

Book 9

**FROM THE DEATH OF AHAB
TO THE CAPTIVITY OF THE
TEN TRIBES**

Flavius Josephus

Chapter 1

Jehoshaphat Constituted Judges

1. When Jehoshaphat the king was come to Jerusalem, from the assistance he had afforded Ahab, the king of Israel, when he fought with Benhadad, king of Syria, the prophet Jehu met him, and accused him for assisting Ahab, a man both impious and wicked; and said to him, that God was displeased with him for so doing, but that he delivered him from the enemy, notwithstanding he had sinned, because of his own proper disposition, which was good. Whereupon the king betook himself to thanksgivings and sacrifices to God; after which he presently went over all that country which he ruled round about, and taught the people, as well the laws which God gave them by Moses, as that religious worship that was due to him. He also constituted judges in every one of the cities of his kingdom; and charged them to have regard to nothing so much in judging the multitude as to do justice, and not to be moved by bribes, nor by the dignity of men eminent for either their riches or their high birth, but to distribute justice equally to all, as knowing that God is conscious of every secret action of theirs. When he had himself instructed them thus, and gone over every city of the two tribes, he returned to Jerusalem. He there also constituted judges out of the priests and the Levites, and principal persons of the multitude, and admonished them to pass all their sentences with care and justice (1) And that if any of the people of his country had differences of great consequence, they should send them out of the other cities to these judges, who would be obliged to give righteous sentences concerning such causes; and this with the greater care, because it is proper that the sentences which are given in that city wherein the temple of God is, and wherein the king dwells, be given with great care and the utmost justice. Now he set over them Amariah the priest, and Zebadiah, [both] of the tribe of Judah; and after this manner it was that the king ordered these affairs.

2. About the same time the Moabites and Ammonites made an expedition against Jehoshaphat, and took with them a great body of Arabians, and pitched their camp at Engedi, a city that is situate at the lake Asphaltiris, and distant three hundred furlongs from Jerusalem. In that place grows the best kind of palm trees, and the opobalsamum. (2) Now Jehoshaphat heard that the enemies had passed over the lake, and had made an irruption into that country which belonged to his kingdom; at which news he was afrighted, and called the people of Jerusalem to a congregation in the temple, and standing over against the temple itself, he called upon God to afford him power and strength, so as to inflict punishment on those that made this expedition against them (for that those who built this his temple had prayed, that he would protect that city, and take vengeance on those that were so bold as to come against it); for they are come to take from us that land which thou hast given us for a possession. When he had prayed thus, he fell into tears; and the whole multitude, together with their wives and children, made their supplications also: upon which a certain prophet, Jahaziel by name, came into the midst of the assembly, and cried out, and spake both to the multitude and to the king, that God heard their prayers, and promised to fight against their enemies. He also gave order that the king should draw his forces out the next day, for that he should find them between Jerusalem and the ascent of Engedi, at a place called The Eminence, and that he should not fight against them, but only stand still, and see how God would fight against them. When the prophet had said this, both the king and the multitude fell upon their faces, and gave thanks to God, and worshipped him; and the Levites continued singing hymns to God with their instruments of music.

3. As soon as it was day, and the king was come into that wilderness which is under the city of Tekoa, he said to the multitude, "that they ought to give credit to what the prophet had said, and not to set themselves in array for fighting; but to set the priests with their trumpets, and the Levites with

the singers of hymns, to give thanks to God, as having already delivered our country from our enemies." This opinion of the king pleased [the people], and they did what he advised them to do. So God caused a terror and a commotion to arise among the Ammonites, who thought one another to be enemies, and slew one another, insomuch that not one man out of so great an army escaped; and when Jehoshaphat looked upon that valley wherein their enemies had been encamped, and saw it full of dead men, he rejoiced at so surprising an event, as was this assistance of God, while he himself by his own power, and without their labor, had given them the victory. He also gave his army leave to take the prey of the enemy's camp, and to spoil their dead bodies; and indeed so they did for three days together, till they were weary, so great was the number of the slain; and on the fourth day, all the people were gathered together unto a certain hollow place or valley, and blessed God for his power and assistance, from which the place had this name given it, the Valley of [Berachah, or] Blessing.

4. And when the king had brought his army back to Jerusalem, he betook himself to celebrate festivals, and offer sacrifices, and this for many days. And indeed, after this destruction of their enemies, and when it came to the ears of the foreign nations, they were all greatly afrighted, as supposing that God would openly fight for him hereafter. So Jehoshaphat from that time lived in great glory and splendor, on account of his righteousness and his piety towards God. He was also in friendship with Ahab's son, who was king of Israel; and he joined with him in the building of ships that were to sail to Pontus, and the traffic cities of Thrace (3) but he failed of his gains, for the ships were destroyed by being so great [and unwieldy]; on which account he was no longer concerned about shipping. And this is the history of Jehoshaphat, the king of Jerusalem.

Footnotes:

1. These judges constituted by Jehoshaphat were a kind of Jerusalem

Sanhedrim, out of the priests, the Levites, and the principal of the people, both here and 2 Chronicles 19:8; much like the old Christian judicatures of the bishop, the presbyters, the deacons, and the people.

2. Concerning this precious balsam, see the note on Atiq. B. VIII. ch. 6. sect. 6.
3. What are here Pontus and Thrace, as the places whither Jehoshaphat's fleet sailed, are in our other copies Ophir and Tarshish, and the place whence it sailed is in them Eziongeber, which lay on the Red Sea, whence it was impossible for any ships to sail to Pontus or Thrace; so that Josephus's copy differed from our other copies, as is further plain from his own words, which render what we read, that "the ships were broken at Eziongeber, from their unwieldy greatness." But so far we may conclude, that Josephus thought one Ophir to be some where in the Mediterranean, and not in the South Sea, though perhaps there might be another Ophir in that South Sea also, and that fleets might then sail both from Phoenicia and from the Red Sea to fetch the gold of Ophir.

Chapter 2

Ahaziah, King of Israel

1. And now Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, reigned over Israel, and made his abode in Samaria. He was a wicked man, and in all respects like to both his parents and to Jeroboam, who first of all transgressed, and began to deceive the people. In the second year of his reign, the king of Moab fell off from his obedience, and left off paying those tributes which he before paid to his father Ahab. Now it happened that Ahaziah, as he was coming down from the top of his house, fell down from it, and in his sickness sent to the Fly, which was the god of Ekron, for that was this god's name, to inquire about his recovery (1) but the God of the Hebrews appeared to Elijah the prophet, and commanded him to go and meet the messengers that were sent, and to ask them, whether the people of Israel had put a God of their own, that the king sent to a foreign god to inquire about his recovery? and to bid them return and tell the king that he would not escape this disease. And when Elijah had performed what God had commanded him, and the messengers had heard what he said, they returned to the king immediately; and when the king wondered how they could return so soon, and asked them the reason of it, they said that a certain man met them, and forbade them to go on any farther; but to return and tell thee, from the command of the God of Israel, that this disease will have a bad end. And when the king bid them describe the man that said this to them, they replied that he was a hairy man, and was girt about with a girdle of leather. So the king understood by this that the man who was described by the messengers was Elijah; whereupon he sent a captain to him, with fifty soldiers, and commanded them to bring Elijah to him; and when the captain that was sent found Elijah sitting upon the top of a hill, he commanded him to come down, and to come to the king, for so had he enjoined; but that in case he refused, they would carry him by force. Elijah said to him, "That you may have a trial whether I be a true prophet, I

will pray that fire may fall from heaven, and destroy both the soldiers and yourself." (2) So he prayed, and a whirlwind of fire fell [from heaven], and destroyed the captain, and those that were with him. And when the king was informed of the destruction of these men, he was very angry, and sent another captain with the like number of armed men that were sent before. And when this captain also threatened the prophet, that unless he came down of his own accord, he would take him and carry him away, upon his prayer against him, the fire [from heaven] slew this captain as well the other. And when, upon inquiry, the king was informed of what happened to him, he sent out a third captain. But when this captain, who was a wise man, and of a mild disposition, came to the place where Elijah happened to be, and spake civilly to him; and said that he knew that it was without his own consent, and only in submission to the king's command that he came to him; and that those that came before did not come willingly, but on the same account; - he therefore desired him to have pity on those armed men that were with him, and that he would come down and follow him to the king. So Elijah accepted of his discreet words and courteous behavior, and came down and followed him. And when he came to the king, he prophesied to him and told him that God said, "Since thou hast despised him as not being God, and so unable to foretell the truth about thy distemper, but hast sent to the god of Ekron to inquire of him what will be the end of this thy distemper, know this, that thou shalt die."

2. Accordingly the king in a very little time died, as Elijah had foretold; but Jehoram his brother succeeded him in the kingdom, for he died without children: but for this Jehoram, he was like his father Ahab in wickedness, and reigned twelve years, indulging himself in all sorts of wickedness and impiety towards God, for, leaving off his worship, he worshipped foreign gods; but in other respects he was an active man. Now at this time it was that Elijah disappeared from among men, and no one knows of his death to this very day; but he left behind him his disciple Elisha, as we have formerly declared. And indeed, as to Elijah, and as to Enoch, who was before the

deluge, it is written in the sacred books that they disappeared, but so that nobody knew that they died.

Footnotes:

1. This god of flies seems to have been so called, as was the like god among the Greeks, from his supposed power over flies, in driving them away from the flesh of their sacrifices, which otherwise would have been very troublesome to them.
2. It is commonly esteemed a very cruel action of Elijah, when he called for fire from heaven, and consumed no fewer than two captains and a hundred soldiers, and this for no other crime than obeying the orders of their king, in attempting to seize him; and it is owned by our Savior, that it was an instance of greater severity than the spirit of the New Testament allows, Luke 9:54. But then we must consider that it is not unlikely that these captains and soldiers believed that they were sent to fetch the prophet, that he might be put to death for foretelling the death of the king, and this while they knew him to be the prophet of the true God, the supreme King of Israel, (for they were still under the theocracy,) which was no less than impiety, rebellion, and treason, in the highest degree: nor would the command of a subaltern, or inferior captain, contradicting the commands of the general, when the captain and the soldiers both knew it to be so, as I suppose, justify or excuse such gross rebellion and disobedience in soldiers at this day. Accordingly, when Saul commanded his guards to slay Ahimelech and the priests at Nob, they knew it to be an unlawful command, and would not obey it, 1 Samuel 22:17. From which cases both officers and soldiers may learn, that the commands of their leaders or kings cannot justify or excuse them in doing what is wicked in the sight of God, or in fighting in an unjust cause, when they know it so to be.

