

## MOTHERS OF OFFSPRING IN 1–2 KINGS

### A MESSIANIC HOPE IN DAVID’S LINE?

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#### Summary

*In the books of 1 and 2 Kings, the mothers of Judaeen kings are given a unique focus in being mentioned. Historically-minded scholars, neglecting a more message-minded approach, have not sufficiently explored why this is the case. However, when viewed as an allusion to Genesis 3:15, the focus on mothers reveals a literary marking of each Judaeen king as an offspring of the woman, maintaining messianic hope within a dark period of Judah’s history.*

#### 1. Introduction

The editor of 1–2 Kings grabs the reader’s attention by mentioning the mothers of Judaeen kings with only two exceptions while always omitting the mothers of Israelite kings. This is likely not an accidental detail, since in all communication ‘choice implies meaning’.<sup>1</sup> What an author chose both to include and exclude shapes the message of the book. My answer for the editor’s bias toward the Judaeen mothers will demonstrate how the spotlight on these mothers contributes to the message of the book of Kings, and this study will enrich other messianic interpretations of Kings.

#### 2. Overview of Recent Scholarship

While some scholars notice the mention of the king’s mother, they offer little if any interpretation. For example, in her commentary on

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<sup>1</sup> S. Runge, *A Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament: A Practical Introduction for Teaching & Exegesis* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2010): 5–7.

1–2 Kings, Gina Hens-Piazza identifies the seventeen mothers of Judaeen kings but does not offer justification for why they are mentioned.<sup>2</sup> Some scholars note the omission of the mothers of the Judaeen kings J(eh)oram and Ahaz, but they do not explore why they are excluded.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Russell Dilday recognises that the introductions to Israelite kings omit the name of the mother, but he offers no explanation.<sup>4</sup> Still, other scholars cite that the mothers of Judaeen kings hold the office of ‘queen mother’, but this fact is merely stated and not developed in their writing.<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1 *Queen Mother View*<sup>6</sup>

The most common answer given for the mother’s mention is that each Judaeen mother became queen mother when her son ascended the throne; conversely, Israel never attained dynastic stability in order to establish the office of queen mother.<sup>7</sup> Niels-Erik Andreasen, representative of this view, appears inconsistent, however, in that he affirms that the queen mother in 2 Kings 10:13 refers to Jezebel of Israel.<sup>8</sup> Yet,

<sup>2</sup> G. Hens-Piazza, *1–2 Kings* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006): 144, 151, 152, 220, 282, 313, 327, 335, 339, 359, 376, 378, 383, 390, 391, 397, 398.

<sup>3</sup> K. Spanier, ‘The Queen Mother in the Judaeen Royal Court: Maacah—A Case Study’ in *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings*, ed. A. Brenner and K. Shargent (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1994): 186; V. Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003): 340; B. Long, *1 Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984): 160; cf. B. Long, *2 Kings* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991): 108–110, 173–79.

<sup>4</sup> R. H. Dilday, *1, 2 Kings* (Waco: Word, 1987): 176.

<sup>5</sup> S. J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (Waco: Word, 1985): 184, 187, 190; P. R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (Nashville: B&H, 1995): 297; T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (Waco: Word, 1985): 212; T. Fretheim, *First and Second Kings* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999): 89; and R. H. Lowery, *The Reforming Kings: Cult and Society in First Temple Judah* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991): 105. I. Provan only notes that queen mother may have been an official office in the Israelite or Judaeen kingdoms (*1 and 2 Kings* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995]: 41).

<sup>6</sup> For a fuller analysis and critique of scholarship on queen mother, the reader should consult Appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> J. Gray, *1 and II Kings* (London: SCM Press, 1964): 341–42; G. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984): 276; J. T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1996): 207. Cf. R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961): 117–18 and M. Cogan, *1 Kings* (New York: Doubleday, 2001): 386, 397–98, who agree that each Judaeen mother is mentioned because she became queen mother when her son became king. Cf. also N. A. Andreasen, who agrees that the northern kingdom never attained dynastic stability to develop the office of queen mother (‘The Role of the Queen Mother in Israelite Society’, *CBQ* 45.2 (1983): 179–94).

<sup>8</sup> Andreasen, ‘Role of Queen Mother’, 179–94, esp. 180, 190. Conversely, J. Olley uses 2 Kings 10:13 as proof that all mothers of Israelite kings may have held the title

if she is queen mother, why was she not mentioned when her son Ahaziah ascended the throne (1 Kgs 22:52) like the Judaeans mothers?

Appealing to the office of queen mother does not answer why the Israelite mothers are omitted, nor does it answer why two of the Judaeans mothers are unnamed. One postulation is that these mothers died before their sons became king and never attained the office of queen mother.<sup>9</sup> Another is that their names were lost from the documentary sources and were unknown to the editor.<sup>10</sup> These speculations actually raise more questions than they answer.

## 2.2 *Cultic Role View*

In my judgement, an even more unlikely view is held by Susan Ackerman. She proposes that each Davidic king was considered ‘the adopted son of Yahweh’ and the queen mother was Asherah’s representative.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Asherah was the ‘adopted mother of the king’. Her support is that ‘Asherah was seen by many—in both the state and popular cult—as the consort of Yahweh.’<sup>12</sup> This view is highly conjectural, since only one Judaeans queen mother is said to worship Asherah (1 Kgs 15:13). Moreover, she fails to distinguish between the remnant minority and the rebel majority. Though many in Judah certainly did worship Asherah alongside of YHWH, he clearly forbade other gods (Exod. 20:3; Deut. 16:21), and the editor of Kings decried such worship of Asherah (1 Kgs 14:22–23; 2 Kgs 18:3–4; 21:2–3).

## 2.3 *Message-Based Views*

The following three views have more validity in that they begin to consider the book’s message. The first view affirms a purposeful omission of the two Judaeans mothers because their kingly sons were very evil. Edward Sri criticises this view, because there are many Judaeans kings who ‘did evil’, yet their mothers are mentioned.<sup>13</sup>

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of ‘queen mother’ (*The Message of Kings: God is Present* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011]: 155–56).

