

Ahab

Ahab the son and successor of Omri, founder of the dynasty, who reigned as the seventh king of Israel for twenty two years [874-852BC].

1 Kings 16:30-33 [New King James] *“Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. 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. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 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.”*

This influence of Jezebel was in the end his downfall bringing on him the wrath of the Creator God and the trust of the people.

Ahab fortified Israelite cities and undertook extensive work at his own capital, [1 Kings 22:39] and was a capable leader and military strategist.

Through Ahab’s reign there were frequent wars with Syria, [1 Kings 22:1] especially against Ben-Hadad who with his allies besieged Samaria but was driven off, [1 Kings 20:21].

Later in battle near Aphek, Ahab heavily defeated Ben-Hadad but spared his life, [1 Kings 20:26-34].

Later in his reign Ahab with Jehoshaphat of Judah, warred against Syria, [1 Kings 22:3-4].

Though warned by Micaiah’s prophecy from God of the fatal outcome, Ahab entered into the battle in disguise, [1 Kings 22:14-28].

Ahab was mortally wounded by a random arrow in this battle and his body was taken to Samaria for burial, [1 Kings 22:29-40].

Throughout his reign Ahab had Elijah as the divine prophet, but he was influenced by his wife Jezebel whom he allowed to build a temple dedicated to the pagan god Baal, [1 Kings 16:32] and Jezebel encouraged a large group of false prophets to influence Ahab.

Ahab also allowed Jezebel to slay the true prophets, and destroy the altars of God and cause the prophet Elijah to flee for his life.

One hundred true prophets of God were hidden by Obadiah, Ahab’s godly minister, [1 Kings 18:3-4].

Ahab’s failure to stand for the law and true justice, again influenced by his wife Jezebel, was shown in the fake trial and subsequent death of Naboth whose vineyard was annexed to the adjacent palace grounds at Jezreel, [1 Kings 21:1-16].

This situation brought Elijah once again into open opposition, his stand being vindicated by Yahweh at the test at Carmel which routed the claims of the false prophets of Jezebel.

Elijah then prophesied the fate of Ahab, his wife and the dynasty, [1 Kings 21:17-24].

The reign, marked by idolatry and the evil influence of Jezebel, [1 Kings 21:25-26], affected succeeding generations for evil and was also condemned by Hosea, [Hosea 1:1-4] and Micah [Micah 6:16].

Lessons learnt from the life of Ahab –

The choice of a partner will have a significant effect on our life, physically, spiritually and emotionally, [2 Corinthians 6:14-16].

Selfishness, left unchecked, can lead to great evil.