

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 1 KINGS 16

"CHAOS IN ISRAEL"

1 KINGS 16:1-7 - PROPHECY AGAINST BAASHA'S HOUSE

TO BE EATEN BY DOGS OR BIRDS IMPLIES A DISHONORABLE DEATH. FOR A KING TO DIE IN THIS WAY WOULD BE EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANT.

1 KINGS 16:8-14 - ELAH, SON OF BAASHA BECOMES KING

ZIMRI, ELAH'S CHARIOT COMMANDER CONSPIRES AGAINST HIM. ZIMRI KILLS ELAH WHILE ELAH WAS "DRINKING HIMSELF DRUNK" (V. 9). ZIMRI BECOMES KING IN HIS PLACE AND WITH HIS FIRST ACT AS KING, KILLS ALL OF BAASHA'S HOUSE. THIS FULFILLED THE PROPHECY OF JEHU (V. 2-4)

BIOGRAPHY: SON OF BAASHA. REIGNED FOR 2 YEARS FROM THE CITY OF TIRZAH DURING THE 26TH YEAR OF ASA'S REIGN IN THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM OF JUDAH. HE WAS KILLED BY ZIMRI.

SPIRITUAL MATTERS: ELAH IS MENTIONED BRIEFLY AS HAVING FOLLOWED AFTER THE "SINS OF BAASHA" (HIS FATHER) IN 16:13. THE TEXT SAYS THAT "THEY DID EVIL AND ...MADE ISRAEL SIN, PROVOKING THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL TO ANGER WITH THEIR IDOLS" (V. 13). HE WILL BE KILLED IN AN ACT OF DIVINE PUNISHMENT.

1 KINGS 16:15-20 - THE BRIEF REIGN OF ZIMRI

AFTER ONLY 7 DAYS AS KING, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL REJECTED ZIMRI AS A RESULT OF HIS CONSPIRACY AND MURDER OF THE PREVIOUS KING (ELAH). THEY MADE OMRI, THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY KING INSTEAD AND OMRI LED A MILITARY REBELLION AND SIEGE AGAINST ZIMRI. REMEMBER ZIMRI WAS THE "COMMANDER OF HALF (THE KING'S) CHARIOTS" (V. 9). HIS REBELLION AGAINST KING ELAH WOULD HAVE BEEN TREASON TO HIS COMMANDING OFFICER AS WELL, THE MAN JUST APPOINTED AS THE NEW KING BY THE PEOPLE (OMRI, V. 16).

REALIZING THE REVERSAL OF HIS FORTUNES, ZIMRI, SURELY OVERWHELMED WITH PANIC, FLEES TO HIS PALACE AND SETS THE PLACE ON FIRE, RESULTING IN HIS DEATH.

BIOGRAPHY: ZIMRI RULED FOR 7 DAYS DURING THE 27TH YEAR OF ASA KING OF JUDAH. HE WAS FORMERLY A MID LEVEL COMMANDER IN ELAH'S ARMY. HE COMMITS SUICIDE VIA ARSON OF HIS OWN HOUSE. OMRI, THE LEADING GENERAL OF ELAH'S ARMY BECOMES KING IN HIS PLACE.

SPIRITUAL MATTERS: ZIMRI WAS USED BY GOD TO ENACT PUNISHMENT AGAINST THE HOUSE OF BAASHA. HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT MUCH DIFFERENT THAN HIS PREDECESSORS, AS HE TOO DID "EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, WALKING IN THE WAY OF JEROBOAM..." (V. 19).

1 KINGS 16:21-28 - OMRI BECOMES KING

BIOGRAPHY: AT THE BEGINNING OF OMRI'S REIGN HE FINDS HE MUST FEND OFF A RIVAL TO HIS THRONE (TIBNI THE SON OF GINATH). HE PREVAILS (V. 22) AND BECAME KING, FOR 12 YEARS, DURING THE 31ST YEAR OF ASA'S REIGN. IT IS DURING OMRI'S REIGN THAT THE CITY OF SAMARIA WILL BECOME THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL. SAMARIA WILL REMAIN THE PREDOMINANT CITY (AND THE COUNTERPART TO JUDAH'S JERUSALEM) UNTIL THE KINGDOM IS DEFEATED BY ASSYRIA. THERE IS SOME EXTRA-BIBLICAL EVIDENCE THAT OMRI WAS POLITICALLY SIGNIFICANT BEYOND WHAT THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE TELLS. HIS FAMILY DYNASTY WILL RULE OVER ISRAEL FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS.

SPIRITUAL MATTERS: "OMRI DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND ACTED MORE WICKEDLY THAN ALL WHO WERE BEFORE HIM". HE FOLLOWED AFTER THE WAYS OF JEROBOAM (V. 25-26).

