

Jesus's Royal Ancestry: Rulers of the Kingdom of Judah

Matthew's genealogy (Matt 1:1–16) names several of the rulers of the kingdom of Judah—Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah—that are part of Jesus Christ's ancestry. Matthew's genealogy also refers to King David and his son Solomon (Matt. 1:6–7). All of these rulers played prominent roles in world history, and all were Jesus's progenitors.

Nineteen kings and one queen served as rulers in the kingdom of Judah. The average reign lasted approximately seventeen years, with the longest being Manasseh's reign, which persisted for fifty-five years. Two kings—Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin—reigned for only three months. After Jehoahaz ruled Judah for three months, Egypt's pharaoh captured and exiled him to Egypt, where he eventually died (2 Kgs. 23:33–34). About a decade later, Jehoiachin was enthroned, and he ruled for about three months.

Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jehoiachin, made him prisoner, and exiled him to Babylon, together with his mother, his wives, and others of his kingdom (2 Kgs. 24:10–16).⁴⁸

Compared to the average longevity of modern times, kings' life spans were not long. According to the available data, the average length of a king's life in Judah was forty-four

years (see column 4). The youngest king died at twenty-two years old, the oldest at sixty-eight.

During its existence, the kingdom of Judah was marked by internal strife, competition for the crown, idolatry and false worship, and wars against neighboring world powers. The kingdom was smeared by much wickedness, including idolatry (1 Kgs. 11:33; 14:24; 2 Kgs. 21:7; 23:6–7; 18:4) and the rejection of God's prophets (1 Chr. 16:22). Of Judah's twenty rulers, twelve engaged in evil practices in their kingdom.

During its history, the kingdom of Judah battled against a number of foreign powers, including Egypt (1 Kgs. 14:25–26), Syria (1 Kgs. 22:1–40), and Assyria (2 Kgs. 18–19).

The kingdom of Judah lasted approximately 345 years, from Rehoboam (930 BC) to Zedekiah (586 BC). Nebuchadnezzar and his armies dealt the final blow to Judah (2 Kgs. 25:1–2, 21).

Although Matthew's genealogy lists several kings in Jesus Christ's ancestry, Jesus is markedly different from all mortal kings. He is perfect, sinless, and full of love, grace, and mercy, and His kingdom will be an "everlasting kingdom" (2 Pet. 1:11). Furthermore, He is the "king of glory" (Ps. 24:7). He is the "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:16).

Kings/ Queen	Length of Reign	Years (BC)	Age at Death	References
Rehoboam	17 years	930-913	59	1 Kgs. 12:1-24; 14:21-31
Abijah	3 years	913-910		1 Kgs. 15:1-8
Asa	41 years	910-869		1 Kgs. 15:9-24
Jehoshaphat	25 years	Co-regent with Asa 872-869 Co-regent with Jehoram 853-848 Total reign 872-848	59	1 Kgs. 22:41-50
Jehoram	8 years	Co-regent with Jehoshaphat 853-848 Total reign 853-841	44	2 Kgs. 8:16-24
Ahaziah	1 year	841	22	2 Kgs. 8:25-29
Athaliah (Queen)	6 years?	841-835		2 Kgs. 11
Joash	40 years	835-796	46	2 Kgs. 12
Amaziah	29 years	Total reign 796-767 Overlap with Azariah 792-767	54	2 Kgs. 14:1-22
Azariah (Uzziah)	52 years	Overlap with Amaziah 792-767 Total reign 792-740	68	2 Kgs. 15:1-7
Jotham	16 years	Co-regent with Azariah 750-740 Total reign 750-732	44	2 Kgs. 15:30-38
Ahaz	16 years	732-715	40	2 Kgs. 16
Hezekiah	29 years	Co-regent with Ahaz 729-715 Co-regent with Manasseh 696-686 Total reign 715-686	54	2 Kgs. 18:1- 20:21
Manasseh	55 years	Co-regent with Hezekiah 696-686 Total reign 696-642	66	2 Kgs. 21:1-18

Kings/ Queen	Length of Reign	Years (BC)	Age at Death	References
Amon	2 years	642–640	24	2 Kgs. 21:19–26
Josiah	31 years	640–609	39	2 Kgs. 22:1– 23:30
Jehoahaz	3 months	609		2 Kgs. 23:31–33
Jehoiakim (Eliakim)	11 years	609–598	36	2 Kgs. 23:34– 24:7
Jehoiachin	3 months (or 3 months, 10 days, according to 2 Chron. 36:9)	598–597		2 Kgs. 24:8–17
Zedekiah	11 years	597–586		2 Kgs. 24:18– 25:26