List of High Priests of Israel

This page gives one list (partly traditional) of the High Priests of Ancient Israel up to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD. Because of a lack of historical data, this list is incomplete and there may be gaps.

Line of the High Priests of Israel

The office did not always pass directly from father to son. The high priests, like all Jewish priests, belonged to the Aaronic line. The Bible mentions the majority of high priests before the captivity, but does not give a complete list of office holders. Lists would be based on various historical sources. In several periods of gentile rule, high priests were appointed and removed by kings. Still, most high priests came from the Aaronic line. One exception is Menelaus, who may not have been from the Tribe of Levi at all, but from the Tribe of Benjamin.

From the Exodus to the Babylonian Exile

- Aaron, during the Exodus from Egypt
- Eleazar, son of Aaron
- Phinehas, son of Eleazar
- Abishua, son of Phineas

According to the Samaritans, Shesha is incerted, said to be the son of Abishua and father to Bukki.

- Bukki, son of Abishua-ancestor of Ezra
- Uzzi, son of Bukki
- Eli, descendant of Itamar, son of Aaron
- Ahitub, son of Phinehas and grandson of Eli
- Ahijah, son of Ahitub
- Ahimelech, son of Ahitub, High Priest during the reign of King Saul; killed at Nob by Doeg; part of the curse on the House of Eli - that none of Eli's male descendants would live to old age - was fulfilled with the death of Ahimelech.
- Abiathar, son of Ahimelech, High Priest during the reign of King David and the early years of Solomon, deposed (1 Ki 2:2-4). 5th Generation descendant of Eli; Dethroned from office of High Priest which went to the house of Zadok after the Holy Spirit deserted Abiathar and without which the Urim and Thummin could not be consulted [Jewish Encyclopedia]; the other part of the Curse on the House of Eli - that the priesthood would pass out of his descendants - was fulfilled when Abiathar was deposed from the office of High Priest.
- Zadok, son of Ahitub (son of Amariah, son of Meraioth, son of Zerahiah, son of Uzzi — 1 Chr 6:6-8) of the line of Eleazar, High Priest during the reign of King Solomon and the construction of the First Temple
- Ahimaaz, son of Zadok, High Priest during the reign of King Solomon
- Azariah, son of Ahimaaz (during Solomon's reign — 1 Ki 4:2)
- Joash, son of Azariah
- Jehoiarib, son of Joash (1 Chr 9:10)
- Jehoshaphat, son of Jehoiarib
- Jehoiada, son of Jehosaphat (c. 842 - 820 BC — 2 Ki 11:4)
- Pediah, son of Jehoiada
- Zedekiah, son of Pediah
- Azariah II, son of Zedekiah (c. 750 BC — 2 Chr 26:17; seemingly conflated with Azariah I in 1 Chr 6:6-8)
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- Jotham, son of Azariah
- Urijah, son of Jotham (c. 732 BC — 2 Ki 16:10; cf. Isaiah 8:2)
- Azariah III, son of Johanan, son of Azariah II (c. 715 BC — 1 Chr 6:9, 2 Chr 31:10)
- Hoshaiah, son of Azariah
- The Priesthood may have failed during the 50-years' apostasy of Manasseh
  - Shallum, son of Zadok, son (or probably grandson) of Ahitub, son of Amariah, son of Azariah III (c. 630—1 Chr 6:12, 2 Chr 34:22)
  - Hilkiah, son of Shallum (c. 622 — 2 Ki 22:4)
  - Azariah IV, son of Hilkiah (1 Chr 6:13)
  - Seriah, son of Azariah IV (2 Ki 25:18)

Some name Jehozadak, son of Seriah, as a high priest prior to being sent to captivity in Babylonia, which however is a misreading of biblical references to "Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest." Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaqi) wrote that Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the [High] Priest, "does not [mean] that Jehozadak ever served in the high priesthood, for he was exiled to Babylon in the days of Jeconiah, as it is written: And Jehozadak went when… exiled etc.,” but Joshua his son was the High Priest when they ascended from Babylon during the time of the Second Temple. Now why was Azariah the son of Seraiah the scholar not the High Priest, but [instead] his nephew Joshua the son of Jehozadak? This is the reason: because Joshua ascended with Zerubbabel many days and years before Ezra ascended.[2]

A genealogy from Aaron through Eleazar to Jehozadak can be found in 1 Chronicles, chapter 6. As in several biblical genealogies, some names may be omitted. Therefore it is uncertain whether high priests mentioned elsewhere (such as Jehoiada and Jehoiarib) are simply omitted or did not belong to the unbroken male line in this genealogy. During the later time of the judges, the office went to Itamar's descendants for a period, the first known and most notable high priest being Eli. After Abiathar was expelled, the office returned to the line of Eleazar. It is not sure whether all those mentioned in the genealogy between Zadok and Jehozadak were high priests. From Solomon's time until the captivity, Josephus names 17 high priests, while Seder 'Olam Zuta names 19.

After the Babylonian Exile

- Joshua, son of Jehozadak, ca. 515-490 BC, after the restoration of the Temple
- Joiakim, son of Joshua, ca. 490-470 BC
- Eliashib, son of Joiakim, ca. 470-433 BC
- Joiada, son of Eliashib, ca. 433-410 BC (A son married a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite for which he was driven out of the Temple by Nehemiah)
- Johanan, son of Joiada, ca. 410-371 BC
- Jaddua, son of Johanan, ca. 371-320 BC, during the reign of Alexander the Great. Some have identified him as Simeon the Just.

