

**Asa, Abijah's Son, Assumes the Throne of Judah (912t BC)**

1 Kings 15:9–10

9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.

10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Maachah, the [grand]daughter of Abishalom [Absalom].

**Asa's Early Reign Marked by Religious Reform (c. 912–907 BC)**

1 Kings 15:11–12

11 And Asa did *that which was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father.

12 And he took away

the sodomites out of the land,  
and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

2 Chronicles 14:2–5a

2 And Asa did *that which was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

3 For he took away  
the altars of the strange *gods*,  
and the high places,

and brake down the images,  
and cut down the groves:

4 And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers,  
and to do the law and the commandment.

5a Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places  
and the images:

**The Death of Jeroboam (910n BC)**

1 Kings 14:19–20

19 And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred,  
and how he reigned, behold, they *are* written in the book of the  
chronicles of the kings of Israel.

20 And the days which Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty  
years: and he slept with his fathers,  
and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

2 Chronicles 13:20b

20b and the LORD struck him, and he died.

**Nadab, Jeroboam's Son, Assumes the Throne of Israel (910n BC)**

1 Kings 15:25–26

25 And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years.

26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

**Nadab is Assassinated by Baasha (909n BC)**

1 Kings 15:27–28, 31

27 And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.

28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.

31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

**Baasha of Issachar Assumes the Throne of Israel (909n BC)**

1 Kings 15:29–30, 33–34

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years.

29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

30 Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

34 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

### God Rewards Asa's Reforms With Peace (c. 907–897 BC)

2 Chronicles 14:1b, 5b–8

1b In his days the land was quiet ten years.

5b and the kingdom was quiet before him.

6 And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest.

7 Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about *them* walls, and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought *him*, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.

8 And Asa had an army *of men* that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: all these *were* mighty men of valor.

### Zerah the Cushite Attacks the Southern Kingdom (897t BC)

2 Chronicles 14:9–15:7

#### Asa Asks God for Help

14:9 And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah.

10 Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, *it is* nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou *art* our God; let not man prevail against thee.

#### God Answers Asa's Prayer

12 So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.

13 And Asa and the people that *were* with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil.

14 And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.

15 They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

#### Azariah Encourages Asa to Continue/Renew His Religious Reforms

15:1 And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

2 And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD *is* with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

3 Now for a long season Israel *hath been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

4 But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

5 And in those times *there was* no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations *were* upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

6 And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.

7 Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.

### The Southern Kingdom Swears Allegiance to Yahweh (Sivan [June] 896t BC)

1 Kings 15:13–15

2 Chronicles 15:8–19

8 And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of [Azariah the son of] Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that *was* before the porch of the LORD.

9 And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him.

10 So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

11 And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil

<p>13 And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from <i>being</i> queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt <i>it</i> by the brook Kidron.</p> <p>14 But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days.</p> <p>15 And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.</p>	<p><i>which</i> they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.</p> <p>12 And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;</p> <p>13 That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.</p> <p>14 And they sware unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.</p> <p>15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.</p> <p>16 And also <i>concerning</i> Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from <i>being</i> queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped <i>it</i>, and burnt <i>it</i> at the brook Kidron.</p> <p>17 But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.</p> <p>18 And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.</p> <p>19 And there was no <i>more</i> war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa [<i>counted from the division</i>].</p>
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### Baasha Attacks Judah (896t BC)

1 Kings 15:16–22, 32	2 Chronicles 16:1–10
<p>16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.</p> <p>17 And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.</p> <p>18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold <i>that were</i> left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,</p> <p>19 <i>There is</i> a league between me and thee, <i>and</i> between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.</p> <p>20 So Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelbethmaachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali.</p> <p>21 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard <i>thereof</i>, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah.</p> <p>22 Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none <i>was</i> exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah.</p>	<p>1 In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. [<a href="#">cf. 2 Chr 15:9</a>]</p> <p>2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,</p> <p>3 <i>There is</i> a league between me and thee, <i>as there was</i> between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.</p> <p>4 And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abelmaim, and all the store cities of Naphtali.</p> <p>5 And it came to pass, when Baasha heard <i>it</i>, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.</p> <p>6 Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.</p>

<p>32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.</p>	<p>7 And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.  8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.  9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of <i>them</i> whose heart <i>is</i> perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.  10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for <i>he was</i> in a rage with him because of this <i>thing</i>. And Asa oppressed <i>some</i> of the people the same time.</p>
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### The Death of Baasha (886n BC)

1 Kings 16:1–7

1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,  
2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;  
3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.  
4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.  
5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?  
6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.  
7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

### Elah, Baasha's Son, Assumes the Throne of Israel (886n BC)

1 Kings 16:8

8 In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

### Elah is Assassinated by Zimri (885n BC)

1 Kings 16:9–10, 14

9 And his servant Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots, conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of *his* house in Tirzah.  
10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.  
14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

### Zimri—King For a Week (885n BC)

1 Kings 16:11–13, 15–20

15a In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah.  
11 And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.  
12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,  
13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.  
15b And the people *were* encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines.

16 And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died,

19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.

20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

*Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.*

### **Chronological Notes**

- 1) The account of Asa's reign over the Southern Kingdom as recorded in 2 Chronicles contains several chronological notes:
  - A) 2 Chr 14:1 – during the first part of Asa's reign, the land "had rest for 10 years."
  - B) 2 Chr 15:10 – the Southern Kingdom swore allegiance to Yahweh in the "third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign."
  - C) 2 Chr 15:19 – there was "no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign."
  - D) 2 Chr 16:1 – "In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, King Baasha of Israel attacked Judah."
  - E) 2 Chr 16:12 – "In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a foot disease."
  - F) 2 Chr 16:13 – "Asa passed away in the forty-first year of his reign."
  