<sup>9</sup> Gray, *I and II Kings*, 534; D. J. Wiseman, *I and 2 Kings* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993): 47.

<sup>10</sup> E. Sri, *Queen Mother: A Biblical Theology of Mary’s Queenship* (Steubenville: Emmaus Road, 2005): 137 n. 21.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 1, especially n. 76.

<sup>12</sup> S. Ackerman, ‘The Queen Mother and the Cult in Ancient Israel’, *JBL* 112.3 (1993): 385–401.

<sup>13</sup> Sri, *Queen Mother*, 137 n. 21.

Nevertheless, there are varying degrees of doing evil for both Judaeen and Israelite kings. The question still remains: if the omissions are deliberate, what function do they fulfil in the narrative? Second, Zafirra Ben-Barak suggests that mentioning the mothers stresses ‘the uninterrupted dynastic continuity of the house of David’,<sup>14</sup> but she does not explain how the continuity is stressed or for what purpose.

Third, Nancy Bowen is the only one to my knowledge who discusses the naming of the kings’ mothers on a literary level. She observes that the evaluation of the king follows the naming of the king’s mother within the succession formula. For every king until Manasseh who receives a negative evaluation, the mother is either not named, foreign, or engages in ‘non-Yahwistic practices’. Furthermore, the approved mothers are all ‘from Jerusalem or the Judaeen provinces’. She concludes that attention given to these mothers ‘is in part a reflex of the Deuteronomistic critique of Solomon and foreign wives in 1 Kings 11:8’.<sup>15</sup> Bowen, however, does not answer why the Israelite mothers are unnamed, nor does the editor focus on the mother’s place of origin as consistently as she claims.<sup>16</sup>

### 3. Analysis of Data in Kings

The preceding overview of scholarship has revealed an oversight in how attention given to the Judaeen mothers contributes to the message of the book. My thesis is that mentioning the Judaeen mothers strengthens a dichotomy between the Israelite and Judaeen kings as two distinct, rival lines. Moreover, the frequent mentioning of these mothers highlights the crystallising hope that the Messiah would be a future kingly offspring of the woman, a seed sown in Genesis 3:15. This twofold thesis contributes to other messianic interpretations of Kings, and it is itself supported by the literary ties of Samuel–Kings and intertextual connections with Revelation.

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<sup>14</sup> Z. Ben-Barak, ‘The Status and Right of the Gēbîrâ’, *JBL* 110.1 (1991): 23–34, esp. 24.

<sup>15</sup> N. Bowen, ‘The Quest for the Historical Gēbîrâ’, *CBQ* 63.4 (2001): 597–618, esp. 602.

<sup>16</sup> For six mothers, their place of origin is not even mentioned (1 Kgs 15:2, 10; 22:42; 2 Kgs 15:33; 18:2; 21:1). Moreover, except for Josiah, every king following Manasseh is given a negative evaluation, even though their mothers are likely from Judaeen provinces. That a mother is mentioned is more telling than her place of origin.

### 3.1 Message of the Book of Kings

We should first briefly consider the message of Kings before detailing how the spotlight on the Judaeans mothers contributes to it. Forming the backdrop of the book is the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7). This is evidenced by at least twenty-six allusions throughout Kings to the Davidic covenant.<sup>17</sup> This backdrop explains why it is so important who succeeds David in 1 Kings 1–2 and why the Davidic dynasty survives, despite the disobedience of individual Judaeans kings and the extermination of the Israelite dynasties.<sup>18</sup> The book of Kings is abuzz with anticipation that God's promises to David might soon be fulfilled in one of his sons.

The fulfilment of the Davidic covenant would mediate the blessing of Abraham to the nations of the earth, and this fulfilment seems promising in Solomon's reign. Solomon expects a name more famous than David's (1 Kgs 1:47; cf. Gen. 12:2), is blessed by God (1 Kgs 2:45; cf. Gen. 12:2), and rules a people too many to count (1 Kgs 3:8; cf. Gen. 13:16; 15:5) and as numerous as the sand (1 Kgs 4:20; cf. Gen. 13:16). Nevertheless, Solomon must keep what was 'written in the Law of Moses' for his throne to be established (1 Kgs 2:3–4).<sup>19</sup> Solomon's reign comes to a disappointing end as he pursues the three things forbidden in Deuteronomy 17:16–17: much silver and gold (1 Kgs 10:14–25),<sup>20</sup> many horses (10:26–29), and many wives (11:1–8).

God responds with judgement by splitting the kingdom under Rehoboam's reign, and his people await their Messiah, having been divided under the reigns of two distinct, rival lines: Judah and Israel. These distinct, rival lines of kings are seen most clearly in how Jeroboam is presented as the antithesis to David, each standing as covenantal head over his line.

Jeroboam stands as the antithesis to David in several ways. First, when God promises Jeroboam ten tribes of David's kingdom (1 Kgs

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<sup>17</sup> 1 Kgs 1:37, 47–48; 2:4, 24, 33, 45; 3:6–7, 14; 5:3–5; 6:11–13; 8:17–20, 23–26; 9:4–5; 10:9; 11:11–13 (cf. 11:4, 6), 32, 34, 36 (cf. 11:39); 14:21; 15:4–5; 2 Kgs 8:19; 19:34; 20:6; 21:4, 7; 23:27.

<sup>18</sup> I. Provan, 'The Messiah in the Books of Kings' in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. Hess, and G. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995): 72–73.

<sup>19</sup> All Scriptural quotations are the author's own translation, but the verse numbers correspond to the English versification rather than the Hebrew text.

<sup>20</sup> Though initially a blessing (1 Kgs 3:10–14), Solomon's later riches were of his own faithless acquisition.

