

Lesson 7

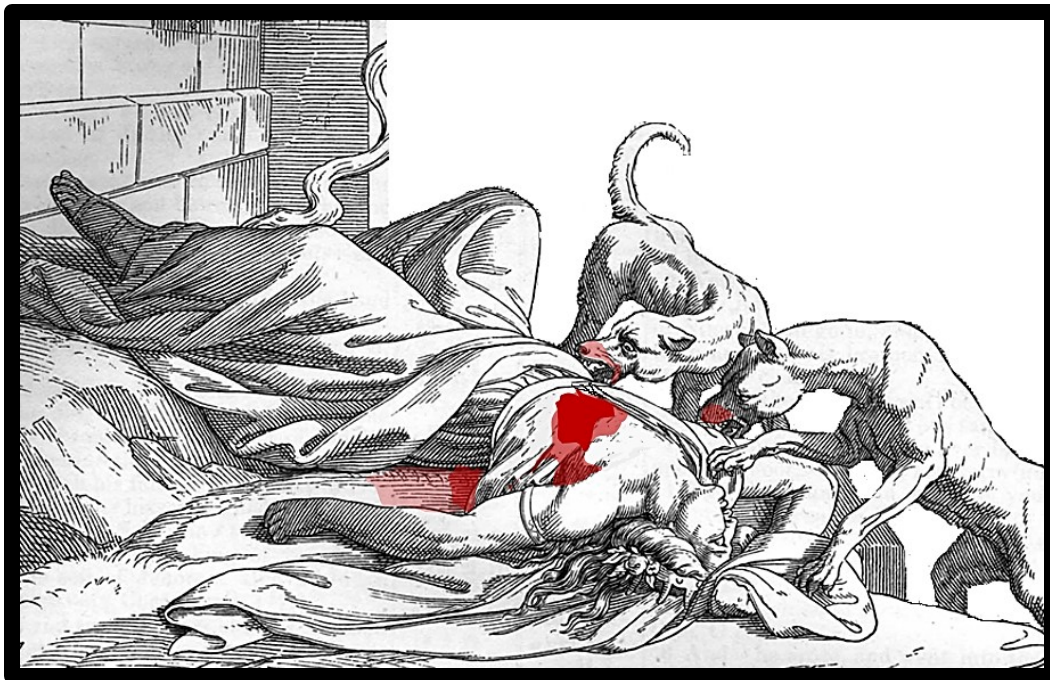
The Story of the Singers

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT . . .





Ahab King of Israel and his wife Jezebel tried to kill *all* of God's prophets, and they came close to succeeding.



Elijah tormented this wicked couple and prophesied their deaths.

His gruesome prophecy was fulfilled when dogs licked Ahab's blood and ate Jezebel's body.

The account of Ahab's reign in I Kings 16 to 22 is full of idolatry, deceit, and treachery. His influence was broadened by family ties for he and Jezebel had two sons, a grandson and a daughter that became royalty. All of them were idolaters.

KINGS OF ISRAEL

Jeroboam	975-954
Nadab	954-953
Baasha	953-930
Elah	930-929
Zimri	929
Omri	929-918
Ahab	918-897
Ahaziah	897-896
Joram	896-884
Jehu	884-850
Jehoahaz	850-842
Jehoiakim	842-814
Jehoiachin	814-813
Zedekiah	813-762
Shallum	762-760
Shallum	760-740
Shallum	740-730
Shallum	730-721

KINGS OF JUDAH

Rehoboam	975-958
Abijah	958-955
Asa	955-914
Jehoshaphat	914-892
Jehoram	892-884
Ahaziah	885
Athaliah	885-878
Joash	878-839
Amaziah	839-810
Uzziah	810-758
Jotham	758-742
Ahaz	742-726
Hezekiah	726-698
Manasseh	698-643
Amon	643-641
Josiah	641-610
Jehoahaz	610
Jehoiakim	610-599
Jehoiachin	599
Zedekiah	599-588

Ahaziah King of Israel (son)

Joram King of Israel (son)

Ahaziah King of Judah (grandson)

Athaliah Queen of Judah (daughter)



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Joram	896-884
Jehu	884-843
Jehoahaz	843-814
Jehoash	814-786
Jehoram	786-748
Uzziah	748-740
Jotham	740-732
Ahaz	732-726
Hezekiah	726-698
Manasseh	698-643
Amon	643-641
Josiah	641-609
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Ahab & Jezebel's daughter, **Athaliah, was the only woman to reign over Judah.**

[Israel never had a woman reign over it].



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Ahaziah	897-896
Joram	896-894
Jehu	894-856
Jehoahaz	856-841
Jehoash	841-825
Jeroboam II	825-784
Zedekiah	773
Shallum	772
Menahem	772-762
Uzziah	762-760
Isiah	760-740
Jeroboam III	730-721

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Before she became queen **Athaliah** married **Jehoram** King of Judah the son of King **Jehoshaphat**.

It is reprehensible that Jehoshaphat allowed his son to marry into such an evil family as that of Ahab and Jezebel. Apparently, Jehoshaphat wanted Judah and Israel to unite, and he was willing to befriend King Ahab and his wife Jezebel (possibly among the most wicked people to walk the earth) in an attempt to accomplish what he considered a worthy goal, that of uniting the two kingdoms despite Israel's wickedness.



King Solomon made a similar mistake when he befriended foreign nations by marrying their princesses. His first was the princess of Egypt.

His enormous army sat idle because he embraced idolatrous nations instead of waging war against them like King Saul and King David had done.



Jehu the prophet
put it best when he
confronted King
Jehoshaphat by
asking him,
“Shouldest thou
help the ungodly,
and love them that
hate the Lord?”
(II Chronicles 19:2).





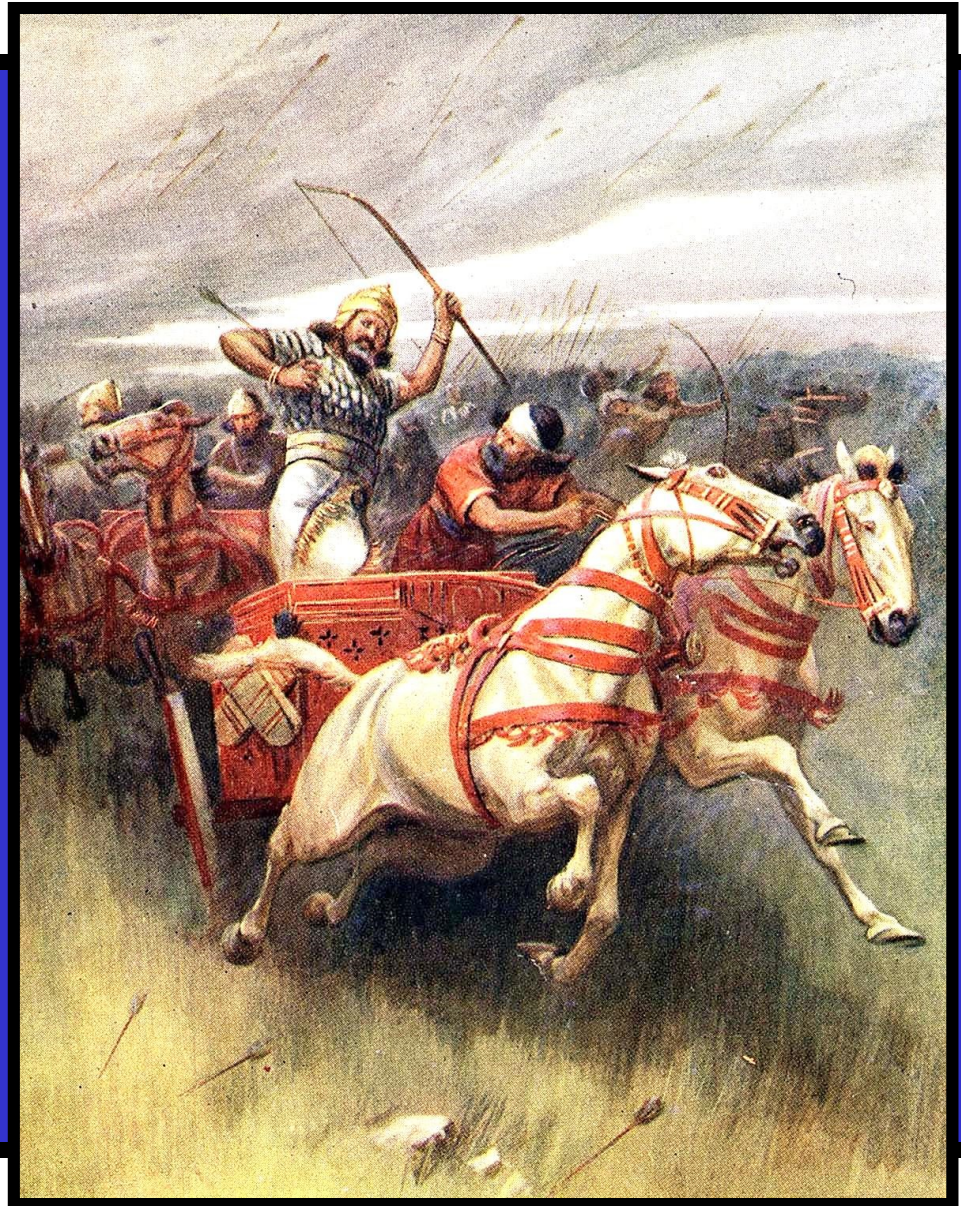
Jehu asked him this question after Jehoshaphat had joined King Ahab in a war against Syria, their common enemy.