- 2) These chronological markers create a significant problem for the OT chronologist: 1 Kings 15:33 records that Baasha ruled for 24 years, while 1 Kings 16:8 reports that Elah succeeded Baasha in the twenty-sixth year of Asa. Clearly, Baasha could not have been alive in Asa's thirty-sixth year where 2 Chronicles 16:1 places him.
  
- 3) The only current solution which harmonizes Kings and Chronicles and leaves the text of the MT as it stands is that taken by Thiele<sup>1</sup> and Steinmann<sup>2</sup>: the dates mentioned in 2 Chr 15:19 and 2 Chr 16:1 should be taken as dynastic years, dated from the division of the kingdom (hence my insertion of the words "[counted from the division]"). Noting that Rehoboam reigned for 17 years and Abijah for 3 years, we are able to subtract 20 years from the references which then become the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> years of Asa's reign and synchronize with the years of Baasha. The passage can then be read as follows: the victory celebration after the battle with Zerah in the 15<sup>th</sup> year included large numbers of Israelites who had defected from the northern kingdom to join Asa (2 Chr 15:9). This defection prompted Baasha to fortify Ramah to prevent further desertion (2 Chr 16:1b).
  
- 4) This solution, while ingenious, is not without problems:<sup>3</sup>
  - A) Of the hundreds of bits of data for the chronology of the divided monarchy, this would be the only occasion of dating from the schism. It would be unique to this passage and it is therefore arbitrary to appeal to it—an example of special pleading.
  - B) It ignores the plain sense of the text that these were the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth years "of Asa's reign." The formulae used for these regnal years are identical to the formulae used throughout Chronicles as well as in Kings and generally throughout the OT to cite the regnal years of individual kings. While it is certainly allowable that the Chronicler used a doublet account to achieve his purposes, it is hard to argue that the Chronicler intended anything other than the thirty-fifth and thirty-sixth years of Asa's reign. Re-dating by eliminating the twenty years of earlier reigns in Judah also does not ease the inerrancy question: The specter remains that the Chronicler may have misunderstood some sources which dated from the schism, for this was certainly not his intent or practice.
  - C) This reconstruction would also play havoc with the Chronicler's argument and theological method. While in effect emending 15:19 and 16:1, it leaves the date in 16:12 untouched. This results in the following sequence: victory celebration in the fifteenth year, attack by Baasha in the sixteenth year, the rebuke of the prophet and his imprisonment, all

<sup>1</sup> Edwin R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*, 57–61.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Steinmann, *From Paul to Abraham*, 152–153.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Dillard, "The Reign of Asa (2 Chronicles 14–16): An Example of the Chronicler's Theological Method," *JETS* 23:3 (Sept 1980): 207–218.

presumably in the sixteenth through eighteenth years, and the foot disease in the thirty-ninth year. The foot disease as retribution would come over 20 years after the offense. The cycles of obedience-blessing and sin-punishment that everywhere characterize the Chronicler are thereby destroyed. If 16:12 is also reduced by twenty years so that the foot disease is contracted in the nineteenth year, then it took 22 years for it to kill him—and that will not work either.

- D) This method would also fail to take account of the Chronicler's careful introduction of chronological patterns into his accounts of various reigns to achieve his theological purposes. The example from the reign of Rehoboam has been discussed above (see Dillard's paper); the treatment of Josiah is also particularly interesting.
- 5) In conclusion, at this time and subject to further research, I have decided to present the reading as following the current harmonization solution. As Selman comments, "No solution, therefore commends itself with any confidence."<sup>4</sup>
- A) One potential solution is offered by Kohlberg: regnal overlaps for Abijah and Asa. Thus the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign would be dated from his nomination as vice-regent to Abijah.<sup>5</sup>

### **Commentary Notes**

- 1) At first glance, the mention that Asa "removed the pagan altars and the high places" (2 Chr 14:3) seems to be in tension with the statement that "the high places were not eliminated from Israel" (2 Chr 15:17); many regard these two statements as fiat contradictions or a measure of the author's incompetence as a historian. Rather than dismiss efforts to ease the apparent contradiction as unconscionably harmonistic, it would be more plausible to assume that in the author's mind the two statements were not in tension; it is unlikely that either the author or a later editor would contradict himself in such short compass. (1) Since 15:17 occurs toward the end of Asa's reign, presumably in some proximity to his thirty-fifth year from the narrator's viewpoint (15:19), and 14:3 refers to early reforms, an intervening period of up to thirty years is possible. The two statements could be understood as no more than evidence of the resilience of the indigenous cults which plagued Judah's history and required repeated reformation. (2) It is also possible that the Chronicler's insertion of the words "from Israel" in 15:17 is intended to indicate that Asa did not remove the high places from the cities earlier belonging to the Northern Kingdom and then under his sway; contrast the explicit statement that he removed the high places "from all the cities of Judah" (14:5). This difficulty is not unique to the Chronicler's account of Asa, but recurs in his statements that Jehoshaphat did (17:6) and did not (20:33) remove the high places.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Martin J. Selman, "2 Chronicles," TOTC, 415.

<sup>5</sup> Bruno Kohlberg, "Redating the Hebrew Kings," 57–61. Online: <http://www.redatedkings.com/download/Redating.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond B. Dillard, "2 Chronicles," WBC, 118.