11:30–37), Jeroboam breaks his covenant and it is not established (11:38; 13:33–34; 14:7–11), while David’s covenant is perpetual (2 Sam. 7:11–16).<sup>21</sup> Second, God condemns Jeroboam for doing ‘evil more than all who were before you’ (14:9), while David is praised as one who did ‘only the right thing’ (1 Kgs 14:8). Third, God completely destroys the houses of Jeroboam,<sup>22</sup> Baasha,<sup>23</sup> and Ahab,<sup>24</sup> while David’s house is preserved, even in spite of judgement.<sup>25</sup> Fourth, Israelite kings are nearly always compared to Jeroboam,<sup>26</sup> while Judaeen kings are regularly evaluated in light of David.<sup>27</sup>

Not only are the Israelite kings presented as a distinct line from the Judaeen kings, they are further presented as a rival line, constantly warring against the Judaeen kings. Wars are mentioned for six different sets of kings: Rehoboam vs Jeroboam (1 Kgs 14:30; 15:6), Abijam vs. Jeroboam (1 Kgs 15:7), Asa vs. Baasha (1 Kgs 15:16, 32), Amaziah vs. J(eh)oash (2 Kgs 13:12; 14:11–15), Jotham vs. Pekah (2 Kgs 15:37), and Ahaz vs. Pekah (2 Kgs 16:5). Wars between these two nations are so common that peace is noteworthy (1 Kgs 22:4, 44).

### 3.2 *Mothers of Kings*

Turning now to the focus of our study, examining the kings’ mothers only strengthens our observation that the kingly lines of Judah and Israel are presented as distinct and rivals. The editor of Kings uses an established succession formula when introducing the reign of each of the forty kings following the kingdom split:<sup>28</sup> twenty Judaeen kings and

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<sup>21</sup> Although I prefer ‘perpetual’ to ‘unconditional’, B. Waltke is insightful: ‘[W]hile the covenant is unconditional, the king’s experience of its blessing depends on his obedience’ (*An Old Testament Theology: an Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007]: 661). The conditionality of each king’s enjoyment of the covenant (2 Sam. 7:14–15) is why the king is often exhorted to be obedient (1 Kgs 2:2–4; 6:11–13; 8:25–26; 9:4–7).

<sup>22</sup> 1 Kgs 15:29–30; cf. 14:10–11, 14.

<sup>23</sup> 1 Kgs 16:11–13; cf. 16:2–4.

<sup>24</sup> 2 Kgs 9:7–9; 10:10–11, 17; cf. 1 Kgs 21:21–24.

<sup>25</sup> 1 Kgs 11:13, 32, 34, 39; 15:4–5; 2 Kgs 8:19.

<sup>26</sup> 1 Kgs 15:26, 34; 16:2, 19, 26, 31; 22:52; 2 Kgs 3:3; 10:29, 31; 13:2, 11; 14:24; 15:9, 18, 24, 28.

<sup>27</sup> 1 Kgs 3:3; 11:6; 15:3, 11; 2 Kgs 14:3; 16:2; 18:3; 22:2.

<sup>28</sup> The only exceptions in the northern kingdom are Jeroboam, Tibni, and Jehu, who each usurped the throne of Israel. The reigns of Baasha, Zimri, Omri, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, and Hoshea also mark dynasty changes in the northern kingdom, yet they each have succession formulae, because how they usurped the throne is included in the account of the previous king. Athaliah, also a usurper, is the only exception in the southern kingdom.

twenty Israelite kings.<sup>29</sup> The formula differs slightly for the kings of Judah and Israel. Singularly important for our study is that no mother of an Israelite king is mentioned in the succession formulae, while the Judaeans mothers regularly are.

### Fig. 1. Comparative Succession Formulae

<b>Judaeans Kings</b>	<b>Israelite Kings</b>
i year of ascent <sup>30</sup>	i year of ascent <sup>31</sup>
ii name of father <sup>32</sup>	ii name of father <sup>33</sup>
iii length of reign in capital city <sup>34</sup>	iii length of reign in capital city <sup>35</sup>
iv age at beginning of reign <sup>36</sup>	iv *omitted*
v name of mother <sup>37</sup>	v *omitted*
vi summary evaluation <sup>38</sup>	vi summary evaluation <sup>39</sup>

When analysing closely the two Judaeans kings whose mothers are omitted, a striking fact arises. J(eh)oram and Ahaz are given identical evaluative statements that are unique to them: ‘he walked in the way of the kings of Israel’ (2 Kgs 8:18; 16:3). When so much attention has

<sup>29</sup> This numbering includes the reign of Athaliah in the line of Judah (2 Kgs 11:1–3) and Tibni in the line of Israel (1 Kgs 16:21–22). Although it appears that Tibni never gained control of all of Israel, the text does mention that ‘[h]alf of the people followed’ him ‘to crown him king’ (16:21). The editor seems to include this brief account of Tibni in order to present an equal number of kings in the Israelite and Judaeans lines.

<sup>30</sup> 11/19 Judaeans kings with succession formulae. The year is given in relation to the reign of his northern counterpart. Rehoboam began to reign before the kingdom split, and the seven last kings began to reign after the exile of the northern kingdom.

<sup>31</sup> 17/17 Israelite kings who have a succession formula.

<sup>32</sup> 9/19 Judaeans kings. The fathers of Asa and Abijam are mentioned the verse before their formulae (1 Kgs 14:31; 15:8), and the father of Joash is named nearly a chapter before his formula (2 Kgs 11:2). The fathers of the last seven kings are mentioned immediately before the succession formulae. Only the father of the last king Zedekiah is unmentioned.

<sup>33</sup> 15/17 Israelite kings. Only Zimri (1 Kgs 16:15) and Omri (1 Kgs 16:23) lack the father’s name.

<sup>34</sup> 19/19 Judaeans kings.

<sup>35</sup> 17/17 Israelite kings.

<sup>36</sup> 17/19 Judaeans kings. This data are only absent for Abijam and Asa.

<sup>37</sup> 17/19 Judaeans kings. Only the mothers of J(eh)oram and Ahaz are omitted.

<sup>38</sup> 19/19 Judaeans kings. This is a very brief description of whether the king ‘did the evil thing’ (1 Kgs 14:22; 2 Kgs 21:2, 20; 23:32, 37; 24:9, 19), ‘did the right thing’ (1 Kgs 15:11; 2 Kgs 12:2; 14:3; 15:3, 34; 18:3; 22:2), or how the king walked (1 Kgs 15:3; 22:43; 2 Kgs 8:18, 27; 16:3; 21:21; 22:2).

