Abstract

In the Old Testament, Hebrew culture shows that it was predominantly patriarchal society. However, this does not mean that women did played vital role in that culture and society. Kings and Chronicles recorded a distinct breakthrough as mothers’ were attached to the selected Judean kings. The questions that need to be resolve emerged: First, why this attachment of mother’s name only appeared in Kings and Chronicles and obscured in rest of the Old Testament books? Second, why so exclusive that only Judean kings were the names of the mothers were attached and not to the Israel’s kings? This study points out that the mother’s names were only reflected in the Kings and Chronicles for these books recorded both the emergence of the divided kingdom. But God’s original plan was that only the tribe Judah the scepter’s of the kingship has the sole divine mandate. Besides, theologically, Jesus the Messiah came from the tribe of Judah, where supposedly that all Judean kings should have Him as pattern for true morality, leadership and kingship. The study found out that the mother’s role was so significant in the Hebrew culture and society. The mother’s influence in the domestic life to her son that would be king has enduring effect. The motherhood influence not only reflected in the character of the king, but significantly, the king’s morality. Even more, the mother’s role has been carried to the extent of the leadership role of the king. Finally, this shows that in the Bible, the mother’s role, influence, and attachment, stick to the mind of their children regardless of what society they belong. Mothers have a very vital role in shaping character, morality, in even religious life together with the fathers that complement the whole development of the children.

Strand: Theology

Keywords: mother, woman significance, Judean kings, influence

The significant of motherhood has been manifested from the very beginning of human history, in the creation of Eve. The mother’s role over her children is definitely importance but it is rarely appreciated due to the patriarchal system that dominates the culture of the Bible.

The Scripture especially Old Testament (OT) strongly suggests father headship over the family particularly his responsibility for the character building of the children. Lawrence Richards (1991:266) asserts that the "OT culture was patriarchal and the father was dominant family members. He was the head of the house and, with his wife, was to be respected and honored by their children and other members of the household. The father was responsible for the well-being of the family unit and for its discipline.”

However, an interesting consistency in the Kings and Chronicles break this OT culture as Edith Deen (1955:338) observes it. This consistency has been reflected on the constant repetition of the phrase "his mother's name" associated with the positive expression "he did what was right in the sight of the Lord" or the negative "he did evil in the sight of the Lord." For example, 1 Kings reads:
In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa began to reign over Judah, and he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. And Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as David his father had done (1 Ki 15:9-11 NKJV).

Similarly, 2 Kings narrates:

In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. And Jehoash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all his days, because Jehoiada the priest instructed him (2 Ki 12:1-2).

Both Kings and Chronicles are so consistent as the writer of the chronicled it:

So King Rehoboam grew strong in Jerusalem and reigned. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city that the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel to put his name there. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. And he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the LORD (2 Chr 12:13-14).

Again, the repetition was intentional as reflected in the 2 Chronicles:

Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not with a whole heart (2 Chro 25:1-2).

The repetition of the distinct phrase was very unusual for it is only found in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Interestingly, the books suggest that the kings' genealogy particularly the Judean kings can be traced back to their mother. Herbert Lockyer (1967:34) agrees with it by pointing out that the recurring relational expression of the king’s mother has linked in the genealogy of the king.

This, however, notably was in contrasts to the whole OT culture. Richards (1991:266) argues that the "OT provides a number of genealogical lists in which we read that x was the father of y." Moreover, it is not only the mothers who are important but their names. As confirms by Lockyer (1958:12) that "in ancient Israel the name of a person was supposed to indicate some characteristic of that person, or be linked to circumstances, however trivial or monotonous, connected with his birth."

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to find out the significant of the unusual consistency of the phrase “his mother’s name” in Kings and Chronicles. It sought to understand the theological concept of mother in Israel monarchial context as expressed in the phrase.

The study assumes that the phrase “his mother’s name” carried a very significant connection to the character and career of the future kings of Judah. It presupposes that the mother’s character and training possibly reflected in her name contributes a very great impact to the life of the kings of Judah.
Research Questions

The recurring phrases of “his mother’s name” as noted above are so significant, thus, there are issues in which the study sought substantial solutions. The study answered the following research questions:

- Why the genealogies of the kings of Judah are being traced back to their mothers?
- Why only in Kings and Chronicles?
- What is the relationship of attaching the “mother’s name” to whether the king “did what right in the sight of the Lord” or “did evil in the sight of the Lord”?
- What are the theological implications?

