

2 Kings 3

Verses 1-3

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned for twelve years.

² He did evil in the sight of the Lord, though not like his father and his mother; for he removed the memorial stone of Baal which his father had made.

³ Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, into which he misled Israel; he did not abandon them.

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned for twelve years.

See chart 305

North					
	King	Began	Ended	Years	Co-reign
1	Jeroboam I	930	909	22	
2	Nadab	909	908	2	
3	Baasha	908	886	24	
4	Elah	886	885	2	
5	Zimri	885	885	7 days	
6	Omri	885	874	12	
7	Ahab	874	853	22	
8	Ahaziah	853	852	2	
9	Jehoram (aka Joram)	852	841	12	
10	Jehu	841	814	28	

Another son of Ahab takes the throne because Ahaziah (a son of Ahab) had no heir.

See 2 Kings 1:17

¹⁷ So Ahaziah died in accordance with the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And since he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

² **He did evil in the sight of the Lord, though not like his father and his mother; for he removed the memorial stone of Baal which his father had made.**

The sons of Ahab & Jezebel were evil but they were not as bad as their father and mother. There are different degrees of evil and God will punish it accordingly.

Jehoram did a good thing by getting rid of this stone because it is likely that this was all that remained of the temple and altar to Baal after the 450 prophets of Baal had been killed and the people choose to follow the Lord. The text in 1 Kings 18 does not specifically say that the temple and altar were destroyed but this assumption seems like a reasonable conclusion given the overall context. The fact that Ahab made a memorial stone of Baal seems to confirm that conclusion.

See 1 Kings 18:39 – 40

³⁹ **When all the people saw *this*, they fell on their faces; and they said, “The Lord, He is God; the Lord, He is God!”** ⁴⁰ **Then Elijah said to them, “Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape.” So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slaughtered them there.**

³ **Nevertheless, he clung to the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, into which he misled Israel; he did not abandon them.**

Jehoram did not get rid of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel which was the original sin that had corrupted Northern Israel.

His mother, Jezebel, was living throughout the twelve years of his reign. She will not die until

Verses 4-8

⁴ **Now Mesha the king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and he used to make *tribute* payments to the king of Israel of a hundred thousand lambs, and the wool of a hundred thousand rams.** ⁵ **However, when *King* Ahab died, the king of Moab broke with the king of Israel.** ⁶ **So King Jehoram left Samaria *for battle* at that time and mustered all Israel.** ⁷ **Then he went and sent *word* to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, “The king of Moab has broken away from me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?” And he said, “I will go up. Consider me yours, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.”** ⁸ **Then he said, “Which way shall we go up?” And he answered, “The way of the wilderness of Edom.”**

⁴ Now Mesha the king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and he used to make *tribute* payments to the king of Israel of a hundred thousand lambs, and the wool of a hundred thousand rams. ⁵ However, when *King Ahab* died, the king of Moab broke with the king of Israel.

This subject was covered in 2 Kings 1:1 in great detail.

⁶ So King Jehoram left Samaria *for battle* at that time and mustered all Israel.

After the death of Ahab his son Ahaziah reigned for two years. However, his fall from the upper room kept Ahaziah from going to war with Mesha the king of Moab who had broken with Israel by refusing to pay tribute.

When Ahaziah died Jehoram became king and it was up to him to go to war with Mesha. So Jehoram left Samaria (the capital of Israel) and gathered all of Israel to fight against the king of Moab.