<sup>39</sup> 14/17 Israelite kings. The same thing is said of every Israelite king who is given an evaluation: ‘He did what was evil in the sight of the YHWH.’ It is missing for Shallum and Elah, who both had short reigns; it is attributed to Zimri (1 Kgs 16:19) outside of his succession formula (16:15).

been given in the book to present the two lines of kings as *distinct*, the reader is alarmed that these two Judaeen kings are aligned with their Israelite *rivals*.<sup>40</sup>

This would not be the first time in Scripture that the line of promise is diluted by the rival line. The ultimate rival lines begin in the garden with the enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent (Gen. 3:15).<sup>41</sup> Eve expected Cain to put an end to this enmity, proclaiming at his birth, ‘I have acquired a man with the help of YHWH’ (4:1); yet by killing his brother Abel, Cain proved himself to be an offspring of the serpent, not of the woman (4:25; 1 John 3:12, 15; cf. John 8:33, 39–44).<sup>42</sup>

A rising number of scholars agree that, while plural offspring is also in view in Genesis, the book envisions an individual deliverer as early as Genesis 3:15.<sup>43</sup> Stephen Dempster finds a messianic interpretation of

<sup>40</sup> J(eh)oram’s son Ahaziah is identified with the kings of Israel in a similar way: ‘He walked in the way of the house of Ahab’ (2 Kgs 8:27). Nevertheless, his mother Athaliah is mentioned (8:26). Ahaziah is likely aligned with the line of promise to give hope that, in spite of his father’s evil intermarriage with the rival Israelite line (8:18), God will preserve the Judaeen throne for David’s sake (8:19).

<sup>41</sup> J. Hamilton traces some of the canonical development of the enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent. He sees this enmity between Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1–16), Isaac and Ishmael (21:9–10, 12; Rom. 9:7), and Pharaoh’s attempt to kill all the male children of Israel (Exod. 1:16, 22). Sometimes the enemies of God’s people are called ‘offspring of wicked ones’ (Isa. 1:4; 14:20), ‘sons of worthlessness’ (Deut. 13:14; Judg. 19:22; 20:13; 1 Sam. 2:12; 1 Kgs 21:10, 13; 2 Chr. 13:7), ‘offspring of vipers’ (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7), children of ‘your father the devil’ (John 8:41, 44), ‘son[s] of hell’ (Matt. 23:15), and ‘sons of disobedience’ (Eph. 2:2) (‘The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15, *SBJT* 10.2 [2006]: 30–54, esp. 33, 47–48, n. 32). S. Dempster highlights the same theme throughout the Old Testament and terms it ‘the woman against the beast’. He lists ‘Eve versus the serpent; Sarah and Rebekah versus barrenness; Tamar versus Judah; Jochebed and Miriam versus the Pharaoh; Deborah and Jael versus Sisera; Ruth and Naomi versus death; Hannah versus barrenness; Jehosheba versus Athaliah [and Esther versus Haman]’ (*Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003]: 223).

<sup>42</sup> J. DeRouchie and J. Meyer, ‘Christ or Family as the “Seed” of Promise? An Evaluation of N. T. Wright on Galatians 3:16’, *SBJT* 14.3 (2010): 36–48; W. Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995): 42; and J. Hamilton, ‘The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham’, *TynBul* 58.2 (2007): 253–73.

<sup>43</sup> Though עֲרֵב (offspring) is a collective-singular noun—its form does not change whether it refers to one offspring or to several—Jack Collins provides criteria for determining when עֲרֵב is singular or plural in referent. When referring to an individual descendent, עֲרֵב ‘appears with singular verb inflections, adjectives, and pronouns’ (‘A Syntactical Note (Genesis 3:15): Is the Woman’s Seed Singular or Plural?’, *TynBul* 48.1 [1997]: 139–48). Since Gen. 3:15 uses a 3ms pronoun to refer back to עֲרֵב, a singular offspring is in view. Later scholars who agree with Collins’ analysis include



Genesis 3:15 decisive '[o]nce the contextual scope is widened, not only to the book of Genesis but to the literary horizon of the canon'.<sup>44</sup> Although many scholars trace the canonical ripples of Genesis 3:15 through use of offspring language, Eve's title of 'mother of all the living' (3:20) may direct the reader to look throughout Scripture for a motherhood theme which functions to invigorate the messianic hope.<sup>45</sup>

It is likely that the editor of Kings has the Genesis 3 account in mind, because there are three probable allusions to this passage in the narrative.<sup>46</sup> Before David publically announces his successor, Adonijah exalts himself as king (1 Kgs 1:5). Adonijah, however, is an imposter, since David has promised that Solomon would reign next (1 Kgs 1:13, 17, 24, 30), and the reader is told that Adonijah is sacrificing 'by the Serpent's Stone' (1:9). Adonijah is, at least literarily, allied with the serpent.<sup>47</sup> Solomon describes David's military victories in the language of Genesis 3:15, declaring that 'God put them [his enemies] under the soles of his feet' (1 Kgs 5:3; cf. Gen. 22:17b; 24:60; 49:8; Num. 24:7, 17–19). Hezekiah's actions are compared to David's (2 Kgs 18:3), and the editor relates next that 'he beat into pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made' (2 Kgs 18:4), because it was used as a place of sacrifice. Again, at least literarily, Hezekiah defeats the serpent to secure sole devotion to God.

If indeed the editor has the Genesis 3 account in mind, the mention of Jeroboam's mother may be significant. Though Jeroboam lacks a

T. D. Alexander, 'Further Observations on the Term "Seed" in Genesis', *TynBul* 48.2 (1997): 363–67; Hamilton, 'Skull Crushing Seed', 30–54; DeRouchie and Meyer, 'Christ or Family', 36–48; and M. Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Really Messianic?* (Nashville: B&H, 2010): 143.

<sup>44</sup> Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 69. Several essays have convincingly argued this very point: T. D. Alexander, 'From Adam to Judah: The Significance of the Family Tree in Genesis', *EQ* 61 (1989): 5–19; T. D. Alexander, 'Messianic Ideology in the Book of Genesis', in *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, R. Hess, and G. Wenham (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995): 19–39; Hamilton, 'Seed of the Woman', 253–73; and Hamilton, 'Skull Crushing Seed', 30–54.