Chapter 3

The Death of Jehoshaphat

1. When Joram had taken upon him the kingdom, he determined to make an expedition against the king of Moab, whose name was Mesha; for, as we told you before, he was departed from his obedience to his brother [Ahaziah], while he paid to his father Ahab two hundred thousand sheep, with their fleeces of wool. When therefore he had gathered his own army together, he sent also to Jehoshaphat, and entreated him, that since he had from the beginning been a friend to his father, he would assist him in the war that he was entering into against the Moabites, who had departed from their obedience, who not only himself promised to assist him, but would also oblige the king of Edom, who was under his authority, to make the same expedition also. When Joram had received these assurances of assistance from Jehoshaphat, he took his army with him, and came to Jerusalem; and when he had been sumptuously entertained by the king of Jerusalem, it was resolved upon by them to take their march against their enemies through the wilderness of Edom. And when they had taken a compass of seven days' journey, they were in distress for want of water for the cattle, and for the army, from the mistake of their roads by the guides that conducted them, insomuch that they were all in an agony, especially Joram; and cried to God, by reason of their sorrow, and [desired to know] what wickedness had been committed by them that induced him to deliver three kings together, without fighting, unto the king of Moab. But Jehoshaphat, who was a righteous man, encouraged him, and bade him send to the camp, and know whether any prophet of God was come along with them, that we might by him learn from God what we should do. And when one of the servants of Joram said that he had seen there Elisha, the son of Shaphat, the disciple of Elijah, the three kings went to him, at the entreaty of Jehoshaphat; and when they were come at the prophet's tent, which tent was pitched out of the camp, they asked him

what would become of the army? and Joram was particularly very pressing with him about it. And when he replied to him, that he should not trouble him, but go to his father's and mother's prophets, for they [to be sure] were true prophets, he still desired him to prophesy, and to save them. So he swore by God that he would not answer him, unless it were on account of Jehoshaphat, who was a holy and righteous man; and when, at his desire, they brought him a man that could play on the psaltery, the Divine Spirit came upon him as the music played, and he commanded them to dig many trenches in the valley; for, said he, "though there appear neither cloud, nor wind, nor storm of rain, ye shall see this river full of water, till the army and the cattle be saved for you by drinking of it. Nor will this be all the favor that you shall receive from God, but you shall also overcome your enemies, and take the best and strongest cities of the Moabites, and you shall cut down their fruit trees, (1) and lay waste their country, and stop up their fountains and rivers."

2. When the prophet had said this, the next day, before the sun-rising, a great torrent ran strongly; for God had caused it to rain very plentifully at the distance of three days' journey into Edom, so that the army and the cattle found water to drink in abundance. But when the Moabites heard that the three kings were coming upon them, and made their approach through the wilderness, the king of Moab gathered his army together presently, and commanded them to pitch their camp upon the mountains, that when the enemies should attempt to enter their country, they might not be concealed from them. But when at the rising of the sun they saw the water in the torrent, for it was not far from the land of Moab, and that it was of the color of blood, for at such a time the water especially looks red, by the shining of the sun upon it, they formed a false notion of the state of their enemies, as if they had slain one another for thirst; and that the river ran with their blood. However, supposing that this was the case, they desired their king would send them out to spoil their enemies; whereupon they all went in haste, as to an advantage already gained, and came to the enemy's camp, as supposing

them destroyed already. But their hope deceived them; for as their enemies stood round about them, some of them were cut to pieces, and others of them were dispersed, and fled to their own country. And when the kings fell into the land of Moab, they overthrew the cities that were in it, and spoiled their fields, and marred them, filling them with stones out of the brooks, and cut down the best of their trees, and stopped up their fountains of water, and overthrew their walls to their foundations. But the king of Moab, when he was pursued, endured a siege; and seeing his city in danger of being overthrown by force, made a sally, and went out with seven hundred men, in order to break through the enemy's camp with his horsemen, on that side where the watch seemed to be kept most negligently; and when, upon trial, he could not get away, for he lighted upon a place that was carefully watched, he returned into the city, and did a thing that showed despair and the utmost distress; for he took his eldest son, who was to reign after him, and lifting him up upon the wall, that he might be visible to all the enemies, he offered him as a whole burnt-offering to God, whom, when the kings saw, they commiserated the distress that was the occasion of it, and were so affected, in way of humanity and pity, that they raised the siege, and every one returned to his own house. So Jehoshaphat came to Jerusalem, and continued in peace there, and outlived this expedition but a little time, and then died, having lived in all sixty years, and of them reigned twenty-five. He was buried in a magnificent manner in Jerusalem, for he had imitated the actions of David.

Footnote:

1. This practice of cutting down, or plucking up by the roots, the fruit trees was forbidden, even in ordinary wars, by the law of Moses, Deuteronomy 20:19, 20, and only allowed by God in this particular case, when the Moabites were to be punished and cut off in an extraordinary manner for their wickedness See Jeremiah 48:11-13, and many the like prophecies against them. Nothing could therefore justify this practice but a

particular commission from God by his prophet, as in the present case, which was ever a sufficient warrant for breaking any such ritual or ceremonial law whatsoever.

Chapter 4

The Wonders Done by the Prophet Elisha

1. Jehoshapat had a good number of children; but he appointed his eldest son Jehoram to be his successor, who had the same name with his mother's brother, that was king of Israel, and the son of Ahab. Now when the king of Israel was come out of the land of Moab to Samaria, he had with him Elisha the prophet, whose acts I have a mind to go over particularly, for they were illustrious, and worthy to be related, as we have them set down in the sacred books.

2. For they say that the widow of Obadiah (1) Ahab's steward, came to him, and said, that he was not ignorant how her husband had preserved the prophets that were to be slain by Jezebel, the wife of Ahab; for she said that he hid a hundred of them, and had borrowed money for their maintenance, and that, after her husband's death, she and her children were carried away to be made slaves by the creditors; and she desired of him to have mercy upon her on account of what her husband did, and afford her some assistance. And when he asked her what she had in the house, she said, "Nothing but a very small quantity of oil in a cruse." So the prophet bid her go away, and borrow a great many empty vessels of her neighbors, and when she had shut her chamber door, to pour the oil into them all; for that God would fill them full. And when the woman had done what she was commanded to do, and bade her children bring every one of the vessels, and all were filled, and not one left empty, she came to the prophet, and told him that they were all full; upon which he advised her to go away, and sell the oil, and pay the creditors what was owing them, for that there would be some surplus of the price of the oil, which she might make use of for the maintenance of her children. And thus did Elisha discharge the woman's debts, and free her from the vexation of her creditors.

3. Elisha also sent a hasty message to Joram, (2) and exhorted him to take care of that place, for that therein were some Syrians lying in ambush to kill him. So the king did as the prophet exhorted him, and avoided his going a hunting. And when Benhadad missed of the success of his lying in ambush, he was wroth with his own servants, as if they had betrayed his ambushment to Joram; and he sent for them, and said they were the betrayers of his secret counsels; and he threatened that he would put them to death, since such their practice was evident, because he had intrusted this secret to none but them, and yet it was made known to his enemy. And one that was present said that he should not mistake himself, nor suspect that they had discovered to his enemy his sending men to kill him, but that he ought to know that it was Elisha the prophet who discovered all to him, and laid open all his counsels. So he gave order that they should send some to learn in what city Elisha dwelt. Accordingly those that were sent brought word that he was in Dothan; wherefore Benhadad sent to that city a great army, with horses and chariots, to take Elisha: so they encompassed the city round about by night, and kept him therein confined; but when the prophet's servant in the morning perceived this, and that his enemies sought to take Elisha, he came running, and crying out after a disordered manner to him, and told him of it; but he encouraged him, and bid him not be afraid, and to despise the enemy, and trust in the assistance of God, and was himself without fear; and he besought God to make manifest to his servant his power and presence, so far as was possible, in order to the inspiring him with hope and courage. Accordingly God heard the prayer of the prophet, and made the servant see a multitude of chariots and horses encompassing Elisha, till he laid aside his fear, and his courage revived at the sight of what he supposed was come to their assistance. After this Elisha did further entreat God, that he would dim the eyes of their enemies, and cast a mist before them, whereby they might not discern him. When this was done, he went into the midst of his enemies, and asked them who it was that they came to seek; and when they replied, "The prophet Elisha," he promised he would deliver him to them, if they would

follow him to the city where he was. So these men were so darkened by God in their sight and in their mind, that they followed him very diligently; and when Elisha had brought them to Samaria, he ordered Joram the king to shut the gates, and to place his own army round about them; and prayed to God to clear the eyes of these their enemies, and take the mist from before them. Accordingly, when they were freed from the obscurity they had been in, they saw themselves in the midst of their enemies; and as the Syrians were strangely amazed and distressed, as was but reasonable, at an action so Divine and surprising, and as king Joram asked the prophet if he would give him leave to shoot at them, Elisha forbade him so to do; and said, that "it is just to kill those that are taken in battle, but that these men had done the country no harm, but, without knowing it, were come thither by the Divine Power:" - so that his counsel was to treat them in a hospitable manner at his table, and then send them away without hurting them. (3) Wherefore Joram obeyed the prophet; and when he had feasted the Syrians in a splendid and magnificent manner, he let them go to Benhadad their king.

4. Now when these men were come back, and had showed Benhadad how strange an accident had befallen them, and what an appearance and power they had experienced of the God of Israel, he wondered at it, as also at that prophet with whom God was so evidently present; so he determined to make no more secret attempts upon the king of Israel, out of fear of Elisha, but resolved to make open war with them, as supposing he could be too hard for his enemies by the multitude of his army and power. So he made an expedition with a great army against Joram, who, not thinking himself a match for him, shut himself up in Samaria, and depended on the strength of its walls; but Benhadad supposed he should take the city, if not by his engines of war, yet that he should overcome the Samaritans by famine, and the want of necessaries, and brought his army upon them, and besieged the city; and the plenty of necessaries was brought so low with Joram, that from the extremity of want an ass's head was sold in Samaria for fourscore pieces of silver, and the Hebrews bought a sextary of dore's dung, instead of salt,

for five pieces of silver. Now Joram was in fear lest somebody should betray the city to the enemy, by reason of the famine, and went every day round the walls and the guards to see whether any such were concealed among them; and by being thus seen, and taking such care, he deprived them of the opportunity of contriving any such thing; and if they had a mind to do it, he, by this means, prevented them: but upon a certain woman's crying out, "Have pity on me, my lord," while he thought that she was about to ask for somewhat to eat, he imprecated God's curse upon her, and said he had neither thrashing-floor nor wine-press, whence he might give her any thing at her petition. Upon which she said she did not desire his aid in any such thing, nor trouble him about food, but desired that he would do her justice as to another woman. And when he bade her say on, and let him know what she desired, she said she had made an agreement with the other woman who was her neighbor and her friend, that because the famine and want was intolerable, they should kill their children, each of them having a son of their own, and we will live upon them ourselves for two days, the one day upon one son, and the other day upon the other; and," said she, I have killed my son the first day, and we lived upon my son yesterday; but this other woman will not do the same thing, but hath broken her agreement, and hath hid her son." This story mightily grieved Joram when he heard it; so he rent his garment, and cried out with a loud voice, and conceived great wrath against Elisha the prophet, and set himself eagerly to have him slain, because he did not pray to God to provide them some exit and way of escape out of the miseries with which they were surrounded; and sent one away immediately to cut off his head, who made haste to kill the prophet. But Elisha was not unacquainted with the wrath of the king against him; for as he sat in his house by himself, with none but his disciples about him, he told them that Joram, (4) who was the son of a murderer, had sent one to take away his head; "but," said he, "when he that is commanded to do this comes, take care that you do not let him come in, but press the door against him, and hold him fast there, for the king himself will follow him, and come to me, having altered his mind." Accordingly, they did as they were bidden, when he that

was sent by the king to kill Elisha came. But Joram repented of his wrath against the prophet; and for fear he that was commanded to kill him should have done it before he came, he made haste to hinder his slaughter, and to save the prophet: and when he came to him, he accused him that he did not pray to God for their deliverance from the miseries they now lay under, but saw them so sadly destroyed by them. Hereupon Elisha promised, that the very next day, at the very same hour in which the king came to him, they should have great plenty of food, and that two seahs of barley should be sold in the market for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour should be sold for a shekel. This prediction made Joram, and those that were present, very joyful, for they did not scruple believing what the prophet said, on account of the experience they had of the truth of his former predictions; and the expectation of plenty made the want they were in that day, with the uneasiness that accompanied it, appear a light thing to them: but the captain of the third band, who was a friend of the king, and on whose hand the king leaned, said, "Thou talkest of incredible things, O prophet! for as it is impossible for God to pour down torrents of barley, or fine flour, out of heaven, so is it impossible that what thou sayest should come to pass." To which the prophet made this reply, "Thou shalt see these things come to pass, but thou shalt not be in the least a partaker of them."

