

The Rectal Prolapse that Afflicted King Jehoram of the Old Testament

W. I. B. Onuigbo

Department of Pathology, Medical Foundation and Clinic, 8 Nsukka Lane, Enugu 400001, Nigeria

**Corresponding Author:* Wilson I. B. Onuigbo, Medical Foundation & Clinic, 8 Nsukka Lane, Enugu 400001, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

Historical articles based on the Bible are of considerable interest. Therefore, the present article is in the field of proctology with reference to the case of King Jehoram. Recently, it was attributed to colorectal carcinoma. However, this is questioned here on the ground that he probably suffered from rectal prolapse. This better concept of his illness is elaborated here with the assistance of modern cases.

Keywords: Bible; King Jehoram; intestine; prolapse.

INTRODUCTION

The birth of modern proctology must have taken some account of its biblical perspectives. In this context, it was concluded that “Viewed by a modern physician, the story of King Jehoram unfolds as possibly the earliest description of a patient afflicted by colorectal carcinoma.”¹ Therefore, another look at the Bible is deemed worthwhile in that not carcinoma but benign prolapsed fits the descriptions as well as modern examples.

BIBLICAL EXTRACTS

The words written in Second Chronicles, Chapter 21, are as follows:²

vs. 15 ...and you will become very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.

vs. 18 after all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease.

vs. 19 then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain.

DISCUSSION

Pain of such a severe type is suggestive of a dire disease. Perhaps, as the Graneys postulated,³ King Jehoram would have received what their Egyptian neighbors were used to being treated with. Incidentally, the treatments of old were as follows:

41 prescriptions found in the Beatty papyrus which were used to treat such conditions as pruritusani, painful swelling (probably thrombosed hemorrhoids), and prolapse of the rectum. Study of this papyrus leads one to agree with Herodotus that there were specialists for colorectal diseases as well as for many other diseases.

Diseases which were of a noxious nature probably evoked special handling after death. For example, verse 20 suggests the existence of this attitude by the lack of proper royal obsequies. Little wonder that, at his burial, it was “to no one’s sorrow.” Moreover, quite specifically, “they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the Kings.”

Kings were generally described in the Bible with reference to the longevity of their reign. In the instant case, Jehoram died when he was aged only 40 years. Incidentally, this was a fair figure when compared with the mean age of 38.2 years which were documented among modern patients.⁴

Patients should be keenly distinguished when they have rectal prolapse. Although such a prolapse is reported to be “never larger than about the size of a fist,”⁵ the probability is that long duration may lead to the occurrence of a longer disease. In fact, as was recently demonstrated, ⁶ colonic diverticulos is may prolapse up to 6 cm long in older patients. Moreover, as has been described, ⁷ rectal prolapse frequently coexists with other pelvic

The Rectal Prolapse that Afflicted King Jehoram of the Old Testament

floor disorders, and thereby “make the understanding of this disorder difficult.”

CONCLUSION

King Jehoram’s case has sufficiently been exemplified from the Bible as that of prolapse and not of cancer. If it had been cancer, the one attribute inseparable from the account would be ulceration. Certainly, this did not feature in the Biblical story!

REFERENCES

- [1] Liubov Louba BN. Colorectal carcinoma that afflicted King Jehoram. *Minerva Med*, 2004; 95:557-61.
- [2] The Holy Bible. The New King James Version 1985 p 527. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.
- [3] Graney MJ, Graney CM. Colorectal surgery from antiquity to the modern era. *DisColon Rect*, 1980; 23:432-41.
- [4] D’Hoore A, Pennincks F. Laparoscopic ventral recto (colpo)pexy for rectal prolapse: Surgical technique and outcome in 109 patients. *Surg Endosc*, 2006; 20:1919-23.
- [5] Steizner F. Etiology and therapy of rectal prolapse Experience with 308 cases 1956 – 1991 (PMID: 8088209). *Der Chirurg; Zeitschrift fur Alle Gebiete der Operativen Medizen*, 1994; 65:533.
- [6] Edwards VH, Chen YM, Ott DJ, King GT. Rectal diverticulum appearing as a prolapsed rectum. *J. Clin Gastroenterol*, 1994; 18:254.
- [7] Gourgiotis S, Baratsis S. Rectal prolapse. *Int J Colorectal Dis*, 2007; 22:231.

Citation: W. I. B. Onuigbo, “The Rectal Prolapse that Afflicted King Jehoram of the Old Testament”, *Journal of Religion and Theology*, vol.3, no. 1, pp. 56-57, 2019.

Copyright: © W. I. B. Onuigbo, This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.