

~OMRI 3 (241) (Om'ri)

- Sixth king of the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. Nothing of **Omri's** ancestry is recorded, not even the name of his father or tribe. **Omri** founded the third dynasty of Israel, those of Jeroboam and Baasha preceded, his son Ahab and grandsons Ahaziah and Jehoram succeeding him, all four totaling some 46 years, circa **951-905 B.C.E.**, on the throne. **Omri's** granddaughter Athaliah ruled six years on the throne of Judah.
- Twenty-two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and for one year he reigned in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of **Omri** the king of Israel. (**2 Kings 8:26**)
- Now as regards Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah, she saw that her son had died. So she rose up and destroyed all the offspring of the kingdom. (**2 Kings 11:1**)
- However, Jehosheba the daughter of King Jehoram, the sister of Ahaziah, took Jehoash the son of Ahaziah and stole him from among the sons of the king that were to be put to death, even him and his nursing woman, into the inner room for the couches, and they kept him concealed from the face of Athaliah, and he was not put to death. (**2 Kings 11:2**)
- And he continued with her at the house of Yehowah in hiding for six years, while Athaliah was reigning over the land. (**2 Kings 11:3**)
- Twenty-two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and for one year he reigned in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of **Omri**. (**2 Chronicles 22:2**)
- Jehu, who wiped out the house of Ahab and established the next dynasty of Israel, is called a **son, that is, successor, of Omri** on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III. [**Ancient Near Eastern Texts**, edited by J. Pritchard, 1974, p. 281]

- In fact, the Assyrians continued calling Israel the land of **Omri** and Israel's kings the house of **Omri** long after his descendants had ceased ruling a tribute to his power.
- **Omri** came to the throne, not by inheritance, but by the sword. He had been chief of Israel's army under King Elah, and perhaps under his predecessor Baasha when Zimri, chief of half the chariots, overthrew Elah, took the kingship for himself, and wiped out the house and friends of Baasha.
- As soon as this was reported to the Israelite army, at the time camped against the Philistines at Gibbethon, all Israel, doubtless the tribal heads in the camp, made **Omri** their king.
- At once they withdrew from Gibbethon and stormed Zimri's capital Tirzah. Zimri, seeing the hopelessness of his cause, burned down the king's house over himself, tragically ending his seven-day rule.
- In the twenty-sixth year of Asa the king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel in Tirzah for two years. (**1 Kings 16:8**)
- And his servant Zimri the chief of half the chariots began to conspire against him, while he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk at the house of Arza, who was over the household in Tirzah. (**1 Kings 16:9**)
- And Zimri proceeded to come in and strike him down and put him to death in the twenty-seventh year of Asa the king of Judah, and he began to reign in place of him. (**1 Kings 16:10**)
- And it came about that when he began to reign, as soon as he sat down upon his throne, he struck down all the house of Baasha. He did not let anyone of his remain that urinates against a wall or his avengers of blood or his friends. (**1 Kings 16:11**)
- Thus Zimri annihilated the whole house of Baasha, according to the word of Yehowah that he had spoken against Baasha by means of Jehu the prophet. (**1 Kings 16:12**)
- On account of all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son with which they sinned and with which they caused Israel to sin by offending Yehowah the God of Israel with their vain idols. (**1**

Kings 16:13)