5. Now what Elisha had thus foretold came to pass in the manner following: There was a law at Samaria (5) that those that had the leprosy, and whose bodies were not cleansed from it, should abide without the city: and there were four men that on this account abode before the gates, while nobody gave them any food, by reason of the extremity of the famine; and as they were prohibited from entering into the city by the law, and they considered that if they were permitted to enter, they should miserably perish by the famine; as also, that if they staid where they were, they should suffer in the same manner, - they resolved to deliver themselves up to the enemy, that in case they should spare them, they should live; but if they should be killed, that would be an easy death. So when they had confirmed this their

resolution, they came by night to the enemy's camp. Now God had begun to affright and disturb the Syrians, and to bring the noise of chariots and armor to their ears, as though an army were coming upon them, and had made them suspect that it was coming nearer and nearer to them. In short, they were in such a dread of this army, that they left their tents, and ran together to Benhadad, and said that Joram the king of Israel had hired for auxiliaries both the king of Egypt and the king of the Islands, and led them against them for they heard the noise of them as they were coming. And Benhadad believed what they said (for there came the same noise to his ears as well as it did to theirs); so they fell into a mighty disorder and tumult, and left their horses and beasts in their camp, with immense riches also, and betook themselves to flight. And those lepers who had departed from Samaria, and were gone to the camp of the Syrians, of whom we made mention a little before, when they were in the camp, saw nothing but great quietness and silence: accordingly they entered into it, and went hastily into one of their tents; and when they saw nobody there, they eat and drank, and carried garments, and a great quantity of gold, and hid it out of the camp; after which they went into another tent, and carried off what was in it, as they did at the former, and this did they for several times, without the least interruption from any body. So they gathered thereby that the enemies were departed; whereupon they reproached themselves that they did not inform Joram and the citizens of it. So they came to the walls of Samaria, and called aloud to the watchmen, and told them in what state the enemies were, as did these tell the king's guards, by whose means Joram came to know of it; who then sent for his friends, and the captains of his host, and said to them, that he suspected that this departure of the king of Syria was by way of ambush and treachery, and that out of despair of ruining you by famine, when you imagine them to be fled away, you may come out of the city to spoil their camp, and he may then fall upon you on a sudden, and may both kill you, and take the city without fighting; whence it is that I exhort you to guard the city carefully, and by no means to go out of it, or proudly to despise your enemies, as though they were really gone away." And when a certain person

said that he did very well and wisely to admit such a suspicion, but that he still advised him to send a couple of horsemen to search all the country as far as Jordan, that "if they were seized by an ambush of the enemy, they might be a security to your army, that they may not go out as if they suspected nothing, nor undergo the like misfortune; and," said he, "those horsemen may be numbered among those that have died by the famine, supposing they be caught and destroyed by the enemy." So the king was pleased with this opinion, and sent such as might search out the truth, who performed their journey over a road that was without any enemies, but found it full of provisions, and of weapons, that they had therefore thrown away, and left behind them, in order to their being light and expeditious in their flight. When the king heard this, he sent out the multitude to take the spoils of the camp; which gains of theirs were not of things of small value, but they took a great quantity of gold, and a great quantity of silver, and flocks of all kinds of cattle. They also possessed themselves of [so many] ten thousand measures of wheat and barley, as they never in the least dreamed of; and were not only freed from their former miseries, but had such plenty, that two seahs of barley were bought for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, according to the prophecy of Elisha. Now a seah is equal to an Italian modius and a half. The captain of the third band was the only man that received no benefit by this plenty; for as he was appointed by the king to oversee the gate, that he might prevent the too great crowd of the multitude, and they might not endanger one another to perish, by treading on one another in the press, he suffered himself in that very way, and died in that very manner, as Elisha had foretold such his death, when he alone of them all disbelieved what he said concerning that plenty of provisions which they should soon have.

6. Hereupon, when Benhadad, the king of Syria, had escaped to Damascus, and understood that it was God himself that cast all his army into this fear and disorder, and that it did not arise from the invasion of enemies, he was mightily cast down at his having God so greatly for his enemy, and

fell into a distemper. Now it happened that Elisha the prophet, at that time, was gone out of his own country to Damascus, of which Berthadad was informed: he sent Hazael, the most faithful of all his servants, to meet him, and to carry him presents, and bade him inquire of him about his distemper, and whether he should escape the danger that it threatened. So Hazael came to Elisha with forty camels, that carried the best and most precious fruits that the country of Damascus afforded, as well as those which the king's palace supplied. He saluted him kindly, and said that he was sent to him by king Berthadad, and brought presents with him, in order to inquire concerning his distemper, whether he should recover from it or not. Whereupon the prophet bid him tell the king no melancholy news; but still he said he would die. So the king's servant was troubled to hear it; and Elisha wept also, and his tears ran down plenteously at his foresight of what miseries his people would undergo after the death of Berthadad. And when Hazael asked him what was the occasion of this confusion he was in, he said that he wept out of his commiseration for the multitude of the Israelites, and what terrible miseries they will suffer by thee; "for thou wilt slay the strongest of them, and wilt burn their strongest cities, and wilt destroy their children, and dash them against the stones, and wilt rip up their women with child." And when Hazael said, "How can it be that I should have power enough to do such things ?" the prophet replied, that God had informed him that he should be king of Syria. So when Hazael was come to Benhadad, he told him good news concerning his distemper (6) but on the next day he spread a wet cloth, in the nature of a net, over him, and strangled him, and took his dominion. He was an active man, and had the good-will of the Syrians, and of the people of Damascus, to a great degree; by whom both Benhadad himself, and Hazael, who ruled after him, are honored to this day as gods, by reason of their benefactions, and their building them temples by which they adorned the city of the Damascenes. They also every day do with great pomp pay their worship to these kings, (7) and value themselves upon their antiquity; nor do they know that these kings are much later than they imagine, and that they are not yet eleven hundred years old. Now when Joram, the king of

Israel, heard that Berthadad was dead, he recovered out of the terror and dread he had been in on his account, and was very glad to live in peace.

Footnotes:

1. That this woman who cried to Elisha, and who in our Bible is styled "the wife of one of the sons of the prophets," 2 Kings 4:1, was no other than the widow of Obadiah, the good steward of Ahab, is confirmed by the Chaldee paraphrast, and by the Rabbins and others. Nor is that unlikely which Josephus here adds, that these debts were contracted by her husband for the support of those "hundred of the Lord's prophets, whom he maintained by fifty in a cave," in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, 1 Kings 18:4; which circumstance rendered it highly fit that the prophet Elisha should provide her a remedy, and enable her to redeem herself and her sons from the fear of that slavery which insolvent debtors were liable to by the law of Moses, Leviticus 25:39; Matthew 18:25; which he did accordingly, with God's help, at the expense of a miracle.
2. Dr. Hudson, with very good reason, suspects that there is no small defect in our present copies of Josephus, just before the beginning of this section, and that chiefly as to that distinct account which he had given us reason to expect in the first section, and to which he seems to refer, ch. 8. sect. 6. concerning the glorious miracles which Elisha wrought, which indeed in our Bibles are not a few, 2 Kings 6-9., but of which we have several omitted in Josephus's present copies. One of those histories, omitted at present, was evidently in his Bible, I mean that of the curing of Nanman's leprosy, 2 Kings 5.; for he plainly alludes to it, B. III. ch. 11. sect. 4, where he observes, that "there were lepers in many nations who yet have been in honor, and not only free from reproach and avoidance, but who have been great captains of armies, and been intrusted with high offices in the commonwealth, and have had the privilege of entering into holy places and temples." But what makes me most regret the want of that history in our present copies of Josephus is

this, that we have here, as it is commonly understood, one of the greatest difficulties in all the Bible, that in 2 Kings 5:18, 19, where Naaman, after he had been miraculously cured by a prophet of the true God, and had thereupon promised (ver. 17) that "he would henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord," adds, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimnu to worship there, and he leaneth on my hands, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmort; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmort, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. And Elisha said, Go in peace." This looks like a prophet's permission for being partaker in idolatry itself, out of compliance with an idolatrous court.

3. Upon occasion of this stratagem of Elisha, in Josephus, we may take notice, that although Josephus was one of the greatest lovers of truth in the world, yet in a just war he seems to have had no manner of scruple upon him by all such stratagems possible to deceive public enemies. See this Josephus's account of Jeremiah's imposition on the great men of the Jews in somewhat like case, Antiq. B. X. ch. 7. sect. 6; 2 Samuel 16:16, &c.
4. This son of a murderer was Joram, the son of Ahab, which Ahab slew, or permitted his wife Jezebel to slay, the Lord's prophets, and Naboth, 1 Kings 18:4; 21:19; and he is here called by this name, I suppose, because he had now also himself sent an officer to murder him; yet is Josephus's account of Joram's coming himself at last. as repenting of his intended cruelty, much more probable than that in our copies, 2 Kings 6:33, which rather implies the contrary.
5. This law of the Jews, for the exclusion of lepers out of the camp in the wilderness, and out of the cities in Judea, is a known one, Leviticus 13:46; Numbers 5:14.
6. Since Elijah did not live to anoint Hazael king of Syria himself, as he was empowered to do, 1 Kings 19:15, it was most probably now done, in his name, by his servant and successor Elisha. Nor does it seem to me

otherwise but that Benhadad immediately recovered of his disease, as the prophet foretold; and that Hazael, upon his being anointed to succeed him though he ought to have staid till he died by the course of nature, or some other way of Divine punishment, as did David for many years in the like case, was too impatient, and the very next day smothered or strangled him, in order to come directly to the succession.

7. What Mr. Le Clerc pretends here, that it is more probable that Hazael and his son were worshipped by the Syrians and people of Damascus till the days of Josephus, than Benhadad and Hazael, because under Benhadad they had greatly suffered, and because it is almost incredible that both a king and that king's murderer should be worshipped by the same Syrians, is of little force against those records, out of which Josephus drew this history, especially when it is likely that they thought Benhadad died of the distemper he labored under, and not by Hazael's treachery. Besides, the reason that Josephus gives for this adoration, that these two kings had been great benefactors to the inhabitants of Damascus, and had built them temples, is too remote from the political suspicions of Le Clerc; nor ought such weak suspicions to be deemed of any force against authentic testimonies of antiquity.

Chapter 5

The Defeat and Death of Jehoram

1. Now Jehoram the king of Jerusalem, for we have said before that he had the same name with the king of Israel, as soon as he had taken the government upon him, betook himself to the slaughter of his brethren, and his father's friends, who were governors under him, and thence made a beginning and a demonstration of his wickedness; nor was he at all better than those kings of Israel who at first transgressed against the laws of their country, and of the Hebrews, and against God's worship. And it was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, whom he had married, who taught him to be a bad man in other respects, and also to worship foreign gods. Now God would not quite root out this family, because of the promise he had made to David. However, Jehoram did not leave off the introduction of new sorts of customs to the propagation of impiety, and to the ruin of the customs of his own country. And when the Edomites about that time had revolted from him, and slain their former king, who was in subjection to his father, and had set up one of their own choosing, Jehoram fell upon the land of Edom, with the horsemen that were about him, and the chariots, by night, and destroyed those that lay near to his own kingdom, but did not proceed further. However, this expedition did him no service, for they all revolted from him, with those that dwelt in the country of Libnah. He was indeed so mad as to compel the people to go up to the high places of the mountains, and worship foreign gods.