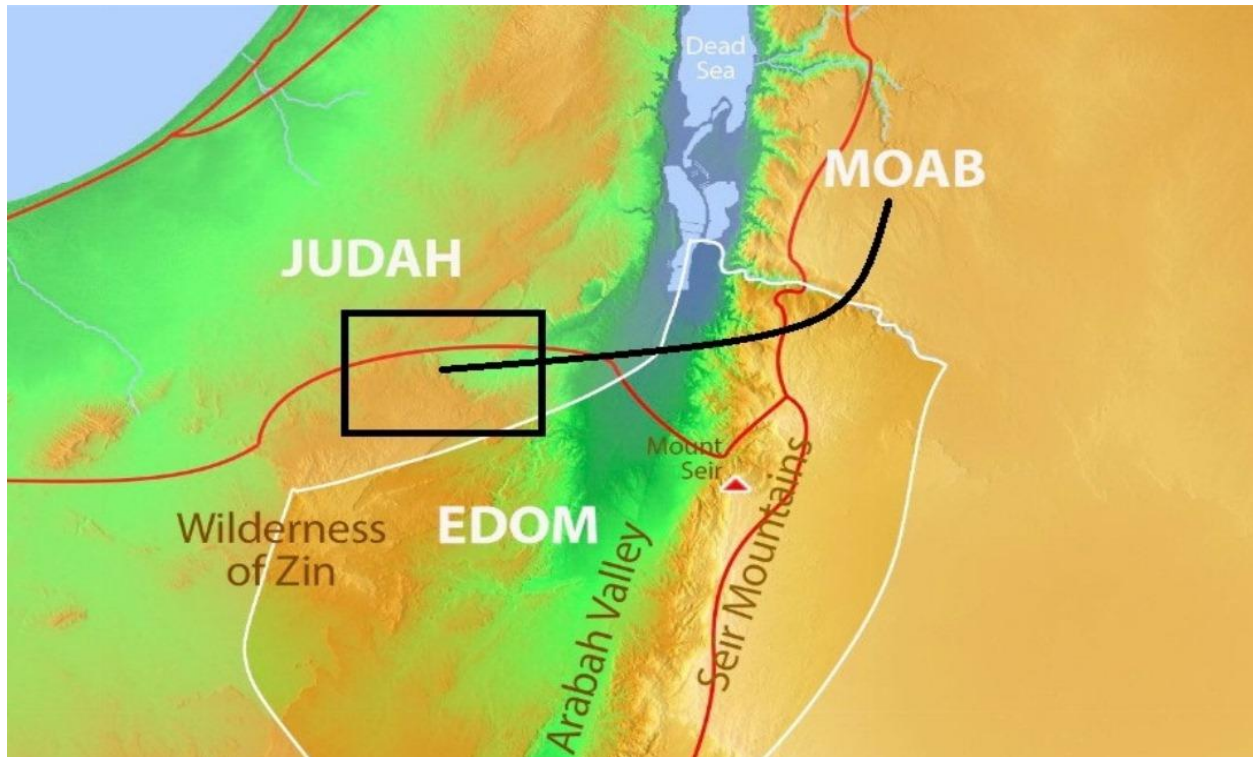
⁷ Then he went and sent *word* to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, “The king of Moab has broken away from me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?” And he said, “I will go up. Consider me yours, my people as your people, my horses as your horses.”

One might wonder why a northern king would ask for help from a southern king given the animosity that had been prevalent for so long. And why would Jehoshaphat (a southern king) agree to help the north? The answer to the first question will become apparent in the next verse.

⁸ Then he said, “Which way shall we go up?” And he answered, “The way of the wilderness of Edom.”

The southern part of Moab was less fortified than the north and it would be the better place to begin an attack. Since Edom was still subject to Jehoshaphat this meant that Jehoram would have safe passage thru the land of Edom and could attack Moab from the south. Plus it would now be three nations, Northern Israel, Southern Israel and Edom, against one nation (Moab).