- As for the rest of the affairs of Elah and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the affairs of the days of the kings of Israel? (**1 Kings 16:14**)
- In the twenty-seventh year of Asa the king of Judah, Zimri became king for seven days in Tirzah, while the people were encamping against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. (**1 Kings 16:15**)
- In time the people that were encamped heard it said; Zimri has conspired and also struck down the king. So all Israel made **Omri**, the chief of the army, king over Israel on that day in the camp. (**1 Kings 16:16**)
- **Omri** and all Israel with him now went on up from Gibbethon and began to lay siege to Tirzah. (**1 Kings 16:17**)
- And it came about that as soon as Zimri saw that the city had been captured, he then came into the dwelling tower of the king's house and burned the king's house over himself with fire, so that he died. (**1 Kings 16:18**)
- For the sins of his with which he had sinned by doing what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah by walking in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he did by causing Israel to sin. (**1 Kings 16:19**)
- As for the rest of the affairs of Zimri and his conspiracy with which he conspired, are they not written in the book of the affairs of the days of the kings of Israel? (**1 Kings 16:20**)
- But a new rival to **Omri** presented himself Tibni the son of Ginath. The populace remained divided for about four years, during which time civil war presumably raged until **Omri's** supporters defeated Tibni, securing undisputed rule for **Omri**. Zimri had died in the 27th year of King Asa of Judah, circa **951 B.C.E.**
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- And it came about that as soon as Zimri saw that the city had been captured, he then came into the dwelling tower of the king's house and burned the king's house over himself with fire, so that he died. (1 Kings 16:18)
- Finally, in the 31st year of Asa, 947 B.C.E, Tibni died in some unstated way, leaving **Omri** about eight years of sole rule.
- It was then that the people of Israel began to divide themselves into two parts. There was one part of the people that became followers of Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and the other part followers of **Omri**. (1 Kings 16:21)
- Finally the people that were following Omri overcame the people that were following Tibni the son of Ginath, so that Tibni met death, and **Omri** began to reign. (1 Kings 16:22)
- In the thirty-first year of Asa the king of Judah, **Omri** became king over Israel for twelve years. In Tirzah he reigned six years. (1 Kings 16:23)
- And as for Ahab the son of **Omri**, he became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa the king of Judah, and Ahab the son of **Omri** continued to reign over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. (1 Kings 16:29)

See Also CHRONOLOGY

- **Mightiness** is attributed to King **Omri**.
- As for the rest of the affairs of **Omri**, what he did and his mightiness with which he acted, are they not written in the book of the affairs of the days of the kings of Israel? (1 Kings 16:27)
- According to lines 4 through 8 of the Moabite Stone, **Omri** brought Moab into subjection, which domination Ahab continued.

- As regards Mesha the king of Moab, he became a sheep raiser, and he paid to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and a hundred thousand unshorn male sheep. (2 Kings 3:4)
- Midway in his reign, **Omri** wisely moved his capital away from Tirzah, which he had found so easy to capture. He purchased the mountain owned by Shemer, well suited for fortifying, and there he built a new city, Samaria, which was able to withstand long sieges.
- In the thirty-first year of Asa the king of Judah, **Omri** became king over Israel for twelve years. In Tirzah he reigned six years. (1 Kings 16:23)
- And he proceeded to buy the mountain of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver, and began to build on the mountain and call the name of the city that he built by the name of Shemer the master of the mountain, Samaria. (1 Kings 16:24)
- Cuneiform inscriptions likewise call him its founder, and it was also his burial place.
- Finally **Omri** lay down with his forefathers and was buried in Samaria, and Ahab his son began to reign in place of him. (1 Kings 16:28)
- In the course of his reign, **Omri** met with various setbacks, such as having to surrender some cities to the king of Syria
- Ben-hadad now said to him; The cities that my father took from your father I shall return, and streets you will assign to yourself in Damascus the same as my father assigned in Samaria. And as for me, in a covenant I shall send you away. With that he concluded a covenant with him and sent him away. (1 Kings 20:34)
- And having to pay tribute to Assyria, he being the first Israelite king to do so.
- Religiously, **Omri** continued the downward trend of the northern kingdom, he continued Jeroboam's idolatry, in fact, he **kept doing what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah** and came to do worse than all who were prior to him.

- And **Omri** kept doing what was bad in the eyes of Yehowah and came to do worse than all who were prior to him. (**1 Kings 16:25**)
- And he went walking in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and in his sin with which he caused Israel to sin by offending Yehowah the God of Israel with their vain idols. (**1 Kings 16:26**)
- Some 200 years later, through Micah, Yehowah condemned Israel for following, **the statutes of Omri**.
- And **the statutes of Omri** and all the work of the house of Ahab are observed, and you people walk in their counsels, to the end that I may make you an object of astonishment and her inhabitants something to be whistled at, and the reproach of peoples you men will bear. (**Micah 6:16**)