Methodology

The study requires some restrictions as it only within the data preserved in Kings and Chronicles. However, since the settings were in the context of Hebrew culture and mind, this necessitates for intertextuality for further in-depth understanding.

Moreover, in order to arrive at appropriate and objective conclusion, the study used biblical and theological analysis divided into three parts. The first part dealt with the overview of motherhood with a brief background and the problem regarding the possible contradiction of the patriarchal system of the biblical culture at that time. The second part explored the biblical understanding of the influence of mother. It focused on the phrase “and his mother’s name.” It sought to understand its direct theological implications.

Results and Discussion

Genealogy and Its Relation to Mothers

The presence of the name of the king’s mother in the regnal formula of the Judean monarchy seems not only reflecting the name of the mother herself, but even in tracing back the origin of the king through her. Lockyer (1967:34) calls this this as “genealogy in nature.” Hebrew culture and society until today has unique way of considering a child as genuine Hebrew. When a Hebrew father married a Hebrew, the son considered as genuine Hebrew. However, if the Hebrew father married a non-Hebrew, the son is not Hebrew. But if the mother is Hebrew and the father is a non-Hebrew, the child is a Hebrew.

Thus Judean kings’ identities were attached to their mother’s names. It presupposes that their genealogy was genuine by tracing back from lines of their mothers’ ancestors. Although as Myers (1987:733) states that “while patrilineality was almost entirely the rule in ancient Israel, some evidence does exist for matrilineal reckoning of the tribal lists,” in which they were liken to the descendants of both Lea and Rachel and the other two Abraham’s concubines.

Moreover, Smith (2006:210) asserts that the “females are named in genealogies when there is anything remarkable about them, or when any right or property is transmitted through them.” Again, Myers clarifies (1987:407) that women “appear most often as wives and concubines, whose position indicates the relative rank and relationship among the subsequent descendants.” However, “on rare occasions women may hold an independent status in a genealogy.”
According to Bromiley (2001:426), there are some who “have claimed to find traces of a matriarchate in Israel.” The “evidence is not sufficient” to “prove that matriarchy existed in Israel.” However, he asserts that, “at best there is evidence of metronymy” which he defines as the tracing of the “genealogy through the mother.” This kind of biblical phenomenon has been reflected in the women’s genealogy of Jesus Christ as found in Matthew (Matt 1:1-17).

Moreover, it assumes that the tribal list of Israel (Genesis 29-30) was also considered as metronymy. In consideration of the context of Kings and Chronicles, if such was the case then the Northern kingdom should also regard its origin in a metronymial way. Nevertheless, such was not found in the Northern tribe.

This is the reason why that instead of the phrase “and his mother’s name” as genealogical aspect, that Niels-Erik A. Andreasen (1983:180) asserts that this naming of mother in the Southern Kingdom and not in the Northern Kingdom as just a means of emphasizing the dynastic stability of the former and lack of it in the latter. It gives the idea that the formula suggests only the continuity and discontinuity of each kingdom.

Along with this view, Brewer-Boydston (2012:119-120) emphasizes three theories scholars are suggesting which give reasons to the attachment of mother’s name in the introductory life of the Judean kings. He claims that first, the “appearance of the queen mothers in the regnal formulas demonstrates dynastic stability and continuity.” Second, he maintains that the reason behind this is that the “text does not name the queen mothers for the northern kingdom then due to dynastic instability.”

Thus, this had to exemplify the continuity of the constancy of Judah. The author of Kings presents the Judean royalty as simply as the successor of the previous kings which were in most cases, was the father. Therefore, the “presence of the queen mother is not necessary to show how the kingship passed from father to son throughout the generations of Judah’s existence.” It implies then that the presence of the name of the mother in the regnal formula is not necessarily genealogical.

This suggests that the occurrence of the name of the mother does not imply legitimacy on the part of the son-king. On the other hand, the legitimacy of the king depends on the father’s line, as it is the concept of the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, he concludes that the presentation of the Judean King’s mother “is not necessary to prove that each individual king was both a legitimate son and a legitimate Davidic king.”

Thus, it is imperative to note that the Judean kings’ mothers are not the legitimate genealogical ancestors but rather it only appears to indicate their relative rank with their sons. As genealogy was already mentioned in First Chronicles, according to Myers (1987:407) this “presents the most complete genealogy of the Old Testament,” the inclusion of the king’s mother is not genealogical in its essence.

