

INSTALLMENT 6, WHICH INCLUDES CHAPTER FIVE, PART TWO, OF THE SERIAL RELEASE.

THE DYNASTY OF DARKNESS

SATAN'S LONG SERPENTINE TRAIL THROUGH HUMAN HISTORY IN THE ROLE OF SUCCESSIVE ANTICHRISTS, AND THE IMMINENT RISE OF HIS LAST-DAYS KINGDOM

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THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND OF ISRAEL

Of the twenty kings of Judah, twelve were wicked and eight were good. Of the nineteen kings of Israel, *all* were wicked. Several of these kings appear to have been Antichrist figures.

King Baasha

The first is Baasha, King of Israel, an exceedingly wicked man who killed his predecessor, Nedab, and then slaughtered every descendant of the House of Jeroboam, the first king of Israel, then went to war against righteous King Asa of Judah, a Christ figure (1 Kings 15:16, 25-32).

“Asa did what was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father. He also put away the male cult prostitutes from the land and removed all the idols which his fathers had made. He also removed Maacah his mother from being queen mother, because she had made a horrid image as an Asherah; and Asa cut down her horrid image and burned it at the brook Kidron” (1 Kings 15:11-13).

Of Baasha, the Lord said, *“I will consume Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nedab. ‘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’ ”* (1 Kings 16:3-4).

KING AHAB OF ISRAEL AND JEZEBEL OF SIDON

*“Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD more than all who were before him. It came about, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nedab, that **he married Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went to serve Baal and worshipped him. So he erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he built in Samaria. Ahab also made the Asherah.** Thus Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him”* (1 Kings 16:30-33).

Ahab and Jezebel (a priestess of Baal) may have been the human hosts of Baal (Satan) and Ashtoreth, the “female” demon counterpart of Satan, whom we have noted above was *“the goddess of the Sidonians”*). If so, this is one of the few places in the Bible which show these two demons together in human form. Importantly, they are adversaries of the prophet Elijah, a Christ figure who raised a child from the dead (1 Kings 17:22) and, standing one against hundreds, defeated the prophets of Baal in a dramatic contest on Mt Carmel (18:20-40).

Of Ahab, God says, *“I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nedab, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin. Of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, ‘The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.’ The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat”* (1 Kings 21:22-24).

ATHALIAH, QUEEN OF JUDAH

In what may be the only Scriptural record of a succession of spiritual possessions by the demon Ashtoreth, we see evil Queen Athaliah seeming to replace Jezebel as Ashtoreth's host.

Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab who had been given in marriage to King Jehoram of Judah to strengthen Ahab's influence in Judah. The scripture says that Jehoram did wickedly because "*[h]e walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab became his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD*" (2 Kings 8:18).¹

Athaliah's son Ahaziah had succeeded Jehoram to the throne, which made her the Queen Mother. After Jehu had killed Ahaziah as part of his purge of Baal worshippers, Athaliah moved quickly to slaughter all of the royal heirs to the Judean throne to ensure the throne for herself and then reigned six years in Judah (2 Kings 11:1-3).²

One child, Joash, survived the massacre due to the intervention of Ahaziah's sister, Jehosheba and was secreted away. When Joash was seven years old, Jehosheba's husband, the prominent priest Jehoiada, orchestrated the coronation of Joash as King of Judah at God's temple under heavy military guard.

"When Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people in the house of the LORD. She looked and behold, the king was standing by the pillar, according to the custom, with the captains and the trumpeters beside the king; and all the people of the land rejoiced and blew trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and cried, 'Treason! Treason!' . . . So they seized her, and when she arrived at the horses' entrance of the king's house, she was put to death there" (2 Kings 11: 13-16).

After wicked Athaliah was killed "*Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they would be the LORD'S people, also between the king and the people. All the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces thoroughly, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars*" (2 Kings 11:17-18). In Jehoiada, God raised up a righteous deliverer for this purpose and this season, and because of him King Joash "*did right in the sight of the LORD all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him*" (2 Kings 12:2).

