

Tibni and Omri—A Tale of Two Rival Kings (885n–880n BC)

1 Kings 16:21–22

21 At that time, the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people went after Tibni the son of Ginath to make him king, and the other half went after Omri.
 22 The people who went after Omri overcame the people who went after Tibni the son of Ginath, so that he died and Omri became king.

Omri, Commander of the Army, Begins Sole Reign of Israel (880n/880t BC)

1 Kings 16:23–24

23 In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel *for* twelve years. He reigned in Tirzah six years,
 24 then bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver, fortified the hill, and called the name of the city Samaria that he built after Shemer, the owner of the hill.

The Death of Omri (874n BC)

1 Kings 16:25–28

25 But Omri did evil in the eyes of Yahweh more than all who were before him.
 26 He went in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and in his sins that he caused Israel to sin by provoking Yahweh the God of Israel with their idols.
 27 The remainder of the acts of Omri that he did and his powerful deeds, are they not written in the scroll of the events of the days of the kings of Israel?
 28 Omri slept with his ancestors, and he was buried in Samaria, and Ahab his son became king in his place.

Ahab, Omri's son, Assumes the Throne of Israel (874n BC)

1 Kings 16:29

29 Now Ahab son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah. Ahab son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.

Asa Develops a Foot Disease (873t BC)

1 Kings 15:23b

23b But at the time of his old age, he developed a foot disease.

2 Chronicles 16:12

12 And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, he fell severely ill in his feet.
 But even in his illness he did not seek Yahweh, but *only* among the healers.

The Death of Asa (871t BC)

1 Kings 15:23a–24

23a The remainder of the acts of Asa, all of his achievements, all that he did, and the cities which he built, are they not written in the scroll of the events of the days of the kings of Judah?
 24 Asa slept with his ancestors
 and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David his ancestor;
 Jehoshaphat his son became king in his place.

2 Chronicles 16:11, 13–14; 17:1

16:11 Now behold, the words of Asa *from* the first to the last,
 behold, they are written in the scroll of the kings of Judah and Israel.
 13 And Asa slept with his ancestors. And he died in the forty-first year of his reign.
 14 And they buried him in his burial site, which had been cut out for him in the city of David. And they laid him on the bier which they had filled with all kinds of spices made *by* the perfumers as a fragment ointment. And they made a great fire in his honor.
 17:1 And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place, and he strengthened himself against Israel.

Jehoshaphat, Asa's Son, Begins Sole Reign of Judah (871t/870n BC)

1 Kings 22:41–42

2 Chronicles 20:31

41 Jehoshaphat the son of Asa became king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.

42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem.

The name of his mother was Azubah daughter of Shilhi.

31 So Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah.

He was thirty-five years old when he began to reign.

And he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem.

The name of his mother *was* Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi.

Jehoshaphat's Early Reign Marked by Religious Reform (870–868 BC)

1 Kings 22:43, 46

2 Chronicles 17:3–4, 6–9; 20:32–33

Jehoshaphat's Religious Reforms

46 The remainder of the male shrine prostitutes who were left over in the days of Asa his father he exterminated from the land.

43a He walked in all of the way of Asa his father, and he did not turn aside from it, doing right in the eyes of Yahweh.

Jehoshaphat Orders the Law to be Taught in Judah

Not Everyone Shares Jehoshaphat's Love of Yahweh

43b Only he did not remove the high places; the people *were* still sacrificing and burning incense on the high places.

17:3 And Yahweh was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of David his father and did not seek after the Baals,

17:4 but he sought after the God of his ancestors and walked in his commandments and not according to the works of Israel.

17:6 And his heart was courageous in the ways of Yahweh.

Moreover, he removed the high places and the Asherahs from Judah.

20:32 And he walked in the way of his father Asa and did not turn aside from it, to do what was right in the eyes of Yahweh.

17:7 In the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah;

17:8 and with them the Levites Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-Adonijah; and with them the priests Elisham and Joram.