2. As he was doing this, and had entirely cast his own country laws out of his mind, there was brought him an epistle from Elijah the prophet (1) which declared that God would execute great judgments upon him, because he had not imitated his own fathers, but had followed the wicked courses of the kings of Israel; and had compelled the tribe of Judah, and the citizens of

Jerusalem, to leave the holy worship of their own God, and to worship idols, as Ahab had compelled the Israelites to do, and because he had slain his brethren, and the men that were good and righteous. And the prophet gave him notice in this epistle what punishment he should undergo for these crimes, namely, the destruction of his people, with the corruption of the king's own wives and children; and that he should himself die of a distemper in his bowels, with long torments, those his bowels falling out by the violence of the inward rottenness of the parts, insomuch that, though he see his own misery, he shall not be able at all to help himself, but shall die in that manner. This it was which Elijah denounced to him in that epistle.

3. It was not long after this that an army of those Arabians that lived near to Ethiopia, and of the Philistines, fell upon the kingdom of Jehoram, and spoiled the country and the king's house. Moreover, they slew his sons and his wives: one only of his sons was left him, who escaped the enemy; his name was Ahaziah; after which calamity, he himself fell into that disease which was foretold by the prophet, and lasted a great while, (for God inflicted this punishment upon him in his belly, out of his wrath against him,) and so he died miserably, and saw his own bowels fall out. The people also abused his dead body; I suppose it was because they thought that such his death came upon him by the wrath of God, and that therefore he was not worthy to partake of such a funeral as became kings. Accordingly, they neither buried him in the sepulchers of his fathers, nor vouchsafed him any honors, but buried him like a private man, and this when he had lived forty years, and reigned eight. And the people of Jerusalem delivered the government to his son Ahaziah.

Footnote:

1. This epistle, in some copies of Josephus, is said to come to Jotare from Elijah, with this addition, "for he was yet upon earth," which could not be true of Elijah, who, as all agree, was gone from the earth about four

years before, and could only be true of Elisha; nor perhaps is there any more mystery here, than that the name of Elijah has very anciently crept into the text instead of Elisha, by the copiers, there being nothing in any copy of that epistle peculiar to Elijah.

Chapter 6

Jehu Was Anointed King

1. Now Joram, the king of Israel, after the death of Benhadad, hoped that he might now take Ramoth, a city of Gilead, from the Syrians. Accordingly he made an expedition against it, with a great army; but as he was besieging it, an arrow was shot at him by one of the Syrians, but the wound was not mortal. So he returned to have his wound healed in Jezreel, but left his whole army in Ramorb, and Jehu, the son of Nimshi, for their general; for he had already taken the city by force; and he proposed, after he was healed, to make war with the Syrians; but Elisha the prophet sent one of his disciples to Ramoth, and gave him holy oil to anoint Jehu, and to tell him that God had chosen him to be their king. He also sent him to say other things to him, and bid him to take his journey as if he fled, that when he came away he might escape the knowledge of all men. So when he was come to the city, he found Jehu sitting in the midst of the captains of the army, as Elisha had foretold he should find him. So he came up to him, and said that he desired to speak with him about certain matters; and when he was arisen, and had followed him into an inward chamber, the young man took the oil, and poured it on his head, and said that God ordained him to be king, in order to his destroying the house of Ahab, and that he might revenge the blood of the prophets that were unjustly slain by Jezebel, that so their house might utterly perish, as those of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and of Baasha, had perished for their wickedness, and no seed might remain of Ahab's family. So when he had said this, he went away hastily out of the chamber, and endeavored not to be seen by any of the army.

2. But Jehu came out, and went to the place where he before sat with the captains; and when they asked him, and desired him to tell them, wherefore it was that this young man came to him, and added withal that he was mad,

he replied, - "You guess right, for the words he spake were the words of a madman;" and when they were eager about the matter, and desired he would tell them, he answered, that God had said he had chosen him to be king over the multitude. When he had said this, every one of them put off his garment, (1) and strewed it under him, and blew with trumpets, and gave notice that Jehu was king. So when he had gotten the army together, he was preparing to set out immediately against Joram, at the city Jezreel, in which city, as we said before, he was healing of the wound which he had received in the siege of Ramoth. It happened also that Ahaziah, king of Jerusalem, was now come to Joram, for he was his sister's son, as we have said already, to see how he did after his wound, and this upon account of their kindred; but as Jehu was desirous to fall upon Joram, and those with him, on the sudden, he desired that none of the soldiers might run away and tell to Joram what had happened, for that this would be an evident demonstration of their kindness to him, and would show that their real inclinations were to make him king.

3. So they were pleased with what he did, and guarded the roads, lest somebody should privately tell the thing to those that were at Jezreel. Now Jehu took his choice horsemen, and sat upon his chariot, and went on for Jezreel; and when he was come near, the watchman whom Joram had set there to spy out such as came to the city, saw Jehu marching on, and told Joram that he saw a troop of horsemen marching on. Upon which he immediately gave orders, that one of his horsemen should be sent out to meet them, and to know who it was that was coming. So when the horseman came up to Jehu, he asked him in what condition the army was, for that the king wanted to know it; but Jehu bid him not at all to meddle with such matters, but to follow him. When the watchman saw this, he told Joram that the horseman had mingled himself among the company, and came along with them. And when the king had sent a second messenger, Jehu commanded him to do as the former did; and as soon as the watchman told this also to Joram, he at last got upon his chariot himself, together with Ahaziah, the king of Jerusalem; for, as we said before, he was there to see how Joram did,

after he had been wounded, as being his relation. So he went out to meet Jehu, who marched slowly, (2) and in good order; and when Joram met him in the field of Naboth, he asked him if all things were well in the camp; but Jehu reproached him bitterly, and ventured to call his mother a witch and a harlot. Upon this the king, fearing what he intended, and suspecting he had no good meaning, turned his chariot about as soon as he could, and said to Ahaziah, "We are fought against by deceit and treachery." But Jehu drew his bow, and smote him, the arrow going through his heart: so Joram fell down immediately on his knee, and gave up the ghost. Jehu also gave orders to Bidkar, the captain of the third part of his army, to cast the dead body of Joram into the field of Naboth, putting him in mind of the prophecy which Elijah prophesied to Ahab his father, when he had slain Naboth, that both he and his family should perish in that place; for that as they sat behind Ahab's chariot, they heard the prophet say so, and that it was now come to pass according to his prophecy. Upon the fall of Joram, Ahaziah was afraid of his own life, and turned his chariot into another road, supposing he should not be seen by Jehu; but he followed after him, and overtook him at a certain acclivity, and drew his bow, and wounded him; so he left his chariot, and got upon his horse, and fled from Jehu to Megiddo; and though he was under cure, in a little time he died of that wound, and was carried to Jerusalem, and buried there, after he had reigned one year, and had proved a wicked man, and worse than his father.

4. Now when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel adorned herself and stood upon a tower, and said, he was a fine servant that had killed his master! And when he looked up to her, he asked who she was, and commanded her to come down to him. At last he ordered the eunuchs to throw her down from the tower; and being thrown down, she be-sprinkled the wall with her blood, and was trodden upon by the horses, and so died. When this was done, Jehu came to the palace with his friends, and took some refreshment after his journey, both with other things, and by eating a meal. He also bid his servants to take up Jezebel and bury her, because of the nobility of her blood,

for she was descended from kings; but those that were appointed to bury her found nothing else remaining but the extreme parts of her body, for all the rest were eaten by dogs. When Jehu heard this, he admired the prophecy of Elijah, for he foretold that she should perish in this manner at Jezreel.

5. Now Ahab had seventy sons brought up in Samaria. So Jehu sent two epistles, the one to them that brought up the children, the other to the rulers of Samaria, which said, that they should set up the most valiant of Ahab's sons for king, for that they had abundance of chariots, and horses, and armor, and a great army, and fenced cities, and that by so doing they might avenge the murder of Ahab. This he wrote to try the intentions of those of Samaria. Now when the rulers, and those that had brought up the children, had read the letter, they were afraid; and considering that they were not at all able to oppose him, who had already subdued two very great kings, they returned him this answer: That they owned him for their lord, and would do whatsoever he bade them. So he wrote back to them such a reply as enjoined them to obey what he gave order for, and to cut off the heads of Ahab's sons, and send them to him. Accordingly the rulers sent for those that brought up the sons of Ahab, and commanded them to slay them, to cut off their heads, and send them to Jehu. So they did whatsoever they were commanded, without omitting any thing at all, and put them up in wicker baskets, and sent them to Jezreel. And when Jehu, as he was at supper with his friends, was informed that the heads of Ahab's sons were brought, he ordered them to make two heaps of them, one before each of the gates; and in the morning he went out to take a view of them, and when he saw them, he began to say to the people that were present, that he did himself make an expedition against his master [Joram], and slew him, but that it was not he that slew all these; and he desired them to take notice, that as to Ahab's family, all things had come to pass according to God's prophecy, and his house was perished, according as Elijah had foretold. And when he had further destroyed all the kindred of Ahab that were found in Jezreel, he went to Samaria; and as he was upon the road, he met the relations of Ahaziah king of Jerusalem, and

asked them whither they were going? they replied, that they came to salute Joram, and their own king Ahaziah, for they knew not that he had slain them both. So Jehu gave orders that they should catch these, and kill them, being in number forty-two persons.

6. After these, there met him a good and a righteous man, whose name was Jehonadab, and who had been his friend of old. He saluted Jehu, and began to commend him, because he had done every thing according to the will of God, in extirpating the house of Ahab. So Jehu desired him to come up into his chariot, and make his entry with him into Samaria; and told him that he would not spare one wicked man, but would punish the false prophets, and false priests, and those that deceived the multitude, and persuaded them to leave the worship of God Almighty, and to worship foreign gods; and that it was a most excellent and most pleasing sight to a good and a righteous man to see the wicked punished. So Jehonadab was persuaded by these arguments, and came up into Jehu's chariot, and came to Samaria. And Jehu sought out for all Ahab's kindred, and slew them. And being desirous that none of the false prophets, nor the priests of Ahab's god, might escape punishment, he caught them deceitfully by this wile; for he gathered all the people together, and said that he would worship twice as many gods as Ahab worshipped, and desired that his priests, and prophets, and servants might be present, because he would offer costly and great sacrifices to Ahab's god; and that if any of his priests were wanting, they should be punished with death. Now Ahab's god was called Baal; and when he had appointed a day on which he would offer those sacrifices, he sent messengers through all the country of the Israelites, that they might bring the priests of Baal to him. So Jehu commanded to give all the priests vestments; and when they had received them, he went into the house [of Baal], with his friend Jehonadab, and gave orders to make search whether there were not any foreigner or stranger among them, for he would have no one of a different religion to mix among their sacred offices. And when they said that there was no stranger there, and they were beginning their sacrifices, he set

fourscore men without, they being such of his soldiers as he knew to be most faithful to him, and bid them slay the prophets, and now vindicate the laws of their country, which had been a long time in disesteem. He also threatened, that if any one of them escaped, their own lives should go for them. So they slew them all with the sword, and burnt the house of Baal, and by that means purged Samaria of foreign customs [idolatrous worship]. Now this Baal was the god of the Tyrians; and Ahab, in order to gratify his father-in-law, Ethbaal, who was the king of Tyre and Sidon, built a temple for him in Samaria, and appointed him prophets, and worshipped him with all sorts of worship, although, when this god was demolished, Jehu permitted the Israelites to worship the golden heifers. However, because he had done thus, and taken care to punish the wicked, God foretold by his prophet that his .sons should reign over Israel for four generations. And in this condition was Jehu at this time.