ELIJAH & JEZEBEL COMPARED TO JOHN THE BAPTIST & HERODIA

God raised up Elijah as a prophet and deliverer during King Ahab's reign, but there was an especially hostile relationship between Elijah and Queen Jezebel (1 Kings 19:1-3). Indeed, of the two (Ahab and Jezebel), Jezebel appears in some ways to be the dominant force for evil. Her obsessive desire to murder Elijah foreshadows that of Herodias, illegitimate wife of Galilean Governor Herod Antipas (a definite Antichrist figure), toward John the Baptist. Malachi 4:5-6

prophesied that Elijah would precede the Messiah, and Jesus identified John as an Elijah (Matthew 11:14).

Like the Old Testament Elijah, John confronted the presiding king about his sin: Herod's illicit marriage to his brother's wife, Herodias (sister of King Agrippa of Judea). John was famously beheaded at the behest of Herodias when her daughter Salome's presumably seductive dance before Herod earned her the right to demand a gift from him. The gift Herodias insisted she demand from Herod was John's head on a platter (Matthew 14:3-11).

THE SIN OF JEROBOAM V. THE WORSHIP OF BAAL

Students of the Books of 1st and 2nd Kings will notice that God differentiated the worship of the golden calves established by Jeroboam in Israel from the worship of Baal, which was considered a much more serious act of rebellion against Him. This distinction is best illustrated in the Scriptural record of the rule of King Jehu of Israel. Jehu was anointed King of Israel by God via Elisha the prophet (2 Kings 9:1-10), and was used by God to fulfill His judgment against the House of Ahab. Through Jehu's guile, all seventy of the sons of Ahab were beheaded by their guardians, and Jehu then *"killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his acquaintances and his priests, until he left him without a survivor"* (2 Kings 10:11).

Jehu also did away with the worship of Baal in Israel. *"Then Jehu sent throughout Israel and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. And when they went into the house of Baal, the house of Baal was filled from one end to the other....Jehu said to the guard and to the royal officers, 'Go in, kill them; let none come out.' And they killed them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the royal officers threw them out, and went to the inner room of the house of Baal. They brought out the sacred pillars of the house of Baal and burned them. They also broke down the sacred pillar of Baal and broke down the house of Baal, and made it a latrine to this day"* (2 Kings 10:21-27).

As reward for his service God gave the throne of Israel to Jehu's descendants to the fourth generation, **"However, as for the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nedab, which he made Israel sin, from these Jehu did not depart, even the golden calves that were at Bethel and that were at Dan"** (2 Kings 10:29).

While God was clearly angered by the Egyptian-style idolatry that King Jeroboam had instituted in the Kingdom of Israel almost from its inception, He nevertheless established Jehu as a royal dynasty because of Jehu's zeal against Baal.

Why did the sin of Jeroboam involve golden calves and why was this form of idolatry less offensive to God than Baal worship?

Remember that Ephraim, son of the patriarch Joseph, was half-Egyptian, the son of the daughter of an Egyptian priest. His descendent, King Jeroboam (Solomon's foreman in the building of the

temple) not only likely knew history of his tribe, he had also sojourned briefly in Egypt (1 Kings 11:40). He established a form of Egyptian idol worship in Israel after the division of the Hebrew kingdom. That division was caused by Solomon's sin (which, incidentally, involved Baal worship), resulting in separation of the Northern Kingdom of Israel from Jerusalem and the Temple of God (which remained in what was now the Southern Kingdom of Judah). To prevent his subjects from defecting to Judah to be closer to the temple, Jeroboam taught them to worship God in the form of golden calves instead.

Jeroboam's false version of Hebrew worship did not involve ritualized sexual perversion or child sacrifice, and was thus much less destructive and defiling to God's chosen people than Baalism. As noted previously, of all possible sins, ritual sexual perversion (especially incest, homosexuality and bestiality) and child sacrifice are identified in the Bible as the most extreme forms of rebellion against God of which humans are capable.