Jehoshaphat most likely realized his mistake before Jehu asked his rhetorical question, for the war had not gone well. King Ahab died in battle and dogs licked his blood just as Elijah had prophesied.



No doubt King Jehoshaphat was shaken by the death of King Ahab.

He could have easily been killed too because he had listened to Ahab and his 400 false prophets instead of God.



**The timing
was perfect
for a prophet
of God to
inspire
Jehoshaphat
to be loyal to
God in all his
ways.**



King Jehoshaphat heeded the prophet Jehu's reprimand about associating with the evil Kings of Israel and regained his faith in God.



He appointed judges and local courts in Judah and insisted they judge righteously. He sent priests and Levites out to teach the people the law of the Lord, and took away the groves where idol worship had prevailed. **Then in II Chronicles 20 we read one of the most amazing examples of faith in all of scripture . . .**

THE STORY OF THE SINGERS

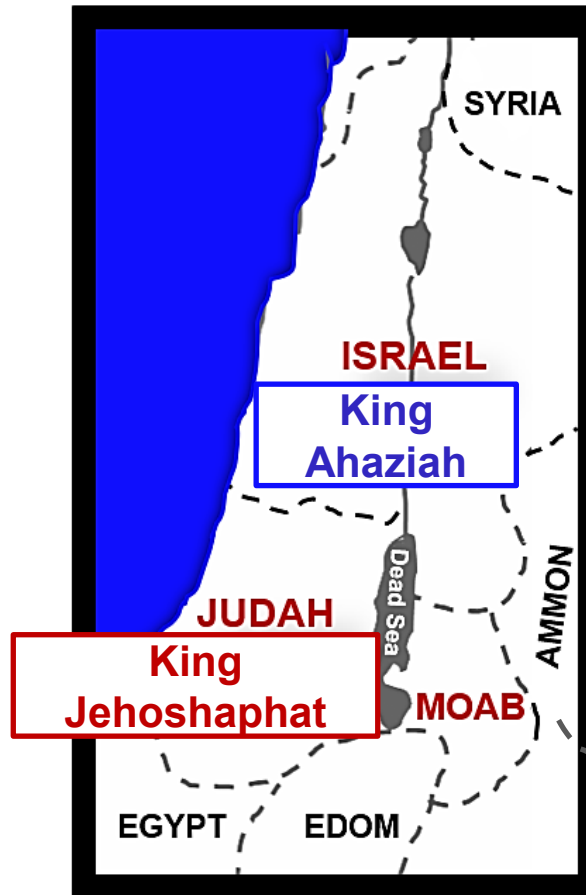
II Chronicles 20



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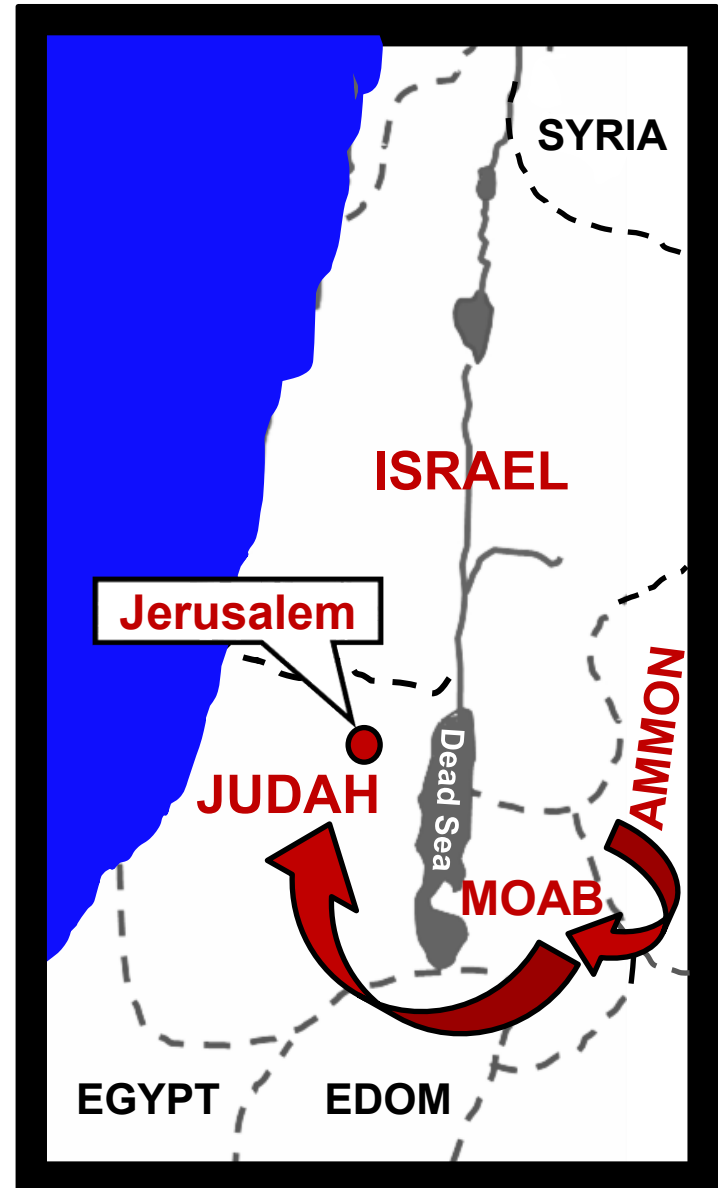
Following the death of King **Ahab** his son, **Ahaziah**, reigned over Israel for two years (I Kings 22:51) and Jehoshaphat continued his reign over Judah.



The **Moabites** had been forced to pay tribute to Israel during the reign of **Ahab** and following his death they rebelled. They were enemies of both Israel and Judah.

In II Chronicles 20 it is recorded that the Ammonites joined forces with Moab to battle against King Jehoshaphat of Judah.

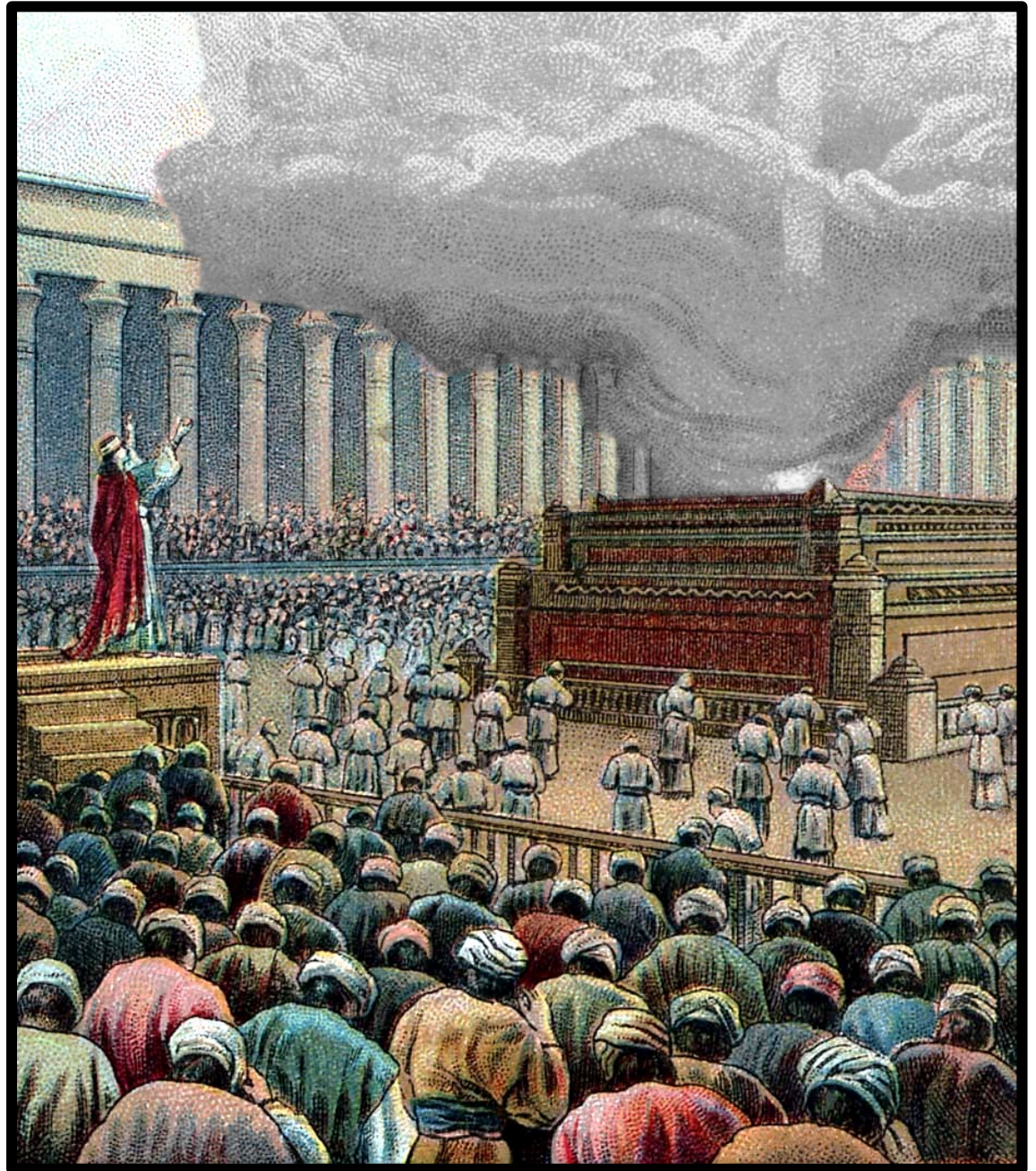
As these two combined armies approached Jerusalem King Jehoshaphat was afraid and rather than seek help from Israel with whom he had aligned himself in the past he turned to God and proclaimed a fast throughout Judah.