<sup>45</sup> Dempster argues that Adam's naming his wife 'Eve' as 'the mother of all living' (Gen. 3:20) is 'a genuine act of faith on the part of the man ... [because of the] specific role she will have as the one who will provide a seed who will strike the serpent' ('Dominion and Dynasty', 68–69).

<sup>46</sup> For explanations of dozens of other allusions to Gen. 3:15 throughout all of Scripture, see Hamilton, 'Skull Crushing Seed', 30–54.

<sup>47</sup> J. Hamilton also sees Adonijah as a recasting of the ancient serpent through four literary correspondences between 1 Kgs 2:13–25 and Gen. 3:1–7 (*God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2010]: 178).

succession formula, his mother's name is given (1 Kgs 11:26) in a similar way to the Judaeen kings. It could be that he is presented as a hopeful offspring of the woman. After all, he is first introduced in a positive way<sup>48</sup>—God gives him ten tribes (11:31, 35) to be king over (11:37) and promises him a house like David's if he will obey (11:38)—but he proves himself to be the antithesis to David as an offspring of the serpent, so none of his lineage have the mother's name listed. If Jeroboam and his Israelite successors represent the offspring of the serpent, how is it that the Judaeen kings J(eh)oram and Ahaz become associated with this rival line?

J(eh)oram is joined to the rival Israelite line through a marriage covenant (see below), and Ahaz follows suit with Israel and submits himself to Assyria through a vassal treaty (2 Kgs 16:5–9; cf. 15:19–20, 29; 17:3). The mothers of each king are omitted, because these kings join themselves with the rival line, and put the Davidic kingdom and the line of promise in jeopardy. Because of the faithless actions of Ahaz, Assyria will come to overthrow Judah during the reign of his son Hezekiah (18:31–19:37), just as this great power overthrew Israel (17:4–6; 18:9–12). Israel has been exiled for repeatedly breaking the covenant, and Judah will experience the same judgement as long as she continues to imitate the evil deeds of Israel.<sup>49</sup>

The influence of the evil Israelite line upon Judah is spread most explicitly through the Israelite women Jezebel and Athaliah. Although Ahab is described as more wicked than all Israelite kings before him (1 Kgs 16:33), it becomes clear that Jezebel is the *source* of his wickedness, influencing Ahab and his sons to evil. Marrying Jezebel is the worst sin Ahab committed (16:31–33). Jezebel is the one who plots to kill Naboth (21:7) on behalf of her passive husband (21:4–6). And Ahab is supremely evil because 'Jezebel his wife incited' him (21:25). The influence of Jezebel is felt even upon her son (22:52) and grandson

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<sup>48</sup> Hope is placed in Jeroboam even though he is from the tribe of Ephraim (1 Kgs 11:26), not Judah. Like Saul, who was a Benjamite (1 Sam. 9:1), he is a false hope as a king.

<sup>49</sup> The editor views Israel as the source of evil which infiltrates Judah. After recounting why Israel was exiled, the editor notes, 'Judah also did not keep the commandments of YHWH their God, but they *walked* in the statutes which *Israel* practised' (2 Kgs 17:19). This verdict echoes the unique pronouncement against J(eh)oram and Ahaz: "he *walked* in the way of the kings of *Israel*" (2 Kgs 8:18; 16:3). YHWH will bring judgement against Judah if they remain aligned with the rival line.

(2 Kgs 3:2–3). In fact, it is the whorings of Jezebel that live on while the house of Ahab remains alive (9:22).

These whorings of Jezebel spread to the house of Judah through her daughter<sup>50</sup> Athaliah, who marries the Judaeen king J(eh)oram. This tragedy is first signalled when J(eh)oram's father Jehoshaphat 'made peace with the king of Israel' (1 Kgs 22:44; cf. 22:4). The reason J(eh)oram is said to have 'walked in the way of the kings of Israel' is given: 'for (כִּי) the daughter of Ahab was his wife' (2 Kgs 8:18). The same logic is given for his son Ahaziah, who 'walked in the way of the house of Ahab ... for (כִּי) he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab' (8:27). The woman who spreads the evil of Israel to Judah is Athaliah.

Athaliah does more than merely influence the Judaeen kings to evil;<sup>51</sup> she wars against the entire royal house, putting the line of promise in jeopardy. Already her influence upon her husband J(eh)oram (2 Kgs 8:16–18) would have spelled certain doom for David's house if not for YHWH's allegiance to his covenant with David (8:19). Now upon the death of her son Ahaziah, Athaliah 'arose and destroyed all the offspring (אֶרְבָּי) of the kingdom' (11:1), warring against David's house for six years (11:2–3). If she were to succeed in wiping out the entire royal house, the Davidic covenant, which is the backdrop to the entire book, would be broken, and God would be found a liar, not able to secure a son for David to reign forever (2 Sam. 7:12–13).<sup>52</sup>

Athaliah does not succeed in extinguishing David's line, however, since God saves the king's son through another woman, Jehosheba (2 Kgs 11:2–3). T. R. Hobbs observes that the editor means to contrast these women vividly: 'Athaliah is the potential destroyer of the dynasty, Jehosheba is its savior.'<sup>53</sup> As was mentioned above, it is

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<sup>50</sup> That Athaliah is the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel is disputed by J. Hatzenstein. Athaliah is called the 'daughter of Ahab' (2 Kgs 8:18; cf. 8:27) and 'daughter of Omri' (8:26). Hatzenstein resolves this tension through analysis of dates given in the text by concluding that she was rather the daughter of Omri and 'a young orphan at the court of Ahab', who was also 'educated under ... Jezebel' ('Who Were the Parents of Athaliah?', *Israel Exploration Journal* 5.3 [1955]: 194–97). Even if he is correct, the strong relational tie between Jezebel and Athaliah is undisputed, so my point still stands.

<sup>51</sup> Spanier also notes that another indication of her influence over the Judaeen kings is that both J(eh)oram and Ahaziah share 'the same names as their Omride counterparts' ('The Queen Mother', 142).

