

tea with tolkien presents
SILMARILLION SUMMER
2022 READ-ALONG



Silmarillion Summer: A Five-Part Overview of *The Silmarillion* by J.R.R. Tolkien
Presented by The Tea with Tolkien Community

Part 4: Akallabêth: The Downfall of Númenor

Akallabêth begins with exposition on the coming of Men under the dominion of Melkor, the voyage of Eärendil, the downfall of Melkor, and the descendants of the Edain.

After the downfall of Morgoth, the Valar forsook the men of Middle-earth for a time and summoned the Eldar to return to the West, and most of them went and dwelt in the Isle of Eressëa.

A land was made for the Edain that was neither part of Middle-earth nor Valinor. The Valar called it Andor, the Land of Gift; the Edain called it **Anadûnê** (Westerness) and Númenóre in the High Eldarin tongue. They also called it **Elenna** (Starwards).

The Rulers of Númenor

For more information about all Númenórean rulers, visit [Tolkien Gateway](#). All dates are Second Age.

32–442 Elros Tar-Minyatur

2221–2386 Tar-Ancalimon

442 Tar-Vardamir

2386–2526 Tar-Telemmaitë

442–590 Tar-Amandil

2526–2637 Tar-Vanimeldë

590–740 Tar-Elendil

2637–2657 Tar-Anducal

740–883 Tar-Meneldur

2657–2737 Tar-Alcarin

883–1075 Tar-Aldarion

2737–2825 Ar-Belzagar, Tar-Calmacil

1075–1280 Tar-Ancalimë

2825–2899 Ar-Abattârik, Tar-Ardamin

1280–1394 Tar-Anárion

2899–2962 Ar-Adûnakhôr

1394–1556 Tar-Súrion

2962–3033 Ar-Zimrathôn

1556–1731 Tar-Telperiën

3033–3102 Ar-Sakalthôr

1731–1869 Tar-Minastir

3102–3177 Ar-Gimilzôr

1869–2029 Tar-Ciryatan

3177–3255 Tar-Palantir

2029–2221 Tar-Atanamir

3255–3319 Ar-Pharazôn

The Beginning of Númenor

The Edain began a great journey to this land, and their arrival marked the beginning of the people of Númenor. While the Númenóreans were still mortal, they were given a long span of years. For example, **Elros lived 500 years.**

The Númenóreans spoke the Elvish tongue as well as the High Eldarin tongue of the Blessed Realm. The Númenóreans became great mariners, but the Valar forbade them from sailing too far west of Númenor lest they would try to sail all the way to the Blessed Realm, and they were content with this rule for a time. The Númenóreans, instead, sailed ever more Eastward to Middle-earth, where they came as teachers and bringers of hope. They were revered by the Men and even called gods.

Obsession With and Fear of Death

Despite their long lives, the Númenóreans grew to fear death and wondered how they might escape their fate. The Númenóreans murmured against their mortality and the Ban, asking why they should die when the Valar and the Eldar would not? Why should they not go to Avallone? Why should they not even travel all the way to Valinor?

The Eldar told what they heard to the Valar, and Manwë was grieved. He sent messengers to speak to them and explain their fate to them. The Númenóreans were not pleased with the answer of the Valar; the messenger of Manwë had spoken to Tar-Atanamir, the thirteenth king of Númenor, and he gave little heed to this counsel. Instead he sought more power and glory, even going so far as to demand tribute from the Men of Middle-earth.

Atanamir was the first of the Númenorean kings to hold onto the throne until death took him; in the past, the King would relinquish the throne to his heir when they came of age. Atanamir, instead, clung to his life and his kingdom until he was witless and without all joy.

His son and heir, Tar-Ancalimon, was of the same mindset as his father and under his reign the people of Númenor became divided.

- **The King's Men:** the greater party, of like mind with the king and estranged from the Valar and Eldar.

- **The Elendili, the Elf-friends:** the lesser party, who wished to remain loyal to the Valar and in friendship with the Eldar.

In this time the Bliss of Westermesse was diminished. The Númenóreans sought to discover a way to bring people back from death, or to prolong life, but they only achieved the art of preserving bodies after their death. After Tar-Ancalimon, the practice of offering the first fruits to Eru was neglected, and few came to Meneltarma anymore. The Númenóreans made settlements upon the shores of Middle-earth, behaving as cruel masters rather than helpers.

The Rise of Sauron

Around this time, Sauron arose again in Middle-earth and grew in power. He hated the Númenóreans and desired to become “as a god unto Men.”

There is a reference to the making of the Rings of Power, which were created around 1500ish of the Second Age by the Elves under the direction of Sauron; Sauron himself forged the One Ring around 1600. This occurred while Tar-Telperiën was Queen of Númenor, and the War of the Elves and Sauron began in Middle-earth during her reign as well (but she did not intervene). Since this chapter is about the Númenóreans, it doesn't go into their creation.

Sauron enslaved nine great lords of men (three of which were Númenóreans), and they became the **Úlairi**, the **Ringwraiths**, and he used them to assail Númenor along its shores.