II Chronicles 20

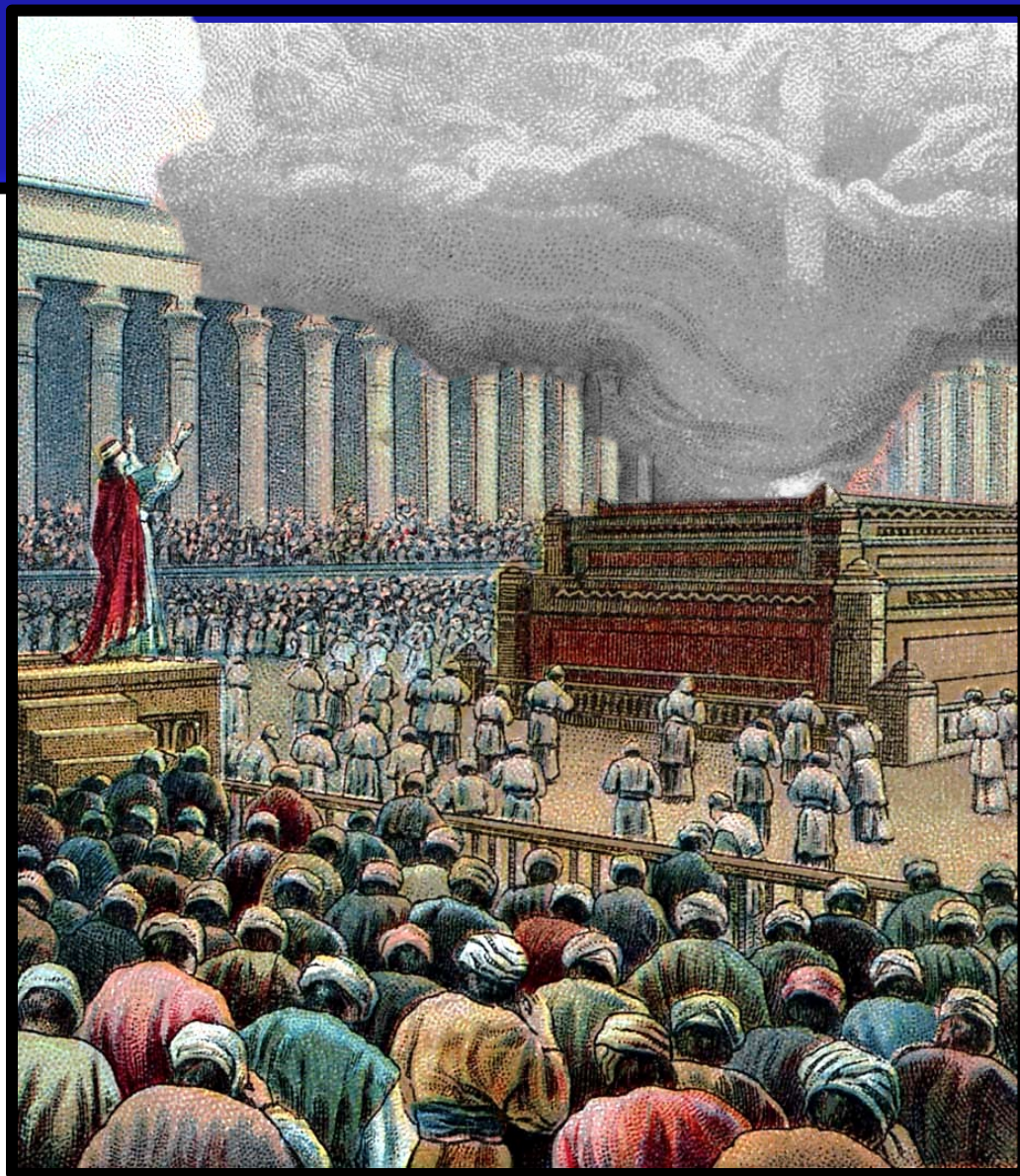
“³And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.

⁴ And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.”



The nation of Judah came out of all their cities to the temple in Jerusalem.

King Jehoshaphat led the people in prayer standing with them in the court of the temple. His lengthy prayer is recorded word for word in II Chronicles 20:5-12.