MANASSEH, KING OF JUDAH

As we have previously noted, whenever God Himself dispenses with an Antichrist figure among the Hebrews, as He does with Ahab and Jezebel, Satan's influence among the Hebrews appears to weaken for a subsequent period of time. Thus, while there follows a series of post-Ahab Kings in Judah and Israel who perpetuate the "sins of Jeroboam" we don't find a clear Antichrist candidate among them until Manasseh.

The Antichrist figure during this interim period appears to be the Assyrian King Shalmeneser V, followed by his grandson King Sennacherib. We will address the Assyrian Antichrists below.

Just as Ahab had been the most wicked of the Israelite kings, Manasseh was the most wicked of all the kings of Judah. And just as Ahab's reign triggered the gradual withdrawal of God's protection of the House of Israel, ending in its conquest by the Assyrians, Manasseh's reign sealed Judah's fate as future exiles in Babylon.

*"[Manasseh] did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel. **For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he erected altars for Baal and made an Asherah, as Ahab king of Israel had done,** and worshipped all the host of heaven and served them. He built altars . . . for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. **He made his son pass through the fire,** practiced witchcraft and used divination, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. . . . Manasseh seduced [the people] to do evil more than the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the sons of Israel. . . . Manasseh shed very much innocent blood until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another."*

This was God's response:

"Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations, having done wickedly more than all the Amorites

*did who were before him, and has also made Judah sin with his idols; therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Behold, I am bringing such calamity on Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both his ears will tingle. I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab, and **I will wipe Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down.** I will abandon the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies, and they will become as plunder and spoil to all their enemies' "* (2 Kings 21: 2-16).

The prophet who delivered this message to Manasseh was likely Isaiah. Rabbinical and church tradition holds that Manasseh retaliated by having Isaiah sawn in half (as alluded to in Hebrews 11:37). Like Solomon, Manasseh repented late in life.

Importantly, while God's sentence of conquest and exile was pronounced during the reign of Manasseh, it wasn't carried out until 586BC during the reign of Zedekiah, Manasseh's great-grandson (righteous King Josiah's third son) (2 Kings 25:1-7). Likewise, while Ahab's reign marked the high (or low) point of sin in the northern kingdom, the House of Israel was not fully enslaved by Assyria until 722BC, during the reign of King Hoshea (2 Kings 17:6), roughly 120 years after Ahab.

JEHOAHAZ AND JEHOIAKIM OF JUDAH: LIONS WHO EAT MEN

Jehoahaz (also known as Shallum) was the 4th son and successor to King Josiah by his wife Hamutal. His life and reign is described in 2 Kings 23:31-32 and 2 Chronicles 36:1-2. Pharaoh Neco of Egypt removed Jehoahaz after only three months and replaced him with Eliakim, King Josiah's eldest son (by wife Zebidah) whose name he changed to Jehoiakim upon his ascension to the throne. Jehoiakim's life and reign is described in 2 Kings 23: 36-37 and 2 Chronicles 36:5.

As we noted earlier in the book, Ezekiel 19:1-6 describes Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim in language that suggests that they were Antichrist figures:

*"As for you, take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel and say, 'What was your mother? A lioness among lions! She lay down among young lions, She reared her cubs. '**When she brought up one of her cubs [Jehoahaz], He became a lion, And he learned to tear his prey; He devoured men.** Then nations heard about him; He was captured in their pit, And they brought him with hooks to the land of Egypt. '**When she saw, as she waited, That her hope was lost, She took another of her cubs [Jehoiakim] And made him a young lion. And he walked about among the lions; He became a young lion, He learned to tear his prey; He devoured men.**' "*

These were among the last of the kings of Judah. Jehoiakim's son Jaconiah was removed from the throne by King Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon and replaced by Zedekiah, the last King of Judah.³ Hoshea was the last King of Israel.

