

Kings of Israel and Judah

Below is a list of the rulers of Israel and Judah. Israel became a divided kingdom in about 929 BC. The northern part continued to be called Israel. The southern part was called Judah. Kings Saul, David and Solomon ruled over Israel before it became a divided kingdom.

Kings of (undivided) Israel in order of reign:

- Saul
- David
- Solomon

Kings of Judah in order of reign:

- Rehoboam
- Abijah
- Asa
- Jehoshaphat
- Jehoram
- Ahaziah (Jehoahaz)
- Athaliah (Queen)
- Joash (Jehoash)
- Amaziah
- Uzziah (Azariah)
- Jotham
- Ahaz

- Hezekiah
- Manasseh
- Amon
- Josiah
- Jehoahaz
- Jehoiakim
- Jehoiachin
- Zedekiah

Kings of Israel in order of reign:

- Jeroboam 1
- Nadab
- Baasha
- Elah
- Zimri
- Tibni
- Omri
- Ahab

- Ahaziah
- Jehoram (Joram)
- Jehu
- Jehoahaz
- Jehoash (Joash)
- Jeroboam 2
- Zechariah
- Shallum
- Menahem
- Pekahiah
- Pekah
- Hoshea

Saul (King)

Saul was the first king of Israel. He was the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin. He became king at about the time that Samuel had retired as the last Judge of Israel. Although the land of Israel had been ruled by judges, the people were clamoring to have a king, like other nations. Samuel asked the Lord for advice. God directed Samuel to Saul and to anoint him as the first king.

Saul, his army, and a miracle from God, defeated the Philistines in their first battle. He then defeated Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Amalekites. However Saul did not obey the Lord, and kept some of the loot after defeating the Amalekites. For this, God rejected Saul as king of Israel. The Lord had Samuel anoint young David as the next king.

After David killed Goliath, Saul made David his special assistant, and as David succeeded in everything he did, Saul grew extremely jealous. Saul became possessed by an evil spirit, went into fits of anger and tried to kill David several times. He even threw a spear at his own son Jonathan, who had become David's close friend.

After Samuel died, the Philistines invaded Israelite territory and gathered forces at Shunem. Saul had a foreboding of his fate, and as he did not have Samuel to ask God for advice, he traveled to En Dor to consult a witch about the outcome of the battle. The result of the seance confirmed his worst fears, he was told that the entire Israel army would be routed by the Philistines, and that he and his three sons would be killed.

The Israelite army had no chariots and could not withstand the assault of the heavy Philistine weaponry. On Mount Gilboa, Saul and his three sons were killed. Their bodies were brought to Jabesh where they were cremated. David after learning of Saul's death, moved to Hebron and was crowned king of the Judean confederacy.

The story of Saul is found in 1 Samuel chapters 9-31.

David (King)

David was the youngest son of Jesse, the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth, born in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. He was handpicked by God, anointed by Samuel, and became Israel's second, and greatest, king.

David was a shepherd in his early years. After killing Goliath, with a slingshot, he joined the entourage of King Saul, Israel's first king. Saul eventually became jealous of David's popularity with the Israelites and tried to kill him several times. David and his followers had to flee and hide out from Saul, but with the defeat of the Israelites and the death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines, David was anointed King over Judah.

Later, David defeated Ishbosheth the son of Saul, who was King of the northern tribes of Israel. Thereafter, in his eighth year, David united all the tribes and became King of all Israelites. He moved the capitol to Jerusalem, and brought the sacred Ark of the Covenant there.

David defeated the Philistines in two decisive battles, at Baal Perazim and at Rephaim, and the Philistines were no longer a serious threat to Israel. David then defeated Moab, Edom, Damascus, and Ammon, and they all became subjugated.

David committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband Uriah to his death. For this, God rebuked David through Nathan the prophet, and told David that murder will be a constant threat to his family from this time on. David's first child by Bathsheba died

seven days after birth. One of David's sons, Absalom, killed his half-brother Amnon, after Amnon raped Absalom's sister, Tamar.

Later, Absalom revolted against his father David and tried to take over the throne, but was killed by Joab, David's army commander. Another son of David, Adonijah, was killed soon after David died.

David was king for about 40 years. He was an extraordinary musician and poet, and wrote many of the Psalms in the Book of Psalms. He had many sons and daughters and died at an old age, and Solomon, his second son by Bathsheba, became the next king.

David is noted for several things. He initiated a cultural and literary revival which was continued by Solomon. He undertook far-reaching reforms in national institutions and administration. He also began preparations for building a central sanctuary in Jerusalem (the first Temple) and chose the site. The worship of God became the official state religion, and the priesthood was organized under the chief priests. He also reorganized the army.

David's story is found in the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the first two chapters of 1 Kings, also in 1 Chronicles.

Solomon (King)

Solomon, the son of King David and Bathsheba, was the third king of Israel. Solomon was renowned for his wisdom, wealth and for his construction projects. Israel enjoyed an era of security, prosperity, and international political and economic importance under Solomon.

Solomon was anointed king when his older brother, Adonijah, rashly tried to proclaim himself as ruler when their father, King David, became old. But Bathsheba and the prophet Nathan, with the support of others, crowned Solomon as King.

Solomon began his 40-year reign in 967 BC while David was still alive. Thanks to the conquests of David, Solomon's domain stretched from Tipshah on the Euphrates to Gaza on the border of Egypt. The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for anything he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom to lead the Israelites. God was so pleased with Solomon's reply, He not only gave him wisdom, but riches and honor too.

It was in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, that he began the construction of the Temple. Seven years later it was completed, and the Ark of the Covenant was moved from the Tabernacle in Zion, the City of David, to the Temple. He also built a large palace for himself, Fort Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, and the cities of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer.

He also built cities for grain storage, cities to keep his chariots, homes for his army, and resort cities. He built a fleet of ships to bring gold in from Ophir. People from many lands came to visit him and to listen to his God-given wisdom, including the Queen of Sheba.