To balance the idea in considering the culture of Hebrews in terms of patrilineality and not disregarding the significance of women, Meyers (2014:26) sums it up clear by suggesting that though Israelite society provides a high regard to women, patrilineality is still undeniable. In The Israelite society clearly favored men in the transmission of a household’s inheritance across generations through male lines; thus, patrilineality is not the same as patriarchy.

The regnal formula was exclusive in the Southern and not in the Northern kings. For this fulfills the plan, will and purpose of God, that the “scepter shall depart from Judah” (Gen 49:8-10). For it is in this tribe were the promised Messiah would come. Further, it is important to note that the continuity of the Kingdom of Judah did not only find its fulfillment in the presence of the
regnal formula. Its continuity ultimately fulfilled in the incarnation of Jesus, the “Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (Rev 5:5) who established the eternal Kingdom of God.

**Mother’s Names Only in Kings and Chronicles**

Hamilton (2001:415) asserts the significant role of the Judean mothers in stories, activities, even profiles of the kings in Kings and Chronicles particularly during their ascension to the throne. The king’s evaluation runs, thus: “he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD” or he “did what was evil in the eyes of the LORD.” This pattern which were repeated in the Judean monarchial era have been called as the “regnal” formula.

Kohlenberger and Swanson (1998:125) observe that this regnal formula appears 27 times in Kings and Chronicles. Further, Brewer-Boydston (2012:118, 230-231) asserts that the appearances refer to the 16 Judean kings among the 17. There were 14 appearances of mothers and one grandmother. This data analysis affirms the significance of the phrase “and his mother’s name” as claimed by Howard Hendricks and Williams Hendricks (2007:153) since repetition in the Bible implies importance.

In this connection, Sterrett and Schultz (2010:61) state that Bible readers should “be alert for any word or phrase in the verse that is repeated in the verse's immediate context. It may indicate a close relationship between neighboring passages.” Bowen (2001:616, 617) presents a table [see Table 1] showing the summary of the regnal formulas in the books of Kings. This serves as an overview in the analysis of the significance of the phrase “and his mother’s name.”

Table 1
**Summary Table of the Regnal Formula**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>King's Mother</th>
<th>Mother’s Place of Origin</th>
<th>Persons Intervening in Succession</th>
<th>Deuteronomistic Evaluation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>Bathsheba</td>
<td>Foreign</td>
<td>Outside forces Nathan, et al.</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>1 Ki 14:21-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>Naamah</td>
<td>Ammonite</td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>1 Ki 15:9-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abijam</td>
<td>Maacah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualified approval</td>
<td>1 Ki 15:9-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoshaphat</td>
<td>Azubah</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Qualified approval</td>
<td>2 Ki 8:16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoram</td>
<td>Athaliah</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 8:25-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahazia</td>
<td>Athaliah</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 11:1-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joash</td>
<td>Zibiah</td>
<td>Beersheba</td>
<td>Intervention of the priest</td>
<td>Qualified approval</td>
<td>2 Ki 12:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azariah</td>
<td>Jecoliah</td>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>Intervention by “all the people</td>
<td>Qualified approval</td>
<td>2 Ki 15:1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotham</td>
<td>Jerusha</td>
<td></td>
<td>“of Judah”</td>
<td>Qualified approval</td>
<td>2 Ki 15:32-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 16:1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>Abi</td>
<td>Bozkar</td>
<td>Intervention by “the people of</td>
<td>Complete approval</td>
<td>2 Ki 18:1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>Hephzibah</td>
<td></td>
<td>“the land”</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 21:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amon</td>
<td>Meshelemeth</td>
<td>Jotbav</td>
<td>Intervention by “the people of</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 21:19-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Josiah</td>
<td>Jedidah</td>
<td>Bozkat</td>
<td>“the people of the land”</td>
<td>Complete approval</td>
<td>2 Ki 22:1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoahaz</td>
<td>Hamutal</td>
<td>Libnah</td>
<td>Intervention by “the people of</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 23:31-34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>King's Mother</th>
<th>Mother’s Place of Origin</th>
<th>Persons Intervening in Succession</th>
<th>Deuteronomistic Evaluation</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jehoiakim</td>
<td>Zebidah</td>
<td>Rumah</td>
<td>Intervention by Pharaoh Neco</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>2 Ki 23:36-37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wray Beal (2014: 200, 502) points out that the “regnal formula provides the name of the king, his age during his ascension, his mother’s name, and the evaluation of him. On the other hand, the books did not supply any valuable data about the significance of the mentioning of the name of the king’s mother or even the mother herself. However, the presentation of her name seems significant after the evaluation of the king.” Moreover, this regnal formula was exclusive only for the Southern Kingdom.