1 KINGS 16:29-33, 34 - AHAB BECOMES KING

BIOGRAPHY: AHAB WILL SUCCEED HIS FATHER OMRI AND RULE OVER ISRAEL FROM ITS NEW CAPITAL SAMARIA FOR 22 YEARS. HE MARRIED JEZEBEL, A SIDONIAN PRINCESS. HE BECAME KING DURING THE 38TH YEAR OF KING ASA OF JUDAH. WE WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT AHAB'S REIGN IN 1 KINGS 17-22.

SPIRITUAL MATTERS: "AHAB THE SON OF OMRI DID EVIL IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, MORE THAN ALL WHO WERE BEFORE HIM" (V. 30)

V. 31 (NLT) - "AND AS THOUGH IT WERE NOT ENOUGH TO FOLLOW THE SINFUL EXAMPLE OF JEROBOAM, HE MARRIED JEZEBEL, THE DAUGHTER OF KING ETHBAAL OF THE SIDONIANS, AND HE BEGAN TO BOW DOWN IN WORSHIP OF BAAL."

V. 34 - ONE OF THE EVILS THAT WAS DONE DURING THE TIME OF AHAB WAS THAT A MAN NAMED HIEL OF BETHEL WAS ALLOWED TO BEGIN TO REBUILD THE CITY OF JERICO. AS A RESULT, HIEL LOST TWO OF HIS SONS. THIS WAS FORETOLD BY JOSHUA AT THE DESTRUCTION OF JERICO'S WALLS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CANAANITE CONQUEST.

JOSHUA 6:26 - "THEN JOSHUA MADE THEM TAKE AN OATH AT THAT TIME, SAYING, "CURSED BEFORE THE LORD IS THE MAN WHO RISES UP AND BUILDS THIS CITY JERICO; WITH THE LOSS OF HIS FIRSTBORN HE SHALL LAY ITS FOUNDATION, AND WITH THE LOSS OF HIS YOUNGEST SON HE SHALL SET UP ITS GATES."

THE MERE FACT THAT THIS WAS DONE BY SOMEONE FROM THE BIOLOGICAL DESCENDANTS OF ABRAHAM IS ASTONISHING. CLEARLY THE WORD OF THE LORD HAS BEEN FORGOTTEN AND REJECTED. CLEARLY EVERY MAN IS RIGHT IN HIS OWN EYES.

ESV STUDY BIBLE (ON JOSHUA 6:24): "JERICO REPRESENTS GOD'S JUDGMENT ON CANAAN, AND THE CONTINUING PRESENCE OF ITS RUINS IS TO SERVE AS A WARNING TO ISRAEL. ANY ATTEMPT TO REBUILD AND REFORTIFY THE CITY, THEREFORE, WILL SUGGEST DEFIANCE OF THE LORD'S RULE."

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT THINGS COULDN'T GET ANY WORSE, AHAB, THE SON OF OMRI BECOMES KING. AHAB WILL BE ONE OF, IF NOT THE, WORST KINGS OF ISRAEL. WITH THE HELP OF HIS EVIL WIFE JEZEBEL, HE WILL LEAD DURING A TIME OF GREAT ABOMINATION. YET, IT IS DURING THE REIGN OF THIS HORRID KING THAT THE LORD WILL RAISE UP THE GREAT PROPHET ELIJAH TO SPEAK FOR THE LORD AND STAND FOR THE WAYS AND RENOWN OF THE TRUE GOD.

THIS IS A VERY DEPRESSING CHAPTER! THE GREAT LESSON WE LEARN IS THAT IDOLATRY IS NO JOKE OR CASUAL SIN IN THE LORD'S EYES AND THAT CHAOS IS THE STATE OF HUMANITY WHEN THEY FORSAKE THE LORD AND HIS WAYS.

THOUGH IT IS EASY TO LOOK AT THIS CHAPTER WITH DISDAIN, WE SHOULD ASK OURSELVES HOW DIFFERENT IS OUR GENERATION FROM THE GENERATION OF 1 KING'S 16? IS OUR LAND FILLED WITH THOSE WHO WORSHIP THE LORD OR MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW AFTER THEIR OWN IMAGINED GOD OR THEIR OWN VERSION OF WHO THEY THINK THE LORD IS? ARE WE A PEOPLE THAT FOLLOWS AFTER THE WAY OF "DAVID" OR THE WAY OF "JEROBOAM"? AND PERHAPS THE LORD CAN USE THE SAD CHAOS OF THIS CHAPTER TO STIR OUR HEARTS TO NOT BE COMFORTABLE WITH HOW THINGS ARE IN THE WORLD AROUND US TODAY. MAYBE THE LORD WILL RAISE UP A NEW ELIJAH FROM AMONG US TO "DECLARE THE WORD OF THE LORD".

THOUGH REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO JOHN THE BAPTIST, MAY WE LONG FOR THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH IN OUR OWN DAY...

MALACHI 4:5-6 - "'BEHOLD, I AM GOING TO SEND YOU ELIJAH THE PROPHET BEFORE THE COMING OF THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE DAY OF THE LORD. HE WILL RESTORE THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN AND THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS, SO THAT I WILL NOT COME AND SMITE THE LAND WITH A CURSE.'"