

This Ahaz is only a limb in the chain of the descendants of Saul (for a diagram see Klein: 254–55), but nevertheless he has an important function. The first indication of its significance is the fact that the genealogy of the ancestors and descendants of Saul is presented twice in a very similar form: 1 Chr 8:33–40 and 9:39–44. The function of this genealogy is a matter of debate (for an overview of research see Knoppers: 488–92). Is it a well informed list that preserves very old information from the earliest times of the monarchy? Or is it a mirror of the postexilic circumstances: “the due attention given to Benjamin’s many descendants supports and ratifies the prominence of this group in Persia period Judah” (Knoppers: 492)? This link to the historical situation of the Chronic circle itself is for sure an important factor but it does not explain why the part of Benjamin was unfolded so extensively by the genealogy of the Saulides. It is unlikely that we have here an indication of hope for the return of the Saulide dynasty to power (Flanagan: 25). According to Oeming, the background of this list of the Saulides is the curse of Shimei in 2 Sam 16:7–8: “Murderer! Scoundrel! The LORD has avenged on all of you the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned.” The function of the fictional genealogy is an apology of “the Chronicler’s darling” David. The fact that Ahaz “existed” disburdens David.

The unsavoury shadow that cast darkness upon David as the murderer of the house of Saul is banished by the detailed genealogy and by several purposeful omissions from the text ... The pronounced emphasis on the genealogy of the house of Saul is part of an idealization of David. David is no murderer! (Oeming: 179, see also Klein: 258, 281)

In any case it is important to realize the narratological function of the repeated list in 1 Chr 9.

The genealogy of the ancestors and descendants of Saul prepares the reader for the narrative of Saul’s death in 1 Chr 10. The Chronicler here may have omitted 8:39–40, which end with the words: ‘all these were Benjaminites,’ lest he give the impression that Saul’s unfaithfulness recounted in ch. 10 applies to the Benjaminites in general (Klein: 280).

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## Ahaziah

The proper name “Ahaziah” appears in two forms: *ʾĀhazyā* and *ʾĀhazyāhū*, with the meaning “YHWH has seized (in protection)” (Noth: 179).

## 1. King of Israel

Ahaziah son of Ahab comes to power after the death of his father at Ramoth-Gilead in the mid-9th century BCE (1 Kgs 22:37–40). The Hebrew Bible says little about him apart from a few details about his interactions with Jehoshaphat, Jezebel and Elijah.

One of his first acts as king is to ask Jehoshaphat to partner with him in the shipping business (1 Kgs 22:49–50); i.e., to exchange some of Israel’s seafaring technology for a percentage of Judah’s lucrative gold trade. Since Israel and Phoenicia have successfully formed a “treaty” (*bērit*, 1 Kgs 5:15–25; Moore 2004), he suggests that Israel and Judah form an “alliance” (*heber*, 2 Chr 20:35–37). Jehoshaphat, however, shows little interest in forging such an alliance, especially after the failure of his partnership with Ahab (1 Kgs 22:1–40). Ahab’s death, moreover, redefines Jezebel’s role. As widowed queen-mother she inherits a role projecting greater influence over Ahaziah than when her husband was alive (1 Kgs 21:8–10; Molin; Donner; Ackerman; Bowen).

Religiously Ahaziah offends the Yahwist prophet Elijah when, after accidentally falling through a lattice-roof and injuring himself, he pursues a healing strategy dictated more by Canaanite than Yahwistic theology (2 Kgs 1:1–2). Unaware (or unimpressed) by the showdowns at Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18) and the Samaritan threshing floor (1 Kgs 22), Ahaziah turns to Baal-Zebub of Ekron for help, a deity whose name literally means “lord of the flies.” Whether or not this represents a later editorial distortion of Baal-Zebul (“Prince Baal”; Gaston), or a title later replaced by Baal-Zebul (Tangberg), Elijah condemns this decision (2 Kgs 1:5–16; Moore 2003b). Dying childless, Ahaziah’s power eventually transfers so his brother Joram, who succeeds him to the throne as the last king of the Omride dynasty (2 Kgs 2:17–18; Moore 2003a).

**Bibliography:** ■ S. Ackerman, “The Queen Mother and the Cult in Ancient Israel” *JBL* 112 (1993) 385–401. ■ N. Bowen, “The Quest for the Historical Gebirā,” *CBQ* 63 (2001) 597–618. ■ H. Donner, “Art und Herkunft des Amtes der Königinmutter im Alten Testament,” in FS J. Friedrich (eds. R. von Kiele et al.; Heidelberg 1959) 105–45. ■ L. Gaston, “Beelzebub,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 18 (1962) 247–55. ■ G. Molin, “Die Stellung der Gebira im Staate Juda,” *Theologische Zeitschrift* 10 (1954) 161–75. ■ M. S. Moore, “Jehu’s Coronation and Purge of Israel,” *VT* 53 (2003a) 97–114. ■ M. S. Moore, “Injury to Insult,” in id., *Faith Under Pressure* (Siloam Springs, Ark. 2003b) 159–62. ■ M. S. Moore, “Big Dreams and Broken Promises,” *BBR* 14 (2004) 205–21. ■ M. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen* (Hildesheim 1980 [= Stuttgart 1928]). ■ A. Tangberg, “A Note on Baʿal-Zēbub in 2 Kgs 1:2,3,6,16,” *SJOT* 6 (1992) 293–96.