Solomon took many foreign wives - 700 wives and 300 concubines, and they turned his heart away from the Lord, and they encouraged him to worship their gods. He even built temples for these foreign wives to use for burning incense and for offering sacrifices to their gods. This made the Lord angry, and the Lord told Solomon that after Solomon's death, He would take the Kingdom away from Solomon's son, except for one tribe.

After Solomon's death his son, Rehoboam, became King of Judah, while an enemy of Solomon, Jeroboam, became king of the northern tribes.

Solomon was the author of 3,000 proverbs and wrote 1,005 songs. The Books of Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, and parts of the Book of Proverbs are ascribed to him. The story of Solomon is found in 1 Kings chapters 1-11, and in 2 Chronicles chapters 1-9. The name Solomon means "peace/welfare."

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Rehoboam (King of Judah)

Rehoboam, son of Solomon and Naamah the Ammonitess, became the first ruler of the Southern Kingdom of Judah at age 41. Rehoboam refused to alleviate the burdens of taxation and forced labor, which Solomon had laid upon them, and the northern tribes seceded from the state, proclaiming Jeroboam as their king. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained under Rehoboam's rule. Rehoboam tried to force the northern tribes to acknowledge him as their king, but God sent the prophet Shemaiah to stop the war before it started. Rehoboam, at the height of his power, abandoned the Lord. As a result, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign. The Egyptians conquered Jerusalem and took away all of the treasures of the Temple and palace, including Solomon's gold shields, and Judah was forced to pay annual tribute to Shishak. But the economy of Judah remained strong even after the invasion. There were constant battles between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, and after 17 years of reign Rehoboam died. He was buried in Jerusalem and his son, Abijah, became the new king. Rehoboam had 18 wives and 60 concubines, who together bore him 28 sons and 60 daughters. His story is found in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. The name Rehoboam means "may the people be enlarged."

Abijah (King of Judah)

Abijah, also called Abijam, was the second King of Judah (911-908 BC). He was the son of King Rehoboam and Maacah, the grand-daughter of Absalom. He was a sinner as was his father, and his heart was not right with God. However, in a battle with Israel, he defies Jeroboam's powerful army and tells the people of Israel "do not fight against the Lord God of your fathers, for you will not succeed." God used Abijah and the men of Judah to turn the tide of the battle against King Jeroboam and the army of Israel, defeating Israel and capturing the cities of Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron. Abijah's reign lasted three years, he had 14 wives, and 22 sons and 16 daughters. When Abijah died, he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son, Asa, became the new king of Judah. The story of Abijah is found in 1 Kings 15:1-8 and in 2 Chronicles, chapter 13.

Asa (King of Judah)

Asa was the third king of Judah (reigned 908-867 BC). He was the son and successor of Abijah. His mother was Maachah. Asa became King of Judah in the 20th year of the reign of Israel's King Jeroboam, and reigned 41 years. Asa was a loyal adherent of the worship of God and did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He instituted reforms to rid the land of heathen deities and practices. He banished the perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his father had made. He also demoted Maachah from her position as Queen Mother because of her paganism. There was ten years of peace at the beginning of Asa's reign, during which he fortified cities on his frontiers and raised an army of 580,000 men. He was attacked by an army of 1,000,000 troops from Ethiopia under the leadership of General Zerah. Asa cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord defeated the Ethiopians, and Asa and the army of Judah triumphed as the Ethiopians fled. Asa then cleared the land of Judah and Benjamin of all idols. Then the people entered into a contract to worship only the Lord God of their fathers. King Baasha of Israel then declared war on Asa. Asa paid King Ben-hadad of Syria to help him defeat King Baasha. The Israelites were defeated, but God, through the prophet Hanani, let Asa know that he had made a mistake by going to Syria for help, instead of God. Asa died in the 41st year of his reign and was buried in Jerusalem. His son, Jehoshaphat, became king. Asa's story is found in 1 Kings 15:8-24, and in 2 Chronicles, chapters 14-16.

Jehoshaphat (King of Judah)

Jehoshaphat, the son of King Asa and Azubah, became the fourth King of Judah (873-849 BC) at the age of 35, and reigned for 25 years. During his reign he eradicated the pagan cults and sent priests and Levites all over the country to teach the Law of God. Jehoshaphat became strong, wealthy and popular, and built fortresses and supply centers throughout Judah. He made a marriage alliance for his son, with the daughter of King Ahab of Israel. Later he went to Samaria and allied himself with king Ahab of Israel, at Ahab's request, to fight the armies of Syria. King Ahab was killed by a stray arrow during the battle and Jehoshaphat returned to Judah. The prophet Jehu met Jehoshaphat and told him not to help the wicked and not to love those who hate the Lord. Jehoshaphat made no more trips to Israel after that, but traveled through Judah to encourage the people to worship God. He set up courts in the larger cities, with the Levites, priests, and clan leaders as judges. Later on, the armies of Moab, Ammon and the Meunites declared war on Jehoshaphat. He prayed to the Lord for help. The Lord gave him help by causing the opposing armies to fight amongst themselves and to destroy each other. When Jehoshaphat died, he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son Jehoram became the new ruler of Judah. The story of Jehoshaphat is found in 2 Chronicles, chapters 17-20. The name Jehoshaphat means "Yah has judged."

Jehoram (King of Judah)

Jehoram, son of King Jehoshaphat of Judah, was 32 years old when he became King of Judah, and he reigned for 8 years (851-843 BC). He married Athaliah the daughter of King Ahab of Israel, and renewed pagan worship in Judah. Jehoram was an evil king. After becoming king, he killed all of his brothers, and many other leaders of Israel. The nation of Edom, which had been subjugated by Israel, revolted against Jehoram, and after a battle, Edom maintained its independence and appointed its own king. Jehoram constructed idol shrines in Judah, and compelled his people to worship them. Then Elijah the prophet wrote him a letter describing Jehoram's sins and explaining the punishment that would befall him. Then the Lord stirred up the Philistines and Arabs to attack Jehoram, and they carried away everything of value in the king's palace, including his sons and his wives. Only his youngest son, Jehoahaz, (Ahaziah), escaped. Then Jehoram was struck down with the incurable bowel disease. He was dead in two years, and was buried in Jerusalem, but not in the royal cemetery. Then the people chose Ahaziah, his youngest son, as their new king. Jehoram's story is found in 2 Kings 8:16-23, and in 2 Chronicles, chapter 21. The name Jehoram means "Yah is high."

