



Writing Life Faith



Life of a King: Jehoram's Devastation

The Eighth King.

You can read King Jehoram's story in 2 Kings 8:16-24 and 2 Chronicles 21.

When I, Jehoram, son of the renowned Jehoshaphat, became King, I set my plan into motion. It was clear from the start that my brothers were after my treasure and my throne. I eliminated the threat. I then secured my alliance with Israel by marrying one of Ahab's daughters.

Suddenly the Edomites revolted. What right did they have to try separating from my Kingdom? I took my full army out to confront them, but they surrounded me. When I snuck out at night to attack them, my army deserted me.

After this humiliating defeat, the prophet Elijah made it worse by insulting me to my face. Some nonsense about not listening to my father's God and His commands.

The Philistines came next. They broke into my capital city, took my valuables and my wives, and only spared my young son. To make it worse, the LORD, who was supposed to be my ally, cursed me with this deplorable intestinal disease. It feels as though my very bowels are going to come out...

Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's oldest son, had everything in his favour. His father and grandfather were good kings, Judah was as close as ever to being idol-free, he had the kingship, and his father gave him wealth and cities.

This is as good as his life gets. From here, Jehoram sets off on a route of self-destruction that will tarnish his life and the reputation of Judah. What happened?

The Beginning.

"But when Jehoram had become solidly established as king, he killed all his brothers and some of the other leaders of Judah." (2 Chronicles 21:4)

You don't typically see the Prime Minister or President of your country killing their entire family and all their enemies upon receiving the title. Granted, Canada isn't a monarchy or dictatorship. That said, Jehoram goes way further than any king before him. Solomon killed one brother, but Jehoram took the lot.

What's even worse is Jehoram's complete ignorance of God's promise. God put Judah's kings on the throne, not men. If God wanted Jehoram in command, He would've protected him. All this killing was nothing more than the first signs of self-placed trust. **Taking matters into our own hands and disobeying God is never honourable.**

Jehoram marries one of Ahab's daughters, further tightening a dangerous alliance that first emerged during his father's reign. Everything Jehoram does is wicked. Incredibly, God still chooses to preserve this dynasty, upholding the promise He made to David.

The Middle.

"During Jehoram's reign, the Edomites revolted against Judah and crowned their own king."
(2 Chronicles 21:8)

Here's how Jehoram's next chapter unfolds:

- *Edom:* We want our own king! We revolt!
- *Jehoram:* No you do not! I'm taking my whole army out to fight you!
- *Edom:* Now you're surrounded! God isn't with you today!
- *Jehoram:* Too bad, let's wait until night and then we'll see how things go!
- *Jehoram's Army:* We're leaving.
- *Edom:* We didn't think it would be that easy...
- *Elijah:* This guy doesn't get it. God is not happy with him.

Jehoram does not take this well. Not at all. **Sometimes serious resistance is a sign to turn around.** I find there are two types of counter-forces in life: the ones sent by the devil to thwart God's plans, and the ones sent by God to thwart us from acting out the devil's plans. It's generally easy to differentiate between the two. Just ask yourself whose "interests" you're pursuing.

The End.

"Then the LORD stirred up the Philistines and the Arabs...they marched against Judah, broke down its defences, and carried away everything of value..." (2 Chronicles 21:16-17)

As my pastor says, unforgiveness and unrepentance are deadly foes. Jehoram makes himself good friends with both. God, still trying to help Jehoram clue in, sends the Philistines into Judah. During Jehoram's moment of need, Scripture is silent. He doesn't cry to the LORD for help like Rehoboam, or Asa, or Jehoshaphat. Nothing. Judah is looted, his wives and treasures are taken, and only his youngest son, Ahaziah, is left to hold down the fort. (We'll see how he performs next week.)

But God isn't done. Elijah's prophecy against Jehoram hasn't come to fulfillment. Jehoram had all this time to repent, to tell God he was wrong, to admit his mistakes. He's made a fool of himself militarily, politically, spiritually, and all the other 'Ilys' you can imagine.

Now it's God's turn to make a show of Jehoram. Struck with an incurable intestinal disease, Jehoram's response is, once again, silence. **Hate to say it, but silence is an answer.** Because my words can't summarize the sheer "Emotional Damage" Jehoram experienced, here's a paraphrase of 2 Chronicles 21:19-20:

"The disease grew worse and worse, and at the end of two years it caused his bowels to come out, and he died in agony. His people did not build a great funeral fire to honour him as they had done for his ancestors... No one was sorry when he died... They buried him in the City of David, but not in the royal cemetery."

Oof.

What Defined Jehoram?

Throughout Jehoram's life, we see him repeatedly, blatantly, and unabashedly ignoring God. Jehoram chose to rely on himself and trust his power. It does not go well. Consequently, his life is the direct antithesis of his father's, teaching us that...

Self-Trust is a Landmine

"But Jehoram followed the example of the kings of Israel and was as wicked as King Ahab, for he had married one of Ahab's daughters. So Jehoram did what was evil in the LORD's sight." (2 Kings 8:18)

To be blunt, Jehoram's life fell apart because he split ways with the LORD. Every move he made focused on what he wanted and what he could get. Listening to correction wasn't on his bucket list.

Let me flip this around: How do you want to be remembered? I hope you don't want a Jehoram legacy. What footprint do you think you're currently leaving behind? How will people react, one day, at your funeral? If you're worried you may receive a Jehoram-esque reception, what can you do today to begin drawing yourself to God?

In light of Jehoram's life, are you listening to God and obeying when He nudges you? Are you walking towards destruction or life?

Good/Bad.

Sadly, we often see Jehoram-esque mindsets in the West. The world teaches us to be completely self-reliant. Scripture advocates for a different message. Clearly one is correct, and the other is not.

Which is why we need to put Jehoram in his place on the Kings Chart (you can visit WritingLifeFaith.com to view it). He is our fifth king on the 'BAD' side.

It's no coincidence we have Jehoram directly after Jehoshaphat. In two weeks, we've seen both extremes (and their outcomes) contrasted.

We are not defined exclusively by our actions, but by the character that gives root to our actions. What is our heart's posture? Who do we yield to, inside and out? Jehoram sure knew the ruler of his life. Do you?

Next week, things get even crazier when Jehoram's youngest son, Ahaziah, takes the throne. After watching his father die, he has a crucial choice ahead of him: Follow Jehoram, or choose God's way.

As 2 Chronicles 21:22 reads, *"This is what the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says: You have not followed the good example of your father...or your grandfather."*



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