

1Kings 16:1 ¶ Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying,

1Kings 16:2 Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;

1Kings 16:3 Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

1Kings 16:4 Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.

The LORD sent a message to Baasha through Jehu the son of Hanani. This is likely a reference to the Hanani through whom the LORD rebuked King Asa of Judah.

*2 Chronicles 16:7 "And at that time **Hanani the seer** came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand."*

Jehu's message from the LORD pronounced judgment against Baasha that mirrored His judgment against Jeroboam. He declared that he would destroy the house of Baasha so that none were left to carry on his name. His descendants would also be denied a proper burial. The LORD declared that this judgment was because Baasha had also chosen to promote idol worship instead of submitting to the LORD that had made him king.

1Kings 16:5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1Kings 16:6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead.

This ends the record of Baasha. He died and was buried in Tirzah; his son Elah became the next king of Israel.

1Kings 16:7 And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for 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 him.

This verse seems to be a summary repeat of the opening verses. It also makes a point of holding him accountable for the murder of Nadab.

These kinds of statements are always thought provoking. The LORD declared that Baasha's actions fulfilled prophecy. He also declared that He had been the one to make Baasha king. Still, He declared that Baasha was accountable for the sin he committed in bringing those events about. I think this is all tied into the fact that God in his omniscience formulated a plan to accomplish His purposes that often made use of men that did not have to violate their conscience or go

against their own desires in the process of exacting His judgment. Because the choice to act was their own, they were still accountable for their actions.

Clarke makes this statement: "God is ever represented in Scripture as doing those things which, in the course of his providence, he permits to be done."

1Kings 16:8 In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.

1Kings 16:9 And his servant Zimri, captain 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.

1Kings 16:10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead.

In the 26th year of King Asa of Judah, Elah, the son of Baasha became king in Israel; he reigned for two years from Tirzah. Zimri, one of his military commanders, plotted to overthrow him. One night Elah got drunk while in the house of his steward Arza. Zimri chose this time to kill him and assume the throne.

Note: The scriptural record of these kings assumes any part of a year to represent a year.

1Kings 16:11 And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.

1Kings 16:12 Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the prophet,

1Kings 16:13 For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

1Kings 16:14 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?

The first thing Zimri did as king was to kill all of the remaining descendants of Baasha. Through him, the prophecy declared by Jehu against Baasha was fulfilled. Elah had walked in the same sins of idolatry as his father.

The reference to the chronicles of the kings of Israel does not refer to the Chronicles of scripture. The Chronicles of scripture focus specifically on the kings of Judah.

1Kings 16:15 ¶ In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were* encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines.

1Kings 16:16 And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp.

Zimri became king of Israel for seven days during the 27th year of Asa's reign in Judah. The troops of Israel were encamped against the Philistine city of Gibbethon at that time. When the troops there heard that Zimri had killed King Elah, they decided to make Omri, the chief military commander, king over Israel. They did so that day in the camp.

1Kings 16:17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.

1Kings 16:18 And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died,

1Kings 16:19 For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin.

1Kings 16:20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Omri took his troops and left Gibbethon to lay siege to Tirzah. Zimri realized he could not win and decided to burn down the king's house over himself. His death is identified as God's judgment against him for his wickedness and idolatry before the people.

1Kings 16:21 Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri.

1Kings 16:22 But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

1Kings 16:23 In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

At this point the people of Israel had split loyalties. Half followed Omri and half followed Tibni, the son of Ginath, to make him king. After four years (compare verses 15 & 23), Omri finally won out, and Tibni died. (Sounds like he could have been killed after his troops were defeated in battle.)

Omri finally became king over all of Israel in the 31st year of the reign of Asa in Judah; he reigned for 12 years total, including 6 years in Tirzah.

1Kings 16:24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria.

Omri bought the hill of Samaria of Shemer (about 12 miles west of Tirzah) for two talents of silver and built on it. I presume that means he built his palace there since the one in Tirzah had been burned.

The IVP Commentary adds this insight regarding the two talents of silver: "It is about 150 pounds of silver. Its economic equivalent in buying power today would be between fifteen and twenty million dollars."

1Kings 16:25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him.

1Kings 16:26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

1Kings 16:27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

1Kings 16:28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

Omri was another evil king, and it is said that he did even worse than those that went before him. He followed idolatry and led the people to do the same. How he was worse we aren't told.

That's basically all the writer has to say about Omri. After he died and was buried in Samaria, his son Ahab became king.

Guzik provides a bit more information about Omri using a quote from Dilday. "In the records of secular history, Omri is one of the more *successful* and famous kings of ancient Israel. Omri's fame as a monarch, while downplayed by the author of Kings, was widely recognized in other places. The Moabite stone, discovered in 1868, refers to him as the conqueror of Moab. Assyrian inscriptions make mention of him as a great warrior. For years the Assyrians referred to Israel as the house of Omri."

1Kings 16:29 ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

1Kings 16:30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him.

Ahab, son of Omri, began his 22-year reign in Israel in the 38th year of Asa's reign in Judah. Even worse than the kings before him, Ahab did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Guzik helps make a distinction: "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."

1Kings 16:31 And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

1Kings 16:32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he

had built in Samaria.

1Kings 16:33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

One of the main influences for evil in Ahab's life was his wife Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Zidon (Tyre). She led him to practice the worship of Baal. Ahab even built a house for an altar to Baal in Samaria. Ahab also made a grove, an image to Asherah (aka Astarate and Ishtar), a Phoenician goddess. According to Easton's Dictionary, this image's "...symbol was the stem of a tree deprived of its boughs, and rudely shaped into an image, and planted in the ground."

Again the IVP Commentary adds some insight: "The goddess was popular in the religious deviations in Israel and was sometimes considered a consort of Yahweh. An indication of this belief is found in the inscriptions from Kuntillet Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom. In Canaanite mythology she was the consort of the chief god, El. She appears in Mesopotamian literature as early as the eighteenth century, where she is consort of the Amorite god Amurru. The cult symbol may or may not have born a representation of the deity on it. The pole may represent an artificial tree since Asherah is often associated with sacred groves. Sometimes the cult object can be made or built, while on other occasions it is planted. We have little information of the function of these poles in ritual practice."

1Kings 16:34 In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

This chapter closes with a note stating that it was during Ahab's reign that Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt Jericho. The NIV is a bit easier to understand.

1 Kings 16:34 "In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun."

The prophecy from Joshua (some 500 years earlier) to which he referred is from Joshua 6.

Joshua 6:26 "And Joshua adjured them at that time, saying, Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it."

I think the main reason for this little note at the end of this chapter is to point out yet another fulfilled prophecy from the LORD.