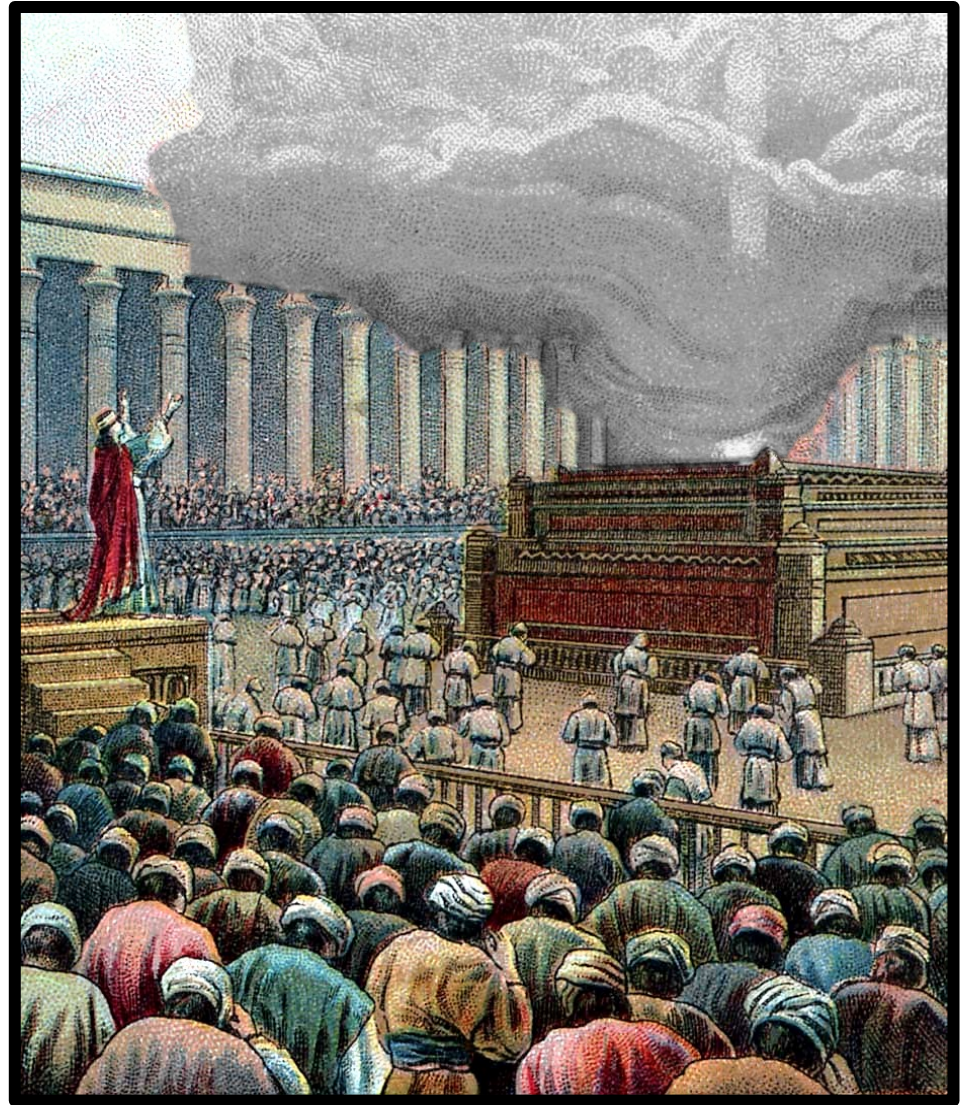


Jehoshaphat's Prayer

II Chronicles 20

“⁵And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,

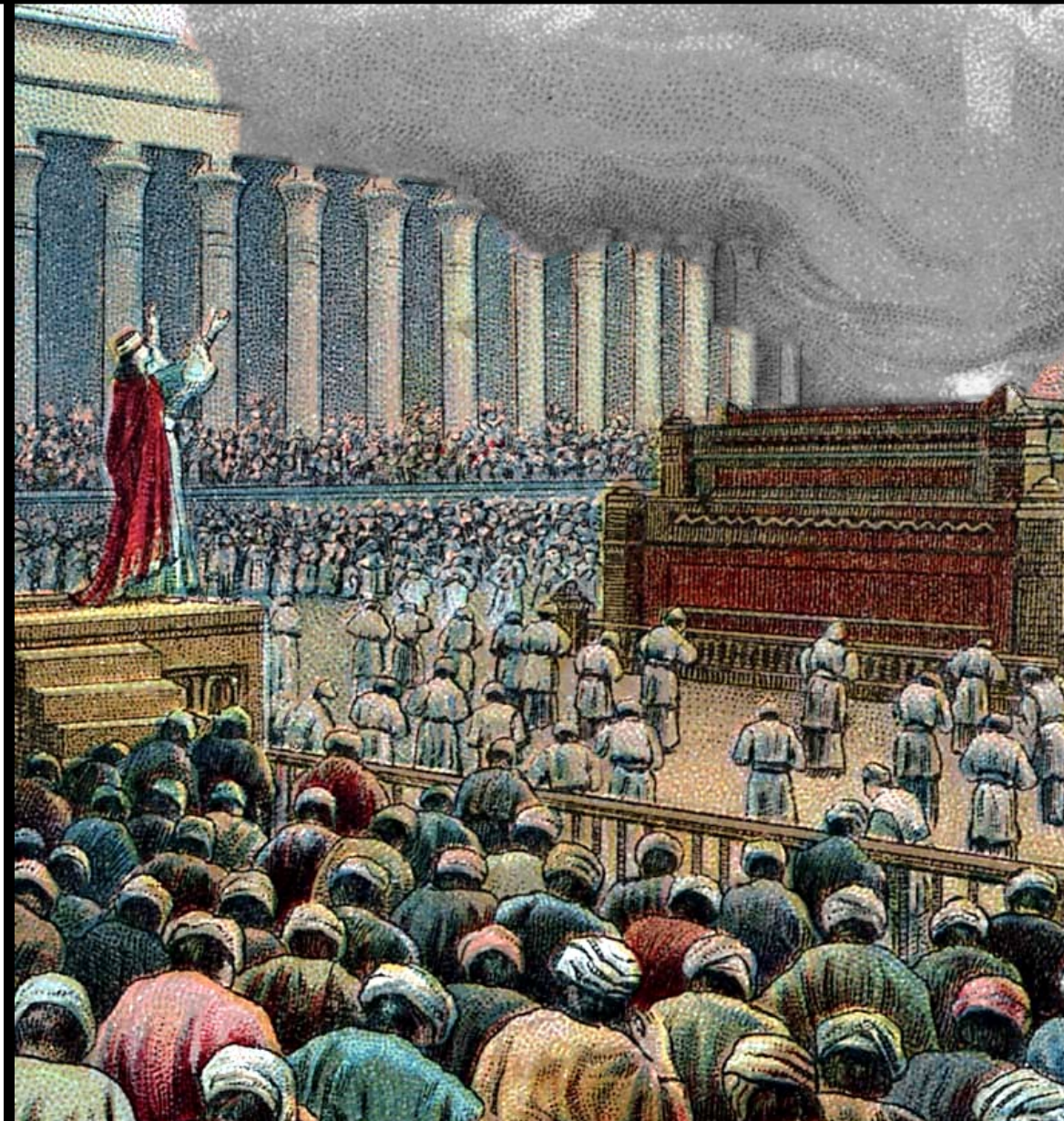
⁶And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?”



Jehoshaphat's Prayer

II Chronicles 20

“⁷Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?”

