**A Man Like Us!**

**I Kings 15:16-17:6 (Lesson #13)**

***15:16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. 17 Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might permit no one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 18 Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house and gave them into the hands of his servants. And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who lived in Damascus, saying, 19 "Let there be a covenant between me and you, as there was between my father and your father. Behold, I am sending to you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your covenant with Baasha king of Israel, that he may withdraw from me." 20 And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel and conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. 21 And when Baasha heard of it, he stopped building Ramah, and he lived in Tirzah. 22 Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah, none was exempt, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building, and with them King Asa built Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. 23 Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? But in his old age he was diseased in his feet. 24 And Asa slept with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.***

**Vs 17 -** Then we are told something specific, Baasha, went up against Judah and built Ramah. His goal appears to be to stop movement from kingdom to kingdom. We can imagine that many are defecting to the south to escape the reign of the wicked northern king.

**So Baasha is building a blockade!** But it is not just that good are being blocked from flowing into Jerusalem Baasha is fortifying a city just a few miles north of Jerusalem (the capital of Judah).

**Vs 18 -** Here we find another area, where Asa made mistakes.

In spite of early great decisions involving the Ethiopians, here rather than trusting in Yahweh, Asa trusts in what he can purchase and secure with money.

He takes the silver and gold that were left ***in the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king’s house.*** He places it all into the hands of some of his servants. He sends them to the **King of Syria** a man named **Ben-hadad**. A Gentile, a pagan.

**Vs 19 -** He gives money from the temple and his own house, with a proposition that they make a covenant, one like the covenant that existed between their fathers.

Some trust in horses, some trust in Egypt, **others is Syria!** So, he proposes that he break covenant with Baasha, the King of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.

**He may be following Yahweh, but this is a foolish and unbiblical move. He steals from Jahweh’s house, he bribes an unbeliever to break a covenant with Israel, and to attack people who are Israelites.**

**APPLICATION:** We can do the same things. When we get into trouble, we can trust our resources and our ability to work our way out of a problem, even do things that are a little questionable, rather than trusting in God!

**Vs 20 -** Ben-hadah listens to Asa, he breaks his covenant with Israel and then launches an offensive against some of the cities of the northern empire. Namely, Ijon, Dan, Abel-beth-maacah, and all Chinneroth (in the land of Naphtali).

**Vs 21 -** This did cause Baasha to shift his focus away from building and fortifying Ramah. Baasha stopped building Ramah, and lived in Tirzah and in fact made it the capital. It would remain the capital until Omri moved it to Samaria.

**Now from a political perspective** this turned about to be a masterful move. **But, there are a number of problems:**

1. He trusted in the army of Syria rather than the armies of heaven
2. Solomon received treasures from pagan kings, Asa gave his treasures away to the king of Syria
3. Asa plunder the nation’s treasuries, which led to a pagan army capturing cites (in the Promised Land) and the death of fellow Israelites.

God’s commentary:

*“****6*** *Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber, with which Baasha had been building, and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.* ***7*** *At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you.” (2Ch 16:6-7 ESV)*

**But notice, God would have given Syria into Judah’s hand. Instead, because Asa did not trust the Lord, Asa gave the nation’s wealth into Syria’s hand.**

**APPLICATION:** Spiritual compromise has consequences. In this case, rather than God delivering the kingdom and the kingdom receiving money from the pagan nation, the exact opposite occurred.

**Vs 22 – Next** it appears, King Asa called the entire nation to a building project. No one was exempt.

They carried away all the timber and stones that Baasha had brought to Ramah and toted it all to Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah.

**Vs 23-24 -** We are told, almost as a side-not that Asa was diseased in the feet. He died, was laid to rest with his fathers, and his Son Jehoshaphat, reigned in his place. So we are provided the next name in the list of kings of the southern empire.

It will be a while before we get to the good King Jehoshaphat. But we will get back to him!

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***15:25 Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 26 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin which he made Israel to sin. 27 Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha struck him down at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines, for Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon. 28 So Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah and reigned in his place. 29 And as soon as he was king, he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He left to the house of Jeroboam not one that breathed, until he had destroyed it, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite. 30 It was for the sins of Jeroboam that he sinned and that he made Israel to sin, and because of the anger to which he provoked the LORD, the God of Israel. 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? 32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. 33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah began to reign over all Israel at Tirzah, and he reigned twenty-four years. 34 He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in his sin which he made Israel to sin.”***

**Vs 25 -** So in the second year of the **reign of Asa**, the crown changes hands in the northern kingdom and **Jeroboam’s son Nadab begins to reign**.

**We notice he only reigned 2 years.** That does create great concern!

 **Vs 26 -** Sadly, he walked in the very same sins as Jeroboam.

On the theme of bad to worse, we read this:

***14****For the Levites left their common lands and their holdings and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons cast them out from serving as priests of the Lord,****15****and he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat idols and for the calves that he had made. (II Chr 11:14-15)*

**Vs 27 -** YIKES! So as a reminder, Jeroboam was from the house of Ephraim. Here we are provided with details of what happened. Baasha, the son of Ahijah, from a totally different house (tribe or nation) in fact he was from the tribe of Issachar. Baasha launched a conspiracy and struck down Nadab at Gibbethon, which is a city of the Philistines.

For some context when Saul was chasing David around, David had opportunities to kill Saul, but he would not raise him hand against him. Solomon, prior to becoming king, did not to stop the threats of Adonijah who was attempting to make himself king.

**APPLICATION and MESSIAH:** We should avoid seeking to exalt ourselves and rather leave it to Christ to exalt us instead.

*“Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Mt 23:12 ESV)*

*“3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,” (Php 2:3-9 ESV)*

God used one wicked man to destroy another. But they were both doing exactly what they wanted to do!