The Shadow Grows Deeper

When the twentieth king of Númenor, **Ar-Adûnakhôr**, took the throne he named himself Lord of the West (a direct attack upon the Valar), and he forbade the use of Elvish speech in Numenor. He ruled from 2899–2962.

Ar-Gimilzôr, the 23rd ruler of Númenor, was “the greatest enemy of the Faithful.” His rule lasted from 3102–3177 S.A. He neglected the White Tree.

The **Elendili** were essentially cast out from Numenorean society, and many of them went to the kingdom of Gil-galad (which was in Middle-earth, in Lindon). The King's Men, alternatively, desired to sever all ties between the Númenóreans and the Eldar.

Ar-Gimilzôr took Inzilbêth as his Queen, though she was secretly one of the Faithful. Theirs was an unhappy family life, to say the least! They had two children: **Inziladûn**, the oldest, was of like mind to his mother, and **Gimilkhâd**, the youngest, was favored by his father.

Inziladûn became the 24th ruler of Númenor and took the name of **Tar-Palantir**. He returned to many of the old traditions of Númenor, tending the White Tree and going to the temple of Eru — but he was too late. All the while, his brother continued to lead the people in rebellion against the Valar.

Tar-Palantir had one daughter and no son. His daughter was named Míriel. Gimilkhâd had one son, Pharazôn, who was much like his father: restless and eager for wealth and power. Míriel was the rightful heir to the throne of Númenor, but Pharazôn married her against her will and took the scepter from her. This was wrong for two reasons: first, because he married her against her will; second, because they were cousins. Míriel's name was changed to Ar-Zimraphel.

The Reign of Ar-Pharazôn

Ar-Pharazôn desired even more power and glory, seeking to be the King of all Men. He came up with a plan to bring even Sauron under his command. Sauron, deeming himself unable and unready to fight against the Númenóreans, did not put up a fight. Sauron was brought as a prisoner to Númenor.

Sauron in Númenor

Within three years, Sauron was so cunning that he went from prisoner to advisor of the King. Sauron convinced the Númenóreans to **worship the Darkness**, saying that it alone was worshipful. Sauron then convinced the King that Melkor was the Lord of the Darkness. Under Sauron's counsel, the people of Númenor were forbidden to visit the temple of Eru. Sauron also urged the King to cut down the White Tree.

The Flight of the Faithful

The chief of the Faithful, who were called rebels, was **Amandil**. His son was named **Elendil**, and his sons were **Isildur** and **Anárion**. They led the remainder of the Faithful to **Rómenna** for they were in

danger. Fearing that the White Tree would be cut down, Isildur took a fruit from the tree and planted it in secret. Shortly after this, the tree was indeed cut down.

Melkor, Giver of Freedom

Sauron instructed the King to build a temple to Melkor in Armenelos. In the temple, there was a great altar of fire on which Sauron burnt the wood of Nimloth. After this, the Númenóreans offered human sacrifice to Melkor “that he should release them from Death.” But rather than save them from death, these sacrifices hastened death and brought it more abundantly. Madness and sickness assailed Númenor. The lords of Númenor hunted the men of Middle-earth, enslaving them and sacrificing many of them to Melkor. When Ar-Pharazôn had grown old and was coming close to death, Sauron spoke to him and convinced him to make war with the Valar and claim the Blessed Realm for himself.

Amandil's Plight

Amandil, knowing that the end of Númenor was near, told his son Elendil that he planned to sail to the Blessed Realm and plead before the Valar. He urged Elendil to gather the Faithful and flee to Rómenna. Amandil sailed into the West and was not seen again. For “**Men could not a second time be saved** by any such embassy, and for the treason of Númenor there was no easy absolving.” Then Elendil and his sons prepared their ships to depart. They brought with them the Seven Stones (the Palantíri!) and the young tree, the descendant of Nimloth.

The Last Days of Númenor

While the weather had previously been mild, the skies darkened. And there were great storms, with clouds shaped as Eagles bringing lightning. The Men called them the Eagles of Manwë, and while some repented, most hardened their hearts against the Valar. Sauron was unharmed by the lightning, and the Númenóreans took this as a sign that he was a god.

The King prepared the fleets of Númenor, and they readied themselves for battle against the Valar; Sauron withdrew into the Temple where he continued to make human sacrifices to Melkor. Ar-Pharazon led the fleets of the Númenóreans to Aman, where **he stepped foot on the shores of the Blessed Realm.**

The Changing of the World

In this time, the Valar relinquished their dominion of Arda for a time, and Ilúvatar stepped in. All the fleets of Númenor were swallowed up into the abyss. All who had set foot upon the shores of Aman were buried under falling hills. Lands were destroyed, and new lands were formed; the geography of Arda was completely changed after this.

The Downfall of Númenor

The Blessed Realm and Eressëa were removed, and Númenor was swallowed into the sea. Elendil and his sons were saved, for they had stayed in Rómenna. They came to Middle-earth.

Sauron fell, as he laughed, into the abyss. He was not mortal and could not die, but he was unable to return to his physical form after this. His spirit remained and fled back to Mordor, taking up his great Ring. It is said that the summit of the Meneltarma, the Pillar of Heaven, remained as an island. After the downfall of Númenor, the world was made round (whereas it had been flat).