

Jehoshaphat

Jehoshaphat was the son of Asa king of Judah.

Jehoshaphat ascended the throne at the age of thirty-five and reigned for twenty-five years. He spent the first years of his reign fortifying his kingdom against the Kingdom of Israel. His zeal in suppressing the idolatrous worship of the "high places" is commended in 2 Chronicles 17:6.^[2] In the third year of his reign Jehoshaphat sent out priests and Levites over the land to instruct the people in the Law, an activity that was commanded for a Sabbatical year in Deuteronomy 31:10–13. The author of the Books of Chronicles generally praises his reign, stating that the kingdom enjoyed a great measure of peace and prosperity, the blessing of God resting on the people "in their basket and their store.

According to *Chronicles*, the Moabites formed a great and powerful confederacy with the surrounding nations, and marched against Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20). The allied forces were encamped at Ein Gedi. The king and his people were filled with alarm. The king prayed in the court of the Temple, "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." (2 Chronicles 20:12). The voice of Jahaziel the Levite was heard announcing that the next day all this great host would be overthrown. So it was, for they quarreled among themselves, and slew one another, leaving to the people of Judah only to gather the rich spoils of the slain. Soon after this victory Jehoshaphat died after a reign of twenty-five years at the age of sixty (1 Kings 22:50).

In I Kings xxii. 43 the piety of Jehoshaphat is briefly dwelt on. *Chronicles*, in keeping with its tendency, elaborates this trait of the king's character. According to its report, Jehoshaphat organized a missionary movement by sending out his officers, the priests, and the Levites to instruct the people throughout the land in the Law of Yhwh, the king himself delivering sermons. Ecclesiastical and secular jurisdictions, according to II Chron. xix. 11, were by royal command kept distinct.

Underlying this ascription to the king of the purpose to carry out the Priestly Code, is the historical fact that Jehoshaphat took heed to organize the administration of justice on a solid foundation and was an honest worshiper of Yhwh. In connection with this the statement that Jehoshaphat expelled the "Kedeshim" (R. V. "Sodomites") from the land (I Kings xxii. 46) is characteristic; while II Chron. xix. 3 credits him with having cut down the Asherot.

William F. Albright has dated the reign of Jehoshaphat to 873–849 BC. E. R.

Thiele held that he became coregent with his father Asa in Asa's 39th year, 872/871

BC, the year Asa was infected with a severe disease in his feet, and then became sole regent when Asa died of the disease in 870/869 BC, his own death occurring in 848/847 BC. So Jehoshaphat's dates are taken as one year earlier: co-regency beginning in 873/871, sole reign commencing in 871/870, and death in 849/848 BC” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehoshaphat>)