The regnal formula has three implications. First, the genealogy of the kings has been traced back through their mother. Second, the name of the mother was the only accessible information that introduces her character and her influence to her son. Lastly, the king’s mother seems to have a significant role in the royal court in which the evaluations to the kings are dependent.

Names and Its Relation to Mothers

The mother’s name and its relation to the kings have implications to the regnal formula that provides the significance of mother’s name in the moral tone of the Judean kings. It seems that the name of the mother reflects the influence she imparts to her son. Further, the limited and even lack of information about the mother takes into consideration the significance of her name. Moreover, no information about her was provided other than her name.

One of the basic and yet profound theologies in the Bible has been the theology of names. The Bible is pregnant of passages indicating the usage of name. For instance, the name Abram which means “exalted father” was changed into Abraham which means “father of multitude” (Gen 17:5) according to Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter (2003:13) and the change of name is based on the promise of God to Abraham in making him as the father of many nations (Gen 17:5c).

Besides this, the Bible has a lot of references about the significance of name. Taking a closer look, name denotes a person’s character as it is in the case of Jacob (Gen 25:19-34; 27:1-46). It can also signify the experience of someone such as of Naomi (Ruth 1:20). Moreover, name can also represent the nature of an event experienced by a person like of what had happened to Israel in the wilderness when they complained (Num 11:34).

The Hebrew word “shem” which usually translated as “name” as William Wilson (1978:284) shows, means “memory, memorial, or remembrance of a person in the world.” This may also refer to the “character, good or bad by which persons are marked, distinguished, or known in the world.” For "the name is supposed to correspond to the nature of a person or thing; or to express some qualities or circumstances relating to them." Warren Baker (1994:117) concurs that this Hebrew word means “an appellation as a mark or memorial of individuality; by implication honor, authority, character.”

Moreover, in consideration of the Hebrew thinking, according to Willem A. VanGemeren (1997:147, 148) in the “ancient Semitic world a person’s name” which he refers as to its Hebrew word shem, “often carried more significance than an identification mark; it was considered to be a description of character or conditions.” It also represents the “nature or attributes of the person named.” In the language, Meyers (2000:33) is poignant that in ancient Near Eastern literature,
generally, names often carry enormous significance, being inextricably connected to the very nature of that which is named. Hence, to know the name is to know something of the fundamental traits, nature, or destiny of the name's bearer. Names can provide insights into a person's character, social location, or future, or the way in which others perceive the person. In the Bible, the name often represents the very essence of a person.

This observation needs to be highlighted for it concludes the significance of the name of the person and this is scripturally sound, as Abigail says, "Please, don't pay any attention to Nabal, that good-for-nothing! He is exactly what his name means---a fool!" (1Sam 25:25).

According to Baker and Carpenter (2003:702), literally in its original language, it confirms that the word "נבל" (nabal) in the Hebrew word means "fool."

With this idea, the phrase “and his mother’s name” which uses the same Hebrew word may indicate something about the personality of the mother and with which the moralities of the kings were affected. In fact, nothing has been said about the mother other than her name. Deen (1995:338) defends that “the juxtaposition of the queen-mother’s name and an evaluation of her son's reign” which refers to the kings’ morality “seems significant.”

