

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

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Five Successive Kings of Israel

A. Two short dynasties over Israel: Baasha and Zimri.

(1 Kings 16:1-4) Baasha's rebuke and prophecy of judgment.

(1) Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, against Baasha, saying:

(2) "Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins,

(3) surely I will take away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

(4) The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields."

(1) I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel: [1 Kings 15:27](#) tells us that Baasha was head of a conspiracy to kill Nadab, the son of Jeroboam. It tells us nothing of God's hand with Baasha, but here we learn that behind-the-scenes God moved even *through* the conspiracy of Baasha against Nadab.

"Baasha's name which means, *he who lays waste*, tells only too accurately what kind of a ruler he proved himself to be." (Knapp)

(2) You have walked in the way of Jeroboam... I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam: Because Baasha was a wicked king after the pattern of Jeroboam, he would face the same judgment as Jeroboam and his house. This had special relevance to Baasha, because he was the

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

instrument of judgment God used to bring justice to the house of Jeroboam. Baasha was not a blood descendant of Jeroboam, but he was a spiritual descendent of this great idolater of the northern kingdom. Because he walked in the way of Jeroboam, the house of Baasha would face the same judgment as the house of Jeroboam.

(4) The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city: This same judgment was promised and fulfilled against the house of Jeroboam **READ** ([1 Kings 14:11](#)). It was considered a special disgrace to have your dead corpse desecrated and kept from proper burial.

[\(1 Kings 16:5-7\)](#) The death of Baasha.

(5) Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

(6) So Baasha rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place.

(7) And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them.

(5) book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel **We do not have these books. Remember 1 & 2 Chronicles basically covers the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.**

(7) The word of the LORD came by the prophet Jehu: Apparently, Jehu had a long career as a prophet. [2 Chronicles 19:2](#) mentions another word of Jehu, the son of Hanani. Some 50 years after this word to Baasha, he spoke to Jehoshaphat the King of Judah.

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

Jehu the Prophet also wrote specific books of history regarding kings of Israel ([2 Chronicles 20:34](#)) 2 Chronicles 20:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel. **We do not have the book of Jehu.**

His father Hanani is also mentioned in [2 Chronicles 16:7-10](#), where it describes how he suffered imprisonment because he was a faithful prophet in speaking to King Asa.

Because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger: The Bible tells us that by nature, God *is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy* ([Psalm 103:8](#)). Because He is *slow to anger*, it took a lot of wickedness on the part of Baasha to succeed in **provoking Him to anger**.

In being like the house of Jeroboam, and because He killed them: In [1 Kings 16:2](#) God said that He lifted Baasha out of the dust and set him as ruler over Israel. In doing this, God used Baasha to bring judgment upon the house of Jeroboam; yet God did not *cause* Baasha to do this, so He rightly judged Baasha, even though God used the wickedness of Baasha in bringing judgment upon Jeroboam.

God did not need to coerce a reluctant Baasha to conspire against and assassinate Nadab the son of Jeroboam. That wicked desire was already in the heart of Baasha. In using Baasha to bring judgment on the house of Jeroboam, God only needed to let Baasha do *what he wanted to do*. Therefore, it was proper of God to judge Baasha for something that ultimately furthered God's eternal plan.

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

(1 Kings 16:8-14) The two-year reign of Elah.

(8) In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, *and reigned* two years in Tirzah.

(9) Now his servant Zimri, commander of half *his* chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of *his* house in Tirzah.

(10) And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

(11) Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, *that* he killed all the household of Baasha; he did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends.

(12) Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,

(13) for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.

(14) Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

(8) Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah: The hope of every king is to pass the throne on to his son and to further a lasting dynasty. Because Baasha was a wicked king, God did not bless his dynasty and his son only **reigned two years**.

and reigned two years in Tirzah. so his son Elah reigned from the twenty-sixth to the twenty-seventh year of Asa, i.e., not quite two years.

(10) And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place: Even as Baasha gained the throne through assassination, so the son of Baasha was assassinated by Zimri, an officer in the army of Israel.

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

(11) Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha: This was common practice in the ancient world, and was exactly what Baasha did to the house of Jeroboam ([1 Kings 15:29](#)). David's treatment of the house of Saul was a glorious exception to this common practice.

This massacre was an exact fulfillment of the word of the LORD through the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani ([1 Kings 16:2-4](#)).

"In less than fifty years the first two dynasties of Israel's kings had come to an end and every member of their families been exterminated. God meant to make their doom an example to those who should thereafter live ungodly." (Knapp)

(14) Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? We do not have these books. Remember 1 & 2 Chronicles basically covers the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

([1 Kings 16:15-20](#)) The seven-day reign of Zimri.

(15) In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days.

(16) And the people *were* encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. Now the people *who were* encamped heard it said, "Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king." So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp.

(17) Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah.

(18) And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died,

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

(19) because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin.

(20) Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason he committed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

(15) Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days: The man who assassinated Elah, the son of Baasha, did not enjoy a blessed reign. His end came soon.

(16) So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day: This shows that the democratic influence in Israel was greater than is often thought. The people — especially it would seem the army — simply did not want Zimri to reign as king over them. They therefore rejected his authority and appointed **Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel.**

(18) When Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house down upon himself with fire, and died, because of the sins which he had committed: Zimri is one of the few suicides in the Bible, along with Samson ([Judges 9:54](#)), Saul ([1 Samuel 31:4](#)) and Ahithophel ([2 Samuel 17:23](#)).

The Bible never approves of suicide. It is sin; the sin of self-murder. Yet we are wrong if we regard it as the unforgivable sin, and anyone who does commit suicide has given in to the lies and deceptions of Satan, whose purpose is to kill and destroy ([John 10:10](#)).