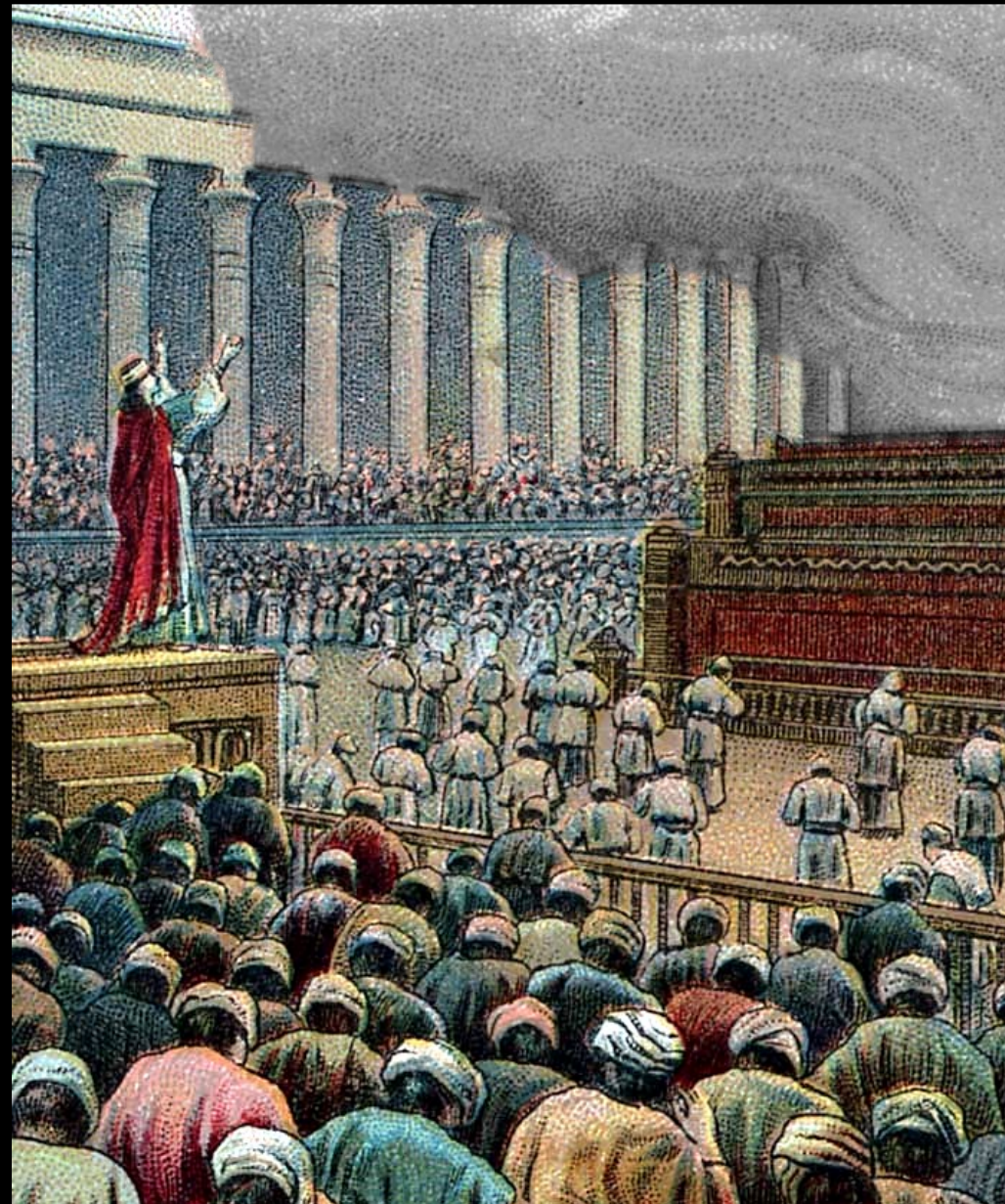


Jehoshaphat's Prayer

II Chronicles 20

“⁸ And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,

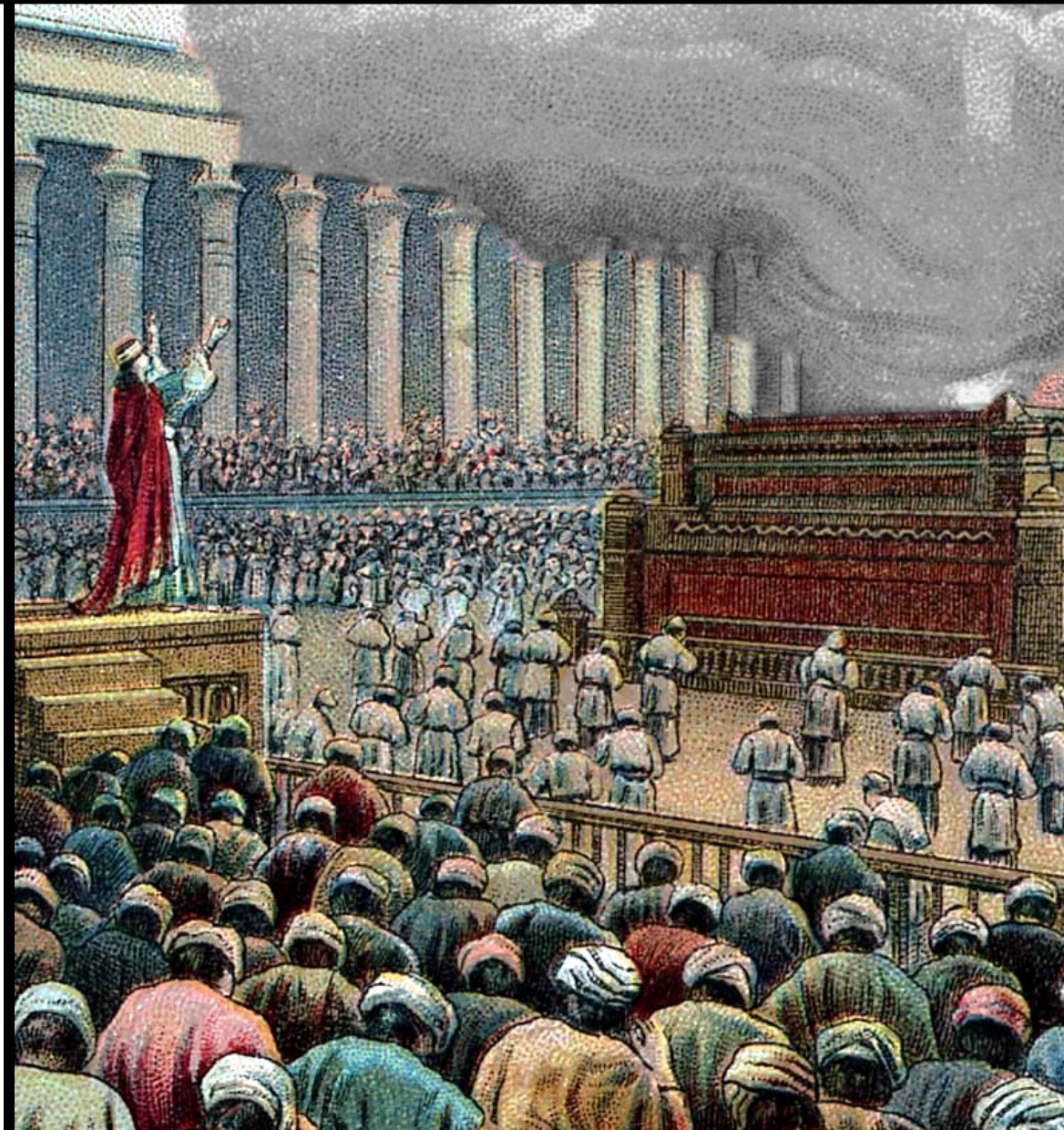
⁹ If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.”



Jehoshaphat's Prayer

II Chronicles 20

“¹⁰And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, [Deut. 2:5, 9] when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;”



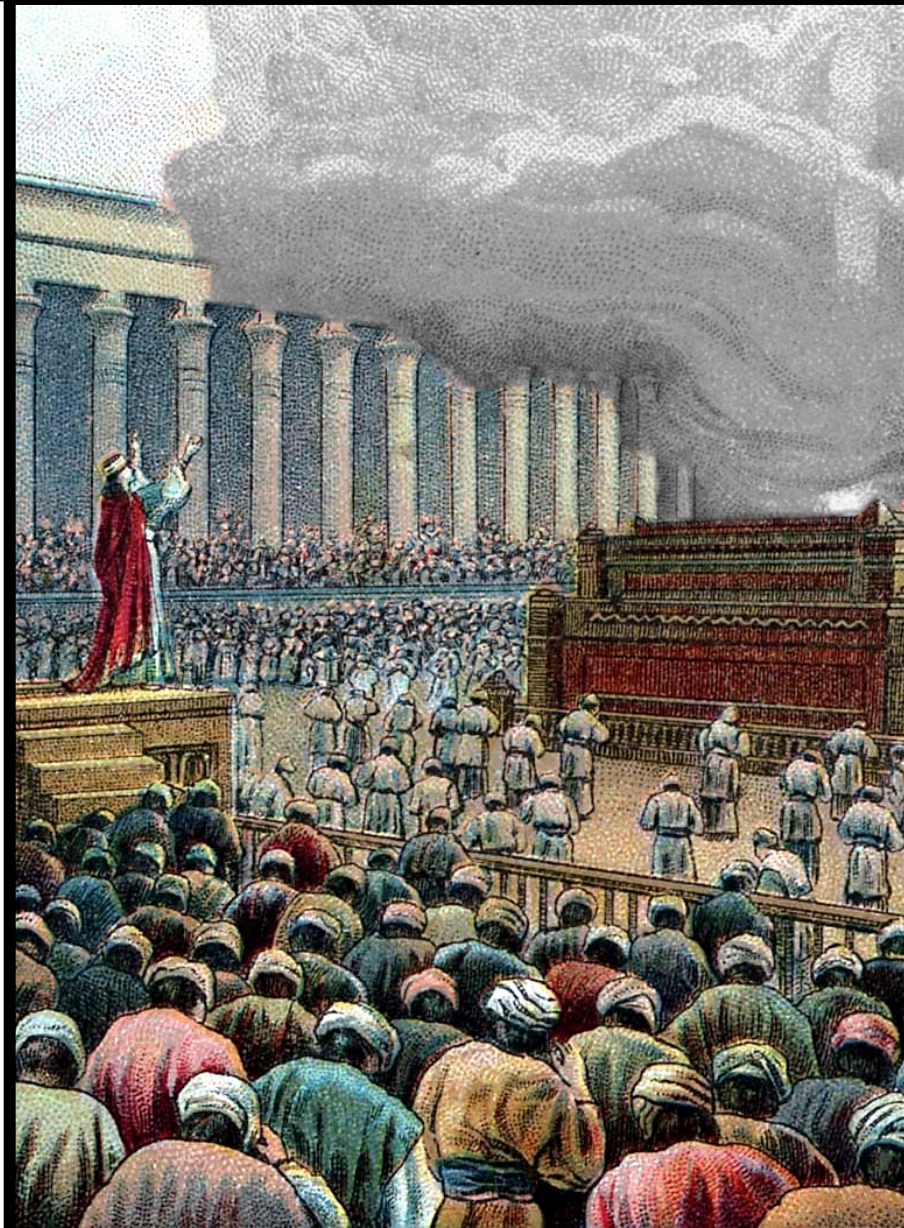
Jehoshaphat's Prayer

II Chronicles 20

“¹¹ Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.

¹² O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but **our eyes are upon thee.**

¹³ And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.”