The five descendants of Joshua are mentioned in Nehemiah, chapter 12, 10f. The chronology given above, based on Josephus, however is not undisputed, with some alternatively placing Jaddua during the time of Darius II and some supposing one more Johanan and one more Jaddua in the following time, the latter Jaddua being contemporary of Alexander the Great.

- Onias I, son of Jaddua, ca. 320-280 BC
- Simon I, son of Onias, ca. 280-260 BC
- Eleazar, son of Onias, ca. 260-245 BC
- Manasseh, son of Jaddua, ca. 245-240 BC
- Onias II, son of Simon, ca. 240-218 BC
- Simon II, son of Onias, 218-185 BC
- Onias III, son of Simon, 185-175 BC, murdered 170 BC
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• Jason, son of Simon 175-172 BC
• Menelaus 172-162 BC
  • Onias IV, son of Onias III, fled to Egypt and built a Jewish Temple at Leontopolis (closed in AD 66)
• Alcimus 162-159 BC

Inter-Sacerdotium:
It is unknown who held the position of High Priest of Jerusalem between Alcimus' death and the accession of Jonathan.

Josephus, in *Jewish Antiquities* XX.10, relates that the office was vacant for six years, but this is indeed highly unlikely, if not impossible. In religious terms, the High Priest was a necessary part of the rites on the Day of Atonement - a day that could have not been allowed to pass uncelebrated for so long so soon after the restoration of the Temple service. Politically, Israel's overlords probably would not have allowed a power vacuum to last that length of time.

In another passage (XII.10 §6, XII.11 §2) Josephus suggests that Judas Maccabeus, the brother of Jonathan, held the office for three years, succeeding Alcimus. However, Judas actually predeceased Alcimus by one year. The nature of Jonathan's accession to the high priesthood makes it unlikely that Judas held that office during the inter-sacerdotium. The *Jewish Encyclopedia* tries to harmonise the contradictions found in Josephus by supposing that Judas held the office "immediately after the consecration of the Temple (165-162), that is, before the election of Alcimus".[3]

It has been argued that the founder of the Qumran community, the Teacher of Righteousness (Moreh Zedek), was High Priest (but not necessarily the sole occupant) during the inter-sacerdotium and was driven off by Jonathan. This view is based on sources from the Qumran, that portray the teacher as a figure of authority usually associated with the high priest, however, without clearly spelling out names or events.

Hasmonean dynasty
• Jonathan Apphus, 153-143 BC
• Simeon Tassi, brother of Jonathan Apphus, 142-134 BC
• John Hyrcanus I, son of Simeon Tassi 134-104 BC
• Aristobulus I, son of John Hyrcanus, 104-103 BC
• Alexander Jannaeus, son of John Hyrcanus, 103-76 BC
• John Hyrcanus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus, 76-66 BC
• Aristobulus II, son of Alexander Jannaeus, 66-63 BC
• John Hyrcanus II (restored) 63-40 BC
• Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II, 40-37 BC
• Aristobulus III 36 BC-last of the Hasmoneans; paternal grandson of Aristobulus II and brother of Herod's wife Mariamne (second wife of Herod).

High Priest under Herodians and Romans
• Ananelus 37-36 BC
• Aristobulus III 36 BC-last of the Hasmoneans; paternal grandson of Aristobulus II and brother of Herord's wife Mariamne (second wife of Herod).
• Ananelus (restored) 36-30 BC
• Joshua ben Fabus 30-23 BC
• Simon ben Boethus his daughter Mariamne (third wife of Herod) married Herod the Great-the parents of Herod II was the first husband of Herodias,
• Matthias ben Theophilus 5-4 BC[4]
• Joazar ben Boethus 4 BC (Sadducee)
• Eleazar ben Boethus 4-3 BC (Sadducee)
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- Joshua ben Sie 3 BC - ?
- Joazar ben Boethus ? - 6 AD (Sadducee)
- Ananus ben Seth 6-15
- Ishmael ben Fabus 15-16
- Eleazar ben Ananus 16-17
- Simon ben Camithus 17-18
- Joseph Caiaphas 18-36 Son-in-law of the high priest Ananas or Annas,
- Jonathan ben Ananus 36-37
- Theophilus ben Ananus 37-41
- Simon Cantatheras ben Boethus 41-43 (Sadducee)
- Matthias ben Ananus 43
- Elioneus ben Simon Cantatheras 43-44 (Sadducee)
- Jonathan ben Ananus 44 (restored)
- Josephus ben Camydus 44-46
- Ananias ben Nebedeus 46-52
- Jonathan 52-56
- Ishmael ben Fabus 56-62 (restored?)
- Joseph Cabi ben Simon 62-63
- Ananus ben Ananus 63
- Joshua ben Damneus 63
- Joshua ben Gamaliel 63-64-his wife Martha belonged to family of Boethus (Sadducee)
- Mattathias ben Theophilus 65-66

During the First Jewish-Roman War
- Phannias ben Samuel 67-70

References

[1] According to Samaritan sources a civil War broke out between the Sons of Itamar (Eli (Bible)) and the Sons of Phineas - which resulted in the division of those who followed Eli and those who followed High Priest Uzzi ben Bukki at Mount Gerizim Bethel (A third group followed neither). Likewise according to Samaritan sources the high Priests line of the sons of Phineas died out in 1624 A.D. with the death of the 112th High Priest Shlomyah ben Pinhas when the priesthood was transferred to the sons of Itamar; see article Samaritan for list of High Priests from 1613 to 2004-the 131st High priest of the Samaritans is Elazar ben Tsedaka ben Yitzhaq
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