Footnotes:

1. Spanheim here notes, that this putting off men's garments, and strewing them under a king, was an Eastern custom, which he had elsewhere explained.
2. Our copies say that this "driving of the chariots was like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously," 2 Kings 9:20; whereas Josephus's copy, as he understood it, was this, that, on the contrary, Jehu marched slowly, and in good order. Nor can it be denied, that since there was interval enough for king Joram to send out two horsemen, one after another, to Jehu, and at length to go out with king Ahaziah to meet him, and all this after he was come within sight of the watchman, and before he was come to Jezreel, the probability is greatly on the side of Josephus's copy or interpretation.

Chapter 7

Jehoiada, the High Priest, Slew Athaliah

1. Now when Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, heard of the death of her brother Joram, and of her son Ahaziah, and of the royal family, she endeavored that none of the house of David might be left alive, but that the whole family might be exterminated, that no king might arise out of it afterward; and, as she thought, she had actually done it; but one of Ahaziah's sons was preserved, who escaped death after the manner following: Ahaziah had a sister by the same father, whose name was Jehosheba, and she was married to the high priest Jehoiada. She went into the king's palace, and found Jehoash, for that was the little child's name, who was not above a year old, among those that were slain, but concealed with his nurse; so she took him with her into a secret bed-chamber, and shut him up there, and she and her husband Jehoiada brought him up privately in the temple six years, during which time Athaliah reigned over Jerusalem and the two tribes.

2. Now, on the Seventh year, Jehoiada communicated the matter to certain of the captains of hundreds, five in number, and persuaded them to be assisting to what attempts he was making against Athaliah, and to join with him in asserting the kingdom to the child. He also received such oaths from them as are proper to secure those that assist one another from the fear of discovery; and he was then of good hope that they should depose Athaliah. Now those men whom Jehoiada the priest had taken to be his partners went into all the country, and gathered together the priests and the Levites, and the heads of the tribes out of it, and came and brought them to Jerusalem to the high priest. So he demanded the security of an oath of them, to keep private whatsoever he should discover to them, which required both their silence and their assistance. So when they had taken the oath, and had thereby made it safe for him to speak, he produced the child that he had brought up of the

family of David, and said to them, "This is your king, of that house which you know God hath foretold should reign over you for all time to come. I exhort you therefore that one-third part of you guard him in the temple, and that a fourth part keep watch at all the gates of the temple, and that the next part of you keep guard at the gate which opens and leads to the king's palace, and let the rest of the multitude be unarmed in the temple, and let no armed person go into the temple, but the priest only." He also gave them this order besides, "That a part of the priests and the Levites should be about the king himself, and be a guard to him, with their drawn swords, and to kill that man immediately, whoever he be, that should be so bold as to enter armed into the temple; and bid them be afraid of nobody, but persevere in guarding the king." So these men obeyed what the high priest advised them to, and declared the reality of their resolution by their actions. Jehoiada also opened that armory which David had made in the temple, and distributed to the captains of hundreds, as also to the priests and Levites, all the spears and quivers, and what kind of weapons soever it contained, and set them armed in a circle round about the temple, so as to touch one another's hands, and by that means excluding those from entering that ought not to enter. So they brought the child into the midst of them, and put on him the royal crown, and Jehoiada anointed him with the oil, and made him king; and the multitude rejoiced, and made a noise, and cried, "God save the king!"

3. When Athaliah unexpectedly heard the tumult and the acclamations, she was greatly disturbed in her mind, and suddenly issued out of the royal palace with her own army; and when she was come to the temple, the priests received her; but as for those that stood round about the temple, as they were ordered by the high priest to do, they hindered the armed inert that followed her from going in. But when Athaliah saw the child standing upon a pillar, with the royal crown upon his head, she rent her clothes, and cried out vehemently, and commanded [her guards] to kill him that had laid snares for her, and endeavored to deprive her of the government. But Jehoiada called for the captains of hundreds, and commanded them to bring Athaliah to the

valley of Cedron, and slay her there, for he would not have the temple defiled with the punishments of this pernicious woman; and he gave order, that if any one came near to help her, he should be slain also; wherefore those that had the charge of her slaughter took hold of her, and led her to the gate of the king's mules, and slew her there.

4. Now as soon as what concerned Athaliah was by this stratagem, after this manner, despatched, Jehoiada called together the people and the armed men into the temple, and made them take an oath that they would be obedient to the king, and take care of his safety, and of the safety of his government; after which he obliged the king to give security [upon oath] that he would worship God, and not transgress the laws of Moses. They then ran to the house of Baal, which Athaliah and her husband Jehoram had built, to the dishonor of the God of their fathers, and to the honor of Ahab, and demolished it, and slew Mattan, that had his priesthood. But Jehoiada intrusted the care and custody of the temple to the priests and Levites, according to the appointment of king David, and enjoined them to bring their regular burnt-offerings twice a day, and to offer incense according to the law. He also ordained some of the Levites, with the porters, to be a guard to the temple, that no one that was defiled might come there.

5. And when Jehoiada had set these things in order, he, with the captains of hundreds, and the rulers, and all the people, took Jehoash out of the temple into the king's palace; and when he had set him upon the king's throne, the people shouted for joy, and betook themselves to feasting, and kept a festival for many days; but the city was quiet upon the death of Athaliah. Now Jehoash was seven years old when he took the kingdom. His mother's name was Zibiah, of the city Beersheba. And all the time that Jehoiada lived Jehoash was careful that the laws should be kept, and very zealous in the worship of God; and when he was of age, he married two wives, who were given to him by the high priest, by whom were born to him both sons and daughters. And thus much shall suffice to have related

concerning king Jehoash, how he escaped the treachery of Athaliah, and how he received the kingdom.

Chapter 8

Jehoash Commands Zechariah to Be Stoned

1. Now Hazael, king of Syria, fought against the Israelites and their king Jehu, and spoiled the eastern parts of the country beyond Jordan, which belonged to the Reubenites and Gadites, and to [the half tribe of] Manassites; as also Gilead and Bashan, burning, and spoiling, and offering violence to all that he laid his hands on, and this without impeachment from Jehu, who made no haste to defend the country when it was under this distress; nay, he was become a contemner of religion, and a despiser of holiness, and of the laws, and died when he had reigned over the Israelites twenty-seven years. He was buried in Samaria, and left Jehoahaz his son his successor in the government.

2. Now Jehoash, king of Jerusalem, had an inclination to repair the temple of God; so he called Jehoiada, and bid him send the Levites and priests through all the country, to require half a shekel of silver for every head, towards the rebuilding and repairing of the temple, which was brought to decay by Jehoram, and Athaliah and her sons. But the high priest did not do this, as concluding that no one would willingly pay that money; but in the twenty-third year of Jehoash's reign, when the king sent for him and the Levites, and complained that they had not obeyed what he enjoined them, and still commanded them to take care of the rebuilding the temple, he used this stratagem for collecting the money, with which the multitude was pleased. He made a wooden chest, and closed it up fast on all sides, but opened one hole in it; he then set it in the temple beside the altar, and desired every one to cast into it, through the hole, what he pleased, for the repair of the temple. This contrivance was acceptable to the people, and they strove one with another, and brought in jointly large quantities of silver and gold; and when the scribe and the priest that were over the treasuries had emptied

the chest, and counted the money in the king's presence, they then set it in its former place, and thus did they every day. But when the multitude appeared to have cast in as much as was wanted, the high priest Jehoiada, and king Joash, sent to hire masons and carpenters, and to buy large pieces of timber, and of the most curious sort; and when they had repaired the temple, they made use of the remaining gold and silver, which was not a little, for bowls, and basons, and cups, and other vessels, and they went on to make the altar every day fat with sacrifices of great value. And these things were taken suitable care of as long as Jehoiada lived.

3. But as soon as he was dead (which was when he had lived one hundred and thirty years, having been a righteous, and in every respect a very good man, and was buried in the king's sepulchers at Jerusalem, because he had recovered the kingdom to the family of David) king Jehoash betrayed his [want of] care about God. The principal men of the people were corrupted also together with him, and offended against their duty, and what their constitution determined to be most for their good. Hereupon God was displeased with the change that was made on the king, and on the rest of the people, and sent prophets to testify to them what their actions were, and to bring them to leave off their wickedness; but they had gotten such a strong affection and so violent an inclination to it, that neither could the examples of those that had offered affronts to the laws, and had been so severely punished, they and their entire families, nor could the fear of what the prophets now foretold, bring them to repentance, and turn them back from their course of transgression to their former duty. But the king commanded that Zechariah, the son of the high priest Jehoiada, should be stoned to death in the temple, and forgot the kindnesses he had received from his father; for when God had appointed him to prophesy, he stood in the midst of the multitude, and gave this counsel to them and to the king: That they should act righteously; and foretold to them, that if they would not hearken to his admonitions, they should suffer a heavy punishment. But as Zechariah was ready to die, he appealed to God as a witness of what he suffered for the

good counsel he had given them, and how he perished after a most severe and violent manner for the good deeds his father had done to Jehoash.

4. However, it was not long before the king suffered punishment for his transgression; for when Hazael, king of Syria, made an irruption into his country, and when he had overthrown Gath, and spoiled it, he made an expedition against Jerusalem; upon which Jehoash was afraid, and emptied all the treasures of God and of the kings [before him], and took down the gifts that had been dedicated [in the temple], and sent them to the king of Syria, and procured so much by them, that he was not besieged, nor his kingdom quite endangered; but Hazael was induced by the greatness of the sum of money not to bring his army against Jerusalem; yet Jehoash fell into a severe distemper, and was set upon by his friends, in order to revenge the death of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada. These laid snares for the king, and slew him. He was indeed buried in Jerusalem, but not in the royal sepulchers of his forefathers, because of his impiety. He lived forty-seven years, and Amaziah his son succeeded him in the kingdom.

5. In the one and twentieth year of the reign of Jehoash, Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, took the government of the Israelites in Samaria, and held it seventeen years. He did not [properly] imitate his father, but was guilty of as wicked practices as hose that first had God in contempt: but the king of Syria brought him low, and by an expedition against him did so greatly reduce his forces, that there remained no more of so great an army than ten thousand armed men, and fifty horsemen. He also took away from him his great cities, and many of them also, and destroyed his army. And these were the things that the people of Israel suffered, according to the prophecy of Elisha, when he foretold that Hazael should kill his master, and reign over the Syrians and Damcenens. But when Jehoahaz was under such unavoidable miseries, he had recourse to prayer and supplication to God, and besought him to deliver him out of the hands of Hazael, and not overlook him, and give him up into his hands. Accordingly God accepted of his repentance instead of virtue; and

being desirous rather to admonish those that might repent, and not to determine that they should be utterly destroyed, he granted him deliverance from war and dangers. So the country having obtained peace, returned again to its former condition, and flourished as before.