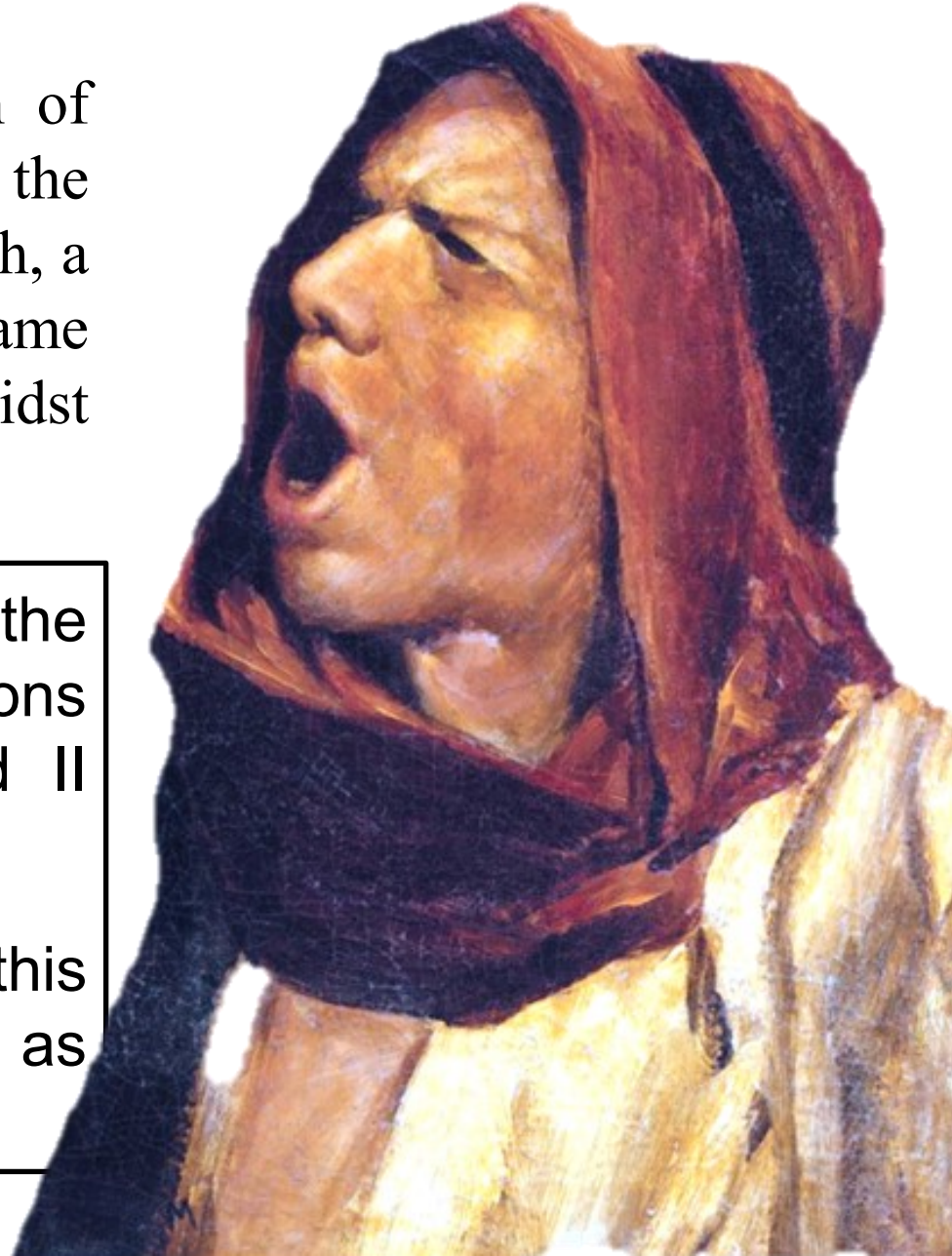


II Chronicles 20

“¹⁴Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation;”

Jahaziel's family had been the Levitical singers for generations (I Chronicles 15 & 16 and II Chronicles 5:12).

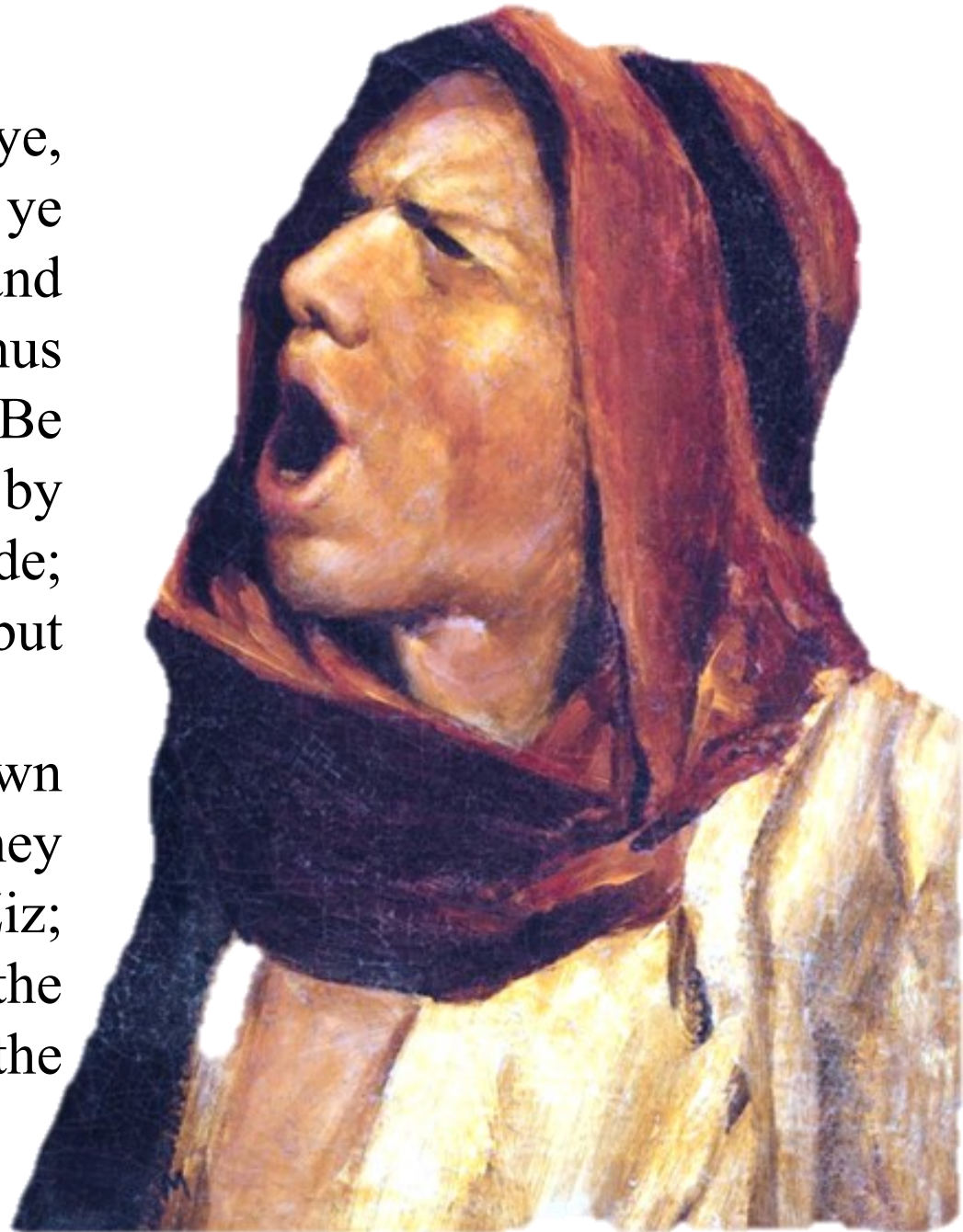
The significance of this connection will be revealed as the story continues.



II Chronicles 20

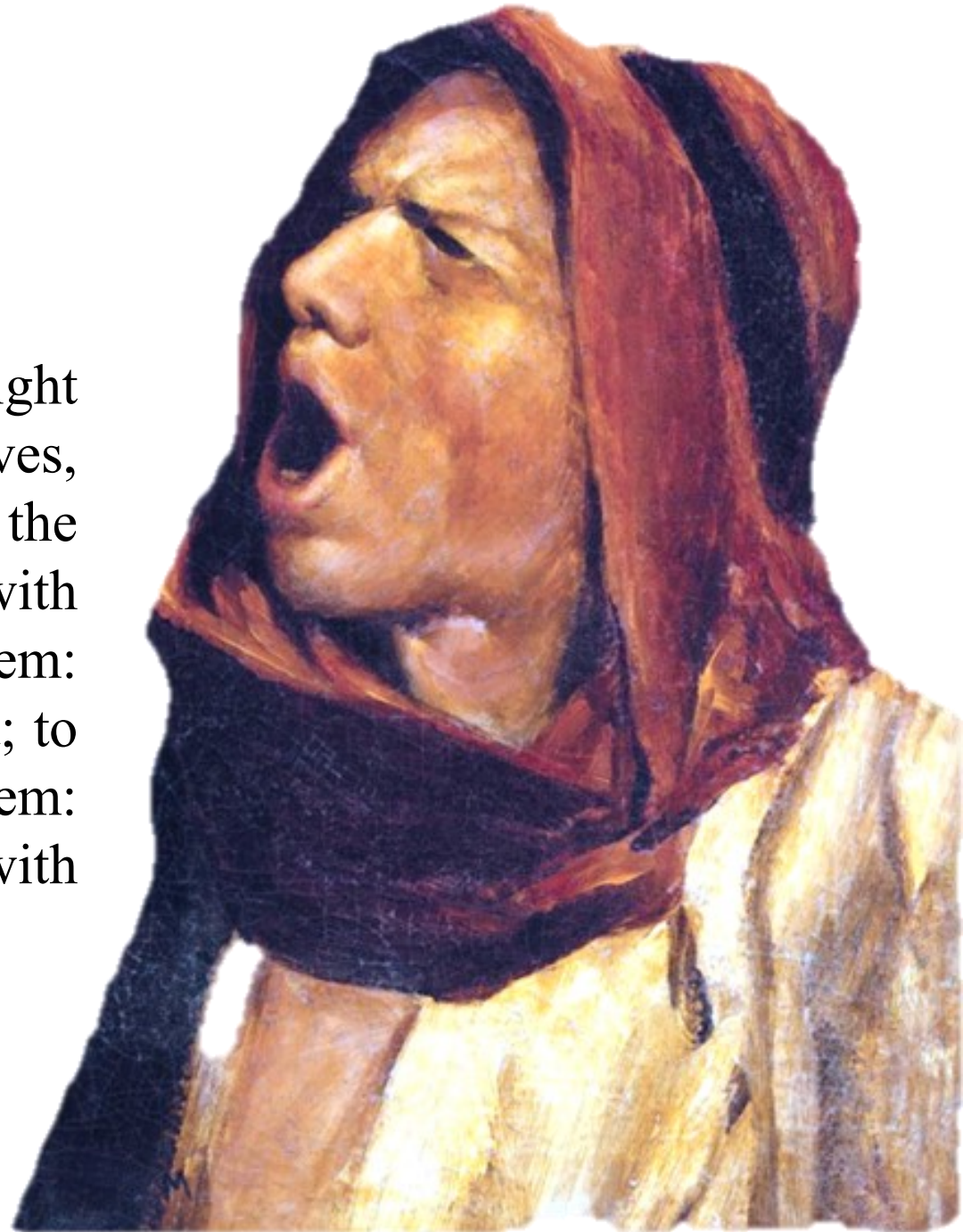
“¹⁵And he said, Hearken ye, all of Judah and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God’s.

