

1 Kings Chapter 16 Commentary

We note, this chapter is devoted solely to Israel, the ten tribes, and does not involve Judah and Benjamin.

1Ki 16:1 ¶ "Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, 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; 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. 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. 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? 6 So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. 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."

What we know of Jehu the prophet is what we see here. We know of his father from **2Ch 16:7-10; 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. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars. 10 Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time."

God, through Jehu, reminds Baasha that God promoted him from being nothing to be king over Israel, and Baasha has cast these thoughts aside and followed in the ways of Jeroboam. God reminds Baasha: you knew that I raised you up, and exalted your position in Israel, to destroy the house of Jeroboam, and yet you have exalted yourself against God in insubordination. God sends Jehu the prophet to prophesy against him, just as God sent Ahijah the prophet to prophesy against Jeroboam. God gives practically the same judicial judgment in each case.

This principle still exists today. What do you mean? Any person who hears the gospel of Jesus Christ and does not heed the warning, is guilty of continuing in sin against God. Having been warned by the preaching of the gospel, they bring destruction upon their own heads. They heard the gospel, and they repented not to turn to God.

There is a great warning to God's people in this scenario. As we see that sin begets more sin, and children learn what they see their parents do, and without the intervention of God in the lives of the children, the children will continue in the same way their parents lived.

We see that God is always fair in his judgments. What do you mean? Baasha was given warning by Jehu the prophet of God, and he did not heed the warning, but continued in his sinfulness. Therefore, we see that Baasha has no one to blame but himself, for God sent him a warning and he did not repent and turn to God.

There is hope for God's people because this principle is true for God's people. Their children learn what they see their parents do, and we pray that God will fulfill what we are told in scripture in **Pr 22:6 ¶** "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

Just as this is not always true in life, so it is not always true, of those who are raised in sin or under the truth, because of what God has said in **Ro 9:18-24; 18** Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?"

God's will must always be done, according to His choice of who shall be saved, seen in **Joh 15:16 "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."**

Again, we have the warning that our sins do not just affect us, but they affect our children, our friends, and our neighbors.

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. 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. 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. 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. 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, 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. 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?"

Just as God said of the pharaoh of Egypt that **Ro 9:17 "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."** So, God seems to have raised up Zimri for the sole purpose of destroying the lineage of Baasha. We shall see in the next verse that Zimri only reigned seven days.

According to custom of these times, as recorded by history, when a king and his family and friends were eliminated, they also slew those who dwelt in the five houses closest to the family and friends, to entirely eradicate those who may be lovers of the ones who were slain, who may raise up objections or rise in insurrection.

We point out that again we see it was those of his own house who rose up against Elah. Reminding us that our inherited sin nature is our first enemy to be guarded against. Church troubles most often come from within the church itself, which is why Jesus Christ directed us as seen in **Mt 22:36-40; 36 "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."** If we are enabled to keep these commandments, we will save ourselves from spiritual troubles, and we will not have church troubles.

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. 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. 17 And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. 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, 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. 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?"

Matthew Henry points out in his commentary what we see happening in Israel, in **Pr 28:2 ¶ "For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged."** We see in Israel now the short reign of many kings, because of their transgression and how they made Israel to transgress the command of God.

We point out: what we see playing out before us is that man, left to his own will, will not turn to God, but will pursue to glorify his own name, and seek glory in power of position.

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

Israel divided itself again with half following Tibni and half following Omri. Omri prevailed, Tibni died, and Omri reigned over all Israel. The reason for this division seems to be political. Omri was a war general over Israel and upon the death of his king, the army appointed him king. The followers of Tibni sought political resources and were afraid of a king who was a man of war.

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. 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. 25 But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that were before him. 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. 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? 28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead."

Omri reigns in Tirzah for six years and then he buys the town of Samaria and makes it the capital of the northern kingdom.

Have you noticed that each king does worse than the one before him? This reminds us of what is happening in the world today. Man, left to his own will, can only do worse and worse. Each generation goes further down the pathway of sin and defiance to God. Just think about what happened from the fall of Adam until the flood that destroyed the occupants of the earth, except for those eight souls who found grace in the sight of God. We look around today, seeing that same progression of sin proliferating upon the earth, and wonder how long before God will finally destroy this world and sin.

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. 30 And Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. 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. 32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 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."

Again, we see the progression of sin as Ahab comes on the scene, as we are told he does worse than all before him. He adds to his sins by taking Jezebel, a Phoenician, to wife. Jezebel was an idolatrous woman who worshipped Baal. This was a political ploy to make friends with a nation that God had commanded Israel not to do. Ahab even built an altar to Baal in the house of Baal and made a grove to Baal.

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."

We are told that during his reign Hiel, the Bethelite, rebuilds Jericho. We are told that he began building with the birth of his firstborn and finished with the death of his youngest son, which was according to the prophesy of Joshua in **Jos 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."** Any other children that Hiel may have had died in the interim.

This demonstrates to us that those who harden their hearts against the word, and will of God, will suffer the consequence of their hardness of heart and mind. It reminds us that when God pronounces a curse, it will be as God has said.

The actions of Hiel are what we call presumptuous sins, of which we are told in **2Pe 2:4-10; 4 "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; 5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of**

righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; 7 ¶ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) 9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: 10 ¶ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities."

May God keep us from presumptuous sins, and through His Holy Spirit power, lead us to be willing subjects to God and Christ, our King, we pray in the name of Jesus, Amen!