6. Now after the death of Jehoahaz, his son Joash took the kingdom, in the thirty-seventh year of Jehoash, the king of the tribe of Judah. This Joash then took the kingdom of Israel in Samaria, for he had the same name with the king of Jerusalem, and he retained the kingdom sixteen years. He was a good man, (1) and in his disposition was not at all like his father. Now at this time it was that when Elisha the prophet, who was already very old, and was now fallen into a disease, the king of Israel came to visit him; and when he found him very near death, he began to weep in his sight, and lament, to call him his father, and his weapons, because it was by his means that he never made use of his weapons against his enemies, but that he overcame his own adversaries by his prophecies, without fighting; and that he was now departing this life, and leaving him to the Syrians, that were already armed, and to other enemies of his that were under their power; so he said it was not safe for him to live any longer, but that it would be well for him to hasten to his end, and depart out of this life with him. As the king was thus bemoaning himself, Elisha comforted him, and bid the king bend a bow that was brought him; and when the king had fitted the bow for shooting, Elisha took hold of his hands and bid him shoot; and when he had shot three arrows, and then left off, Elisha said, "If thou hadst shot more arrows, thou hadst cut the kingdom of Syria up by the roots; but since thou hast been satisfied with shooting three times only, thou shalt fight and beat the Syrians no more times than three, that thou mayst recover that country which they cut off from thy kingdom in the reign of thy father." So when the king had heard that, he departed; and a little while after the prophet died. He was a man celebrated for righteousness, and in eminent favor with God. He also performed wonderful and surprising works by prophecy, and such as were gloriously preserved in memory by the Hebrews. He also obtained a magnificent

funeral, such a one indeed as it was fit a person so beloved of God should have. It also happened, that at that time certain robbers cast a man whom they had slain into Elisha's grave, and upon his dead body coming close to Elisha's body, it revived again. And thus far have we enlarged about the actions of Elisha the prophet, both such as he did while he was alive, and how he had a Divine power after his death also.

7. Now, upon the death of Hazael, the king of Syria, that kingdom came to Adad his son, with whom Joash, king of Israel, made war; and when he had beaten him in three battles, he took from him all that country, and all those cities and villages, which his father Hazael had taken from the kingdom of Israel, which came to pass, however, according to the prophecy of Elisha. But when Joash happened to die, he was buried in Samaria, and the government devolved on his son Jeroboam.

Footnote:

1. This character of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, that "he was a good man, and in his disposition not at all like to his father," seems a direct contradiction to our ordinary copies, which say (2 Kings 13:11) that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord; and that he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: he walked therein." Which copies are here the truest it is hard positively to determine. If Josephus's be true, this Joash is the single instance of a good king over the ten tribes; if the other be true, we have not one such example. The account that follows, in all copies, of Elisha the prophet's concern for him, and his concern for Elisha, greatly favors Josephus's copies, and supposes this king to have been then a good man, and no idolater, with whom God's prophets used not to be so familiar. Upon the whole, since it appears, even by Josephus's own account, that Amaziah, the good king of Judah, while he was a good king, was forbidden to make use of the hundred thousand auxiliaries he had hired of this Joash,

the king of Israel, as if he and they were then idolaters, 2 Chronicles 25:6-9, it is most likely that these different characters of Joash suited the different parts of his reign, and that, according to our common copies, he was at first a wicked king, and afterwards was reclaimed, and became a good one, according to Josephus.

Chapter 9

Amaziah Was Slain

1. Now, in the second year of the reign of Joash over Israel, Amaziah reigned over the tribe of Judah in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan, who was born at Jerusalem. He was exceeding careful of doing what was right, and this when he was very young; but when he came to the management of affairs, and to the government, he resolved that he ought first of all to avenge his father Je-hoash, and to punish those his friends that had laid violent hands upon him: so he seized upon them all, and put them to death; yet did he execute no severity on their children, but acted therein according to the laws of Moses, who did not think it just to punish children for the sins of their fathers. After this he chose him an army out of the tribe of Judah and Benjamin, of such as were in the flower of their age, and about twenty years old; and when he had collected about three hundred thousand of them together, he set captains of hundreds over them. He also sent to the king of Israel, and hired a hundred thousand of his soldiers for a hundred talents of silver, for he had resolved to make an expedition against the nations of the Amatekites, and Edomites, and Gebalites: but as he was preparing for his expedition, and ready to go out to the war, a prophet gave him counsel to dismiss the army of the Israelites, because they were bad men, and because God foretold that he should be beaten, if he made use of them as auxiliaries; but that he should overcome his enemies, though he had but a few soldiers, when it so pleased God. And when the king grudged at his having already paid the hire of the Israelites, the prophet exhorted him to do what God would have him, because he should thereby obtain much wealth from God. So he dismissed them, and said that he still freely gave them their pay, and went himself with his own army, and made war with the nations before mentioned; and when he had beaten them in battle, he slew of them ten thousand, and took as many prisoners alive, whom he brought to the

great rock which is in Arabia, and threw them down from it headlong. He also brought away a great deal of prey and vast riches from those nations. But while Amaziah was engaged in this expedition, those Israelites whom he had hired, and then dismissed, were very uneasy at it, and taking their dismissal for an affront, (as supposing that this would not have been done to them but out of contempt,) they fell upon his kingdom, and proceeded to spoil the country as far as Beth-horon, and took much cattle, and slew three thousand men.

2. Now upon the victory which Amaziah had gotten, and the great acts he had done, he was puffed up, and began to overlook God, who had given him the victory, and proceeded to worship the gods he had brought out of the country of the Amalekites. So a prophet came to him, and said, that he wondered how he could esteem these to be gods, who had been of no advantage to their own people who paid them honors, nor had delivered them from his hands, but had overlooked the destruction of many of them, and had suffered themselves to be carried captive, for that they had been carried to Jerusalem in the same manner as any one might have taken some of the enemy alive, and led them thither. This reproof provoked the king to anger, and he commanded the prophet to hold his peace, and threatened to punish him if he meddled with his conduct. So he replied, that he should indeed hold his peace; but foretold withal, that God would not overlook his attempts for innovation. But Amaziah was not able to contain himself under that prosperity which God had given him, although he had affronted God thereupon; but in a vein of insolence he wrote to Joash, the king of Israel, and commanded that he and all his people should be obedient to him, as they had formerly been obedient to his progenitors, David and Solomon; and he let him know, that if he would not be so wise as to do what he commanded him, he must fight for his dominion. To which message Joash returned this answer in writing: "King Joash to king Amaziah. There was a vastly tall cypress tree in Mount Lebanon, as also a thistle; this thistle sent to the cypress tree to give the cypress tree's daughter in marriage to the thistle's

son; but as the thistle was saying this, there came a wild beast, and trod down the thistle: and this may be a lesson to thee, not to be so ambitious, and to have a care, lest upon thy good success in the fight against the Amalekites thou growest so proud, as to bring dangers upon thyself and upon thy kingdom."

3. When Amaziah had read this letter, he was more eager upon this expedition, which, I suppose, was by the impulse of God, that he might be punished for his offense against him. But as soon as he led out his army against Joash, and they were going to join battle with him, there came such a fear and consternation upon the army of Amaziah, as God, when he is displeased, sends upon men, and discomfited them, even before they came to a close fight. Now it happened, that as they were scattered about by the terror that was upon them, Amaziah was left alone, and was taken prisoner by the enemy; whereupon Joash threatened to kill him, unless he would persuade the people of Jerusalem to open their gates to him, and receive him and his army into the city. Accordingly Amaziah was so distressed, and in such fear of his life, that he made his enemy to be received into the city. So Joash overthrew a part of the wall, of the length of four hundred cubits, and drove his chariot through the breach into Jerusalem, and led Amaziah captive along with him; by which means he became master of Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of God, and carried off all the gold and silver that was in the king's palace, and then freed the king from captivity, and returned to Samaria. Now these things happened to the people of Jerusalem in the fourteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, who after this had a conspiracy made against him by his friends, and fled to the city Lachish, and was there slain by the conspirators, who sent men thither to kill him. So they took up his dead body, and carried it to Jerusalem, and made a royal funeral for him. This was the end of the life of Amaziah, because of his innovations in religion, and his contempt of God, when he had lived fifty-four years, and had reigned twenty-nine. He was succeeded by his son, whose name was Uzziah.

Chapter 10

Jonah the Prophet

1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah, Jeroboam the son of Joash reigned over Israel in Samaria forty years. This king was guilty of contumely against God, (1) and became very wicked in worshipping of idols, and in many undertakings that were absurd and foreign. He was also the cause of ten thousand misfortunes to the people of Israel. Now one Jonah, a prophet, foretold to him that he should make war with the Syrians, and conquer their army, and enlarge the bounds of his kingdom on the northern parts to the city Hamath, and on the southern to the lake Asphaltitis; for the bounds of the Canaanites originally were these, as Joshua their general had determined them. So Jeroboam made an expedition against the Syrians, and overran all their country, as Jonah had foretold.

2. Now I cannot but think it necessary for me, who have promised to give an accurate account of our affairs, to describe the actions of this prophet, so far as I have found them written down in the Hebrew books. Jonah had been commanded by God to go to the kingdom of Nineveh; and when he was there, to publish it in that city, how it should lose the dominion it had over the nations. But he went not, out of fear; nay, he ran away from God to the city of Joppa, and finding a ship there, he went into it, and sailed to Tarsus, in Cilicia (2) and upon the rise of a most terrible storm, which was so great that the ship was in danger of sinking, the mariners, the master, and the pilot himself, made prayers and vows, in case they escaped the sea: but Jonah lay still and covered [in the ship,] without imitating any thing that the others did; but as the waves grew greater, and the sea became more violent by the winds, they suspected, as is usual in such cases, that some one of the persons that sailed with them was the occasion of this storm, and agreed to discover by lot which of them it was. When they had cast lots, (3) the lot fell

upon the prophet; and when they asked him whence he came, and what he had done? he replied, that he was a Hebrew by nation, and a prophet of Almighty God; and he persuaded them to cast him into the sea, if they would escape the danger they were in, for that he was the occasion of the storm which was upon them. Now at the first they durst not do so, as esteeming it a wicked thing to cast a man who was a stranger, and who had committed his life to them, into such manifest perdition; but at last, when their misfortune overbore them, and the ship was just going to be drowned, and when they were animated to do it by the prophet himself, and by the fear concerning their own safety, they cast him into the sea; upon which the sea became calm. It is also reported that Jonah was swallowed down by a whale, and that when he had been there three days, and as many nights, he was vomited out upon the Euxine Sea, and this alive, and without any hurt upon his body; and there, on his prayer to God, he obtained pardon for his sins, and went to the city Nineveh, where he stood so as to be heard, and preached, that in a very little time they should lose the dominion of Asia. And when he had published this, he returned. Now I have given this account about him as I found it written [in our books.]

3. When Jeroboam the king had passed his life in great happiness, and had ruled forty years, he died, and was buried in Samaria, and his son Zachariah took the kingdom. After the same manner did Uzziah, the son of Amaziah, begin to reign over the two tribes in Jerusalem, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam. He was born of Jecoliah, his mother, who was a citizen of Jerusalem. He was a good man, and by nature righteous and magnanimous, and very laborious in taking care of the affairs of his kingdom. He made an expedition also against the Philistines, and overcame them in battle, and took the cities of Gath and Jabneh, and brake down their walls; after which expedition he assaulted those Arabs that adjoined to Egypt. He also built a city upon the Red Sea, and put a garrison into it. He, after this, overthrew the Ammonites, and appointed that they should pay tribute. He also overcame all the countries as far as the bounds of Egypt, and

then began to take care of Jerusalem itself for the rest of his life; for he rebuilt and repaired all those parts of the wall which had either fallen down by length of time, or by the carelessness of the kings, his predecessors, as well as all that part which had been thrown down by the king of Israel, when he took his father Amaziah prisoner, and entered with him into the city. Moreover, he built a great many towers, of one hundred and fifty cubits high, and built walled towns in desert places, and put garrisons into them, and dug many channels for conveyance of water. He had also many beasts for labor, and an immense number of cattle; for his country was fit for pasturage. He was also given to husbandry, and took care to cultivate the ground, and planted it with all sorts of plants, and sowed it with all sorts of seeds. He had also about him an army composed of chosen men, in number three hundred and seventy thousand, who were governed by general officers and captains of thousands, who were men of valor, and of unconquerable strength, in number two thousand. He also divided his whole army into bands, and armed them, giving every one a sword, with brazen bucklers and breastplates, with bows and slings; and besides these, he made for them many engines of war for besieging of cities, such as cast stones and darts, with grapplers, and other instruments of that sort.