The biblical theology of name could be summarized on Table 2 from Meyers (2014) that provides the meaning of the names of the mother with reference to the kings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>King</th>
<th>King's Mother</th>
<th>Hebrew Word</th>
<th>Her Name's Meaning</th>
<th>King's Evaluation</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehoboam</td>
<td>Naamah of Naaman</td>
<td>נאם (נָעַם)</td>
<td>Pleasantness</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Inconsistent (Ammonite)</td>
<td>1 Ki 14:21-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abijam (Abijah)</td>
<td>Maacah, daughter of Absalom</td>
<td>מַעֲכָה (מָעַך)</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>1 Ki 15:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asa</td>
<td>Maacah, daughter of Absalom</td>
<td>מַעֲכָה (מָעַך)</td>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Consistent (Asa removed her)</td>
<td>1 Ki 15:9-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoash-phat</td>
<td>Azubah, daughter of Shilhi</td>
<td>עֲזוּבָה (עֲזוּב)</td>
<td>Desertion or Forsaking</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td>1 Ki 22:41-43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehoram</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Ki 8:16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaziah</td>
<td>Athaliah of Israel, daughter of Ahab</td>
<td>שְָחַלֹם</td>
<td>Jah (the Lord) has constrained</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 8:25-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joash (Jehoash)</td>
<td>Zibiah of Beersheba</td>
<td>ברֵהֶסְבָה (בְּרֵהֶסְב)</td>
<td>Beautiful, Pleasant</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 12:1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaziah</td>
<td>Jehoaddin of Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְהוֹאָדִין</td>
<td>Jehovah-pleased</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 14:1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azariah</td>
<td>Jecoliah of Jerusalem</td>
<td>יְכִילְיָה</td>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 15:1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jotham</td>
<td>Jerusha, daughter of Zadok</td>
<td>יְרֻשָּה</td>
<td>Possessed</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 15:32-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahaz</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 Ki 16:1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hezekiah</td>
<td>Abi, daughter of Zecharish</td>
<td>עִבְרֵי</td>
<td>Fatherly</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 18:1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manasseh</td>
<td>Hephzibah</td>
<td>חֶפְצִי בָהּ</td>
<td>my delight (is) in her</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
<td>2 Ki 21:1-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is significant that in Table 2, 12 names of the kings’ mothers are consistent with the moral tone of the kings while four are inconsistent with it. Though context has still a greater bearing, it is undeniable that the number of mothers consistent with their name and the moral tone of the king are present in the regnal formulas. Nevertheless, there are some considerations to be taken with those mothers who are inconsistent.

For instance, Azubah, the mother’s name of King Jehoshaphat has a negative meaning which is “forsakenness”, according to Baker and Carpenter (2003:820). However, the significance of name, Lockyer (1967:34) suggests the meaning and implication of the name Azubah (2 Chr 20:31) which signifies “Armed of God” which “speaks of a man who knew God as his defense.” Moreover, regarding the name Naamah, he (1967:116) argues that the probable reason for the inconsistency between the meaning of her name and the moral tone of Rehoboam due to her citizenship. It is because Naamah was an Ammonite, “the royal line of Israel’s inveterate enemies.”

Likewise, in consideration of the consistent ones, Baker and Carpenter (1967:22) suggest that the name of Abi or Abijah who was the mother of King Hezekiah (2 Chro 29:1-2) that “in spite of idolatry of her royal husband” she remains “true to her name” which means, “My father is Jehovah, or The Will of God.” Where she “clung to the Fatherhood of God and sought to do His will” and emphasizes her influence to her son, “She counteracted any evil influence of Ahaz over their young son, Hezekiah, who, when he came to the throne, did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.”

Furthermore, on the opposite, kings “who did which was evil in the sight of the Lord” had taken also their moral from the influence of their mother. The influence was manifested in their mother’s name. Remarkable among them was Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah who only ruled for one year. According to William Smith (2006:63) the name Athaliah means “afflicted of the Lord.” Robert G. Lee as cited by Lockyer (1967:33) agrees that “her very name is an execration.”
The records say, “Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly. He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done. For after the death of his father, they were his counselors, to his undoing (2 Chr 22:2-4).

This shows that the names of the mothers, though context needs to be considered, in most cases reflect the moral tones of their son-kings. Further, this idea is consistent with the Hebrew thinking which probably affects the thought of the author.

**Mother's Name and King's Morality**

The king’s morality was attached to “his mother’s name” has been essential in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Every time this phrase occurs, readers can anticipate that the next statement is whether the Judean king “did what was right in the sight of the Lord” or “he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” However, how can one infer that the mother really influenced the spiritual tone of the king when little information about her? The names were significant to Hebrew thinking and culture.

Ellen G. White (1952:240) in a far reaching insights declares that the “sphere of the mother may be humble; but her influence, united with the father’s, is as abiding as eternity. For next to God, the mother’s power for good is the strongest known on earth.” Regarding the mother’s role of influence, she categorically claims that, “her influence is for truth, for virtue, when she is guided by divine wisdom, what a power for Christ will be her life!” For her “influence will reach on through time into eternity, and salvation or ruin of many will be the result of her influence.” Mothers should understand that their influence to the children consequently “stretching forward into the future immortal life.”

