God, this was a very negative and bad thing, which does not reflect on the way in which the chronicler presents the reign of Jehoshaphat, but it certainly reflects on the reign of his son, Jehoram. So, the first thing we see in the reign of Jehoram is the purge of the royal house by Athaliah, the queen, who was the daughter of Jezebel.

We also see the subjugation of Edom further. You'll recall that David had brought Edom to become part of the Israelite empire, but of course, Edom was always resistant to that control and attempted to succeed in having their own prince and ruler act independently of Israel. So, what Jehoram is able to do, and probably here reflects somewhat the help of his ally to the north Israel, is bring Edom under subjugation, which means he's able again to use that port, that very important shipping center at Ezion-Geber.

But here we have Jehoram's negative side presented in a terrible letter from Elisha. This is one of the most intriguing things in the book of Chronicles, this letter that Elisha sends to Jehoram. Now, at one point, that may seem to be an immediate

contradiction because, as we know from the Book of Kings, Elisha was translated to heaven during the reign of Jehoshaphat.

That's in 2 Kings chapter 2. Then we have the war against Moab in 2 Kings chapter 3. And so, it seems that Jehoshaphat is the one that is going to war. But here we have Elisha still present during this war, and sending a terrible letter to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. Now actually, this is not a chronological problem when we begin to understand the complexity of the system of chronology that is represented.

There were often two kings ruling at the same time for very good reasons. A king would appoint his son as a co-regent while he was still reigning. In this case, the reason probably was that Jehoshaphat was facing the threat of the Moab and of Ammon, and his son was placed on the throne at that time.

So, in fact, Jehoram was already appointed as king by Jehoshaphat while Elisha was still alive. And Elisha, in the meantime, went to war with Moab. But Elisha gives Jehoram this warning about the way in which his following in the ways of his mother Athaliah and his bringing the practices of the north down into Judah is completely contrary to God's work and to God's will.

And so, of course, what he experiences is the raids of the Philistines and the Arabs, which are described as the diminishing of his rule and his empire. And finally, he dies of an agonizing illness. So, the reign of Jehoshaphat, sorry, the reign of Jehoram does not end well.

But that brings us to the reign of Ahaziah. He is the son of Jehoshaphat and the son of Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel. He reigns for only one year and is involved in the alliance with Israel against Hazael.

And you'll recall that he is the king who gets killed when he goes to visit Ahab, who is trying to recover from the wounds that he received in the battle against the Arameans. This is the point at which Jehu has been assigned by God, in some certain sense, to intervene and to end this influence of the rule of the descendants of Omri, Ahab, and his sons, Jehoram and Ahaziah. And so, this king is killed in just one year.

So, this is the point at which the threat against the descendants of David in the land of Judah comes close to being at an end. There is an attempt to eliminate all the heirs to the throne so that the north can completely take over the south. But as the chronicler shall show us, there is an intervention by God and a lamp is preserved for David.

This is one of his favorite phrases, that God has determined that God shall preserve a lamp, a light, that is the house of David. And so, we shall see how that story continues in our next episodes.

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