¹⁶To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.”



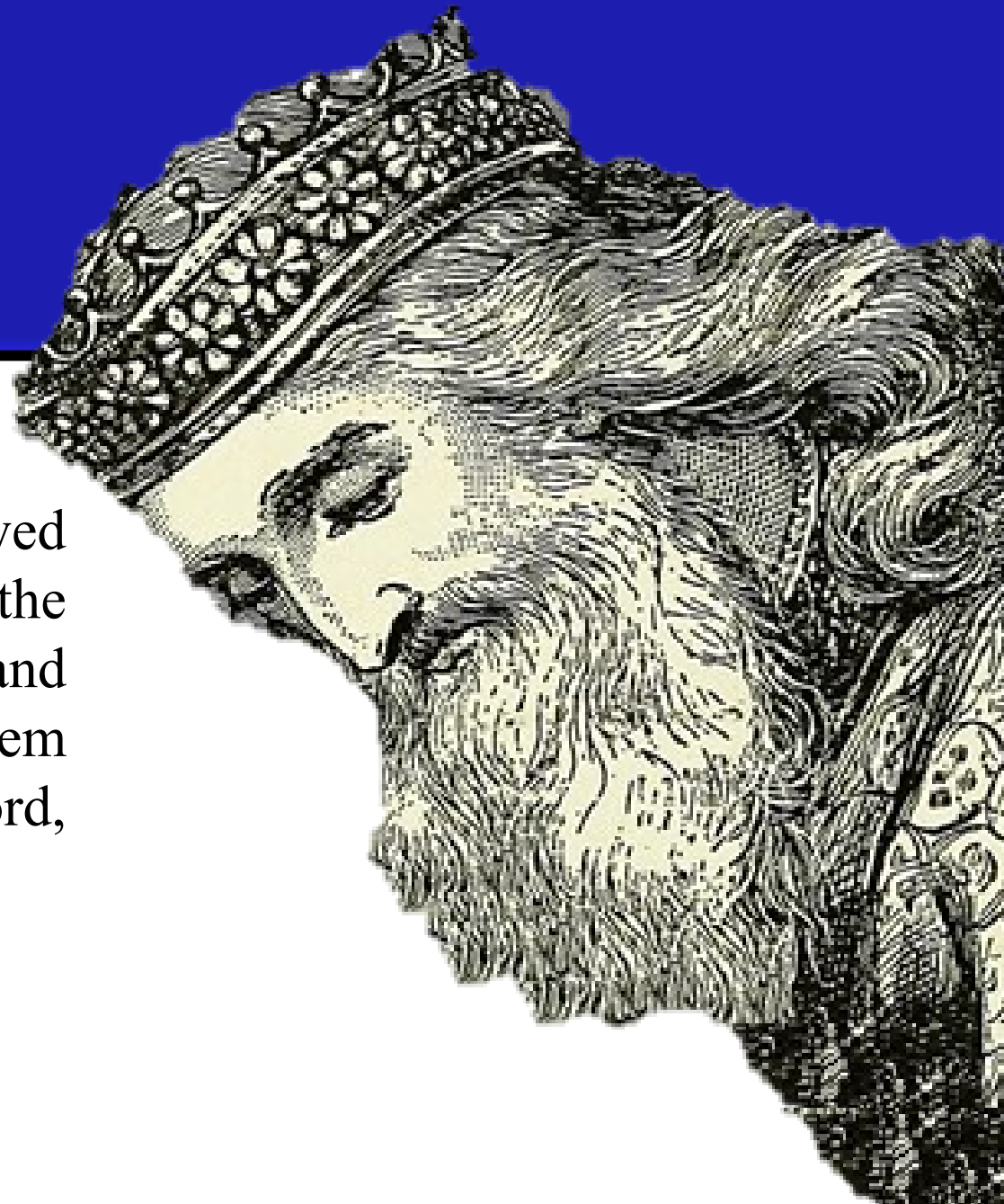
II Chronicles 20

“¹⁷Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you.”



II Chronicles 20

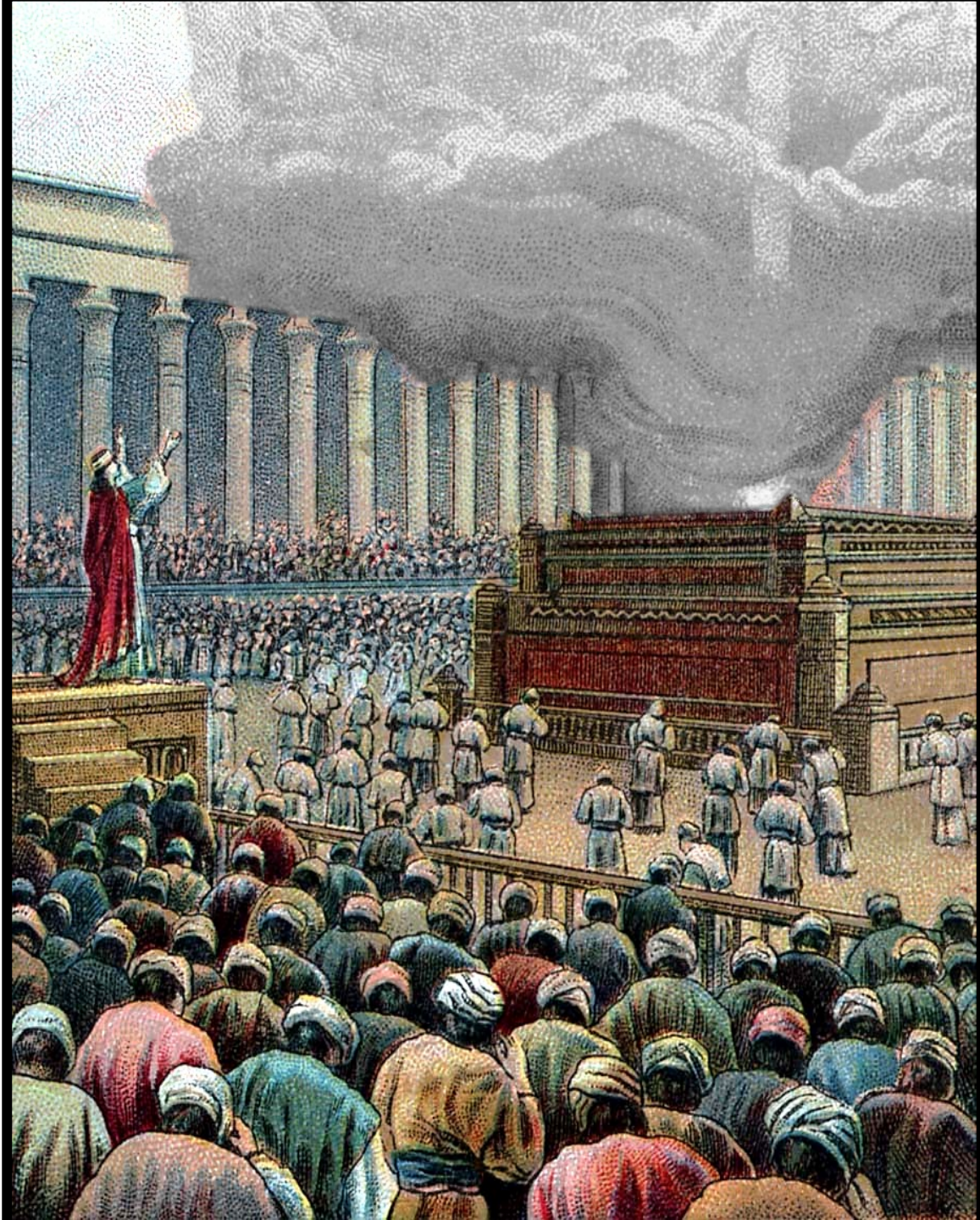
“¹⁸And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord.”