Ahaziah (Jehoahaz) (King of Judah)

Ahaziah reigned for one year (843-842 BC) as the king of Judah when he was 22 years old. He was the son of Jehoram. His mother, Athaliah, was King Ahab's daughter. He had many of the same failings as did King Ahab, and his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. He made an alliance with King Jehoram of Israel (son of Ahab). Jehoram (not to be confused with King Jehoram of Judah) was wounded in a battle with Syria, and returned to Jezreel to recover. Ahaziah went to visit him, but this was a fatal mistake, for God had decided to punish Ahaziah for his alliance with Jehoram. Jehu, who was earlier anointed by one of Elisha's young prophets, as the man to wipe out the family of Ahab, was hunting down and killing the family and friends of Ahab. When he found Ahaziah hiding in Samaria, he killed him. When Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, found out that her son was dead, she killed her grandsons, except for Joash. Joash was rescued and hidden in a storage room of the Temple by his Aunt Jehoshabeath, who was King Ahaziah's sister. Athaliah then became queen and reigned for six years. Ahaziah was given a royal burial, because he was the grandson of King Jehoshaphat. The story of Ahaziah is found in 2 Chronicles, chapter 22. The name Ahaziah means "Yah holds firm."

Athaliah (Queen of Judah)

Athaliah was Queen of Judah from 842-836 BC. She was the daughter of Israel's King Ahab and of Jezebel, who was the wife of Jehoram King of Judah, and the mother of King Ahaziah. Following Ahaziah's death at the hands of Jehu, Athaliah seized power and killed all members of the royal family who were possible rivals for the throne, except for Joash, the infant son of Ahaziah, who had

been rescued by his Aunt Jehosheba. When Joash was seven years old, Jehoiada the priest conspired to have the young boy crowned in the Temple as king. When Queen Athaliah heard the commotion, she rushed to the Temple to see what was going on, and found the new king surrounded by army officers and people from all over the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Athaliah ripped her clothes in distress and yelled "Treason! Treason!" Jehoiada the priest told the army officers to take her out of the Temple and to kill her. She was killed at the Palace stables. Then, Jehoiada and others destroyed a pagan temple of Baal and destroyed pagan idols. Athaliah's story is found in 2 Chronicles 22:10-12, and in chapter 23.

Joash (Jehoash) King of Judah

Joash ("God has bestowed/donated") was King of Judah from 836 BC to 798 BC. He was the son of King Ahaziah. His mother's name was Zibiah. He became king at the age of seven, after Jehoiada the priest rebelled against Athaliah, and proclaimed Joash the rightful ruler.

Joash tried hard to please the Lord during the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. Jehoiada arranged two marriages for him, and he had sons and daughters. Under the influence of Jehoiada, Joash repaired the Temple and destroyed the cult of Baal. However, after Jehoiada's death, at age 130, the leaders of Judah induced King Joash to abandon the Temple of God, and to worship pagan idols instead.

Jehoiada's son, Zechariah, resisted the cult of Baal, and for this he was killed by orders from King Joash (2 Chronicles 24:22). A few months later, the Syrian army successfully attacked Judah and Jerusalem. In 2 Chronicles 24:24, the Bible explains that the tiny Syrian army was allowed to defeat Judah because people had forsaken the Lord. Joash was severely wounded by the Syrians, and after they left, his own officials assassinated him as he lay in bed.

He was buried in the City of David, but not in the cemetery of the Kings. His son, Amaziah, became the next king. The story of Joash is found in 2 Kings, chapters 11 and 12, and 2 Chronicles, chapters 23 and 24.

Amaziah (King of Judah)

Amaziah ("Yah is strong") was King of Judah (798-769), the son of King Joash, and mother Jehoaddin, became king at age 25, and reigned 29 years. After becoming king, he killed the men who had assassinated his father. Amaziah assembled an army from Judah and Benjamin, and re-conquered Edom, which had gained its independence from Judah about 50 years earlier.

Amaziah also had hired 100,000 men from Israel to participate in the battle, but gave up the idea in view of the opposition it aroused. He dismissed the men, but the soldiers were displeased and on their way home, raided several cities of Judah, killing 3000 people.

When King Amaziah returned from defeating the Edomites, he brought with him idols from Seir, set them up as gods, and bowed before them. This made the Lord angry and the Lord sent a prophet to warn him, Amaziah rebuked the prophet. He then declared war on King Joash of Israel. The Israelites defeated Judah, and King Amaziah was captured.

King Joash took many hostages, and all the gold and silver from the Temple and palace, and returned to Samaria. However Amaziah lived 15 years longer than Joash. Amaziah was assassinated by his enemies in Lachish. His body was returned to Jerusalem and buried in the Royal cemetery. His son Uzziah (also known as Azariah) became king. The story of Amaziah is found in 2 Kings 14:1-20 and 2 Chronicles, chapter 25.

Uzziah (Azariah) King of Judah

Uzziah, also known as Azariah ("Yah is my strength") became King of Judah at age 16 and reigned 52 years. He was generally a good king. While Zechariah was alive, Uzziah was always eager to please God, and he prospered, for God blessed him (2 Chronicles 26:5). God helped him in wars against the Philistines, against the Arabs of Gurbaal, and the Meunites. His fame spread to Egypt and he was very powerful.