17:9 And they taught in Judah, and the scroll of the law of Yahweh *was* with them when they went around in all the cities of Judah, and they taught the people.

20:33 Only the high places were not removed. The people still had not yet set their heart on the God of their ancestors.

God Rewards Jehoshaphat's Faithfulness (c. 868 – c. 854 BC)

2 Chronicles 17:2, 5, 10–18:1a

God Helps Jehoshaphat Secure His Kingdom

17:2 And he put troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and put garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim that Asa his father had taken.

5 So Yahweh established the kingdom in his hand. And all Judah gave tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had much wealth and honor.

God Causes the Surrounding Kingdoms to Fear Judah

10 And the fear of Yahweh was upon all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, and they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.

11 And some of the Philistines brought a gift and silver to Jehoshaphat *as* tribute. The Arabians also brought him seven thousand seven hundred sheep and seven thousand seven hundred goats.

Jehoshaphat's Wealth and Power Continues to Grow as God Blesses Him

12 And Jehoshaphat grew greater and greater, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah.

13 And he had many supplies in the cities of Judah and mighty warriors for battle in Jerusalem.

14 Now these *were* their enrollment by the house of their ancestors: of Judah, the commanders of thousands: Adnah, the commander, and with him *were* three hundred thousand mighty armed warriors;
 15 and at his side, Jehohanan the commander, and with him *were* two hundred and eighty thousand;
 16 and at his side, Amasiah the son of Zicri, who had made a freewill offering to Yahweh, and with him *were* two hundred thousand mighty armed warriors.
 17 And from Benjamin: Eliada, a powerful mighty warrior, and with him *were* two hundred thousand armed with bow and shield;
 18 and at his side, Jehozabad, and with him *were* one hundred and eighty thousand armed for war.
 19 These were serving the king, besides *those* whom the king had placed in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.
 18:1a Now Jehoshaphat had much wealth and honor,

Ahab's Reign Marked by Great Evil (874n – c. 860 BC)

1 Kings 16:30–34

30 But Ahab son of Omri did evil in the eyes of Yahweh more than all who were before him.
 31 If it wasn't enough that he went after the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he also took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal the king of the Sidonians. He went and served Baal and bowed down to him.
 32 And he built an altar to Baal in the house of Baal which he had built in Samaria.
 33 Ahab also made the sacred pole, and he continued to provoke Yahweh the God of Israel more than all the kings of Israel who were before him.
 34 In his days, Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho; at the cost of Abiram his firstborn he laid its foundation, and at the cost of Segub his younger sibling, he set up its gates, according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke by the hand of Joshua the son of Nun. [cf. [Josh 6:26](#)]

Elijah Proclaims God's Judgment on Ahab (c. 860n BC)

1 Kings 17

Elijah Foretells Drought

1 Elijah the Tishbite from Tishbe of Gilead said to Ahab, "As Yahweh lives, the God of Israel before whom I stand, there shall surely not be dew nor rain these years except by my command." [[Jam 5:17](#)]

Elijah Fed by Ravens

2 Then the word of Yahweh came to him, saying,
 3 "Go from this place and turn to the east; you must hide yourself in the Wadi Kerith which faces the Jordan.
 4 It shall be that you shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the crows to sustain you there."
 5 So he went and did according to the word of Yahweh. He went and stayed in the Wadi Kerith which faces the Jordan.
 6 The crows *were* bringing bread and meat in the morning for him and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the wadi.
 7 It happened after a while that the wadi dried up, because there was no rain in the land.

