

Who was King Ahaziah in the Bible?

There are two kings named Ahaziah in the Bible; one ruled in the northern kingdom of Israel and the other in the southern kingdom of Judah. In a long line of righteous and unrighteous kings that ruled in the northern and southern kingdoms, these men were both evil kings.

Ahaziah of Israel was king from 853–852 BC. He was the son of Ahab and Jezebel, who were among the most wicked rulers Israel ever had. Ahaziah's parents brought Baal worship into the land and turned God's people away from Him; although Ahaziah reigned for only two years, he was just as evil as his parents. He "aroused the anger of the LORD" (1 Kings 22:53) due to his own worship of Baal, which continued to lead the people into sin and idolatry. At one point King Ahaziah of Israel tried to ally with King Jehoshaphat of Judah, but, after a warning from one of God's prophets, Jehoshaphat severed ties with the wicked king (verse 49; cf. 2 Chronicles 20:37).

At some point during his reign, King Ahaziah of Israel fell out of a window, injuring himself badly. He was confined to bed, and, rather than inquire of the Lord, Ahaziah sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the "god" of Ekron, to see if he would recover (2 Kings 1:2). The Lord sent His prophet, Elijah, to confront the messengers and give them God's message for King Ahaziah: he would never recover from his injuries and would die in his bed.

When the messengers returned to King Ahaziah and relayed what Elijah had told them, Ahaziah was angry and sent his captain and 50 soldiers to fetch Elijah. The captain demanded that Elijah come down from the hill he was sitting on, but the prophet refused; instead, he announced, "May fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty

men!” (2 Kings 1:10). The Lord allowed this miracle, and all King Ahaziah’s men were consumed by fire. Ahaziah sent men to Elijah twice more. In the second instance, the same thing happened as in the first: Elijah called down fire to kill the soldiers. However, the third captain begged for his life, and the Lord spared the company. Elijah came to the king. God’s Word had not changed: Elijah repeated God’s message of judgment directly to Ahaziah, and soon Ahaziah died. As Ahaziah had no sons, he was succeeded by his brother Joram, who was also a sinful ruler—although not as evil as his brother and parents before him (verse 17).

The other Ahaziah, King Ahaziah of Judah (who is also called “Jehoahaz” in some translations), was the nephew of King Ahaziah of Israel and the son of Jehoram, the evil son of the righteous king Jehoshaphat. Judah’s King Ahaziah was related to King Ahaziah of Israel through his mother, Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Ahaziah of Judah walked in the ways of his father, and because of this the Lord allowed him to reign less than one year in 841 BC. He was only 22 years old (2 Kings 8:26-27).

King Ahaziah immediately allied with his other uncle, King Joram, in a war against the king of Aram. King Joram was wounded and went to Jezreel to rest (2 Kings 8:28-29), and Ahaziah of Judah joined him there. During this time, a man named Jehu was anointed by the Lord as king of Israel with the command to destroy the house of Ahab (see 2 Kings 9:1-10). Jehu knew King Joram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah were in Jezreel, and so he rode to that city (verse 16). When King Joram and King Ahaziah went down to meet Jehu, Joram guessed Jehu’s plan and tried to flee (verse 23). Jehu, however, shot Joram with an arrow and killed him instantly (verse 24). Ahaziah tried to run as well, but Jehu’s company pursued him, mortally wounding him. Ahaziah made it to Megiddo but died there (verse 27). Jehu continued his campaign, killing Jezebel and eventually destroying

all of Ahab's family.

Not only are the stories of King Ahaziah of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah a part of the history of the Jewish people, they are also a cautionary tale of the consequences of leading God's people away from the Lord. Both the northern and southern kingdoms were eventually destroyed as a result of God's judgment for their evil ways. While a remnant that spent 70 years in captivity was eventually able to return to Judah, the kingdom was never the same again.