<sup>52</sup> So Provan, 'Messiah', 73.

<sup>53</sup> Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 136; cf. R. Cohn, *2 Kings* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000): 77–78.

through this motherhood theme that the line of promise is preserved and the hopeful flicker of the coming Messiah is fanned into flame. Moreover, Jehosheba follows Bathsheba as the second woman to play such an important role in the book.

Bathsheba is the most influential person in setting her son Solomon on the throne. Adonijah has set himself up as king, but Nathan and Bathsheba have a counterplot. Although Nathan possesses great influence (1 Kgs 1:10), he comes to Bathsheba (1:11) and asks her to act (1:12–13) by reminding David to put Solomon on the throne. Only afterward does he come in to verify her words (1:14). Also, David calls in Bathsheba first (1:28) and declares to her that Solomon will be king as he had promised her (1:29–30). Bathsheba's significance is derived from being mother of the king, her title five times in the narrative (1:11; 2:13, 19, 20, 22). Once again, the reason for such a focus on the king's mother is to awaken hope that the promised offspring of the woman is near at hand.

The expected offspring of the woman never comes in the book of Kings. In fact, by the end of the book, the eyes of the last king, Zedekiah, are gouged out, his sons are slaughtered, and both he and the nation of Judah are exiled from the land (2 Kgs 25:7, 21). Hope remains kindled as the book closes, however, since the previous king Jehoiachin—whose mother is twice mentioned to have been exiled to Babylon with him (24:12, 15)<sup>54</sup>—is freed from prison and exalted in the Babylonian court (25:27–30). Jehoiachin is twice given the title 'king of Judah' (25:27) to signal that YHWH is remaining faithful to his covenant, and he will yet raise up an offspring of David, born of the woman, and 'establish the throne of his kingdom forever' (2 Sam. 7:13).

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<sup>54</sup> Many scholars point to Jeremiah's account of the exile of the queen mother (Jer. 13:18; 29:2) as an indication that Jehoiachin's mother held a lofty position in the royal court. I suggest that mentioning the exile of the king's mother functions to bring the messianic hope with her into exile. It is no accident that her son Jehoiachin carries the torch of messianic hope as the book draws to a close. In support of this, Micah anticipates the messianic king to come from Judah (5:2), but only after the people of Israel, described as a mother, experience the judgement birth pains of exile (5:3; cf. 4:9–10).

#### 4. Other Messianic Interpretations of Kings

A significant number of other scholars have also seen that the book of Kings is messianic. This study should be seen as a contribution to those who find messianic hope in Kings. Many have followed in the footsteps of Gerhard von Rad, who argued that the promise to David of an everlasting dynasty (2 Sam. 7:15–16) delays the just judgement upon Judah, and the exaltation of Jehoiachin in exile (2 Kgs 25:27–30) gives hope that YHWH is not finished with his covenant.<sup>55</sup>

Iain Provan expands upon this interpretation in a full-length essay on the Messiah in Kings.<sup>56</sup> He argues that the mention of Jehoiachin at the end of the book is significant in contrast to Jehoahaz who died (2 Kgs 23:34) and Zedekiah who departed in obscurity (2 Kgs 24:18–25:7). Moreover, Jehoiachin's exaltation is the third time David's line is miraculously preserved, following Athaliah's rage against David's offspring in 2 Kings 11 and the Ahab-type judgement upon Judah in 2 Kings 21–23. The reigns of Solomon,<sup>57</sup> Hezekiah, and Josiah give glimpses of what the coming Messiah would be like. However, each king fails to measure up during this dark period of Judah's history. Introducing the next king as an offspring of the woman gives a glimmer of hope that maybe this will be the one.

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<sup>55</sup> G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology. Vol. 1, The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962): 340–43; cf. B. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979): 292–93; P. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998): 269–70; T. D. Alexander, *The Servant King: The Bible's Portrait of the Messiah* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1998): 95; R. Dillard and T. Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (2nd edn; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006): 186; and Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 153–156. J. G. McConville sees the ending of Kings as 'gloomy,' but the 'messianic theology of Samuel' survives nonetheless ('King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History' in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day [Sheffield: Sheffield, 1998]: 293–95).

<sup>56</sup> Provan, 'Messiah', 67–85.

<sup>57</sup> G. K. Beale documents six 'literary resonances' between the description of the height of Solomon's reign and Gen. 1:26–28 with its surrounding context. He argues that there is optimism in Kings that Solomon will accomplish what Adam failed to do in the garden, and he contends, along with Provan, that Solomon is 'a prototype of the true eschatological king who would come' (*A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011]: 66–73). Cf. Hamilton, *Salvation through Judgment*, 178–79 and Alexander, *Servant King*, 79–88, who see that Solomon's early reign is exemplary of what the Messiah would be like.

## 5. Support from Samuel–Kings

Connections with 1–2 Samuel do much to invigorate hope in Kings for the offspring of the woman, because Samuel anticipates that the Messiah would be a serpent-crushing king.<sup>58</sup> Literary ties between Samuel and Kings are so strong that the Septuagint linked them together as one book (1–4 Kingdoms). The book of Samuel may be divided into four main sections: Samuel (1 Sam. 1–7), Saul (1 Sam. 8–14), David 1 (1 Sam. 15–2 Sam. 8), and David 2 (2 Sam. 9–20). Since it has become clear throughout salvation history that the coming Messiah would be a king,<sup>59</sup> hope runs high that Saul or David would be the promised deliverer. The literary structure of their reigns highlights the hope that either could be the expected Messiah. James Hamilton and Dempster have called attention to David’s defeat of Goliath resembling the curse against the serpent in Genesis 3:14–15.<sup>60</sup> This observation is strengthened by a chiasmic structure in Samuel.

### Fig. 2. Chiasm of Serpent-Slaying Warriors in 1 and 2 Samuel

	<b>Saul</b> <sup>61</sup> 1 Sam. 8–14	<b>David 1</b> <sup>62</sup> 1 Sam. 15– 2 Sam. 8	<b>David 2</b> <sup>63</sup> 2 Sam. 9–20
<b>Serpent Slain</b>	Nahash, the Ammonite (1 Sam. 11)	Goliath of Gath (1 Sam. 17)	Hanun, son of Nahash (2 Sam. 10)
<b>Fall Account</b>	Unlawful Sacrifice (1 Sam. 13)	(none)	Adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11)

Some commentators have remarked that the name of Nahash, the Ammonite king, means serpent,<sup>64</sup> but no one that I am aware of has

<sup>58</sup> I am indebted to Brian Verrett, who explained these following observations in personal correspondence.