He built numerous fortifications in and around Jerusalem, and extended his domain in all directions. He made water reservoirs for the great herds of cattle in the valleys, and had many farms and vineyards. He organized a draft system and an army of 307,500 men. He produced war machines, invented by brilliant men to shoot arrows and huge stones.

But he also became proud and corrupt. He sinned against the Lord by personally burning incense upon the altar of the Temple. The High Priest went in after him and demanded that he get out. Uzziah refused to set down the incense burner that he was holding, and suddenly - leprosy appeared on his forehead. King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death, and lived in isolation.

His son, Jotham, became vice-regent in charge of the king's affairs, and became king after his father's death. Uzziah was buried in the Royal cemetery, even though he was a leper. The story of Uzziah is found in 2 Kings 15:1-7, and 2 Chronicles, chapter 26. Talmudic references report that because of his leprosy, Uzziah's remains were later removed from their original grave and reburied. A tablet was found on Mount Olives that has the inscription: "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, King of Judah. Do not open."

Jotham (King of Judah)

Jotham ("may Yah complete") became King of Judah at age 25 and reigned 16 years, although some of these years might overlap with the reign of his father, Uzziah, while Uzziah was isolated with leprosy. Jotham's mother was Jerusha, daughter of Zadok. Jotham

followed the generally good example of his father. He built the upper gate of the Temple and did extensive rebuilding of the walls on the hill where the Temple was located. He built cities in the hill country of Judah. He had a successful war against the Ammonites and received annual tribute from them for three years. King Jotham became powerful because he was careful to follow the path of the Lord (2 Chronicles 27:6). When he died, he was buried in Jerusalem, and his son, Ahaz, became the new king. The story of Jotham is found in 2 Kings 15:32-38, and 2 Chronicles, chapter 27.

Ahaz (King of Judah)

Ahaz, King of Judah, was 20 years old when he became king. He reigned 16 years. His father was King Jotham. Ahaz was one of the most evil kings of Judah. He not only burned incense as offerings to false gods, he even sacrificed his own children in fire. This is why the Lord allowed the king of Syria to defeat Ahaz and to deport large numbers of his people to Damascus (2 Chronicles 28:5). He also lost large numbers of men who were slaughtered by the army of the northern kingdom of Israel. In one battle, Judah lost 120,000 troops to Pekah, king of Israel, and 200,000 women and children were captured.

But Oded, a prophet of God told Israel to return the Judah captives because the anger of God was now upon them (2 Chronicles 28:11). Israel returned the captives to their families. Later, Edom and the Philistines invaded Judah. Ahaz asked the King of Assyria for help, and gave the king all of the Temple gold and the treasures of the palace. But when Tilgath-Pilneser, King of Assyria arrived, he caused more trouble for King Ahaz instead of helping him.

During this difficult time, King Ahaz collapsed spiritually. He sacrificed to the false gods of the people of Damascus, because he had thought that the false gods had helped the Syrians defeat him and that maybe they would now help him if he too offered sacrifices to the false gods. But instead, as is written in 2 Chronicles 28:22-23, the false gods were the ruin of Ahaz and his people.

When king Ahaz died, he was buried in Jerusalem but not in the royal tombs, and Hezekiah became the new king (2 Chronicles 28:27). The story of Ahaz is found in 2 Kings 26, and 2 Chronicles 28. The name Ahaz means "he held fast."

Hezekiah (King of Judah)

Hezekiah, son of King Ahaz, and mother Abijah, became king at age 25. He reigned 29 years. According to 2 Chronicles 29:2, his reign was a good one. He took the throne during a crucial time in Judah's history. Assyria had recently conquered Aram. And during the early part of his reign, the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. And, Judah itself had to pay an annual tribute to Assyria.

With the encouragement of the prophet Isaiah, Hezekiah undertook a religious reform, in removing idolatrous elements from worship, cleansing and sanctifying the Temple, and restoring the Levites to their Temple duties. He sent letters across Judah and Israel to have the people attend a Passover celebration. The celebration was a huge success. In fact, 2 Chronicles 30:26 says that Jerusalem hadn't seen a celebration like that since the days of King Solomon.

Hezekiah strengthened Judah politically, expanded its borders, and had the people tithe their crops. He built an underground tunnel to bring water into Jerusalem, in case of a siege. Later, King Sennacherib invaded Judah, surrounded Jerusalem, and sent Hezekiah a letter, stating, basically, that Judah should surrender, claiming that the Assyrian gods were stronger than the Lord God.

Hezekiah and Isaiah prayed to the Lord. God answered Hezekiah and Isaiah by saying that He would defend and save the city. That night, 185,000 Assyrian troops mysteriously died and their bodies were seen all across the landscape in the morning (2 Kings 19:34-35).

Later, the Lord healed Hezekiah of a deathly sickness, after Hezekiah had prayed, and added 15 years to his life. When he died, his son Manasseh became the new king. The story of Hezekiah is found in 2 Kings, chapters 18-20, and 2 Chronicles, chapters 29-32.

The tunnel Hezekiah built is still in existence today. A stone inscription was found describing how King Hezekiah's tunnel was dug by 2 teams of miners, starting at opposite ends, and meeting in the middle. There is also a clay Hebrew seal impression found, with Hezekiah's name on it, now in the Israel museum. The name Hezekiah means "Yah is my strength."

Manasseh (King of Judah)

Manasseh, son of King Hezekiah, and mother Hephzibah, began his reign at age 12. He reigned 55 years, the longest of any Hebrew King, but it was an evil reign. He rebuilt the heathen altars that his father Hezekiah had destroyed - the altars of Baal. He even built pagan altars in both courts of the Temple of the Lord, for worshiping the sun, moon and stars.

And Manasseh sacrificed his own children as burnt offerings in the valley of Hinnom. He consulted spirit mediums, fortune tellers and sorcerers. He angered the Lord by encouraging every sort of evil (2 Chronicles 33:4-6). He also murdered large numbers of innocent people (2 Kings 21:16).

