

# OpenTheo

## 1 Kings 15 - 16



### 1 Kings - Steve Gregg

In this session, Steve Gregg delves into 1 Kings 15 and 16, focusing on the reigns of various kings in Israel and Judah. He notes the repentance of Rehoboam, the positive reign of Abijah, and the rise of King Omri who built the city of Samaria and established Baal worship as the center of the northern kingdom. Gregg also highlights the consequences of the kings who walked in the sins of Jeroboam and provoked the anger of the Lord.

## Transcript

Last time we got through 1 Kings 14 and came to the end of the reign of Jeroboam. Now, Jeroboam was the first king of the northern kingdom and the one who took over when the kingdom split. And there was this rebellion against Rehoboam.

And we're going to turn our attention now with the death of Jeroboam to the southern kingdom. At the end of chapter 14, we already had done so. We were looking at the reign of Rehoboam.

At the end of chapter 14, and this is going to be bouncing back and forth in its treatment of the northern and southern kingdoms. And we're also going to have to be looking from time to time at 2 Chronicles for fill-in material. It's actually kind of interesting because some of the kings that are said to be bad kings, and about which nothing good is said in Kings, we find some good things said about them in Chronicles.

The interesting thing about the kings that we read about in Judah is that some of them are almost entirely bad but have one good thing about them. Or some are almost entirely good but have one thing bad about them. Now, the kings of the northern kingdom, there's nothing good about any of them.

The northern kingdom just had idolatrous evil kings from beginning to the end of their history. Judah's kings kind of went up and down. Now, Rehoboam, for example, we don't read anything good about him at the end of chapter 14.

It's chapter 14, verses 21 through 31. We had the treatment of his reign after the split of

the kingdom. And we did see, after it says that he, you know, did evil in the sight of the Lord, verse 22.

And they provoked him to jealousy with their sins and all of that. It says in verse 25 of chapter 14, Now, it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam that Shishak, the king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord. And we saw that he had to give away the gold shields and so forth and replace them with bronze ones.

There's more about this in 2 Chronicles that's rather interesting because there was a positive thing said about Rehoboam that is not mentioned in Kings. In 2 Chronicles chapter 12, with reference to this attack from Shishak, the Egyptian king, in chapter 12, verses 5 through 8, it says, Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak and said to them, Thus says Yahweh, you have forsaken me and therefore I have also left you in the hand of Shishak. So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and they said, Yahweh is righteous.

Now, when Yahweh saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah saying, They have humbled themselves, therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Nevertheless, they will be his servants, that they may distinguish my service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations.

And so this little paragraph here, this little section, is something we don't have any clue about when we're just reading in Kings. That actually Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah repented or at least acknowledged that God was righteous when they were rebuked. Instead of persecuting the prophet and ignoring him, they accepted the words of the prophet, the rebuke.

And they saw that the king of Egypt had come up as a judgment from God against them. But they said God is righteous and apparently, I don't know what they did to reform their ways, apparently nothing much. But simply in acknowledging that the prophet was right, they got a measure of mercy from God.

Not complete, they still had to be servants, they had to still be conquered, but they wouldn't be totally destroyed. Apparently God had in mind to utterly destroy Jerusalem, they were so wicked. And just by this one little bit of humility, and not even a very thoroughgoing repentance necessarily, but some humility in acknowledging that God was right, this gave them a slight reprieve so that the nation was not destroyed, they were simply defeated.

And I guess being defeated is not as bad as being utterly destroyed. Now we come to chapter 15, the son of Rehoboam. And we're going to look at the king's Abijam, who is

also called in Chronicles, he's called Abijah.

And we're going to see also Azah in this chapter and then we're going to go back and look at what's going on in the northern kingdom again. Now in the 18th year of King Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. And he reigned three years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Meachah, the granddaughter of Abishalom. Now Abishalom is Absalom. And this man, Abijam, was the son of Rehoboam and Rehoboam was married to Absalom's granddaughter.