<sup>59</sup> God promised Abraham (Gen. 17:6), Sarah (17:16), and Jacob (35:11) that kings would come from them. The line of promise continues to narrow upon Judah, who is blessed in regal language (49:8–10), and Num. 24:9, 17 make the connection between Judah’s blessing and Gen. 3:15 explicit. Later, God makes provisions for kings in Israel (Deut. 17:14–20), and Judges supposes that a king will fix the spiritual decline in Israel (17:6; 21:25; cf. 18:1; 19:1). Hannah expects a coming powerful king to be YHWH’s ‘Messiah’ (1 Sam. 2:10).

<sup>60</sup> Hamilton, ‘Skull Crushing Seed’, 35; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 140.

<sup>61</sup> The concluding summary of Saul’s reign is 1 Sam. 14:47–52. What follows is a transition to how David ascended the throne.

<sup>62</sup> Summary is 2 Sam. 8:15–18.

<sup>63</sup> Summary is 2 Sam. 20:23–26, an almost identical list of officials as in the above summary.

made the allusion to Genesis 3:15 explicit.<sup>65</sup> This seems intentional on the editor's part, because the victories over the 'serpent' and the 'offspring of the serpent' mark the first military victories in Saul's and David's respective literary units. The reader who expects Saul or David to be the messianic king is disappointed when the editor relates next their fall accounts. David's own fall even recalls Eve's tragic disobedience in the garden.<sup>66</sup> He himself needs to be redeemed, and hope heading into Kings is placed in one of David's offspring who would defeat the rival line and reign forever (2 Sam. 7:12–13).

## 6. Intertextual Connections with the Book of Revelation

The presentation of distinct, rival lines in the book of Kings is developed throughout the New Testament,<sup>67</sup> but it is addressed most clearly in the book of Revelation. The line of promise is identified with 'a woman' (12:1), who likely is a sign of the believing community of the Old and New Testaments.<sup>68</sup> This woman gives birth to the expected Messiah, 'a male child, who is about to shepherd all nations with an iron rod' (12:2), and other offspring, the saints (12:17; cf. 14:12). She is later recast in Revelation as 'the Bride, the wife of the Lamb' (21:9; cf. 19:7–8).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> R. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel* (Nashville: B&H, 1996): 135; R. Klein, *1 Samuel* (Waco: Word, 1983): 105; and G. Robinson, *1 & 2 Samuel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993): 65.

<sup>65</sup> This allusion is strengthened by W. Brueggeman's observation that 1 Sam. 11 is divided into three parts, each focused on deliverance (*First and Second Samuel* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990]: 83). This structure presents Saul as a messianic figure (B. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003]: 180).

<sup>66</sup> With some identical vocabulary as Gen. 3:6, the editor of Samuel likewise portrays that David sees (ראה) that the temptation is good (טוב), and then takes (לקח) it (2 Sam. 11:2–4). Although David has defeated the 'offspring of the serpent', he cannot be the ultimate offspring of the woman, because he is portrayed as the woman in his fall.

<sup>67</sup> For example, the offspring of the serpent are variously referred to as 'offspring of vipers' (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7), children of 'your father the devil' (John 8:41, 44), 'son[s] of hell' (Matt. 23:15), and 'sons of disobedience' (Eph. 2:2). And the offspring of the woman are called 'children of God' (John 1:12; 11:52; Rom. 8:16, 21; 9:8; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 5:2) 'children of light' (Eph. 5:8; cf. 1 Thess. 5:5), and 'children' of 'the elect lady' (2 John 1). In fact, John says that all people are either 'children of God' or 'children of the devil' (1 John 3:10).

<sup>68</sup> See G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999): 625–32.

<sup>69</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 628.

The rival line is initially identified with ‘that woman Jezebel’, who ‘is teaching and deceiving my servants to practise sexual immorality’ (2:20). She is judged along with her offspring (2:22–23). Jezebel is later recast as ‘the great prostitute ... with whom the kings of the earth have committed sexual immorality’ (17:1–2), and she is also called ‘Babylon the great, mother of prostitutes and of earth’s abominations’ (17:5).<sup>70</sup> In Revelation the woman Jezebel/Babylon is the source of all evil (17:1–2, 5, 15, 18; 18:3; 19:2). These two lines are intentionally contrasted within the book.<sup>71</sup>

The ancient enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent will one day come to an end. Jesus is the offspring of the woman ‘who is to shepherd all nations with an iron rod’ (12:5). Jesus is ‘the Lion from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, [who] has overcome’ (5:5). Jesus is ‘the root and the descendant of David’ (22:16). And Jesus will destroy the woman Babylon (18:1–19:3), throw the serpent Satan into ‘the lake of fire and sulphur’ (20:10), and lift the curse to reign with his people forever (20:3).

## 7. Conclusion

Attention given to mothers in Kings contributes to the book’s message in a twofold way. First, only mentioning the Judaeen mothers strengthens a dichotomy between Israel and Judah as distinct, rival lines. Even the Judaeen kings J(eh)oram and Ahaz, whose mother’s names are omitted, are evaluated as walking like Israelite kings. The evil of Israel is spread to Judah through Jezebel and her daughter Athaliah, who attempted to exterminate David’s offspring.

Second, frequently mentioning the Judaeen mothers animates the hope that one of David’s offspring would be the serpent-crushing offspring of the woman. The true Judaeen line is marked by kings whose mothers’ names are given, literarily marking them as offspring of the woman. This line of promise is preserved in times of peril by Bathsheba and Jehosheba. Even in exile, hope remains kindled in the continuation of David’s line through Jehoiachin.

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<sup>70</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 262, for five parallels in Revelation between Jezebel and the Babylonian harlot, and 884, for eleven additional parallels between the OT Jezebel and Revelation’s Babylonian harlot.

