

# King Ahab

## Introduction:

Although there is no indication that God raised up the house of Baasha to destroy Jeroboam and it appears He simply allowed the wickedness of the nation to continue to grow until this man created his own conspiracy, a later prophet will explain that God was actually involved.

*Then **Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him.** And Baasha killed him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 **Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.** 29 And it was so, **when he became king, that he killed all the house of Jeroboam.** He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of the Lord which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 1 Kings 15:27-29*

After Baasha began to reign, he showed no interest in serving the Lord, but instead followed all the sins of Jeroboam. We will see this in every king that followed. Regardless of the prophet who warned them or the terrible manner in which they were exterminated, not one of them ever returned to the Lord or showed any interest in following the Law.

*In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and reigned twenty-four years. 34 **He did evil in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of Jeroboam,** and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin. 1 Kings 15:33-34*

## Jehu the Prophet

God sent another prophet with another warning. Jehu the son of Hanani is another prophet we know nothing about. But he gives Baasha the same message Ahijah had given to Jeroboam.

*Then **the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha,** saying: 2 "**Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam,** and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, 3 surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4 The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields." 1 Kings 16:1-4*

Like Jeroboam(22 years), Baasha reigned for many years(24 years). After his death the similarities as Jeroboam's son Nadab reigned two years and Baasha's son Elah also reigned two years.

*Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and **reigned two years** in Tirzah. 9 Now his servant **Zimri, commander 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 struck him and killed him** in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and **reigned in his place.** 1 Kings 16:8-10*

This one does not appear to be of the Lord since after killing all of Baasha's house he only reigned for seven days and then was executed.

*12 Thus **Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord,** which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, ... 15 **Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days.** And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. ... 16 "Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king." **So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp.** 1 Kings 16:15-16*

## Omri becomes King

The rise of Omri to power again appears to be in the providence of God since there is no indication of God's direct involvement. He simply became more powerful than his rival and became the king.

*Then the **people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni** the son of Ginath, to make him king, **and half followed Omri.** 22 **But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni** the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned.*

23 In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, **Omri became king over Israel, and reigned twelve years.** 1 Kings 16:21-23

Nothing of note is mentioned about king Omri with the exception of his purchase of a hill from Shemer which later became the city of Samaria. Another important detail is the fact that the downward progression of the kings also began. Omri did worse than all who were before him.

And he **bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer** for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. 25 **Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and did worse than all who were before him.** 26 For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols. 1 Kings 16:24-26

## **Omri's son Ahab becomes King**

In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, **Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel;** and Ahab the son of Omri **reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.** 30 Now Ahab the son of Omri **did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him.** 1 Kings 16:29-31

The downward progression of the kings of Israel continued under the reign of Ahab. He too did worse than all who were before him. The strongest evil brought up against him was his marriage to Jezebel and the idolatry she brought with her.

And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that **he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians;** and he **went and served Baal and worshiped him.** 32 Then he **set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.** 33 And Ahab made a wooden image. **Ahab did more to provoke the Lord** God of Israel to anger **than all the kings of Israel who were before him.** 1 Kings 16:31-34

## **The Sidonians**

Jezebel was the daughter of the king of Sidonians. Sidon was the firstborn son of Noah's grandson Canaan and thus among the cursed that were to be destroyed by Israel when they entered the land of Canaan.

9:25 Then he (Noah) said: "**Cursed be Canaan;** A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." ... 10:15 **Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn,** and Heth; 16 the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; 17 the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; 18 the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. 19 And **the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon** as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; **then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim,** as far as Lasha. Gen 9:25, 10:15-19

Just before Joshua died, God revealed the land that was yet to be conquered and listed among them not only the five lords of the Philistines, but also the Sidonians.

Now **Joshua was old, advanced in years.** And the Lord said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and **there remains very much land yet to be possessed.** ... 2 all the **territory of the Philistines** and all that of the Geshurites, 3 from Sihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (which is counted as Canaanite); **the five lords of the Philistines** ... 6 and **all the Sidonians** — them I will drive out from before the children of Israel; Josh 13:1-3, 6

In Joshua's final speech, he warned Israel that if they did not drive these nations out they would become snares and traps, scourges on their sides, and thorns in their eyes.

Or else, **if indeed you do go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations** — these that remain among you — and **make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you,** 13 know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. **But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land** which the Lord your God has given you. Josh 23:12-13

God later condemned Asher because they did not drive out the inhabitants of Sidon as He had commanded. Later God revealed that the Sidonians were part of the nations God left to test Israel

**Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. Judg 1:31-32**

Now **these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them**, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 namely, **five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites** who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And **they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord**, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. Judg 3:1-4

Even king Solomon brought doom to himself when he married women from among the Sidonians.

But **King Solomon loved many foreign women**, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, **Sidonians**, and Hittites — 2 from **the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods."** Solomon clung to these in love. 1Kings 11:1-2

Ahab also ignored all these warnings and perhaps did not even know about them. But the terrible consequences God had warned against came to pass all the same and brought Israel that much closer to the doom God had decreed through Joshua's last words:

**But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.** Josh 23:12-13

## **God Raised up Elijah**

Soon after this marriage, Elijah appears with no introduction. The lives of Ahab, Jezebel and Elijah become interwoven throughout the remainder of First Kings.

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." 1 Kings 17:1

As this drought continued for over 3 years (Jas 1:17), Jezebel began to massacre God's prophets. Whether this was tied to the drought or something she was doing that led to the drought is not revealed.

For so it was, while **Jezebel massacred the prophets of the Lord**, that Obadiah had taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) ... 13 Was it not reported to my lord what I did when **Jezebel killed the prophets of the Lord**, how I hid one hundred men of the Lord's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? 1K. 18:4, 13

While killing God's prophets she was also gathering prophets of Baal and Asherah. At the end of the drought, the great contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal occurred which resulted in the death of 450 prophets of Baal and 400 of Asherah, it is expressly stated that these 850 prophets were eating at Jezebel's table.

Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the **four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal**, and the **four hundred prophets of Asherah**, who **eat at Jezebel's table.** 1K. 18:19

After God acted for Elijah, he killed all these prophets and raised the ire and hatred of Jezebel.

And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and **Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there.** 1 Kings 18:40

And Ahab told Jezebel **all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.** 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not **make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.**" 1K. 19:1-2

This led Elijah to flee and explaining to God why he ran away.

And he said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord God of hosts; **because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword.** I alone am left; and they seek to take my life." 1 Kings 19:14f

God then revealed to Elijah that even after all the years of apostasy and the ravages of Ahab and Jezebel He still had 7,000 faithful servants in Israel.

*Yet **I have reserved seven thousand in Israel**, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." 1 Kings 19:18*

We will look at the end of the life of Ahab when we study the lives of Elijah and Elisha. But consider this summary of his life.

*But **there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up. 26 And he behaved very abominably in following idols,** according to all that the Amorites had done, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. 1 Kings 21:25-26*