Now remember Absalom had three sons, but their names were never recorded because they apparently didn't live long. But he had a daughter named Tamar. Apparently Tamar had this daughter, Meachah.

And she married Solomon's son, Rehoboam. So Abijam was the son of Rehoboam and of this granddaughter, Meachah. And she was a bad woman.

You can see more about this family connection over in 2 Chronicles 11, 18 through 23. Some information that we don't have elsewhere. In 2 Chronicles 11, 18 through 23, it says, Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife Mahalath, the daughter of Jeremoth, the son of David, and of Abihael, the daughter of Elieah, the son of Jesse.

And she bore him children, Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. After he took, after her, he took Meachah, the granddaughter of Absalom. And she bore him Abijah, that's Abijam, Atai, Zizah, and Shalomoth.

Now Rehoboam loved Meachah, the granddaughter of Absalom, more than all his wives and his concubines. For he took 18 wives and 60 concubines. He didn't quite measure up to his father's prowess in that respect, but still apparently kept pretty busy.

And he begot 28 sons and 60 daughters. And Rehoboam appointed Abijah, the son of Meachah, as chief, to be leader among his brothers, for he intended to make him king. He dealt wisely and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city, and he gave them provisions in abundance.

He also sought many wives for them. So Rehoboam apparently wisely distributed his sons so they wouldn't be able to conspire together against Abijah, it would seem. And spread them out over the countryside and gave Abijah the obvious favor in the family because he loved Abijah's mother more.

As it turns out, Meachah turned out to be a bad woman because she made an obscene image of Asherah, we find out later on in this chapter in verse 13. And she had to be deposed from being queen mother by her grandson, Asherah. Or her son, Asherah.

No grandson, excuse me. Some of these generations you have to think about them a little bit sometimes. So, verse 3. He walked in all the sins of his father which he had done before him.

His heart was not loyal to Yahweh his God as was the heart of his father David. Nevertheless, for David's sake, the Lord his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem. Because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not turned aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

So, a little brief remembrance of David here. And a summary of his life. That he was loyal to Yahweh all the days of his life and he didn't turn aside except in the matter of Uriah.

Of course, that's Bathsheba and Uriah he's talking about. A rather serious turning aside. And yet it says that David was a man who remembered God and was loyal to God all his life.

Obviously, this is as I mentioned earlier, the way that a king is evaluated is by whether he worshiped idols or not. If he did not worship idols then he was loyal to God. He might have any number of other defects.

And a lot of these kings had major defects and yet were considered good kings. So, if a man just didn't worship idols, he remained loyal to Yahweh and the covenant. Then his personal defects were not remembered against him.

In this case, David's personal defect was very serious in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. So, it is remembered as an exception to his general obedience. But he's still regarded despite that to be a godly king.

And the mention of the lamp, David's lamp in Jerusalem in verse 4. We've seen this expression used a number of times previously. It seems to be a reference to the influence of David's life or the blessing of God on David continuing to shine as it were after David was dead. But anyway, our friend Abijam did not walk in the ways of David but he walked in the way of Rehoboam which was not a right way to walk.

And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. Now, the rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. So, Abijam rested with his fathers and they buried him in the city of David.

Then Asa, his son, reigned in his place. Now, there's a significant story about Abijam recorded in 2 Chronicles chapter 13 that is entirely omitted from Kings. In 2 Chronicles 13 verses 4 through 20 there's this story.

And again, in this particular case, there's a good thing said about him. So, just as in 1

Kings 14, we're only told that Rehoboam was a bad king. But 2 Chronicles 12 tells us of one good thing that kind of moderated that badness a little bit.

So, also in Kings we read only of the badness of Abijam. But in 2 Chronicles we have one good story about him. And that is in 2 Chronicles 13 beginning at verse 4. This is, by the way, when he was attacked.