II Chronicles 20

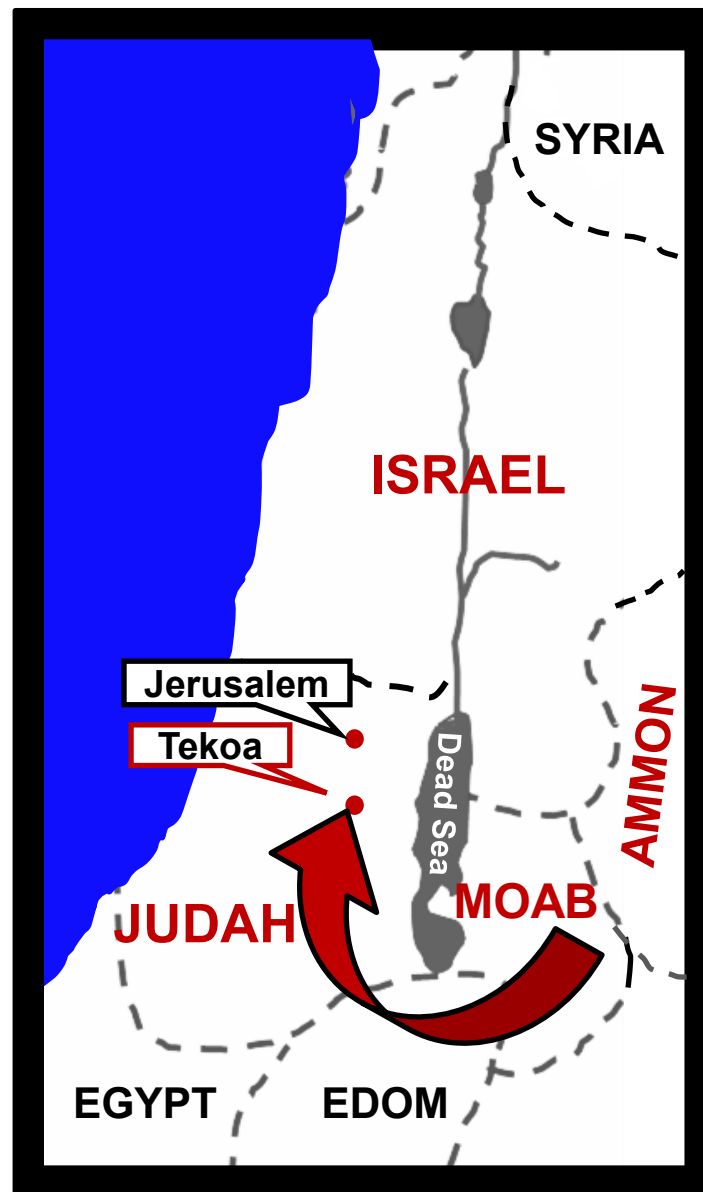
“¹⁹And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high.”

*Oh to have heard that
chorus as their voices
blended that day!*

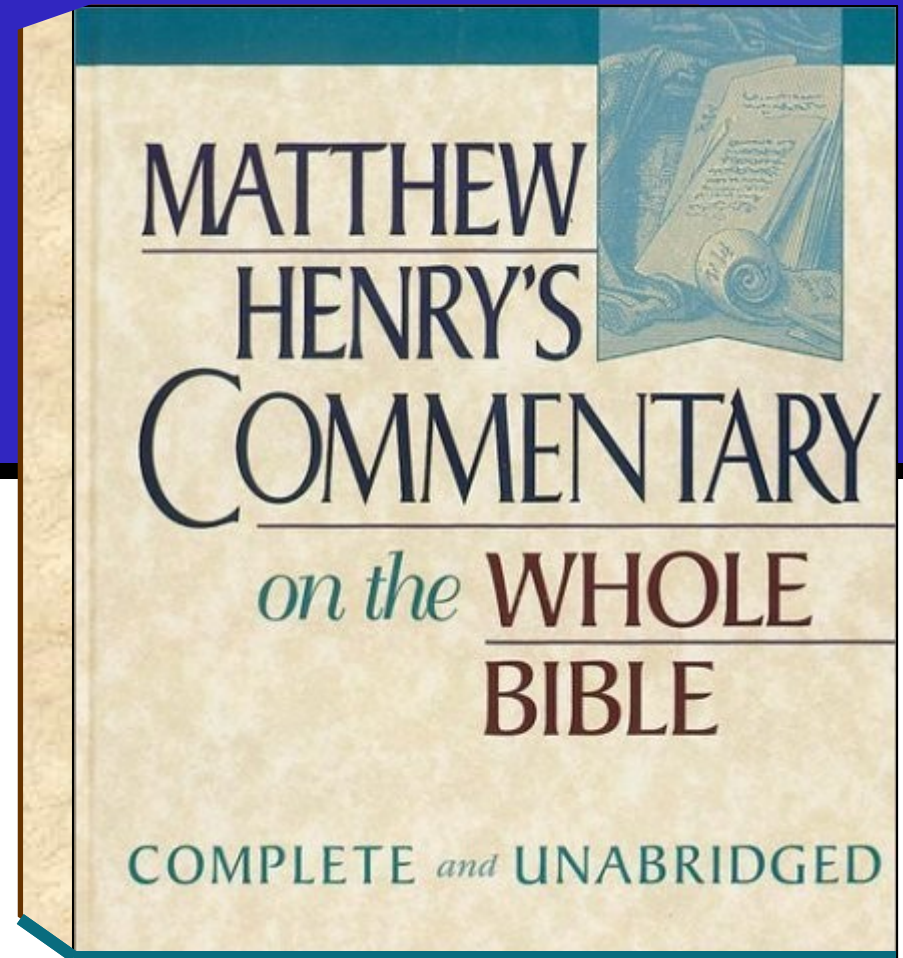


II Chronicles 20

“²⁰And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of **Tekoa**: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”



Many of the following
comments on chapter 20
are from
Matthew Henry's
Commentary.





Never was an army drawn out to the field of battle as Jehoshaphat's army was. No notice was taken of swords or shields. Their faith was their armor. Instead of being called to wield their swords they were called on to believe in the Lord God. The singers lead them into battle.

II Chronicles 20

“²¹And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, **Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever.**” [See: Psalm 136]



II Chronicles 20

“²²And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.”

AMBUSHMENTS

Definition: trap, lie in wait, take by surprise

The text says “the Lord set ambushments,” but how?

- Did angels interfere?
- Did God send some unnamed army into the conflict?
- Did God cause Ammon, Moab and Seir (Edom) to become confused and ambush one another?
- Did jealousy and hatred fester among these three heathen nations in their attempt to unite against Judah to the point that they fought one another?

However it took place the consequence was victory for God’s people without one sword having to be drawn.

***How it happened is not revealed;
just that God set it in motion.***



Never was an army so unaccountably destroyed as that of their enemy; not by thunder, or hail, or the sword of an angel, but by the Lord.

II Chronicles 20

“²⁴And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.”



Never was spoil so cheerfully divided, for all had been done for them. The spoil was more than they could carry away at once, and they were three days in gathering it.

II Chronicles 20

“²⁵And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much.”



Never was victory celebrated with more solemn thanksgivings. They kept a day of praise in the camp before they drew their forces out of the field.

On the fourth day they assembled in a valley where they praised God so much the name of the valley was changed to *The Valley Of Blessing*.

Finally, they made a solemn procession to Jerusalem that ended in prayers and songs of thanksgiving in the Temple.

II Chronicles 20

“²⁸And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord.”



Never did victory bring upon a nation a better reputation. Jehoshaphat's kingdom was made to look very great abroad. It brought fear upon their neighbors of doing any injury to God's people.

II Chronicles 20

“²⁹And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about.”

If the story stopped here the reign of King Jehoshaphat would have ended showing his faithfulness, but it doesn't.

Of course, that is another story

II Chronicles 20

“³⁵And after this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who did very wickedly.”



THE END