Warnings by the Lord were ignored by both Manasseh and his people, so God sent the Assyrian armies, who captured him and took him into exile. It was in captivity that he came to his senses and cried out to God for help. As recorded in 2 Chronicles 33:13, The Lord answered his prayers by returning him to Jerusalem. At that point Manasseh realized that the Lord was really God.

Manasseh removed the foreign idols from the hills and the Temple and tore down the pagan altars. He then rebuilt the altar of the Lord, and offered sacrifices upon it. When Manasseh died, he was buried beneath his own palace, and his son Amon became the new king. The story of Manasseh is found in 2 Kings 21:1-17, and 2 Chronicles 33:1-20.

Interesting fact: The Lord had told Manasseh's father, Hezekiah, who was deathly sick, to prepare to die (2 Kings 20:1). When Hezekiah broke down, cried and prayed to God, The Lord added 15 years to Hezekiah's life. Three years later his son, Manasseh, was born. If Hezekiah had accepted death when first told by the Lord, then his son Manasseh, the most evil of kings, would have never been born.

Amon (King of Judah)

Amon, son of King Manasseh, and mother Meshullemeth, became king of Judah at age 22. His reign lasted 2 years. Amon's reign was an evil one, as was the early years of the reign of his father, Manasseh. Amon sacrificed to pagan idols just as his father did. But, unlike his father, Amon didn't change, instead he sinned more and more. Finally, his own officers assassinated him in his palace. Then, some citizens killed all those who assassinated him, and declared his son Josiah to be the new king (2 Chronicles 33:22-25). Amon was buried in a crypt in the garden of Uzza. The story of Amon is found in 2 Kings 21:18-26, and 2 Chronicles 33:20-25.

Josiah (King of Judah)

Josiah, son of king Amon, and mother Jedidah, became King of Judah at age 8, and reigned 31 years (639-609 BC). The Bible passage at 2 Kings 22:2 says that the character of Josiah's reign was good, and that he followed in the steps of his ancestor, King David, and was obedient to the Lord.

His reign was the last surge of political independence and religious revival before the disintegration of the Kingdom of Judah, which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. When Josiah was 20 years old, he began to clean up Judah and Jerusalem, destroying the heathen altars and the shameful idols on the hills, according to 2 Chronicles 34:3.

He did the same thing in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, Simeon, and Naphtali. Later on, he set up a collection system for gifts for the Temple, and paid carpenters and masons to repair the Temple, from the damage and neglect by the earlier Kings of Judah.

A scroll was found in the Temple by Hilkiyah the High Priest. The scroll, containing the Laws of God, was read to King Josiah. When Josiah found out that the reason for the Lord's great anger on Judah and Israel was that the ancestors had not obeyed the laws written in the scriptures, he ripped his clothing in despair (2 Chronicles 34:21).

Josiah then gathered the elders and all the people to the Temple, read the scroll to them, and required everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin to make a pledge to the Lord, to follow His Commandments. So, Josiah removed all of the idols from the areas occupied by Jews, and required all of them to worship God (2 Chronicles 34:33).

Josiah held a great Passover celebration that was not seen in Jerusalem since the days of Samuel the prophet. Later, King Neco of Egypt led his army against the Assyrians, and warned King Josiah not to interfere while his army passed through Judah (2 Chronicles 35:21). But Josiah refused to turn back, and led his army into battle at the valley of Megiddo. The enemy archers struck King Josiah with their arrows and fatally wounded him. He died in Jerusalem, and was buried there.

All of Judah mourned for him, including Jeremiah the prophet. Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, was selected as the new king. The story of Josiah is found in 2 Kings, chapters 22 and 23, and 2 Chronicles, chapters 34 and 35. The name Josiah means "May Yah give."

Jehoahaz (King of Judah)

Jehoahaz, fourth son and successor of Josiah (609-608 BC). His mother's name was Hamutal. He became King at age 23, and only reigned three months. Pharaoh Neco removed Jehoahaz from the throne and sent him to Egypt, where he later died. The Pharaoh demanded an annual tribute from Judah, and appointed Eliakim as the new King of Judah. Eliakim's name was changed to Jehoikim. The story of Jehoahaz is found in 2 Kings 23:31-34, and 2 Chronicles 36:1-4. The name Jehoahaz means "God has held firmly."

Jehoiakim (King of Judah)

Jehoiakim was the son of Josiah and Zebidah. At age 25, he was made king by Pharaoh Neco in place of his brother Jehoahaz, who was exiled to Egypt. Jehoiakim reigned for eleven years (608-598 BC) but his reign was an evil one. During his reign, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked Jerusalem. Jehoiakim surrendered and paid him tribute for three years, but then rebelled. And the Lord sent bands of Chaldeans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites against Judah in order to destroy the nation, just as the Lord had warned through His prophets that He would, because of the disobedience of the people at that time (2 Kings 24:1-2). When Jehoiakim died, his son, Jehoiachin, became the new king. The story of Jehoikim is found in 2 Kings 23:34-37, 2 Kings 24:1-5, and 2 Chronicles 36:4-8. The name Jehoiakim means "God will arise."

Jehoiachin (King of Judah)

Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim and Nehushta, was also called Jeconiah, and Coniah, became king at age 18, but only reigned for three months. During his reign the armies, of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon besieged the city of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar himself arrived during the siege, and king Jehoiachin, all of his officials, and the queen mother surrendered to him. The surrender was

accepted, and Jehoiachin was imprisoned in Babylon during the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign (2 Kings 24:10-12). Then the king of Babylon appointed Jehoiachin's uncle, Mattaniah, to be the next king, and changed his name to Zedekiah. While in exile throughout the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Jehoiachin remained in prison, but after Nebuchadnezzar's death, he was brought to the royal palace by the new King Evil-Merodach (2 Kings 25:27-30), and he was treated as a royal hostage receiving daily rations from the king at whose table he dined. The story of Jehoiachin is found in 2 Kings 24:6-15. The name Jehoiachin means "God will establish."