See map 310



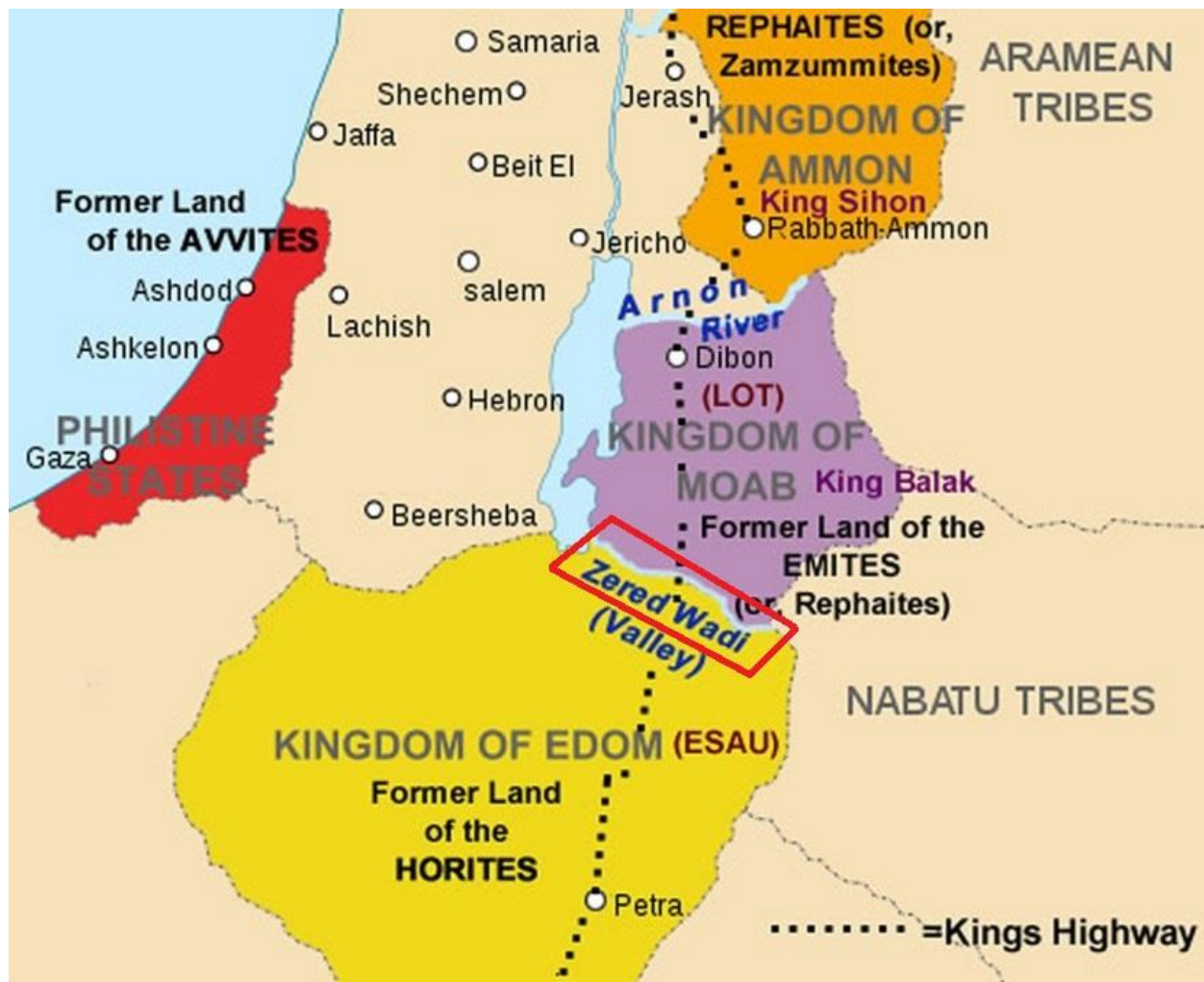
Verses 9-12

⁹ So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they made a circuit of seven days' journey. But there was no water for the army or for the cattle that followed them. ¹⁰ Then the king of Israel said, "It is hopeless! For the Lord has called these three kings to hand them over to Moab!" ¹¹ But Jehoshaphat said, "Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?" And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat is here, who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah." ¹² And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the Lord is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

⁹ So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they made a circuit of seven days' journey. But there was no water for the army or for the cattle that followed them.

When they came to the southern border of Moab they expected to find plenty of water at the Zered Wadi but that was not the case.

See Map 315



¹⁰ Then the king of Israel said, “It is hopeless! For the Lord has called these three kings to hand them over to Moab!”

The lack of faith on the part of Jehoram is not surprising given the fact that the Northern Kingdom of Israel had long ago rejected the Lord.

¹¹ But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?” And one of the king of Israel’s servants answered and said, “Elisha the son of Shaphat is here.”

Consulting a prophet of the Lord was the right thing to do. However, it does make one wonder what had happened to consulting with the High priest who could inquire of the Lord by using the Urim and Thummim. Although, the more detailed answer of a prophet would be preferred over the yes and no answer of the Urim and Thummim.

¹² And Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the Lord is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

Elisha must have been somewhere in Edom.

Verses 13-17

¹³ Now Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What business do you have with me? Go to your father’s prophets and your mother’s prophets.” But the king of Israel said to him, “No, for the Lord has called these three kings *together* to hand them over to Moab.” ¹⁴ Elisha said, “As *surely as* the Lord of armies lives, before whom I stand, if I did not respect Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look at you nor see you. ¹⁵ But now bring me a musician.” And it came about, when the musician played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. ¹⁶ And he said, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Make this valley full of trenches.’ ¹⁷ For the Lord says this: ‘You will not see wind, nor will you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you will drink, you, your livestock, and your *other* animals.

¹³ Now Elisha said to the king of Israel, “What business do you have with me? Go to your father’s prophets and your mother’s prophets

Elisha did not show any deference to Jehoram; instead he suggested that Jehoram should consult with the 400 false prophets of Ahab & Jezebel. There may have been a bit of sarcasm here also, since 450 of his father’s and mothers prophets had been in the grave for some time now.

¹⁴ Elisha said, “As *surely as* the Lord of armies lives, before whom I stand, if I did not respect Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look at you nor see you.

Only a prophet of God could respond like this to a king.

¹⁵ But now bring me a musician.” And it came about, when the musician played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.