A classic example was the Judean king, Josiah (2 Ki 22:1-2; 2 Chro 34:1-2). First, it is almost unbelievable that an eight-year old boy can be a king. Second, his grandfather and father did not leave any good moral outstanding for him (2 Ki 21:1-26). It is the reason why Kroeger and Evans (2002:243) say that “he was perhaps the brightest star of the Judean monarchy and is one of true heroes of 2 Chronicles.” Moreover, Fortosis (1996:83) claims that “he followed no righteous role models; both the boy's father and grandfather were largely blatantly evil kings.” So how such a little boy can make such reformation effectively? Wiersbe (2007:724) answers, “No doubt his mother was a godly woman and guided her son wisely.” Kroeger and Evans (2002:243) comment, “How could a person like Amon have a son like Josiah? Again, could it have something “to do with his mother?”

Interestingly, George Barlow (1974:629) points it up in this way:

> Young persons who are seeking to live a godly life under unfavorable circumstances, in an irreligious or careless family, among ungodly companions, should take comfort and courage from the case of Josiah, whose father's influence and example, in so far as they could be impressed on one so young, were wholly evil.

He further states:

> It is probable that the bias of his mind towards religion was due to material training. The only notice of his mother is a very brief one, and nothing definite is recorded as to her influence upon his earliest years; but considering that even though a king, he was too young to dispense with a mother's care and training, and that twenty years of his life
were passed in comparable privacy, may we not reasonably infer from a mother’s hand into his young mind, bore fruit many days after in personal decisions for God, and rational information? A mother's influence in a religious point of view, cannot be over-estimated.

Consequently, Ellen G. White has a similar inspired thought about the importance of motherhood in the very context of Kings and Chronicles. In her (1917:88) comment to the life of Rehoboam, she profoundly states that, “Rehoboam had received from his mother, an Ammonitess, the stamp of a vacillating character.” Further, “In the mistakes of Rehoboam's life and in his final apostasy is revealed the fearful result of Solomon's union with idolatrous women.”

White (1917:214) confirms that, “Ahazaiah ruled only one year, and during this time, influenced by his mother, Athaliah, “his counselor to do wickedly.” Thus, the same pattern of relationship of mother to her son, for “he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord.”

However, for King Solomon, she notes the value of motherhood in the life of the king, when she (1953:1025) says:

_He was surrounded by his courtly train, consisting of the wisest sages and counselors, yet, when visited by his mother, he laid aside all the customary ceremonies attending the approach of a subject to an oriental monarch. The mighty king, in the presence of his mother, was only her son. His royalty was laid aside, as he rose from his throne and bowed before her. He then seated her on his throne, at his right hand._

**Theological Implications**

Theologically, this study implies that Hebrew mother’s genealogy has been traced to secure and preserve the genuine bloodline of real Hebrew seed. The Hebrew mothers had highly significant roles in the culture during the monarchial times. The mother’s influence in virtues, truth, character and morality were taken as indelible mark imprinted over her future king-son. The impact to the future leadership and morality were reflected through mother’s were attached to the king. White (1952:61-64) concurred that the greatness of Joseph, Samuel, Daniel, Moses in their life experiences were through direct influences of their godly mothers.

This has theological reverberation for modern mothers today. White (1952:242-243) further declared that her responsibility was special. Since the “lifeblood of the child is nourished and its physical frame built up, imparts to it also mental and spiritual influences that tend to shaping of mind and character.” The mother’s office is sacred and that her “influence and example are affecting the character and destiny” of the children.

**Conclusion**

The “mother’s name” expression has been exclusively attached only to the Judean kings and it has biblical and theological considerations. The mother’s role at home united with the father has been the strongest roles that shape the formation of the life of future king of Israel. The mother’s character, influence for good, virtue, truth, and moral life had a great impact on the leadership career of the kings.

This biblical phenomenon of “mother’s name” was exclusive only to the Judean kings for
the reason that only in line of Judah, God has declared the “scepter” of divine appointment of kingship. The phrase has been repeated in Kings and Chronicles for marking in history and divine emphasis and continuity, for it is only this tribe that the promise king-messiah would come to fulfill God plan, purpose and mission- Jesus Christ.

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