In 2 Kings 17:7-19, the Bible explains clearly why God desolated the lands of both of the Hebrew nations, expelling His people from them. It was because they did not heed the warning of Leviticus 18:24-28:

*“Do not defile yourselves by any of these things [ritual child sacrifice, incest, homosexuality and bestiality]; for by all these the nations which I am casting out before you have become defiled. For the land has become defiled, therefore I have brought its punishment upon it, so the land has spewed out its inhabitants. But as for you, you are to keep My statutes and My judgments and shall **not do any of these abominations**, neither the native, nor the alien who sojourns among you (for the men of the land who have been before you have done all these abominations, and the land has become defiled); **so that the land will not spew you out, should you defile it, as it has spewed out the nation which has been before you.**”*

The history of the Hebrew monarchy can thus in one sense be measured as a series of strategic satanic interventions by Antichrist figures designed to lead God’s people into a specific pattern of sin that defiled them individually and corporately. Although God raised deliverers in response to prayer and repentance, the overarching trend of Hebrew society as a whole was always toward greater corruption over time until God expelled them all from the land.

THE KINGS OF TYRE

While not of the line of Hebrew kings, the Antichrist kings of Tyre were intimately associated with the Hebrew monarchy and are thus addressed in this chapter.

In Chapter 1 we showcased Ezekiel chapter 28 as the foremost Biblical teaching on the relationship of Satan and Antichrist. Verses 1-10 address the human King of Tyre in his Antichrist role, while verses 11-19 speak “past” or “through” the King of Tyre to Satan himself. The King of Tyre referenced in Ezekiel 28 is Ethbaal, father of Jezebel (1 Kings 16:31).

Tyre was an ancient offshoot and companion-city of Sidon, founded and named for Sidon, first-born son of Canaan. The Canaanite region of Sidonia which the Hebrews were instructed to conquer and possess, included both Tyre and Sidon (Joshua 13:2-4).

In Matthew 11:20-24, Jesus references Tyre and Sidon as exemplars of wickedness comparable to Sodom in his rebuke of Galilean cities which had not repented despite His miracles done among them.

The Temple of Baal at Tyre, the ruins of which stand to this day, is considered to be the oldest such surviving structure in the world, dating to around 2500 BC. It is a likely candidate for “Satan’s Dwelling” during the years preceding the Altar of Pergamum, at least some of the time. However, many years before King Ethbaal reigned, King Hiram of Tyre was a friend to King Solomon and assisted him in building the Temple of God (1 Kings 5-6), whose design appears visually (a point emphasized by secular historians) to be at least partly influenced by the design of the Temple of Baal.

As stated above, we are not certain that Solomon was an Antichrist figure, but he was clearly demonically influenced in his later years, as is recorded in 1 Kings 11. It is possible that the seeds of Solomon’s rebellion were sown by King Hiram of Tyre. While Hiram is portrayed as a benign

figure during the period in which the Temple was built, he is identified years later in I Kings 10 as the facilitator of Solomon's phenomenal enrichment into the wealthiest man on earth (v. 11-20, esp. 11), reminiscent of Satan's temptation of Christ with riches in the wilderness (Matthew 4:8-10).

¹ Some scholars believe that Athaliah was Ahab's sister rather than his daughter, but the point is largely irrelevant to our analysis here.

² This sort of mass fratricide is a common denominator among many of the Antichrist figures and may indicate that Athaliah was possessed by Satan and not by the demon Ashtoreth (Are demons selective or somehow restricted as to the gender of their host?), or perhaps that this form of conduct is typical among this class of demons.

³ However, J.H. Allen's classic and fascinating book on British Israelism, *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright* (1902), outlines an intriguing hypothesis about the continuation of the line of Judean kings after Zedekiah (without the cultish and racist overtones that emerged among some of the later adherents of British Israel theory).