

## The Mesha Stele and the Book of Kings Source Comparison

### Questions to ponder while reading these sources

1. According to each source, who wins the battle? (look carefully!)
2. According to both sources, who was more powerful in the beginning, Israel or Moab?
3. Point out some differences between the two texts.

### Mesha Stele

I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-gad, king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father reigned over Moab thirty years, and I have reigned after my father. And I have built this sanctuary for [Chemosh](#) in Karchah, a sanctuary of salvation, for he saved me from all aggressors, and made me look upon all mine enemies with contempt.

Omri was king of Israel, and oppressed Moab during many days, and Chemosh was angry with his aggressions. His son succeeded him, and he also said, I will oppress Moab. In my days he said, Let us go, and I will see my desire upon him and his house, and Israel said, I shall destroy it for ever. Now Omri took the land of Madeba, and occupied it in his day, and in the days of his son, forty years. And Chemosh had mercy on it in my time.

And I built Baal-meon and made therein the ditch, and I built Kiriathaim. And the men of Gad dwelled in the country of Ataroth from ancient times, and the king of Israel fortified Ataroth. I assaulted the wall and captured it, and killed all the warriors of the city for the well-pleasing of Chemosh and Moab, and I removed from it all the spoil, and offered it before Chemosh in Kirjath; and I placed therein the men of Siran, and the men of Mochrath. And Chemosh said to me, Go take Nebo against Israel, and I went in the night and I fought against it from the break of day till noon, and I took it: and I killed in all seven thousand men, but I did not kill the women and maidens, for I devoted them to Ashtar-Chemosh; and I took from it the vessels of Jehovah, and offered them before Chemosh.

And the king of Israel fortified Jahaz, and occupied it, when he made war against me, and Chemosh drove him out before me, and I took from Moab two hundred men in all, and placed them in Jahaz, and took it to annex it to Dibon. I built Karchah the wall of the forest, and the wall of the Hill. I have built its gates and I have built its towers. I have built the palace of the king, and I made the prisons for the criminals within the wall.

## **2 Kings Chapter 3**

**4** Now King Mesha of Moab was a sheep breeder, who used to deliver to the king of Israel one hundred thousand lambs, and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. **5** But when Ahab died, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. **6** So King Jehoram marched out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. **7** As he went he sent word to King Jehoshaphat of Judah, “The king of Moab has rebelled against me; will you go with me to battle against Moab?” He answered, “I will; I am with you, my people are your people, my horses are your horses.” **8** Then he asked, “By which way shall we march?” Jehoram answered, “By the way of the wilderness of Edom.”

**9** So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom set out; and when they had made a roundabout march of seven days, there was no water for the army or for the animals that were with them. **10** Then the king of Israel said, “Alas! The Lord has summoned us, three kings, only to be handed over to Moab.” **11** But Jehoshaphat said, “Is there no prophet of the Lord here, through whom we may inquire of the Lord?” Then one of the servants of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat, who used to pour water on the hands of Elijah, is here.” **12** Jehoshaphat said, “The word of the Lord is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

**21** When all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to put on armor, from the youngest to the oldest, were called out and were drawn up at the frontier. **22** When they rose early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, the Moabites saw the water opposite them as red as blood. **23** They said, “This is blood; the kings must have fought together, and killed one another. Now then, Moab, to the spoil!” **24** But when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and attacked the Moabites, who fled before them; as they entered Moab they continued the attack. **25** The cities they overturned, and on every good piece of land everyone threw a stone, until it was covered; every spring of water they stopped up, and every good tree they felled. Only at Kir-hareseth did the stone walls remain, until the slingers surrounded and attacked it. **26** When the king of Moab saw that the battle was going against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through, opposite the king of Edom; but they could not. **27** Then he took his firstborn son who was to succeed him, and offered him as a burnt offering on the wall. And great wrath came upon Israel, so they withdrew from him and returned to their own land.

### **Answer these questions based on the readings above**

1. Do these sources agree or disagree about the main events?
2. These sources both describe the same event. Why do they differ?