Zedekiah (King of Judah)

Zedekiah was a son of King Josiah and Hamutal, and uncle to King Jehoiachin. He was appointed King of Judah, after King Jehoiachin was exiled by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He reigned eleven years, but it was an evil reign (596-586 BC). The idea of a king appointed by a foreign ruler was not accepted by the people who continued to regard Jehoiachin as their legitimate king (Jeremiah 37:1). Zedekiah refused to accept the counsel of Jeremiah the prophet, who gave him messages of the Lord. He rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, even though he had taken an oath of loyalty. (2 Chronicles 36:12-13). King Nebuchadnezzar then laid siege to Jerusalem in the ninth year of the reign of King Zedekiah, and continued to the eleventh year. The food had run out, and Zedekiah tried to escape, but was captured in the plains of Jericho. He was then taken to Riblah, where he was tried and sentenced before the King of Babylon. He was forced to watch as his sons were killed before his eyes, then his eyes were put out and he was taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:6-7). General Nebuzaradan of Babylon then burned down the Temple and the palace, and tore down the walls of Jerusalem. The story of Zedekiah is found in 2 Kings 24:17-20, 25, and 2 Chronicles 36:11-13. The name Zedekiah means "Yah is my righteousness."

Kings of Israel in order of reign:

Jeroboam 1 (King of Israel)

Jeroboam 1 was the son of Nebat. He became the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel, after Israel had split away from Judah, which included the city of Jerusalem and the Temple. The prophet Ahijah prophesied that upon Solomon's death, Jeroboam would become king over ten tribes. After Solomon heard of the prophecy, he ordered Jeroboam killed, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt. After Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam, angered the ten tribes in the northern part of Israel with heavy taxes. This encouraged the people in the northern part of Israel to break away from Judah (the southern part of Israel) and to form a separate kingdom. Jeroboam returned from Egypt and was crowned king of the northern kingdom of Israel, which was home to ten of the tribes of Israel. Wars were continuous between Israel and Judah during Jeroboam's reign.

Jeroboam followed pagan ways. He placed golden calves in the towns of Bethel and Dan in the hopes of getting people to worship without going to the Temple in Jerusalem, which was in Judah. Jeroboam dismissed the priestly tribe of Levi and appointed his own priests. This caused many Levites to defect to Jerusalem. The Lord sent a prophet to warn Jeroboam to turn away from his evil ways. Jeroboam's refusal eventually resulted in the destruction of his kingdom and his family. Ahijah the prophet told Jeroboam's wife of the oncoming death of their son, and also of a king over Israel who will destroy the family of Jeroboam, and how the people of Israel will be uprooted and scattered beyond the Euphrates, because they angered the Lord by worshiping idols. All this later happened. Jeroboam 1 reigned 22 years. When he died, his son Nadab became king. The story of Jeroboam 1 is found in 1 Kings chapters 11-14. The name Jeroboam means "may the people grow numerous."

Nadab (King of Israel)

Nadab was the son of King Jeroboam and became the second king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He reigned for two years. Like his father, he worshiped false idols and led the people of Israel into sin. He was assassinated by Baasha while he was with Israel's army during its attack on the Philistine city of Gibbethon. Baasha then became the next king. The story of Nadab is found in 1 Kings, chapter 15.

Baasha (King of Israel)

Baasha was the son of Ahijah, of the tribe of Issachar. He was the third King of the northern kingdom of Israel and he reigned for 24 years at Tirzah. He became king after assassinating King Nadab, who was the son of King Jeroboam. He then tried to strengthen his hold on the throne by killing all of the descendants of Jeroboam, so that none of the royal family remained. This fulfilled a prophecy of Ahijah. During Baasha's reign, there was continuous warfare between Israel and Judah (the two kingdoms of the Jews after Israel split into two about 2900 years ago). Baasha worshiped idols. He was told, by the Lord, through a prophet, that because of his sins, he and his family would be destroyed (1 Kings 16:2-3). When Baasha died, his son Elah became king. The story of Baasha is found in 1 Kings, chapters 15 and 16.

Elah (King of Israel)

Elah, the son of King Baasha, became the fourth king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He reigned for two years. His reign ended suddenly. He was drunk at the home of Arza, the superintendent of the King's palace in Tirzah, when General Zimri walked up to Elah and killed him. Then, Zimri, who was in charge of half of the royal chariot troops, declared himself King of Israel (1 Kings 16:8-10).

Zimri (King of Israel)

Zimri was the fifth king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He killed Elah, son of Baasha, and declared himself king. He tried to protect his hold on the throne by killing the male heirs of Elah. This fulfilled a prophecy of Jehu about the destruction of the family of Baasha (1 Kings 16:3). Zimri reigned for only seven days. When members of the army had learned of what had Zimri had done, they appointed Omri as their commander. After a successful attack by Omri and the army, Zimri went into the palace and set fire to it. He

died in the flames. The name Zimri is used in 2 Kings 9:31 to invoke an example of someone who has killed his master. The story of Zimri is found in 1 Kings 16:8-20.

Tibni

After King Zimri died, the people of Israel were divided. Some wanted Omri to be the new king and others wanted Tibni. A civil war broke out and Omri won. Omri became the successor to Zimri. (We've included Tibni because some historical references will include Tibni in the list of kings of Israel).

Omri (King of Israel)

After King Zimri died, the people of Israel were divided. Some wanted Omri to be the new king and others wanted Tibni. A civil war broke out and Omri won. He became Israel's sixth king and reigned 12 years (882-871 BC). Omri bought land and built a palace on it. He called the land Samaria, in honor of the former owner, Shemer. Omri worshiped idols and encouraged the people of Israel to do the same. 1 Kings 16:25 says that Omri was worse than any of the kings who had ruled Israel before his reign. Micah 6:16 also alludes to the evilness of Omri. An ancient record, called the Moabite Stone, says that Omri subjugated the nation of Moab and conquered Medeba. (The Moabite Stone is now in the Louvre museum). Omri also strengthened Israel's alliance with Phoenicia, by arranging the marriage of his son, Ahab, to Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Sidon. When Omri died, his son Ahab became the next king. Omri's story is found in 1 Kings, chapter 16.