<sup>71</sup> See Beale, *Revelation*, 889–90 for seven parallels and differences between the Bride and Babylon in chs. 12, 19, 21.



Although many scholars have made a strong case for a messianic reading of Genesis 3:15, they have done so almost exclusively from the angle of ‘*offspring* of the woman’. In doing so, they have produced a truncated Messianism, because Scripture also develops Genesis 3:15 from the complementary angle of ‘*mother* of the offspring’. This study suggests that the editor of Kings focuses on motherhood, a theme throughout Scripture, to highlight how the line of promise is preserved and to heighten hope that the Messiah will yet come.

## Appendix 1: An Overview of Recent Scholarship on ‘Queen Mother’

There is much written on the queen mother<sup>72</sup> in the ancient Near East (ANE), but only a portion can be summarised here. For many ANE kingdoms it was the mother of the king, not the wife, who held the position of queen. Sri gives two reasons for the institution of the queen mother. First, since most kings practised polygamy, establishing the mother as queen was easier than choosing a wife. Second, she received ‘a special place in the royal court’ because she was influential ‘in securing the kingship for her son’.<sup>73</sup>

Though many acknowledge the office of queen mother, scholars do not agree upon her main role or status within the royal court. There are three major proposals for the *main role* of the queen mother. First, the queen mother influenced dynastic succession.<sup>74</sup> Second, she was a chief counselor to the king.<sup>75</sup> Third, Ackerman advances the idea that the queen mother held an official cultic function, wherein she was ‘considered the human representative of Asherah in the royal court’.<sup>76</sup>

There are four major proposals for the *status* of the queen mother within the royal court. First, the queen mother is the second most

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<sup>72</sup> The Hebrew word is *gevirah*, which appears fifteen times in the Hebrew Bible. I affirm the classification of three main meanings put forward by Ben-Barak: ‘(1) mother or wife of the reigning sovereign (1 Kgs 11:19; 2 Kgs 10:13; Jer. 29:2; 1 Kgs 15:13; 2 Chr. 15:16; Jer. 13:18); (2) female ruler, governess (Isa. 47:5, 7); (3) mistress in relation to maidservant (Gen. 16:4, 8, 9; 2 Kgs 5:3; Ps. 123:2; Prov. 30:23; Isa. 24:2)’ (‘Status and Right’, 23–34, esp. 23).

<sup>73</sup> Sri further explains the historical background of this point: ‘Since the kings practiced polygamy, the resulting situation inevitably led to rivalries among wives, each vying for their son to become heir to the throne’ (*Queen Mother*, 45–46).

<sup>74</sup> Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings*, 160; Carol Smith, “‘Queenship’ in Israel? The Cases of Bathsheba, Jezebel and Athaliah’ in *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*, ed. John Day (Sheffield: Sheffield, 1998): 147; Bowen explains that owing to polygamy ‘only the children of the highest or favorite wife would be eligible for succession’ (‘Quest for Historical Gēbirā’, 597–618, esp. 603).

<sup>75</sup> Andreasen, ‘Role of Queen Mother’, 179–94; cf. Sri, *Queen Mother*, 50.

<sup>76</sup> Ackerman, ‘Queen Mother’, 385–401. Her argument is that Maacah, Jezebel, Athaliah, and Nehushta were all participants in the cult of Asherah. She makes these observations ‘in the light of more nuanced exegeses of the biblical text’, and concludes that these women provide the norm rather than the exception for queen mothers.

powerful person behind only the king.<sup>77</sup> Second, she is just the most powerful *lady* of the royal harem.<sup>78</sup> Third, she is due honour simply by being mother of the king.<sup>79</sup> Fourth, Bowen downplays any status—distinguishing between the mother of king and queen mother altogether—and concludes that what is often claimed of the queen mother ‘cannot be adequately demonstrated by the biblical witness’.<sup>80</sup>

The reason for the often divergent and sometimes contradictory material written on the office of the queen mother is due to a lack of biblical data. Scholars often write using a high degree of generalisation and inferential logic because the text does not yield the answers for the questions they are asking. Their motivation often is to peel behind the text and analyse the historical role and status of this queen mother. While there is certainly a place for historical study, the editor of Kings primarily intends his focus on these mothers to serve a literary role in supporting the message of his book. The majority of scholars ignore this literary role of mentioning the mother, so historical study takes the foreground.

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<sup>77</sup> Ackerman, ‘Queen Mother’, 385–401; Andreasen, ‘Role of Queen Mother’, 179–94; and Sri, *Queen Mary*, 50, where he says ‘she shared in her son’s rule of the kingdom’.

<sup>78</sup> Gray, *I and II Kings*, 106; Dilday, *I, 2 Kings*, 58.

<sup>79</sup> Ben-Barak, ‘Status and Right’, 23–34. She does affirm that certain queen mothers attained positions of power, but this was ‘the direct consequence of the woman’s character, ambition, and personal abilities’. In particular, she discusses the mothers Bathsheba, Maacah, Hamutal, and Nehushta, and concludes that they ‘were able to obtain positions of influence and power’ by demonstrating two common characteristics: ‘(1) Each of these queens was the mother of a younger son who was without right to the succession, which legitimately belonged to an older brother. (2) They each succeeded in recruiting a powerful following of ambitious adherents who helped make it possible to place a younger son at the head of the kingdom, although this was in contradiction to accepted practice in regard to the royal succession’. Cf. Smith who disagrees with Ben-Barak slightly. Smith contends that queen mother was an official position, but ‘it was her own qualities that enabled her to wield it effectively’ (‘“Queenship” in Israel’, 143–47).

<sup>80</sup> Bowen argues that the root *gbr* ‘carries connotations of power, strength, and dominance’, and thus a more proper definition of *gevirah* would be ‘Great lady’ or ‘Principal lady’. She concludes that the noun should be able to refer to other familial ties to the king, such as wife or grandmother, and that royal women of high standing, such as Bathsheba and Athaliah, ‘represent the exception and not the norm’ for mothers of the king. (‘Quest for Historical Gēbîrâ’, 597–618).