4. While Uzziah was in this state, and making preparation [for futurity], he was corrupted in his mind by pride, and became insolent, and this on account of that abundance which he had of things that will soon perish, and despised that power which is of eternal duration (which consisted in piety towards God, and in the observation of the laws); so he fell by occasion of the good success of his affairs, and was carried headlong into those sins of his father, which the splendor of that prosperity he enjoyed, and the glorious actions he had done, led him into, while he was not able to govern himself well about them. Accordingly, when a remarkable day was come, and a general festival was to be celebrated, he put on the holy garment, and went into the temple to offer incense to God upon the golden altar, which he was prohibited to do by Azariah the high priest, who had fourscore priests with

him, and who told him that it was not lawful for him to offer sacrifice, and that "none besides the posterity of Aaron were permitted so to do." And when they cried out that he must go out of the temple, and not transgress against God, he was wroth at them, and threatened to kill them, unless they would hold their peace. In the mean time a great earthquake shook the ground (4) and a rent was made in the temple, and the bright rays of the sun shone through it, and fell upon the king's face, insomuch that the leprosy seized upon him immediately. And before the city, at a place called Eroge, half the mountain broke off from the rest on the west, and rolled itself four furlongs, and stood still at the east mountain, till the roads, as well as the king's gardens, were spoiled by the obstruction. Now, as soon as the priests saw that the king's face was infected with the leprosy, they told him of the calamity he was under, and commanded that he should go out of the city as a polluted person. Hereupon he was so confounded at the sad distemper, and sensible that he was not at liberty to contradict, that he did as he was commanded, and underwent this miserable and terrible punishment for an intention beyond what befitted a man to have, and for that impiety against God which was implied therein. So he abode out of the city for some time, and lived a private life, while his son Jotham took the government; after which he died with grief and anxiety at what had happened to him, when he had lived sixty-eight years, and reigned of them fifty-two; and was buried by himself in his own gardens.

Footnotes:

1. What I have above noted concerning Jehoash, seems to me to have been true also concerning his son Jeroboam II., viz. that although he began wickedly, as Josephus agrees with our other copies, and, as he adds, "was the cause of a vast number of misfortunes to the Israelites" in those his first years, (the particulars of which are unhappily wanting both in Josephus and in all our copies,) so does it seem to me that he was afterwards reclaimed, and became a good king, and so was encouraged

by the prophet Jonah, and had great successes afterward, when "God had saved the Israelites by the hand of Jeroboam, the son of Joash," 2 Kings 14:27; which encouragement by Jonah, and great successes, are equally observable in Josephus, and in the other copies.

2. When Jonah is said in our Bibles to have gone to Tarshish, Jonah 1:3, Josephus understood it that he went to Tarsus in Cilicia, or to the Mediterranean Sea, upon which Tarsus lay; so that he does not appear to have read the text, 1 Kings 22:48, as our copies do, that ships of Tarshish could lie at Ezion-geber, upon the Red Sea. But as to Josephus's assertion, that Jonah's fish was carried by the strength of the current, upon a nean, it is by no means an improbable determination in Josephus.
3. This ancient piece of religion, of supposing there was great sin where there was great misery, and of casting lots to discover great sinners, not only among the Israelites, but among these heathen mariners, seems a remarkable remains of the ancient tradition which prevailed of old over all mankind, that I Providence used to interpose visibly in all human affairs, and storm, as far as the Euxine Sea, it is no way impossible; and since the storm might have driven the ship, while Jonah was in it never to bring, or at least not long to continue, notorious judge, near to that Euxine Sea, and since in three more days, while but for notorious sins, which the most ancient Book of he was in the fish's belly, that current might bring him to the Job shows to have been the state of mankind for about the Assyrian coast, and since withal that coast could bring him former three thousand years of the world, till the days of Job nearer to Nineveh than could any coast of the Mediterranean and Moses.
4. This account of an earthquake at Jerusalem at the very same time when Uzziah usurped the priest's office, and went into the sanctuary to burn incense, and of the consequences of the earthquake, is entirely wanting in our other copies, though it be exceeding like to a prophecy of Jeremiah, now in Zechariah 14:4, 5; in which prophecy mention is made of "fleeing from that earthquake, as they fled from this earthquake in the

days of Uzziah king of Judah;" so that there seems to have been some considerable resemblance between these historical and prophetic earthquakes.

Chapter 11

Nahum Prophesied Against the Assyrians

1. Now when Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam, had reigned six months over Israel, he was slain by the treachery of a certain friend of his, whose name was Shallum, the son of Jabesh, who took the kingdom afterward, but kept it no longer than thirty days; for Menahem, the general of his army, who was at that time in the city Tirzah, and heard of what had befallen Zachariah, removed thereupon with all his forces to Samaria, and joining battle with Shallum, slew him; and when he had made himself king, he went thence, and came to the city Tiphseh; but the citizens that were in it shut their gates, and barred them against the king, and would not admit him: but in order to be avenged on them, he burnt the country round about it, and took the city by force, upon a siege; and being very much displeased at what the inhabitants of Tiphseh had done, he slew them all, and spared not so much as the infants, without omitting the utmost instances of cruelty and barbarity; for he used such severity upon his own countrymen, as would not be pardonable with regard to strangers who had been conquered by him. And after this manner it was that this Menahem continued to reign with cruelty and barbarity for ten years. But when Pul, king of Assyria, had made an expedition against him, he did not think meet to fight or engage in battle with the Assyrians, but he persuaded him to accept of a thousand talents of silver, and to go away, and so put an end to the war. This sum the multitude collected for Menahem, by exacting fifty drachme as poll-money for every head; (1) after which he died, and was buried in Samaria, and left his son Pekahiah his successor in the kingdom, who followed the barbarity of his father, and so ruled but two years only, after which he was slain with his friends at a feast, by the treachery of one Pekah, the general of his horse, and the son of Remaliah, who laid snares for him. Now this Pekah held the government twenty years, and proved a wicked man and a transgressor. But the king of Assyria, whose

name was Tiglath-Pileser, when he had made an expedition against the Israelites, and had overrun all the land of Gilead, and the region beyond Jordan, and the adjoining country, which is called Galilee, and Kadesh, and Hazor, he made the inhabitants prisoners, and transplanted them into his own kingdom. And so much shall suffice to have related here concerning the king of Assyria.

2. Now Jotham the son of Uzziah reigned over the tribe of Judah in Jerusalem, being a citizen thereof by his mother, whose name was Jerusha. This king was not defective in any virtue, but was religious towards God, and righteous towards men, and careful of the good of the city (for what part soever wanted to be repaired or adorned he magnificently repaired and adorned them). He also took care of the foundations of the cloisters in the temple, and repaired the walls that were fallen down, and built very great towers, and such as were almost impregnable; and if any thing else in his kingdom had been neglected, he took great care of it. He also made an expedition against the Ammonites, and overcame them in battle, and ordered them to pay tribute, a hundred talents, and ten thousand cori of wheat, and as many of barley, every year, and so augmented his kingdom, that his enemies could not despise it, and his own people lived happily.

3. Now there was at that time a prophet, whose name was Nahum, who spake after this manner concerning the overthrow of the Assyrians and of Nineveh: "Nineveh shall be a pool of water in motion (2) so shall all her people be troubled, and tossed, and go away by flight, while they say one to another, Stand, stand still, seize their gold and silver, for there shall be no one to wish them well, for they will rather save their lives than their money; for a terrible contention shall possess them one with another, and lamentation, and loosing of the members, and their countenances shall be perfectly black with fear. And there will be the den of the lions, and the mother of the young lions! God says to thee, Nineveh, that they shall deface thee, and the lion shall no longer go out from thee to give laws to the world."

And indeed this prophet prophesied many other things besides these concerning Nineveh, which I do not think necessary to repeat, and I here omit them, that I may not appear troublesome to my readers; all which thing happened about Nineveh a hundred and fifteen years afterward: so this may suffice to have spoken of these matters.

Footnotes:

1. Dr. Wall, in his critical notes on 2 Kings 15:20, observes, "that when this Menahem is said to have exacted the money of Israel of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give Pul, the king of Assyria, a thousand talents, this is the first public money raised by any [Israelite] king by tax on the people; that they used before to raise it out of the treasures of the house of the Lord, or of their own house; that it was a poll-money on the rich men, [and them only,] to raise œ353,000, or, as others count a talent, œ400,000, at the rate of œ6 or œ7 per head; and that God commanded, by Ezekiel, ch. 45:8; 46:18, that no such thing should be done [at the Jews' restoration], but the king should have land of his own."
2. This passage is taken out of the prophet Nahum, ch. 2:8-13, and is the principal, or rather the only, one that is given us almost verbatim, but a little abridged, in all Josephus's known writings: by which quotation we learn what he himself always asserts, viz. that he made use of the Hebrew original and not of the Greek version]; as also we learn, that his Hebrew copy considerably differed from ours. See all three texts particularly set down and compared together in the Essay on the Old Testament, page 187.

Chapter 12

The Death of Jotham

1. Now Jotham died when he had lived forty-one years, and of them reigned sixteen, and was buried in the sepulchers of the kings; and the kingdom came to his son Ahaz, who proved most impious towards God, and a transgressor of the laws of his country. He imitated the kings of Israel, and reared altars in Jerusalem, and offered sacrifices upon them to idols; to which also he offered his own son as a burnt-offering, according to the practices of the Canaanites. His other actions were also of the same sort. Now as he was going on in this mad course, Rezin, the king of Syria and Damascus, and Pekah, the king of Israel, who were now at amity one with another, made war with him; and when they had driven him into Jerusalem, they besieged that city a long while, making but a small progress, on account of the strength of its walls; and when the king of Syria had taken the city Elath, upon the Red Sea, and had slain the inhabitants, he peopled it with Syrians; and when he had slain those in the [other] garrisons, and the Jews in their neighborhood, and had driven away much prey, he returned with his army back to Damascus. Now when the king of Jerusalem knew that the Syrians were returned home, he, supposing himself a match for the king of Israel, drew out his army against him, and joining battle with him was beaten; and this happened because God was angry with him, on account of his many and great enormities. Accordingly there were slain by the Israelites one hundred and twenty thousand of his men that day, whose general, Amaziah by name, slew Zechariah the king's son, in his conflict with Ahaz, as well as the governor of the kingdom, whose name was Azricam. He also carried Elkanah, the general of the troops of the tribe of Judah, into captivity. They also carried the women and children of the tribe of Benjamin captives; and when they had gotten a great deal of prey, they returned to Samaria.

2. Now there was one Obed, who was a prophet at that time in Samaria ;he met the army before the city walls, and with a loud voice told them that they had gotten the victory not by their own strength, but by reason of the anger God had against king Ahaz. And he complained that they were not satisfied with the good success they had had against him, but were so bold as to make captives out of their kinsmen the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He also gave them counsel to let them go home without doing them any harm, for that if they did not obey God herein, they should be punished. So the people of Israel came together to their assembly, and considered of these matters, when a man whose name was Berechiah, and who was one of chief reputation in the government, stood up, and the others with him, and said, "We will not suffer the citizens to bring these prisoners into the city, lest we be all destroyed by God; we have sins enough of our own that we have committed against him, as the prophets assure us; nor ought we therefore to introduce the practice of new crimes." When the soldiers heard that, they permitted them to do what they thought best. So the forenamed men took the captives, and let them go, and took care of them, and gave them provisions, and sent them to their own country, without doing them any harm. However, these four went along with them, and conducted them as far as Jericho, which is not far from Jerusalem, and returned to Samaria.