Ahab (King of Israel)

Ahab was the seventh King of Israel. He reigned for 22 years (871-852 BC). He was the son of Omri. He married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the Sidonians. Ahab, under Jezebel's influence, built a pagan temple, and allowed idols into Samaria. Elijah the prophet warned Ahab that the country would suffer from drought if the cult of Baal was not removed from the land of Israel.

After three years of drought, Elijah challenged Ahab and his pagan priests on Mount Carmel. God sent down fire to ignite a sacrifice, but the priests of Baal could not summon Baal to do the same. Then the people realized that God was the only true God. (1 Kings 18:18-39). Then, rains came and ended the drought.

Elijah denounced Ahab as a murderer because of the stoning of Naboth, which Jezebel, had instigated. Elijah told Ahab that dogs would lick his blood outside of the city, just as they had licked the blood of Naboth. He also told Ahab that none of his male heirs would survive and that Jezebel would be torn apart by the dogs of Jezreel (1 Kings 21:17-24).

After that, Ahab went into deep repentance, and the fulfillment of the prophecy was postponed. Ahab fought Ben-Hadad the King of Damascus in several wars, and then allied himself with Jehoshaphat, King of Judah to liberate Ramoth Gilead from the Arameans.

Ahab was warned by the prophet Micaiah that he would die in the battle. But Ahab went to battle anyway, disguised as a soldier, and was killed by a stray arrow. When the blood on his chariot was washed off at a pool in Samaria, the dogs licked up his blood as Elijah said. Jezebel, and eventually all of Ahab's male heirs died as the prophet said.

The Bible lists Ahab as the most evil of all the kings before him (1 Kings 16:30). Ahab's son Ahaziah became the new king. The story of Ahab is found in 1 Kings, chapters 16-22.

Archaeological note: Carved ivory plaques were found at the site of Ahab's palace in Samaria. Ahab was known to live in a ivory palace (1 Kings 22:39).

Ahaziah (King of Israel)

There were two kings with the name of Ahaziah. One ruled over Judah and the other ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel's Ahaziah was the uncle of Judah's Ahaziah. Israel's Ahaziah was the eighth king of the northern kingdom. He was the son of Ahab and Jezebel. He reigned for two years (852-851 BC). After Ahab's death, the country of Moab, which had earlier been subjugated by Israel, declared its independence, and refused to continue paying tribute to Israel. Ahaziah suffered other losses, including his health. He fell off the balcony of his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured. Instead of turning to the Lord, he sent messages to the temple of a pagan god, Baalzebub, at Ekron, to ask whether he would recover from his injuries. But the prophet Elijah intercepted the messengers and told them that because Ahaziah had chosen to inquire of a pagan god, rather than the Lord, that he would not leave the bed that he was lying on and that he would die. Ahaziah did die, just as Elijah had said. Ahaziah's brother, Jehoram, became the new king, because Ahaziah did not have a son to succeed him. The name Ahaziah means "Yah holds firm." The story of Ahaziah is found in 1 Kings 22:40-53 and in 2 Kings, chapter 1.

Jehoram (King of Israel)

Jehoram was the son of Ahab and Jezebel. He was the ninth King of the northern kingdom of Israel. (There was also another man named Jehoram who became king of Judah. In fact, the Jehoram of Judah married the sister, Athaliah, of Jehoram of Israel). Jehoram succeeded his brother, Ahaziah, and reigned for twelve years. He allied himself with King Jehoshaphat of Judah to put down the Moabite rebellion. With a miracle as predicted by Elisha the prophet, the Moabites were defeated. Jehoram continued the long conflict between Israel and the nation of Aram. After he was wounded at Ramoth Gilead, he went to the town of Jezreel to recover. While recovering, Jehu, who was anointed to be the next King of Israel, tracked down and killed Jehoram, and became the next King of Israel. The story of Jehoram is found in 2 Kings. The name Jehoram means "Yah is high."

Jehu (King of Israel)

Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, was the tenth King of the northern kingdom of Israel. Jehu killed a great number of people. He killed the king of Israel, Joram, who was the son of Ahab, with an arrow through the heart. He also killed the king of Judah, Ahaziah. Joram and Ahaziah were related to each other through Ahab and Jezebel. In time, Jehu executed Ahab's entire family, including Jezebel, and fulfilled a prophecy of Elijah (1 Kings 21:17-24). Jehu also killed Ahab's friends and officials.

Aside from killing members of Ahab's family, who had encouraged the people to worship false idols, Jehu ordered his men to kill the priests of the pagan god, Baal, in a temple. He then converted the pagan temple into a public toilet.

Jehu reigned as king of Israel for 28 years. When he died, he was buried in Samaria, and his son Jehoahaz became the new king. The story of Jehu is found in 2 Kings, chapters 9 and 10.

In the British Museum, there is a limestone monument called "the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser 3" (9th century BC). It depicts Jehu presenting tribute to the king of Assyria, and is the only likeness known of any King of Israel or Judah. In the Israel Museum there is a seal impression from Lachish with Jehu's name on it. The name Jehu means "Yahweh is He."

Jehoahaz (King of Israel)

Jehoahaz was the eleventh King of the northern kingdom of Israel. He was the son of King Jehu. He reigned for 17 years (814-798 BC) in Samaria, and followed the same path as Jeroboam, leading the people of Israel to sin. The Syrian army under King Hazael and his son Ben-Hadad invaded Israel, but Jehoahaz prayed for the Lord's help, and the Lord raised up leaders within Israel and defeated the Syrians. Israel lived in peace for awhile, but as the people continued to worship the false goddess Asherah at Samaria, the Lord reduced Jehoahaz's army to 50 mounted troops, 10 chariots, and 10,000 infantry. The Syrians had destroyed the others. When Jehoahaz died, his son Joash became king. The story of Jehoahaz is found in 2 Kings 13:1-10. The name Jehoahaz means "God has held firmly." There is a jasper seal in the Israel Museum, inscribed "Belonging to Jehoahaz son of the King."