He was attacked by the northern kingdom under Jeroboam. And Jeroboam, by the way, had a lot of warriors. 800,000 warriors he brought against him.

And Abijam had only, I think, what did he have, 5,000? 400,000. Yeah, excuse me. 400,000, right.

I'm looking at now verse 3. Abijam had 400,000. Jeroboam had 800,000, twice as many. Then Abijam stood on Mount Zemaraim, which is on the mountains of Ephraim, and said, Hear me, Jeroboam, and all Israel.

Should you not know that Yahweh, God of Israel, gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons by a covenant of salt? A covenant of salt apparently means permanent. Salt is a preservative, and this expression, a covenant of salt, is used in Scripture to apparently mean a permanent covenant. Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon, the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord.

Then worthless rogues gathered to him and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. Now, this is one interpretation of that. Another interpretation is that God was judging Solomon by taking the kingdom away from his son Rehoboam.

And Rehoboam, of course, was being a jerk at the time. The people had come and asked for a somewhat more reasonable taxation and a lessening of the forced labor. I mean, people were asking for something reasonable.

And Rehoboam's older counselors advised him to go along with them and said that would be a good thing for him to do. But he instead consulted younger counselors and did a stupid thing and divided the kingdom. So in a sense, those that sided with Jeroboam could be seen as fulfilling prophecy, asking for something essentially reasonable.

Even the older counselors of Rehoboam agreed with them. And yet here Abijah is referring to them as worthless rogues who stood with Jeroboam against Rehoboam. That's obviously seen from Abijah's side of things.

And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the Lord, which is in the hand of the sons of David, and you are a great multitude. And with you are the gold calves, which Jeroboam made for you as gods. Have you not cast out the priests of the Lord, the sons

of Aaron, the Levites, and made for yourselves priests like the peoples of other lands, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of the things that are not gods? So he's rebuking him for setting up the golden calves and for changing the religion and excluding the Levites.

And anyone who has enough money to swear himself in as a priest can be a priest to these gold calves, which are not even gods. But as for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken him. Not completely at that point, but I mean, remember Abijah is remembered as one who did walk in all the sins of his fathers.

The priests who minister to the Lord are the sons of Aaron, and the Levites attend to their duties. And they burn to the Lord every morning and every evening, burnt sacrifices and sweet incense. They also set the showbread in order on a pure table, and the lampstand of gold with the lamps burn every evening.

For we keep the command of the Lord our God, but you have forsaken him. Now, as we saw from 1 Kings, Abijah did not really keep the commands of God in his life. But in this case, he's talking about in the religious ceremonies, they're following the way that God prescribed.

They've got the temple, they've got the Levites, they've got the lamp, they've got the showbread. They're doing it all the way Moses said to do it when it comes to the rituals of religion. A lot of people feel that if they're just dotting the I's and crossing the T's of their religious observance properly, it doesn't much matter how they live their private lives.

And that's kind of how Abijah, in this case, seems to have been. He felt that we've got the right kind of religious structure here, therefore God is on our side. Remember at the end of the book of Judges, Micah had a priest that he hired to lead worship at a carved image that he had.

And he thought, well, at least I have a Levite doing it now, so that's good. God will bless me now. It's just this mentality that people have that no matter how you live, if you just do the right religious things, that somehow God will be on your side.

It's a mentality that the Jews have, but most religions have, and many Christians have it too. That God is concerned about symbolic things and ritual things more than about reality. And about moral issues and being really good and righteous.

That was apparently how Abijah was thinking about this. We have the priests who are the Levites, the sons of Aaron. We have the table of Shobron.

We've got all that stuff going on that we're supposed to have. Of course, there were some Levites in the area of Judah that would have stayed there when the kingdom split, but we know that also there were a lot of Levites who moved there because of the

offensive things Jeroboam was doing. A lot of the Levites moved to Judah so that they wouldn't have to be put out of work in the temple.

