

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

1 Kings 15:9–10

9 So in the twentieth year of Jeroboam the king of Israel, Asa began to reign as king of Judah.

10 He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem; and his [grand]mother's name was Maacah the [*grand*]daughter of Abishalom [*Absalom*].

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

1 Kings 15:11–12

11 Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father.

12 He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols which his fathers had made.

2 Chronicles 14:2–5a

2 Asa did good and right in the sight of the LORD his God,

3 for he removed the foreign altars and high places,

tore down the *sacred* pillars, cut down the Asherim,
4 and commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers and to observe the law and the commandment.
5a He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah.

The Death of Jeroboam (910n BC)

1 Kings 14:19–20

19 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.
20 The time that Jeroboam reigned *was* twenty-two years; and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his place.

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 Now Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years.

26 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father and in his sin which he made Israel sin.

Nadab is Assassinated by Baasha (909n BC)

1 Kings 15:27–28, 31

27 Then Baasha the son of Ahijah of the house of Issachar conspired against him, and Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon.

28 So Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his place.

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, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel at Tirzah, *and reigned* twenty-four years.

29 It came about as soon as he was king, he struck down all the household of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam any persons alive, until he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite,
30 *and* because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

34 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel sin.

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

2 Chronicles 14:1b, 5b–8

1b The land was undisturbed for ten years during his days.

5b And the kingdom was undisturbed under him.

6 He built fortified cities in Judah, since the land was undisturbed, and there was no one at war with him during those years, because the LORD had given him rest.

7 For he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround *them* with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

8 Now Asa had an army of 300,000 from Judah, bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 from Benjamin, bearing shields and wielding bows; all of them were valiant warriors.

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

2 Chronicles 14:9–15:7

Asa Asks God for Help

14:9 Now Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and 300 chariots, and he came to Mareshah.

10 So Asa went out to meet him, and they drew up in battle formation in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.

11 Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one besides You to help *in the battle* between the powerful and those who have no strength; so help us, O LORD our God, for we trust in You, and in Your name have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; let not man prevail against You."

God Answers Asa's Prayer

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

13 Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them as far as Gerar; and so many Ethiopians fell that they could not recover, for they were shattered before the LORD and before His army. And they carried away very much plunder.

14 They destroyed all the cities around Gerar, for the dread of the LORD had fallen on them; and they despoiled all the cities, for there was much plunder in them.

15 They also struck down those who owned livestock, and they carried away large numbers of sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

Azariah Encourages Asa to Continue/Renew His Religious Reforms

15:1 Now the Spirit of God came on Azariah the son of Oded,

2 and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

3 For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law.

4 But in their distress they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him.

5 In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands.

6 Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress.

7 But you, be strong and do not lose courage, for there is reward for your work."

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

1 Kings 15:13–15

2 Chronicles 15:8–19

8 Now when Asa heard these words and the prophecy which Azariah the son of Oded the prophet spoke, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He then restored the altar of the LORD which was in front of the porch of the LORD.

9 He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10 So they assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign.

<p>13 He also removed Maacah his [grand]mother from <i>being</i> queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah; and Asa cut down her horrid image and burned <i>it</i> at the brook Kidron.</p> <p>14 But the high places were not taken away; nevertheless the heart of Asa was wholly devoted to the LORD all his days.</p> <p>15 He brought into the house of the LORD the dedicated things of his father and his own dedicated things: silver and gold and utensils.</p>	<p>11 They sacrificed to the LORD that day 700 oxen and 7,000 sheep from the spoil they had brought.</p> <p>12 They entered into the covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and soul;</p> <p>13 and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman.</p> <p>14 Moreover, they made an oath to the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting, with trumpets and with horns.</p> <p>15 All Judah rejoiced concerning the oath, for they had sworn with their whole heart and had sought Him earnestly, and He let them find Him. So the LORD gave them rest on every side.</p> <p>16 He also removed Maacah, the mother of King Asa, from the <i>position of</i> queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah, and Asa cut down her horrid image, crushed <i>it</i> and burned <i>it</i> at the brook Kidron.</p> <p>17 But the high places were not removed from Israel; nevertheless Asa's heart was blameless all his days.</p> <p>18 He brought into the house of God the dedicated things of his father and his own dedicated things: silver and gold and utensils.</p> <p>19 And there was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign [<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 Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.</p> <p>17 Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent <i>anyone</i> from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah.</p> <p>18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold which were left in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying,</p> <p>19 "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you a present of silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me."</p> <p>20 So Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah and all Chinneroth, besides all the land of Naphtali.</p> <p>21 When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and remained in Tirzah.</p> <p>22 Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah—none was exempt—and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had built. And King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.</p>	<p>1 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and fortified Ramah in order to prevent <i>anyone</i> from going out or coming in to Asa king of Judah. [cf. 2 Chr 15:9]</p> <p>2 Then Asa brought out silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the king's house,</p> <p>and sent them to Ben-hadad king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying,</p> <p>3 "Let there be a treaty between you and me, as between my father and your father. Behold, I have sent you silver and gold; go, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so that he will withdraw from me."</p> <p>4 So Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, and they conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim and all the store cities of Naphtali.</p> <p>5 When Baasha heard of it, he ceased fortifying Ramah and stopped his work.</p> <p>6 Then King Asa brought all Judah,</p> <p>and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had been building, and with them he fortified Geba and Mizpah.</p> <p>7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you have relied on the king of Aram and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the</p>

<p>32 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.</p>	<p>king of Aram has escaped out of your hand. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubim an immense army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His. You have acted foolishly in this. Indeed, from now on you will surely have wars.” 10 Then Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison, for he was enraged at him for this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time.</p>
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The Death of Baasha (886n BC)

1 Kings 16:1–7

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,
 2 “Inasmuch as I exalted you from the dust and made you leader over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam and have made My people Israel sin, provoking Me to anger with their sins,
 3 behold, I will consume Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.
 4 Anyone of Baasha who dies in the city the dogs will eat, and anyone of his who dies in the field the birds of the heavens will 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 And Baasha slept with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah, and Elah his son became king in his place.
 7 Moreover, the word of the LORD through the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani also came against Baasha and his household, both because of all the evil which he did in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he struck it.

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

1 Kings 16:8

8 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel at Tirzah, *and reigned* two years.

Elah is Assassinated by Zimri (885n BC)

1 Kings 16:9–10, 14

9 His servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him. Now he *was* at Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who *was* over the household at Tirzah.
 10 Then Zimri went in and struck him and put him to death in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and became king in his place.
 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-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned seven days at Tirzah.
 11 It came about when he became king, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave a single male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends.
 12 Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha through Jehu the prophet,
 13 for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, which they sinned and which they made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.
 15b Now the people were camped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines.
 16 The people who were camped heard it said, “Zimri has conspired and has also struck down the king.” Therefore all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp.
 17 Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon and besieged Tirzah.

18 When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house over him with fire, and died,
 19 because of his sins which he sinned, doing evil in the sight of the LORD, walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, making Israel sin.
 20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri and his conspiracy which he carried out, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

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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 Thiele¹ and Steinmann²: 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 15th and 16th 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 15th 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:³
 - 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 presumably in the sixteenth through eighteenth years, and the foot disease in the thirty-ninth year. The foot disease as

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

² Andrew Steinmann, *From Paul to Abraham*, 152–153.

³ 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.

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."⁴
- 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.⁵

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.⁶

⁴ Martin J. Selman, "2 Chronicles," TOTC, 415.

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

⁶ Raymond B. Dillard, "2 Chronicles," WBC, 118.