The Widow of Zarephath

8 Then the word of Yahweh came to him, saying, [cf. [Luke 4:25–26](#)]
 9 "Get up and go to Zarephath which belongs to Sidon and stay there. Look, I have commanded a woman there, a widow, to sustain you."
 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath and came to the gate of the city. There *was* a widow woman gathering wood, so he called to her, and he said, "Please bring a little water for me in a vessel so that I can drink."
 11 She went to fetch *it*, and he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."
 12 She said, "As Yahweh your God lives, surely I do not have a cake, but only a handful of flour in the jar and a little olive oil in the jug. Here I *am* gathering a few pieces of wood, and I will go and prepare it for me and my son, that we might eat it and die."
 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go and do according to your word; only make for me a small bread cake from it first, and bring it out to me. Make it for yourself and for your son afterward.
 14 For thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: 'The jar of flour will not be emptied and the jug of olive oil will not run out until the day Yahweh gives rain on the surface of the earth.'
 15 So she went and did according to the word of Elijah; then *both* she and he ate with her household for many days.
 16 The jar of flour was not emptied and the jug of olive oil did not run out, according to the word of Yahweh which he spoke by the hand of Elijah.

Widow's Son Raised

17 It happened after these things that the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; and his illness was very severe until there was no breath left in him.

18 She said to Elijah, “What do you have against me, O man of God, *that* you have come to me to make known my guilt and to cause my son to die?”

19 Then he said to her, “Give me your son.” He took him from her lap and carried him up to the upper room where he was staying, and he laid him on his bed.

20 Then he called to Yahweh and said, “O Yahweh my God, are you also causing evil to come upon the widow with whom I *am* dwelling as an alien by causing her son to die?”

21 He stretched himself out on the child three times and called to Yahweh and said, “O Yahweh my God, please let the life of this child return within him.”

22 Yahweh listened to the voice of Elijah, and the life of the child returned within him, and he lived.

23 Elijah then took the child and brought him down from the upper room to the house and gave him to his mother. Elijah said, “Look, your son *is* alive.”

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, “Now this I know, that you *are* a man of God and the word of Yahweh in your mouth *is* truth.”

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Chronological Notes

- 1) At first glance the chronology for Omri’s reign seems wrong. The text says he ruled twelve years, beginning with Asa’s thirty-first year. Asa reigned forty-one years (1 Kgs 15:10), which seems to create a gap of two years. What has occurred, however, is that the twelve years reflects the “coreign” of Tibni and Omri (885n–880n) and the length of time Omri ruled on his own (880n–874n). Thiele states that in this case the author utilizes a dual dating procedure “that is used for all three of the overlapping reigns in Israel and for two in Judah.” Thus, Omri comes to power in Asa’s twenty-seventh year after Zimri’s murder of Elah (1 Kgs 16:15), fights Tibni until the thirty-first year of Asa (1 Kgs 16:23), and dies in Asa’s thirty-eighth year, a total of twelve years by the northern means of reckoning reigns.¹
- 2) The text says that Jehoshaphat’s reign lasted twenty-five years (1 Kgs 22:42; 2 Chr 20:31). Thiele concludes that this total includes a three-year coregency with Asa (873t–871t) and a five-year coregency with Jehoram (854t–848t). These calculations coordinate the statements about these men’s reigns made in 1 Kings 15:24; 22:51–52 and 2 Kings 1:17; 3:1; 8:16–24. They also link their reigns with the northern kings of the same era and perhaps explain who ruled Israel during the disease Asa suffered (2 Chr 16:11–12).²
- 3) The chronology of the stories of Elijah is difficult to reconstruct, but the reference to Jehu and Hazael (1 Kgs 19:15–17) suggests that they were persons already known to Elijah. Jehu, however, did not become king until 841n, twelve years after Ahab’s death in 853n, and he reigned for twenty-eight years. It would seem, then, that Elijah’s commission came late in Ahab’s life. We know also that it came at least four years before the king’s death. The basis for this assertion is that the commission was given before Ben-Hadad’s siege of Samaria, which in turn was four years before Ahab was slain in the Ramoth Gilead campaign of 853n (1 Kgs 20:1, 26; 22:1). A date of 857 for Elijah’s trek to Horeb would appear to be reasonable. Since that journey was after the three-year drought, Elijah must have first encountered Ahab in about 860, fourteen years after he had commenced his reign. This would be ample time for the apostate conditions described in the narrative to have taken firm root.³

¹ Paul R. House, “1, 2 Kings,” *NAC*, 202.

² *Ibid*, 242.

³ Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 346.