That's in 2 Chronicles 11, 13-17, it says that. This is when Jeroboam had split off. It says, and from all the territories, the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with Jeroboam.

For the Levites left their common lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem. For Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the Lord. Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons and the calf idols which he had made.

And after the Levites left, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek Yahweh God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord God of their fathers. So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and made Jeroboam the son of Solomon strong for three years. Because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

That is what the Levites did. So when Jeroboam set up this false religion, then the Levites who were in his territory thought, there's nothing left for us up here, we're going to go back and serve in Jerusalem. So they went back to Judah and probably almost all the Levites were now in Judah.

And then there were people from other tribes too in the north who feared the Lord. And they also apparently continued to worship in Jerusalem and probably moved down there as well. Anyway, so Abijam is able to claim rightly that we have the Levites here.

We have the Levitical priests which you have expelled from their duties. And he says in verse 12, 2 Chronicles 13, 12. Now look, God himself is with us as our head and his priests, the sounding trumpets, with sounding trumpets sound the alarm against you, O children of Israel.

Do not fight against the Lord God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper. Now he's saying we have our priests here, the Levites, who are going to sound the battle cry, sound the trumpets for our troops. Our troops are marching under the authorization of God with his priests on their side.

You're asking for trouble if you attack us, even though you've got twice as many soldiers as we have. But Jeroboam caused an ambush to go around behind them. So they were in front of Judah and the ambush was behind them.

And when Judah looked around, to their surprise, the battle line was at both front and rear. And they cried out to the Lord and the priests sounded the trumpets. Then the men of Judah gave a shout.

And as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah and God delivered them into their hand. Then Abijah and his people struck them with the great slaughter.

So 500,000 choice men of Israel fell slain. Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time. And the children of Judah prevailed because they relied on the Lord, the God of their fathers.

And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him. Bethel with its villages, Jashanna and its villages, Ephraim with its villages. So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in those days of Abijah.

And the Lord struck him and he died. So we see then that there was a good story, a positive story in the reign of Abijah. He is only remembered for evil in 1 Kings.

But he did have this one time where he trusted the Lord against Jeroboam and God delivered him then. All right, so much for Abijah. Now let's look at the story of Rehoboam or Abijah.

His son, Asa, reigned and he's a little more, there's a relief with him because he actually was regarded as a good king. Rehoboam had only reigned for 17 years and Abijah for only three years. But Asa is going to reign for 41 years and he is remembered as a good king.

But unfortunately, there's a bad thing about him too in 2 Chronicles 16. It says in verse 9 here, chapter 15, verse 9. In the 20th year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. And he reigned 41 years in Jerusalem.

His grandmother's name was Maika, the granddaughter of Absalom. Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did his father David. And he banished the perverted persons from the land.

That'd be the homosexual, male prostitute and such, part of the pagan worship. And removed all the idols that his father's had made. Also, he removed Maika, his grandmother, from being queen mother because she had made an obscene image of Asherah.

And Asa cut down her obscene image and burned it by the brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed. Nevertheless, Asa's heart was loyal to the Lord all his days.

With the exception of a brief but really shameful thing that we read about in chapter 16 of 2 Chronicles. Actually, we have in 2 Chronicles 15 considerably more detailed information about Asa's reforms. He's the first king to come along after Solomon that is said to be good.



And he was a little bit like Hezekiah and Josiah and Jehoshaphat in that they tried to get rid of idolatry in Judah. Never quite finished the job. But in 2 Chronicles 15, the first 15 verses tell us some details of his reforms.

It says, Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Obed. And he went out to meet Asa and said to him, Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The Lord is with you while you are with him.

If you seek him, he will be found by you. But if you forsake him, he will forsake you. For a long time, Israel has been without a true God, the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law.

But when in their trouble they turned to the Lord God of Israel, they sought him. He was found by them. And in those times there was no peace to the one who went out nor the one who came in.

