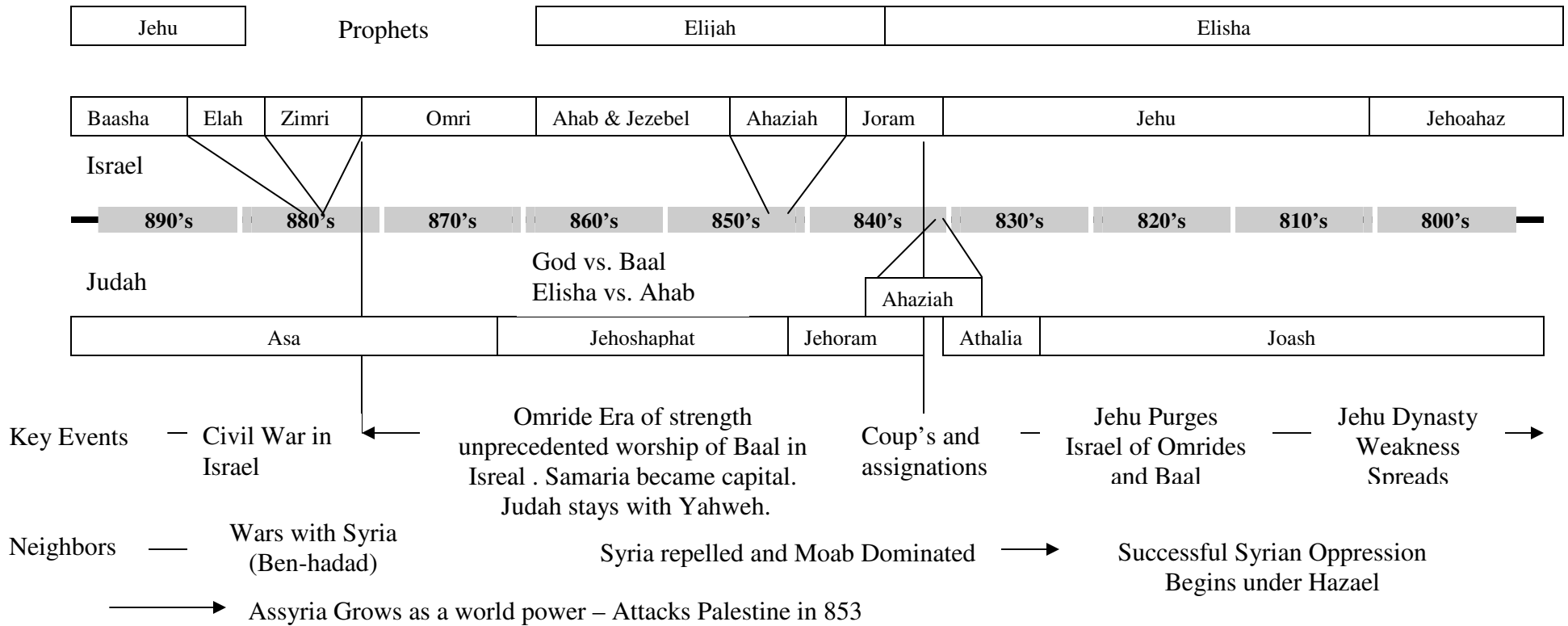


9th Century B.C. – Israel’s Timeline



Summary of the Century:

During the 9th century Israel was a divided kingdom. The early part of the century was called the Omride Era and the latter the Jehu Dynasty. The Omride era was a time of some strength for the Northern kingdom with the southern kingdom aligned to it through a marriage perhaps subserviently. This was the era when the notable showdown between God and Baal (Elijah and Ahab). This era ended with a series of assassinations and a coup by Jehu which ushered in a new dynasty in the northern kingdom. This latter dynasty was characterized by weakness for both kingdoms and Syria began to take a lot of Israel's territory.

Details:

Early in the 9th century political turbulence was evident in Israel which at times may have reached a state of civil war. Zimri's reign began with the assassination of Elah but is thought by some to have only lasted a week. From this state of chaos emerged Omri who started what would be a succession of 3 generations of kings. Omri was a very capable ruler architecting alliances with Judah as well other nations. He was also a builder establishing a new capital at Samaria, a strong military and succeeded at territorial annexations even while Assyria grew in expansive imperialism. These earned Israel the name the Land of Omri during his reign and quite a while thereafter. Omri's son Ahab and with his Phoenician wife Jezebel continued the dynasty and are credited with expanding the worship of Baal to unprecedented proportions and in doing so caused Israel a great deal of trouble. It is in this setting that the great bible stories of Elijah, Elisha, the battles with Ben-hadad and the Naboth Vineyard are set. On Ahab's death his son Ahaziah reigned briefly. He was apparently injured in some way which he did not recover from and his reign was one of decline for Israel and relative inactivity. The next few years were ones of great political unrest again with Kings being assassinated. A coup by Jehu purged the land of the Omride family including Jezebel and killed the prophets of Baal at the temple of Samaria. This stabilized things a bit and ushered in a new dynasty in the northern kingdom. The Jehu Dynasty was however did not flourish. Syrian oppression grew severely during the latter 9th century and ultimately the period was characterized weakness compared to the Omride era.

During the Omride Era Judah was closely related to Israel through a royal marriage during Jehoshaphat's reign. Jehoshaphat was remembered as loyal to God but was also quite deferential to the king of Northern Israel. He also built forts and cities, built up a military and taught the book of law of Yahweh but in the end was pulled down by his close involvement with the northern kingdom. His taking of a daughter of Jezebel for a wife for his son and his participation in a dangerous war against Moab in support of Ahab's son Joram. Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram's reign set the descent of Judah into a time of weakness as the daughter of Jezebel transplanted her mother's policies into Judah. Following Jehoram successive massacres had reduced the descendants of David until only one representative was left. Jehoram, murdered all his brothers and Arab marauders had killed his sons except the youngest Ahaziah, who after the death of his father, was, with 42 of his "brethren," executed by Jehu. Finally, Athaliah attempted to

destroy all the royal seed. By this point the relationship with the Northern Kingdom had brought the Davidic dynasty to the brink of extinction. After the short reign' of Athalia and Ahaziah, Joash came to the throne creating a new start for the Davidic line of leadership. An intial religious fervor cleansed Judah from some of the idol worship yet is was short lived. The religious system became corrupt with Priest mishandling temple funds and Joash was ultimately assassinated by his own people.

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