Jehoash (Joash) (King of Israel)

Jehoash, also known as Joash, was the 12th King of Israel. He was the son of King Jehoahaz and he reigned 16 years. Elisha, the prophet, prophesied that Jehoash would have three victorious battles over the Syrians. Jehoash was successful in recapturing the cities that his father had lost to Syria. King Amaziah of Judah goaded King Jehoash into a war. At first Jehoash resisted, but eventually he led his men into battle at Bethshemesh and defeated Amaziah. Jehoash's men marched into Jerusalem, captured King Amaziah, looted the Temple and palace, and took many people from Judah as hostages to Samaria. When Jehoash died, his son, Jeroboam 2, became king. The story of Jehoash is found in 2 Kings 13:9-19 and in 2 Chronicles 25:17-25. The name Jehoash means "God has bestowed/donated."

Jeroboam 2 (King of Israel)

Jeroboam 2 was the son of King Joash, and the great grandson of King Jehu. He reigned 41 years (789-748 BC). He was the 13th king of the northern kingdom of Israel. He was not related to Jeroboam 1. He fought and conquered Damascus and Hamath and expanded Israel's boundaries. There were peaceful relations between Israel and Judah during the reign of Jeroboam 2, and Israel became wealthy. Although he reigned 41 years, there is not much written about him in the Bible, other than that he was as evil as Jeroboam 1, who had led Israel into the sin of worshiping idols (2 Kings 14:24). When Jeroboam 2 died, he was buried with the other Kings of Israel, and his son Zechariah became the new king. Jeroboam's story is found in 2 Kings chapters 13-15.

Zechariah (King of Israel)

Zechariah became the 14th King of Israel. He was the son of King Jeroboam II and he reigned for only 6 months around 746 BC. He was assassinated by Shallum, who then became king. Zechariah is described as an evil king in 2 Kings 15:9. He was the fourth and final king to be descended from Jehu. This fulfilled God's prophecy to Jehu of allowing Jehu's son, grandson, and great-grandson to reign as kings of Israel for destroying the dynasty of the evil King Ahab (2 Kings 10:30). Zechariah's story is found in 2 Kings 14:29 and in 2 Kings 15:8-12.

Shallum (King of Israel)

Shallum was the 15th king of Israel. He was the son of Jabesh and he reigned for only one month. He became king after he assassinated King Zechariah. His reign ended as it began - with an assassination. Shallum was killed by Menahem, who then became king. Shallum's assassination of King Zechariah ended the dynasty of Jehu and fulfilled the prophecy found in 2 Kings 10:30. Shallum is mentioned in 2 Kings 15:10-15.

Menahem (King of Israel)

Menahem, son of Gadi, became the 16th King of Israel after he assassinated King Shallum. He reigned 10 years in Samaria. He's listed as an evil king and worshiped idols, as did king Jeroboam I. After he assassinated Shallum, he destroyed the city of Tappuah and the surrounding communities, killing everyone there. He did this because the people there had refused to accept him as king. King Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria invaded Israel, but Menahem paid him off by raising 1,000 talents of silver by taxing wealthy Israelites. The payment allowed Menahem to retain the throne, but the event marked the beginning of Israel's submission to foreign powers. When Menahem died, his son, Pekahiah, became king. Archaeological records involving Menahem include an Assyrian inscription recording the tribute payment. It includes the phrase, "Menahem of Samaria". There is also a quartz Hebrew seal in the Israel Museum

inscribed with the words, "Belonging to Menahem". The name Menahem means "comforter." The story of Menahem is found in 2 Kings 15:14-22.

Pekahiah (King of Israel)

Pekahiah was the 17th king of Israel, and the 6th to be assassinated. His father was King Menahem. Pekahiah reigned two years. His reign ended when he was assassinated by Pekah, a general in his army. Pekahiah is described as an evil king who continued the worship of false idols that had been started by Jeroboam 1. Pekah conspired with 50 men from Gilead to assassinate Pekahiah at the palace at Samaria. Pekah then became king. His story is found in 2 Kings 15:22-26. The name means "The Lord opened his eyes."

Pekah (King of Israel)

Pekah became the 18th King of Israel after he assassinated King Pekahiah. Pekah was the son of Ramaliah. The length of Pekah's reign is uncertain. He was described as an evil king, as he continued the worship of false idols that had been started by Jeroboam 1. Pekah was an army general. It is believed he killed Pekahiah because the Israelites were angry that the Assyrians were dominating the kingdom of Israel. Pekah, as king, aligned himself with King Rezin of Damascus. He also encouraged the Edomites and Philistines to attack Jerusalem. King Ahaz of Judah turned to Assyria for help. The Assyrians then invaded Israel and took many people there as captives to Assyria. The Assyrians eventually brought an end to the kingdom of Israel. Pekah was assassinated by Hoshea, who became the last king of the kingdom of Israel. The story of Pekah is found in 2 Kings 15:25-37.

Hoshea (King of Israel)

Hoshea was the 19th and final king of the ancient kingdom of Israel. He was the son of Elah and he became king after he assassinated King Pekah. He reigned nine years in Samaria (733-724 BC). King Hoshea's army was attacked and defeated in battle by King Shalmaneser of Assyria. Assyria forced Israel to pay hefty annual taxes to Assyria. Hoshea, however, stopped paying the taxation and he asked King So of Egypt to help him break free of Assyria's power. The Assyrians responded by placing Hoshea in prison, and by besieging and conquering Samaria. The Assyrians were brutal in their treatment of Israel. Many Israelites were killed or exiled out of the land of Israel. Many were placed in colonies in Halah, Gozan, and among the cities of the Medes. Hoshea's story is found in 2 Kings, chapters 15, 17 and 18.