But great turmoil was on all the inhabitants of the lands. So nation was destroyed by nation and city by city. For God troubled them with every adversity.

But you be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded. And when Asa heard these words of the prophecy of Obed the prophet, he took courage and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim. And he restored the altar of Yahweh that was before the vestibule of the Lord.

Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those who sojourned with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon. For they came over to him in the great numbers from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him. So these many people from Ephraim and Manasseh had joined Judah apparently when they saw that Asa was pious.

And he was a great contrast to their own kings in the north and frankly to the other kings in the south as well who had been before. It was a relief to see a godly king. And so godly people from tribes in the north came down and joined him.

So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered to the Lord at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil which they had brought. Then they entered into a covenant to seek Yahweh God of their fathers with all their heart, with all their soul.

And whoever would not seek Yahweh God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. Then they took an oath before the Lord with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and ram's horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought him with all their soul.

And he was found by them, and the Lord gave him rest all around. And then it goes on to

tell how he, Asa, removed Maika his mother because of the obscene image she'd made. I don't know if that fits in to the story as we have it here in 1 Kings, but more detail is given there about his reforms.

Now in 1 Kings 15 and 14 it says, Nevertheless Asa's heart was loyal to the Lord all his days, with a significant exception. And that is in 2 Chronicles 16, verses 7 through 12. This is a real disappointment because it was refreshing to see a good king.

Well, we find that even 1 Kings tells us that Asa entered into a covenant with Syria to defend him from Baasha, the northern king that we have not read about yet, the king of Israel. He came under attack and he hired, essentially, the Syrians to help him fight off the northern kingdom. And that was not something that God was pleased with.

And it says it in verse 7 of 2 Chronicles 16. And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa the king of Judah and said to him, Because you have relied on the king of Syria and have not relied on Yahweh your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. Were the Ethiopians and the Lubam not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand.

I guess we didn't read that story. That's over in chapter 14. I guess we should have read that one too.

In chapter 14 of 2 Chronicles, there was a time when a million Ethiopians came against Asa. And he depended on the Lord and the Lord delivered him from them and the Ethiopians fled. So that's what the prophet is referring back to.

And it says in 16.9. For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to him. In this you have done foolishly, therefore from now on you shall have wars. So he had done foolishly in hiring Syria's help instead of looking to the Lord.

As he had earlier done, he had earlier looked to the Lord when there was a much more vast army coming against him. But why he didn't on that second occasion, we don't know. These stories are realistic.

People do things that seem uncharacteristic of them. People who are good sometimes do a uncharacteristically bad thing. Or people who are mostly bad sometimes do uncharacteristically good things.

As we'll see in the cases of many of the bad kings. They do a few good things. But they're bad.

And here, amazingly, Asa was angry with the seer and put him in prison. For he was enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

So here's a good king who suddenly becomes an oppressor of some people. We don't know what form this oppression took or which people he chose to oppress. Maybe the prophets.

But he put this prophet in jail for rebuking him. And that's a real big disappointment coming from a king who is otherwise loyal to the Lord. And verse 11 here says, Note that the acts of Asa first and last are indeed written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

In the 39th year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was very severe. Yet in his disease, he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers, etc.

Now, this fact that he didn't seek the Lord when he was diseased in his feet is not mentioned in 1st Kings. It is mentioned in 1st Kings that he made this agreement with Syria, but it does not criticize him for it. It doesn't tell us that the Lord sent a prophet to rebuke him about it or even that the Lord was unhappy with it necessarily.

And it does tell us that he was diseased in his feet, but it doesn't tell us about him not seeking the Lord in it. So back in 1st Kings 15, here's how the parallel reads. Begin in verse 16.

1st Kings 15, 16. Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. And Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.

This is because so many people from the northern kingdom were now defecting to the south because of the wickedness of the north and because Asa was a good king. So many people were defecting that Baasha king of the northern kingdom built a fortress at Ramah to sort of guard the road and to keep people from immigrating. To the south.

Then Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the house of the Lord and the treasuries of the king's house and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And king Asa sent them to Ben-Hadad the son of Tabramun, the son of Hesion, the king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold.

Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me. So Ben-Hadad heeded king Asa and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel, Bethmeica, and Chinnuroth with all the land of Naphtali.

Now it happened when Baasha heard it that he stopped building Ramah and remained in Tirzah, which was his capital. So this is the case of Asa making this treaty with Syria, and

that's the thing he was criticized for by the prophet. Then king Asa made proclamation throughout all Judah.

None was exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building. And with them, king Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

He used the building materials to build up some of their own cities. The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did and the cities which he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age, he was diseased in his feet. And as we saw from chronicles, he did not seek the Lord about his sickness.

Most scholars assume he had gout, a very common disease in those times, in his feet. And we don't know if he had sought the Lord, whether the Lord would have healed him. He might have.

But instead he sought after the physicians. Now the physicians might well have been pagan physicians, not men of science. I mean, to us, a physician is a scientifically trained doctor.

In those days, a physician was superstitious, witch doctor type person probably. And going to people like that instead of the Lord was offensive. So Asa rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, his father.

Then Jehoshaphat, his son, reigned in his place. About whom we'll have a lot of chapters of interest. Jehoshaphat was a very good king, but we won't read about him again until the end of 1 Kings.

And there are a number of chapters in 2 Chronicles about Jehoshaphat that fill in information about him. That's very good, very encouraging. So Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, was also a good king.

They had two good ones in a row, although good is a relative term. Because Asa certainly did some wrong things. He oppressed some people.

He put a prophet in jail for rebuking him. Well, now that we've got Jehoshaphat's rule mentioned, we need to catch up with that time in the north. So Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, became king over Israel in the second year of Asa, the king of Judah.

And he reigned over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of his father and in all his sin by which he had made Israel to sin. Then Baashah, the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him.

And Baashah killed him at Gibethon, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibethon. So we don't know much about how this took place, but

apparently while Nadab was trying to conquer a Philistine fortress and his armies were there, somehow somebody assassinated him. And where it seemed to be a hard place to assassinate a king is when he's actually surrounded by his armies, besieging an enemy city.

So it may be that this Baashah was a general of his who conspired and conducted a coup against him in the midst of this campaign against the Philistines. It says, Baashah killed him in the third year of Asa, the king of Judah, and reigned in his place. And it was so when he became king that he killed all the house of Jeroboam.

He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed until they had destroyed him, according to the word of the Lord, which he had spoken by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite. Remember Ahijah the Shilonite was consulted by Jeroboam's wife when their son was sick. And she disguised herself and went to the prophet to see if the son would live.

And the prophet was told by God, though he was blind, he knew it was her. And he told her that all of Jeroboam's seed would be destroyed and that none would be left because of his sin and how he caused Israel to sin. So the fulfillment came when Baashah killed the king who was Jeroboam's son and then killed all the other sons, offspring of Jeroboam.

Verse 31, Now the rest of the acts of Nadab and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And there was war between Eza and Baashah king of Israel all their days. In the third year of Eza king of Judah, Baashah the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah and reigned 24 years. And he did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the ways of Jeroboam and in his sin by which he had made Israel to sin.

So even though he wiped out the whole household of Jeroboam, he didn't change the policies, the religious policies of Jeroboam and he kept offending God. But now we have a second dynasty in Israel. The first dynasty was that of Jeroboam and it only lasted two generations.

Jeroboam's son was assassinated and replaced by Baashah. Now his dynasty only lasted two generations too because his son was assassinated after him. Actually in the first six kings of Israel, we're going to have four different dynasties because of rapid turnover.

Now in the South, the dynasty of David remained in place the whole time through their whole history. But in the North, they went through one dynasty after another as one king would be assassinated by another unrelated individual and that man would set up his family. Then his son or grandson would be taken out.

In chapter 16, it says, Now Baashah had been the instrument for exterminating the

house of Jeroboam. And now the prophet says your house is going to be exterminated too, the same as his. The dog shall eat whoever belongs to Baashah and dies in the city.

And the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields. Now the rest of the acts of Baashah, what he did and his might, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Baashah rested with his fathers and was buried in Tirzah. Then Elah, his son, reigned in his place.

And also the word of the Lord came by the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, against Baashah and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger with the work of his hands in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them. Now in the 26th year of Asa, king of Judah, Elah, the son of Baashah, became king over Israel and he reigned two years in Tirzah. You can see Tirzah was the original capital of the northern kingdom.

Well, actually Shechem was earlier, but then it was moved to Tirzah. The last several kings have been there. It will be a later king, Omri, that moves the capital to Samaria, where it remained until the kingdom fell.

Now his servant Zimri, commander of half his chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arzah, steward of the house of Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the 27th year of Asa, king of Judah, and reigned in his place. So all that Elah accomplished that we know about is that he got drunk and got himself killed.

Not a great legacy he left of his reign. But it came to pass when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on the throne, that he killed all the household of Baasha. He did not leave him one male, neither of his kinsmen nor of his friends.

Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet. For all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which he had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their idols. 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? Now, again, we have an assassination.

The son of Jeroboam was assassinated by Baasha and the son of Baasha was assassinated by one of his generals, Zimri. Now Zimri reigned for a full seven days before he was besieged and opted for suicide. In verse 15 it says, In the twenty-seventh year of Eza, king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah for seven days, and the people were encamped against Gibethon, which belonged to the Philistines.

So that's the same place they were encamped when Baasha killed Nadab. And apparently they were still on this campaign against the Philistines. But Omri was the

commander and he heard about this assassination.

It says, Now the people who were encamped heard it and said, Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king. So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over all Israel that day in the camp. Now we don't know how he campaigned for that.

We don't know how he rose to power. We know nothing about his background as a general, but he apparently was viewed by his men as a better option of a king than Zimri. And so they just made him king.

They proclaimed him king right out there on the battlefield. Then Omri and all Israel went with him up from Gibethon and they besieged Tirzah. That is, they besieged Zimri there.

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. Because of the sins which he had sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in the sin which he had committed to make Israel sin. 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? By the way, this book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, of course, we don't have.

And even our books of Chronicles don't have this information because our books of Chronicles seem to focus almost exclusively on the southern kingdoms. So we don't have any amplification of the details of these reigns, of these men that have survived. Apparently there were more records available at the time Kings was written in these books that he mentions.

There's more information on this man that says in these books, but those books don't exist anymore. So we don't have any more information about them. Omri, however, becomes the king here.

And Omri, although he only reigned for 12 years, and we only have a brief treatment of his reign, he was actually very considerable. He, in those 12 years, he seemed to establish himself as a powerful ruler to the point where the Assyrians came in inscriptions. Assyrian inscriptions that archaeologists have found, they refer to Israel as the house of Omri.

And that is Omri was so significant and formidable that he gave his name to the whole country as far as the Assyrians were concerned. They referred to the nation of Israel as the house of Omri. More important to our narrative is he was the father of Ahab, whose reign we pause for a very long time during the reign of Ahab because we want to focus on the career of Ahab and Jezebel, and more importantly of Elijah the prophet, who is their contemporary.

But Omri is important, and his dynasty lasted longer than any of the previous ones in the

northern kingdom. Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts. Half of the people followed Tibni, the son of Garnath, to make him king, and half followed Omri.

But the people who followed Omri prevailed over the people who followed Tibni, the son of Garnath, and Omri reigned. In the thirty-first year of Azar, king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel and reigned twelve years. Six years he reigned in Tirzah, and he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemar 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 Shemar, owner of the hill. Omri did evil in the eyes of the Lord and did worse than all who were before him, but not all after him, because we're going to be told that his son Ahab did worse than everyone before him, which would include Omri. He did worse than all who were before him, for he walked in 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.

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? So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place. Now Omri, of course, we don't have any of his acts mentioned except that he acquired Samaria which became the capital of the northern kingdom.

And it was Samaria whose defeat meant the end of the northern kingdom. That was in 722 BC. Eventually the Assyrians destroyed Samaria and that was the downfall of the northern kingdom.

But it was during the time of Omri that Samaria became the capital. Also from secular archaeology we know that Omri conducted wars against Moab and apparently defeated them. So he was a powerful king for a short time.

How he died we are not told. In verse 29, then his son Ahab comes to power and we're going to have a brief introduction to him at the end of this chapter which is for many chapters actually to the end of 1 Kings and even a little bit into 2 Kings on Elijah who was contemporary with Ahab and with Jezebel. But it says in the 38th year of Aza the king of Judah Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel.

And Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria 22 years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him. And that had been said about his father but he exceeded him even in wickedness.

So we can see that the northern kingdom began corrupt with Jeroboam and at certain points it just kept getting worse and worse especially with Omri and Asa. 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 also as a wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians.



And he went and served Baal and worshipped him.

And he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal which he built in Samaria. So there in the capital of Israel there is a temple to Baal whereas in the southern kingdom the capital had the temple of Yahweh. The northern kingdom now became the center of Baal worship and its capital because he had married a Sidonian princess.

Now the Sidonians Baal was their national deity and Ethbaal was the father of Jezebel. He was also the king of the Sidonians. So Jezebel was the princess of this Baal worshipping country.

And she was apparently also the priestess of Baal in Israel when she came down and married Ahab. She also became a very bloodthirsty tyrant. She dominated her husband who seemed to be rather spineless.

And she killed a lot of the prophets and tried to kill Elijah the prophet. She was a very wicked woman obviously. And marrying her was perhaps a political arrangement that Ahab had made to make some kind of deal with the Sidonians, marry the princess.

But by accommodating her religion in Israel he brought the worst situation yet. Now they had had the golden calves before and that was bad but bringing Baal worship and building a temple for Baal in the capital city is regarded to be the worst act yet committed by any king in Israel. Verse 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.

Then we have this kind of parenthetical point of interest. In verse 34 In his days Heel 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.

Now this is referring back to a curse that Joshua uttered on Jericho after he conquered it in Joshua chapter 6 and he uttered a curse on anyone who would rebuild Jericho which apparently no one did for hundreds of years afterwards and yet this man did. Heel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho and it says He laid the foundation with Abiram his firstborn and with his youngest son Segub he set up the gates. The actual words of the curse that Joshua had uttered in Joshua verse 26 It says 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.

So we see that that was fulfilled to the very letter. Now what it means to lay the foundation with his firstborn and with his youngest son at the gates is that when he laid the foundation his firstborn son would die and when he set up the gates the youngest son would die. Now some feel that it is even more specifically saying that the firstborn

son would be buried in the cornerstone of the foundation and then in this one of the cornerstones of the gate his youngest son would be buried because it is known that in those days in the pagan world sometimes people in order to seek to sacrifice their own children and one of the ways they did it was to actually entomb them alive in a cornerstone of a building or of a town.

They would just shut them into a cornerstone and they would of course die and decay in there and it is sort of like they would have time capsules you know like sometimes you are probably familiar with that still being done putting cultural objects and so though the wording is not explicit here most scholars believe this is what it is referring to that this man because he was a pagan that is he was an idolater that he actually sacrificed his sons and put them into the building itself of the walls and of the gates. Anyway that notice is just mentioned in passing just before we come to the story of Elijah who is one of the most famous Elijah's story is of great interest considerably more than most of the kings themselves and so we will take a break at this point and come back and be introduced to Elijah's ministry in our next session.