## 2. King of Judah

According to the Hebrew Bible, the Davidic king Ahaziah son of Joram (*ʾĀhazyāhū*) comes to power in the 12th year of Joram son of Ahab, the Omride

king eventually killed by Jehu (2 Kgs 8:25). According to 2 Kgs 8:18, Ahaziah's mother, Athaliah, is a "daughter of Ahab," while in 8:26 she is a "daughter of Omri." The Septuagint's Lucianic recension tries to harmonize this contradiction by reading "Ahab" instead of "Omri" in 8:26, while the Syriac translation of 2 Chr 21:6 calls Ahaziah's mother a "sister of Ahab." Some try to solve this problem by making Ahaziah the son of Athaliah's marriage to Jehoshaphat's firstborn, an unnamed older brother of Joram (Barrack).

There may be extra-biblical confirmation of Ahaziah's existence in line 8 of the Tell Dan Stela (Biran/Naveh), where the Aramean king Ben-Hadad II (Halpern) or Hazael (Schniedewind) makes the claim:

7. [wqtl't 'yt yw]rm br ['hb]
8. mlk ys'r'l wqtl[t 'yt 'h'z]yhw br [ywr'm ml]
9. k byt dwd.

In translation:

7. [And I killed Jo]ram, son of [Ahab]
8. king of Israel and I kill[ed Ahaz]iah, son of [Joram]
9. [king] of the house of David.

Whatever the history of Ahaziah's death, the narrator of Kings parodies it in a passage designed to ridicule the religion as well as the politics of the Omride dynasty. Just as Anat "raises her voice" against two low-level deities (Gapnu and Ugar) in one of the Canaanite myths found at Ugarit (KTU 1.3 iii 36–38), Jehu not only refuses to speak to Joram and Ahaziah, he publicly slaughters them. By paralleling the deaths of these two kings with two of the lowest demi-gods of the Canaanite pantheon, the narrator of Kings not only narrates the political death of the Omride dynasty, he ridicules the religious ideology he holds most responsible for the abandonment of prophetic Yahwism (Moore).

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## Ahban

Ahban was a son of Abishur and Abihail, of the tribe of Judah. Ahban (MT 'Aḥbān; LXX Αἰαβαν) is mentioned only once in the Bible (1 Chr 2:29), within the extended genealogy list of the sons of Perez, the son of Judah (1 Chr 2:3, 5). Etymologically, the name means "the (Divine) Brother is the One Who Understands [i.e., the Intelligent One]."

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## Aher

The proper name Aher (MT 'Aḥēr; LXX Αἰε; as adverb, the Hebrew word means "another") occurs only once in the Bible, in a genealogy in 1 Chr 7:12. The genealogical information in this verse is, however, problematic. Apart from the fact that it is not clear whether Hushim should be taken as a proper name of a single person or of a group (seeing that "sons of Aher" – plural – follows in apposition), it is also not clear to whose genealogy they belong. Many studies follow H.A. Klostermann's (1898: 94) emendation which takes Hushim to be a Danite. (Gen 46:23 supports this emendation.) Williamson, however, sees 1 Chr 7:12 as a fragmentary verse which provides more Benjaminite names (Williamson 1973).

In these emendations, different proposals for the interpretation of Aher are made:

- a) Klostermann's suggestion (still followed by Knoppers and Klein in their commentaries) is that the Hebrew word should be read as 'ḥd ("one"). The use of numerical summaries in genealogies is attested in 1 Chr 7:1, 3, 6–7, and it could also be assumed for 1 Chr 7:12. Furthermore, the scribal error of replacing the Hebrew *dālet* with a *rēš* is well-known;
- b) Williamson emends the last word in 1 Chr 7:12 to read either 'ard or 'addār which he then (with reference to Gen 46:21 and Num 26:40) interprets as a Benjaminite name (Williamson 1973);
- c) Kartveit (1989: 99–100, 188) translates the Hebrew as "another," thus, "Hushim, the son of another." He interprets "another" then as a code word referring to Dan.

Although rabbinic sources make mention of the legendary Elisha ben Abuya who was also known as Aḥer, there is no indication that this figure is related in any way to the person mentioned in 1 Chr 7:12.

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## Aḥer (Elisha ben Abuya)

Aḥer (Elisha ben Abuya) is a 2nd-century rabbinic figure. Aḥer has fascinated the Jewish imagination from the rabbinic period to contemporary times because of his image as a heretic and sinner. Various sources in the Talmud ascribe to him sins ranging from murder of young Torah scholars (yHag 2:1) and harlotry and desecration of the Sabbath (bHag