**APPLICATION:** God is sovereign!

*“Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places.” (Ps 135:6 NKJV)*

**Vs 28 -** So in the third year of Asa, King of Judah, Baasha killed Nadab and seized the crown and began to reign in his place.

**Vs 29 -** Having become king, Baasha killed all the house of Jeroboam. Let that sink in for a moment, for that is exactly what had been prophesized by Ahijah to the wife of Jeroboam when her son was sick:

*“7 Go, tell Jeroboam, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: "Because I exalted you from among the people and made you leader over my people Israel 8 and tore the kingdom away from the house of David and gave it to you, and yet you have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart, doing only that which was right in my eyes, 9 but you have done evil above all who were before you and have gone and made for yourself other gods and metal images, provoking me to anger, and have cast me behind your back, 10 therefore behold, I will bring harm upon the house of Jeroboam and will cut off from Jeroboam every male, both bond and free in Israel, and will burn up the house of Jeroboam, as a man burns up dung until it is all gone. 11 Anyone belonging to Jeroboam who dies in the city the dogs shall eat, and anyone who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens shall eat, for the LORD has spoken it."’” (1Ki 14:7-11 ESV)*

Here we see a wicked man, doing exactly what he desired, of his own free will, yet he accomplishes the will of God.

**APPLICATIONS:** The sovereignty of God, the judgment of God, and the mercy of God

**MESSIAH:**  This is precisely what happened to the Messiah as explained by Peter:

***22*** *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know —* ***23*** *this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.” (Ac 2:22-23 ESV)*

**Vs 31-32 -** This is the familiar wrap-up and includes ongoing wars between the nations.

**Vs 33-34 -** Then we are provided with the closing comments. Baasha seized the crown via a **violent coupe** and reigned as king of Israel for 24 years.

**He was an evil man and did what was evil in the sight of Jahweh.** Yes, he fulfilled God’s word against the house of Jeroboam, but he was not a follower of Yahweh.

Although not a literal son of Jeroboam, he was spiritually a son, and led Israel (the ten northern tribes) away from God.

**APPLICATION:** The Kings heart is in the hand of the Lord (Pro 21:1). This means your boss, your neighbor, and all the people in your life. God not only can, but is working all things together for good, for those that love him (Rom 8:28)!

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***16:1 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.” 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.***

**Vs 1 –** So now God’s word comes to Jehu (a prophet), to speak against Baasha. By the way, **Baasha’s** name means **“wicked”** and Baashahas proven true to his name.

**Vs 2 –** God lifted up Baasha, to be ruler over His people Israel: Yet Baasha was head of a conspiracy to kill Nadab, the son of Jeroboam and walked in the way of Jeroboam, thus Yahweh 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.

One would think this would be a wake-up call for Baasha! Jehu’s message from God was a call to make a different choice, to choose a different path, per adventure God will relent.

**APPLICATION:** When the word of God speaks harshly about our behavior, those are **words of mercy**, meant to **call us to repentance**!

**Vs 3-4 -**This same judgment was promised and fulfilled against the house of Jeroboam (I Kin 14:11). It was considered a special disgrace to have your dead corpse desecrated and kept from proper burial.

**APPLICATION and MESSIAH:** when we read things like this, they should serve to remind us of what the

New Testament teaches:

* *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” (Ro 1:18 ESV)*
* *Christ Jesus, will “judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom:” (2Ti 4:1b ESV)*
* *“For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God;” (Ro 14:10b ESV)*

These are picture of final judgment, and what awaits those who reject Christ is for more severe than just simply dying on earth:

*“47 And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 48 ’where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.’” (Mr 9:47-48 ESV)*

**Vs 5-6 –** The standard wrap up.

**Vs 7 -** The Bible tells us that by nature, God is loving, merciful, patient, kind, slow to anger and abounding in mercy  *is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy* (Eph 2:4, Psa 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**.

**Notice… In being like the house of Jeroboam, and because he killed them.** 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.

“God is ever represented in Scripture as *doing* those things which, in the course of his providence, he *permits* to be done.” (Clarke)

***16:8 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?***

**Vs 8 -** Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, and reigned two years in Tirzah:

**Vs 9-10 -**Zimri (his servant) went in and struck Elah 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 (Elah) was assassinated by Zimri, an officer in the army of Israel.

So this was a conspiracy and the ring-leader was Zimri. It is apparent from verse 15 (we will see soon enough) that Elah’s army was in Philistia, at the time, involved in an ongoing siege against the city of Gibbethon, in an attempt to recapture land that Israel had won in the days of King David.

Elah, instead of being on the battlefield, with his troops, was getting trashed, and his life ended in a drunken stupor. This reminds us when David stayed back fell into sin. Although Elah was nothing like David!

**Vs 11-13 -** 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 (I Kings 15:29). This massacre was an exact fulfillment of the word of the LORD through the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani (I 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 had been exterminated. Their doom is an example to those who should thereafter live ungodly.

**Vs 14 –** The standard wrap-up.

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***16:15 In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. 16 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, 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?***

**Vs 15-16 -** 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. Indeed very soon!

**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**.

**Vs 17–19 – Omri, with the army of Israel go to Tirzah and besieges it!** 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 (Jud 16:28-30), Saul (I Sam 31:4) and Ahithophel (II Sam 17:23).

**APPLICATION:** 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. It is worth noting that 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).

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.

**APPLICATION:** *“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” (Joh 3:18 ESV)*

Men are not promised a set amount of time to rebel against God. Every hour, every day, every year, are all due to the mercy and long-suffering of God.

**Vs 20 –** The standard wrap up.

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***16:21 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? 28 So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place.***

**Vs 21-23** - 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 even this did not bring about repentance.

“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)

**Vs 24 -** