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## THE FORMATION OF THE REMNANT

(Chronologies and Kings VI)

by James B. Jordan

According to 1 Kings 16:29, Ahab came to the throne of Israel in the 38th year of Asa of Judah, which was the year A.M. 3087. He reigned 22 years, dying in the year 3106. Ahab married a princess of Tyre named Jezebel (Jezebaal). Under Jezebel's influence, Ahab turned away from the syncretistic religion instituted by Jeroboam I, a mixture of Yahwism and Baalism, and introduced pure Baalism as the official state religion of Northern Israel.

During the days of David and Solomon, the Tyreans had been allies with Israel. Hiram of Tyre, a Godly convert, had supported David and had been anxious to have a hand in helping build the Temple, which as Jesus said was a "house of worship for all nations" (Mark 11:17; Isaiah 56:7). When Israel apostatized and split into Southern Judah and Northern Israel, it seems that her influence in Tyre waned. A new power arose in Tyre and the priest-king Ethbaal reinstituted the old Baalist faith. Now we find Ahab marrying Ethbaal's daughter. Now we find God's people forming covenants with the heathen, instead of the other way around. Now we find Israel becoming a spiritual vassal to Tyre, reversing the earlier situation. (This is why so much attention is given to Tyre in the prophecy of Ezekiel. Tyre was a converted nation that apostatized. Tyre's alliance with Solomon meant that Tyre recognized the Temple High Priest as its spiritual king, and so Ezekiel 28 describes the apostate High Priest as the "king of Tyre.")

During Ahab's reign, God raised up Elijah to confront and challenge his apostasy. Elijah was unsuccessful in bringing about a change in the nation, and as a result God turned from Israel and instituted a Remnant Church in its midst.

### Chronology

It seems most likely that Elijah's confrontation with Ahab began in the 13th year of his reign, the year A.M. 3099. We can make this guess on the basis of counting backwards from the death of Ahab. Ahab and Jehoshaphat of Judah went to war with Syria, and Ahab was slain in battle. According to 1 Kings 22:51, Ahaziah of Israel began to reign in Jehoshaphat Year 17 (A.M. 3107). This was also Ahab's 21st year. Thus, it seems that Ahab put his son on the throne to reign as co-rex while he went to war.

At the same time, Jehoshaphat put his son Jehoram of Judah on the throne while he was away. This is established by comparing 2 Kings 1:17, which says Jehoram of Israel was reigning in the 2nd year of Jehoram

his father, not becoming co-rex again until Jehoshaphat Year 22 (2 Kings 8:16-17).

Thus, it seems that the 3rd Syrian War was begun in A.M. 3107 and ended in 3106 with the death of Ahab.

According to 1 Kings 22:1 there was peace for three years between Syria and Israel after the 2nd Syrian War. So the 2nd Syrian War probably took place in A.M. 3103. The previous year saw the 1st Syrian War, so it happened in A.M. 3102. (See 1 Kings 20.) During the three years of peace, Ahab stole Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21), and this seems to be what brought about his doom.

Chapters 17-19 of 1 Kings come right before the 1st Syrian War. It is possible that there was a gap of several years between Elijah's three years of famine and the 1st Syrian War, but my guess is that there was not, for two reasons. First, while the text does not explicitly say so, the concatenation of events points to the idea that the 1st Syrian invasion was a punishment for Ahab's rejection of Elijah's ministry. Second, it makes sense from a political standpoint that the Syrians would invade the nation while it was helpless. This indicates that the three years of famine were A.M. 3099-3101.

### History

Now let us review these events in order and assess their meaning more fully. When Ahab came to the throne and remarried Jezebel, and together they began to change the national state religion of Israel from pseudo-Yahwism to pure Baalism. Probably in the 13th year of Ahab's reign, Elijah appeared out of nowhere and told him that there would be no rain for three years. Doubtless Ahab did not take this strange person and his prophecy seriously, but as the months went by he began to reassess his opinion of Elijah.

Three years without rain radically decapitalized the nation. The great wealth that Omri had gathered began to be depleted as the Israelites had to buy food from other nations. Ahab and Jezebel became increasingly concerned to find Elijah, and Jezebel sought to put all the orthodox Yahwist prophets and pastors to death. Unknown to her, a high official in Ahab's court, a gentile named Obadiah, kept 200 of these church leaders alive in caves. Finally Elijah appeared and called for a confrontation between Yahweh and Baal. The result was that Yahweh was shown to be God, and the prophets of Baal were slain. (1 Kings 17-16).

Ahab was initially impressed, but his wife determined her. Elijah fled

Eljah that while there were no pastors left in the land, there were still 7000 loyal church members. God commissioned Elijah to set up a Remnant Church for them, an Ark to protect them from the coming Flood (1 Kings 19).

This was basically the end of attempts at national reformation in Northern Israel. Instead of confronting the state and calling the nation as a whole back to Yahwism, the prophets would in the future concentrate on ministering to the Godly Remnant in their congregations. Eventually the Remnant would move south to Judah, and thereby be spared when the Assyrians conquered Israel.

Meanwhile, Ben-Hadad of Syria swept into Israel to take over the prostrate nation. The Lord granted Ahab a victory as one more sign to him that He and not Baal was the true God. The next year the Syrians tried again, and God again gave the victory to Ahab. Ahab, however, immediately turned the victory into defeat by sparing Ben-Hadad and forming an alliance with him (1 Kings 20).

Three years of peace ensued, but Ahab still did not repent of his ways. Instead he stole Naboth's vineyard, property that actually belonged to Yahweh (1 Kings 21). So, God provoked Ahab to the folly of attacking Syria, and in the battle Ahab lost his life (1 Kings 22).

As soon as Ahab was known to be dead, the Moabites rebelled against Israel. Ahaziah, who had come to the throne as co-rex with Ahab the year before, fell through a lattice and died as a result. Thus, he died in the same year as his father (A.M. 3108), and Jehoram of Israel came to the throne (2 Kings 1). Since Jehoram of Judah was still standing in for Jehoshaphat at this time (2 Kings 1:17), we can assume that this happened right after Ahab's death, and so Ahaziah must have died within days of Ahab's death, before Jehoshaphat got back to Jerusalem and took his throne back.

2 Kings 3 begins the reign of Jehoram of Israel. The ascension of Elijah is recorded in 2 Kings 2. This indicates that Elijah's ascension also took place in A.M. 3108, the year Ahab and Ahaziah died and the year Jehoram became king. As Jehoram ascended the earthly throne, Elijah ascended to heaven. Elisha became Hiih Prophet in his place.

Further confirmation that Elijah's ascension took place just as Jehoram came to the throne is found in 2 Kings 3, which records the rebellion of Moab that was mentioned in 1 Kings 1:1. Immediately after the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled. Ahaziah died within days, and Elijah ascended. Thus it fell to Jehoram to fight Moab. Jehoshaphat was still in the country, and he joined forces with Jehoram of Israel. The prophet they consulted was Elisha, so Elijah must have been gone by this time.

Then Elisha completed the constitution of the Remnant Church. We see the Exodus themes of borrowing and of deliverance from slavery in 2 Kings 4:1-7. We see the Exodus theme of the restoration of the firstborn son in 2 Kings 4:8-37. We see the Exodus theme of the heating of food in 2 Kings 4:38-41, and of manna in 2 Kings 4:42-44. Finally, we see the building of a new house – a new tabernacle – for God's people in 2 Kings 6:1-7.

These are all the earmarks of a new covenant. This new covenant, the Remnant Covenant, is distinguished by the rise of the Writing Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, Joel, etc.).

made in this article, see my e-Book, "Elijah's War With Baal," available for a tax-deductible contribution from Biblical Horizons, Box 1096, Niceville, FL 32688. I also have a series of taped lectures on 1 & 2 Kings. Write Biblical Horizons for information.)

YEAR	JUDAH	ISRAEL	HISTORICAL DATA, TESTIMONY, EVIDENCE OR PROOF
3086	Asa 37	11	
3087	39	12	1 Ki. 16:29
3088	32	Ahab 2	
3089	4a	3	
	41		
3090	Jehoshaphat accession	4	2 Chron. 16:13; 1 Ia. 22:41-42
3091	Jehoshaphat 1	5	
3092	2	s	
3093	3	7	
3094	4	s	
3095	5	9	
3096	6	10	
3097	7	11	
3098	s	12	
3099	9	13	Elijah: 1 <sup>st</sup> year of famine 1 Ki. 17
3100	10	14	2 <sup>nd</sup> year of famine
3101	11	15	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of famine; Mt. Carmel victory 1 m. 1s-19
3102	12	1s	1 <sup>st</sup> Syrian War 1 Ki. 20:1-20
3100	13	17	2 <sup>nd</sup> Syrian War 1 Ki. 20:26-43
3104	14	1s	1 <sup>st</sup> year of peace
3105	15	19	2 <sup>nd</sup> year of peace
310s	16	20	3 <sup>rd</sup> year of peace
3107	Jehoram Co Rex 1 17	Ahaziah Co Rex 1 21	3 <sup>rd</sup> Syrian War 1 Kings 22:51
	2 1s	2 2 2	Death of Ahab 1 Ki. 22
			Death Of Ahaziah 2 Ki. 1
310s		Jehoram 1	Ascension of Elijah 2 Ki. 2
			Accession of Jehoram 2 Ki. 1:17; 31
			Moabite War 2 Ki. 3
310s	19	2	