3. Hereupon king Ahaz, having been so thoroughly beaten by the Israelites, sent to Tiglath-Pileser, king of the Assyrians, and sued for assistance from him in his war against the Israelites, and Syrians, and Damascenes, with a promise to send him much money; he sent him also great presents at the same time. Now this king, upon the reception of those ambassadors, came to assist Ahaz, and made war upon the Syrians, and laid their country waste, and took Damascus by force, and slew Rezin their king, and transplanted the people of Damascus into the Upper Media, and brought a colony of Assyrians, and planted them in Damascus. He also afflicted the land of Israel, and took many captives out of it. While he was doing thus with the Syrians, king Ahaz took all the gold that was in the king's treasures,

and the silver, and what was in the temple of God, and what precious gifts were there, and he carried them with him, and came to Damascus, and gave it to the king of Assyria, according to his agreement. So he confessed that he owed him thanks for all he had done for him, and returned to Jerusalem. Now this king was so sottish and thoughtless of what was for his own good, that he would not leave off worshipping the Syrian gods when he was beaten by them, but he went on in worshipping them, as though they would procure him the victory; and when he was beaten again, he began to honor the gods of the Assyrians; and he seemed more desirous to honor any other gods than his own paternal and true God, whose anger was the cause of his defeat; nay, he proceeded to such a degree of despite and contempt [of God's worship], that he shut up the temple entirely, and forbade them to bring in the appointed sacrifices, and took away the gifts that had been given to it. And when he had offered these indignities to God, he died, having lived thirty-six years, and of them reigned sixteen; and he left his son Hezekiah for his successor.

Chapter 13

Hezekiah Reigned Instead of Ahaz

1. About the same time Pekah, the king of Israel, died by the treachery of a friend of his, whose name was Hoshea, who retained the kingdom nine years' time, but was a wicked man, and a despiser of the Divine worship; and Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, made an expedition against him, and overcame him, (which must have been because he had not God favorable nor assistant to him,) and brought him to submission, and ordered him to pay an appointed tribute. Now, in the fourth year of the reign of Hoshea, Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, began to reign in Jerusalem; and his mother's name was Abijah, a citizen of Jerusalem. His nature was good, and righteous, and religious; for when he came to the kingdom, he thought that nothing was prior, or more necessary, or more advantageous to himself, and to his subjects, than to worship God. Accordingly, he called the people together, and the priests, and the Levites, and made a speech to them, and said, "You are not ignorant how, by the sins of my father, who transgressed that sacred honor which was due to God, you have had experience of many and great miseries, while you were corrupted in your mind by him, and were induced to worship those which he supposed to be gods; I exhort you, therefore, who have learned by sad experience how dangerous a thing impiety is, to put that immediately out of your memory, and to purify yourselves from your former pollutions, and to open the temple to these priests and Levites who are here convened, and to cleanse it with the accustomed sacrifices, and to recover all to the ancient honor which our fathers paid to it; for by this means we may render God favorable, and he will remit the anger he hath had to us."

2. When the king had said this, the priests opened the temple; and when they had set in order the vessels of God, and east out what was impure, they laid the accustomed sacrifices upon the altar. The king also sent to the

country that was under him, and called the people to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of unleavened bread, for it had been intermitted a long time, on account of the wickedness of the forementioned kings. He also sent to the Israelites, and exhorted them to leave off their present way of living, and return to their ancient practices, and to worship God, for that he gave them leave to come to Jerusalem, and to celebrate, all in one body, the feast of unleavened bread; and this he said was by way of invitation only, and to be done of their own good-will, and for their own advantage, and not out of obedience to him, because it would make them happy. But the Israelites, upon the coming of the ambassadors, and upon their laying before them what they had in charge from their own king, were so far from complying therewith, that they laughed the ambassadors to scorn, and mocked them as fools: as also they affronted the prophets, which gave them the same exhortations, and foretold what they would suffer if they did not return to the worship of God, insomuch that at length they caught them, and slew them; nor did this degree of transgressing suffice them, but they had more wicked contrivances than what have been described: nor did they leave off, before God, as a punishment for their impiety, brought them under their enemies: but of that more hereafter. However, many there were of the tribe of Manasseh, and of Zebulon, and of Issachar, who were obedient to what the prophets exhorted them to do, and returned to the worship of God. Now all these came running to Jerusalem, to Hezekiah, that they might worship God [there].

3. When these men were come, king Hezekiah went up into the temple, with the rulers and all the people, and offered for himself seven bulls, and as many rams, with seven lambs, and as many kids of the goats. The king also himself, and the rulers, laid their hands on the heads of the sacrifices, and permitted the priests to complete the sacred offices about them. So they both slew the sacrifices, and burnt the burnt-offerings, while the Levites stood round about them, with their musical instruments, and sang hymns to God, and played on their psalteries, as they were instructed by David to do, and

this while the rest of the priests returned the music, and sounded the trumpets which they had in their hands; and when this was done, the king and the multitude threw themselves down upon their face, and worshipped God. He also sacrificed seventy bulls, one hundred rams, and two hundred lambs. He also granted the multitude sacrifices to feast upon, six hundred oxen, and three thousand other cattle; and the priests performed all things according to the law. Now the king was so pleased herewith, that he feasted with the people, and returned thanks to God; but as the feast of unleavened bread was now come, when they had offered that sacrifice which is called the passover, they after that offered other sacrifices for seven days. When the king had bestowed on the multitude, besides what they sanctified of themselves, two thousand bulls, and seven thousand other cattle, the same thing was done by the rulers; for they gave them a thousand bulls, and a thousand and forty other cattle. Nor had this festival been so well observed from the days of king Solomon, as it was now first observed with great splendor and magnificence; and when the festival was ended, they went out into the country and purged it, and cleansed the city of all the pollution of the idols. The king also gave order that the daily sacrifices should be offered, at his own charges, and according to the law; and appointed that the tithes and the first-fruits should be given by the multitude to the priests and Levites, that they might constantly attend upon Divine service, and never be taken off from the worship of God. Accordingly, the multitude brought together all sorts of their fruits to the priests and the Levites. The king also made garners and receptacles for these fruits, and distributed them to every one of the priests and Levites, and to their children and wives; and thus did they return to their old form of Divine worship. Now when the king had settled these matters after the manner already described, he made war upon the Philistines, and beat them, and possessed himself of all the enemy's cities, from Gaza to Gath; but the king of Assyria sent to him, and threatened to overturn all his dominions, unless he would pay him the tribute which his father paid him formerly; but king Hezekiah was not concerned at his threatenings, but depended on his piety towards God, and upon Isaiah the

prophet, by whom he inquired and accurately knew all future events. And thus much shall suffice for the present concerning this king Hezekiah.

Chapter 14

The Ten Tribes Transplanted Into Media

1. When Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, had it told him, that [Hoshea] the king of Israel had sent privately to So, the king of Egypt, desiring his assistance against him, he was very angry, and made an expedition against Samaria, in the seventh year of the reign of Hoshea; but when he was not admitted [into the city] by the king, (1) he besieged Samaria three years, and took it by force in the ninth year of the reign of Hoshea, and in the seventh year of Hezekiah, king of Jerusalem, and quite demolished the government of the Israelites, and transplanted all the people into Media and Persia among whom he took king Hoshea alive; and when he had removed these people out of this their land he transplanted other nations out of Cuthah, a place so called, (for there is [still] a river of that name in Persia,) into Samaria, and into the country of the Israelites. So the ten tribes of the Israelites were removed out of Judea nine hundred and forty-seven years after their forefathers were come out of the land of Egypt, and possessed themselves of the country, but eight hundred years after Joshua had been their leader, and, as I have already observed, two hundred and forty years, seven months, and seven days after they had revolted from Rehoboam, the grandson of David, and had given the kingdom to Jeroboam. And such a conclusion overtook the Israelites, when they had transgressed the laws, and would not hearken to the prophets, who foretold that this calamity would come upon them, if they would not leave off their evil doings. What gave birth to these evil doings, was that sedition which they raised against Rehoboam, the grandson of David, when they set up Jeroboam his servant to be their king, when, by sinning against God, and bringing them to imitate his bad example, made God to be their enemy, while Jeroboam underwent that punishment which he justly deserved.

2. And now the king of Assyria invaded all Syria and Phoenicia in a hostile manner. The name of this king is also set down in the archives of Tyre, for he made an expedition against Tyre in the reign of Eluleus; and Menander attests to it, who, when he wrote his Chronology, and translated the archives of Tyre into the Greek language, gives us the following history: "One whose name was Eluleus reigned thirty-six years; this king, upon the revolt of the Citteans, sailed to them, and reduced them again to a submission. Against these did the king of Assyria send an army, and in a hostile manner overrun all Phoenicia, but soon made peace with them all, and returned back; but Sidon, and Ace, and Palsetyrus revolted; and many other cities there were which delivered themselves up to the king of Assyria. Accordingly, when the Tyrians would not submit to him, the king returned, and fell upon them again, while the Phoenicians had furnished him with threescore ships, and eight hundred men to row them; and when the Tyrians had come upon them in twelve ships, and the enemy's ships were dispersed, they took five hundred men prisoners, and the reputation of all the citizens of Tyre was thereby increased; but the king of Assyria returned, and placed guards at their rivers and aqueducts, who should hinder the Tyrians from drawing water. This continued for five years; and still the Tyrians bore the siege, and drank of the water they had out of the wells they dug." And this is what is written in the Tyrian archives concerning Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria.

3. But now the Cutheans, who removed into Samaria, (for that is the name they have been called by to this time, because they were brought out of the country called Cuthah, which is a country of Persia, and there is a river of the same name in it,) each of them, according to their nations, which were in number five, brought their own gods into Samaria, and by worshipping them, as was the custom of their own countries, they provoked Almighty God to be angry and displeased at them, for a plague seized upon them, by which they were destroyed; and when they found no cure for their miseries, they learned by the oracle that they ought to worship Almighty God, as the method for

their deliverance. So they sent ambassadors to the king of Assyria, and desired him to send them some of those priests of the Israelites whom he had taken captive. And when he thereupon sent them, and the people were by them taught the laws, and the holy worship of God, they worshipped him in a respectful manner, and the plague ceased immediately; and indeed they continue to make use of the very same customs to this very time, and are called in the Hebrew tongue Cutlans, but in the Greek tongue Samaritans. And when they see the Jews in prosperity, they pretend that they are changed, and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original alliance with them; but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say they are no way related to them, and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of kindred from them, but they declare that they are sojourners, that come from other countries. But of these we shall have a more seasonable opportunity to discourse hereafter.

Footnote:

1. This siege of Samaria, though not given a particular account of, either in our Hebrew or Greek Bibles, or in Josephus, was so very long, no less than three years, that it was no way improbable but that parents, and particularly mothers, might therein be reduced to eat their own children, as the law of Moses had threatened upon their disobedience, Leviticus 26:29; Deuteronomy 28:53-57; and as was accomplished in the other shorter sieges of both the capital cities, Jerusalem and Samaria; the former mentioned Jeremiah 19:9; Antiq. B. IX. ch. 4. sect. 4, and the latter, 2 Kings 6:26-29.