There was also a beneficial effect upon Saul when David played the Harp.

See 1 Samuel 16:23

²³ So it came about whenever the *evil* spirit from God came to Saul, David would take the harp and play *it* with his hand; and Saul would feel relieved and become well, and the evil spirit would leave him.

This is interesting because it seems that the servants of Saul knew in advance that music could help the king.

See 1 Samuel 16:14 - 16

¹⁴ Now the Spirit of the LORD left Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrified him. ¹⁵ Saul's servants then said to him, "Behold now, an evil spirit from God is terrifying you. ¹⁶ May our lord now command your servants who are before you. Have them search for a man who is a skillful musician on the harp; and it shall come about whenever the evil spirit from God is upon you, that he shall play *the harp* with his hand, and you will become well."

How did these servants know that music would help the king to become well?

**¹⁶ And he said, "This is what the Lord says: 'Make this valley full of trenches.'
¹⁷ For the Lord says this: 'You will not see wind, nor will you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you will drink, you, your livestock, and your *other* animals.**

We are not told where the water came from but it seems that God wanted them to know that it would not come from a rain storm. God may have brought the water from some source that was miles away, opened an unknown spring that was in this area, or he could have created the water out of nothing. Either way this was a super natural event.

When it was needed God supplied water from a rock for 2.5 million people and their animals in Exodus 17 (1446 BC). This happened again 39 years later in Numbers 20 (1407 BC).

Verses 18-20

**¹⁸ And this is an insignificant thing in the sight of the Lord; He will also give the Moabites into your hand. ¹⁹ Then you shall strike every fortified city and every choice city, and cut down every good tree and stop up all the springs of water, and spoil every good plot of land with stones.'"
²⁰ And it happened in the morning about *the time of* offering the sacrifice, that behold, water came from the direction of Edom, and the country was filled with water.**

¹⁸ And this is an insignificant thing in the sight of the Lord; He will also give the Moabites into your hand.

For the God that created the universe and everything in it, supplying water for the army of three nations and handing Edom over to Israel was insignificant.

¹⁹ Then you shall strike every fortified city and every choice city

Cut down every good tree

Stop up all the springs of water

Spoil every good plot of land with stones

Given the harsh treatment of the land one has to assume that this was a time of judgment for Moab and God wanted their recovery to be difficult and slow.

²⁰ And it happened in the morning about the time of offering the sacrifice, that behold, water came from the direction of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

Sometimes a particular event is seen as a miracle because a physical law of nature has been suspended. At other times the timing of an event is the miracle. And sometimes both of these factors are involved.

Verses 21-25

²¹ Now all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. And all who were able to put on armor and older were summoned and they took their positions on the border. ²² Then they got up early in the morning, and the sun shone on the water, and the Moabites saw the water opposite *them* as red as blood. ²³ So they said, "This is blood; the kings must have fought each other, and they have killed one another. Now then, Moab, to the spoils!" ²⁴ But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and struck the Moabites, so that they fled from them; and *the Israelites* invaded the land, killing the Moabites. ²⁵ So they destroyed the cities; and each one threw a stone on every plot of good land and filled it. So they stopped up every spring of water and cut down every good tree, until in Kir-hareseth *only* they left its stones; however, the rock slingers surrounded *it* and struck it.

²² Then they got up early in the morning, and the sun shone on the water, and the Moabites saw the water opposite them as red as blood. ²³ So they said, “This is blood; the kings must have fought each other, and they have killed one another. Now then, Moab, to the spoils!”

The Moabites thought that they had won the lottery. All they had to do was go and collect the winnings. Unfortunately, their going brought them right to the 3 kings.

²⁴ But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and struck the Moabites, so that they fled from them; and the Israelites invaded the land, killing the Moabites.

The Moabite army suffered a great loss along with many citizens.

²⁵ So they destroyed the cities; and each one threw a stone on every plot of good land and filled it. So they stopped up every spring of water and cut down every good tree, until in Kir-hareseth *only* they left its stones; however, the rock slingers surrounded *it* and struck it.

The cities of Moab were destroyed and the land was left desolate.

Verse 26-27

²⁶ When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom; but they could not. ²⁷ Then *the king of Moab* took his oldest son who was to reign in his place, and offered him as a burnt offering on the wall. And great anger came upon Israel, and they departed from him and returned to their own land.

Mesha, the king of Moab, tried to single out the king of Edom but the attempt failed, so he sacrificed his oldest son as a burnt offering. This would have been done to the false god Chemosh.

There is a lot of speculation about the anger that came upon Israel but no one knows for certain because that is not revealed in the text.