“Suicide is always the ultimate action of cowardice. In the case of Saul, and in many similar cases, it is perfectly natural; but let it never be glorified as heroic. **It is the last resort of the man who dare not stand up to life.**”
(Morgan)

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

(19) **In walking in the way of Jeroboam:** Zimri only reigned seven days, but in those days, he **walked in the way of Jeroboam**. God allowed many of the wicked kings of Israel to reign much longer than this, but He was under no obligation to do so. God is within His rights to bring judgment sooner rather than later.

(20) **are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? We do not have these books. Remember 1 & 2 Chronicles basically covers the history of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.**

(1 Kings 16:21-28) The 12-year reign of Omri, King of Israel.

(21) Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri.

(22) But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned.

(23) In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, *and reigned* twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah.

(24) And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill.

(25) Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who *were* before him.

(26) For he walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their idols.

(27) Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

(28) So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place.

(21) The people of Israel were divided into two parts... So Tibni died and Omri reigned: Omri defeated the forces loyal to Tibni, **so Tibni died**, presumably killed by Omri after the defeat of his forces.

"The people of Israel fell into a civil war; yet neither this nor any other of God's dreadful judgments could win them to repentance; which is an evidence of their continual sin and rebellion against God, and how ripe they were for ruin." (Poole)

*"The division of the kingdom between Tibni and Omri began in the *twenty-seventh* year of Asa; this division lasted *five years*, during which Omri, had but a *share* of the kingdom. Tibni dying, Omri came into the possession of the *whole* kingdom, which he held *seven years*; this was in the *thirty-first* year of Asa."* (Clarke)

(24) He built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, Samaria: This became the capital city of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Omri built a capital that was politically neutral (being a new city with no previous tribal associations) and in a strong defensive position (on top of a hill).

(26) He walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat: This makes Omri the sixth king of Israel since the division of the once-unified kingdom. Jeroboam was the first king, and each of the five kings after him followed in the evil ways of Jeroboam.

He seems to have formulated laws [see [Micah 6:16](#)], making Jeroboam's calf-worship, or other forms of idolatry, obligatory throughout his realm, which remained in force till the end of the kingdom, more than two hundred years later." (Knapp)

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

"His name means *heaping*; and by his iniquity he helped to heap up wrath against his dynasty, executed finally, thirty-six years later, on his great-grandson Joram, to the total extinction of the guilty house." (Knapp)

(1 Kings 16:29-34) Ahab begins his 22-year reign.

(29) In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.

(30) Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him.

(31) And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him.

(32) Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

(33) And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

(34) In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

(29) In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah: Asa reigned for 41 years in total (1 Kings 15:10). During his 41 years, there were seven different kings of Israel.

(30) Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him: Each of the previous kings of Israel walked in the wicked pattern of Jeroboam. **Ahab distinguished himself in being worse than Jeroboam.**

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

His father Omri was a political and economic success for Israel but a spiritual failure. Ahab picked up where his father left off. "Reinforcing the father-son relationship is the name *Ahab*, which can be translated 'brother of the father' or 'resembling the father'" (Dilday). It can be said of some sons, "He has his father's eyes." It could be said of Ahab, "He has his father's lies."

Jeroboam intended to serve the LORD through idolatrous images (such as the golden calf) and in disobedient ways (altars and high places other than Jerusalem). Ahab introduced the worship of completely new, pagan gods. In his disobedience Jeroboam said, "I will worship the LORD, but do it my way." Ahab said, "I want to forget about the LORD completely and worship Baal."

In his later years, Solomon tragically worshipped pagan gods. Yet Omri and Ahab were far worse in that they *commanded* the worship of idols. "He made *statutes* in favour of idolatry, and obliged the people by law to commit it. See [Micah 6:16](#), where this seems to be intended: *For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab*" (Clarke).

(31) He took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him: Even as the foreign wives of Solomon led to his spiritual downfall, so Ahab's foreign wife **Jezebel** led him and the nation into deep idolatry.

Ethbaal means, *With Baal*. "Jezebel's name may come from a cultic cry used in the worship of Baal meaning 'Where is Baal?'"

Jezebel was "A woman infamous for her idolatry, and cruelty, and sorcery, and filthiness" (Poole).

"Had a secular historian been recording these events, the marriage of Ahab and Jezebel would likely have been applauded as a prudent political move."

Message on 1st Kings Chapter 16 ODBC, September 7, 2022

Jeroboam 10 Tribes, Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, Solomon's servant

Rehoboam 2 Tribes, Judah and Benjamin, Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, Solomon's son

Both Phoenicia and Israel were being threatened by Syria, and the marriage gave Ahab a powerful military ally at a crucial time." (Dilday)

(34) **In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho:** It seems that Ahab wanted to challenge the prophecy of Joshua after the destruction of the city. *Then Joshua charged them at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates" (Joshua 6:26).* If Ahab did think that he could rebuild Jericho without being affected by this curse, he was wrong: **He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.**

We don't know how the sons of Hiel died; they may have died as a curse or Hiel may have sacrificed them. "Archaeological excavations have uncovered evidence of a practice in ancient biblical times called 'foundation sacrifices' in which children were buried, maybe alive, in the foundations of buildings" (Dilday).

This was a merciful warning to Ahab that he ignored. God told him, "You cannot go against my word without paying the price. Hiel of Bethel, the man you directed to rebuild Jericho, has found this to be true. Take this warning seriously." Yet Ahab did not take this warning seriously.

What did we learn today?

Any questions?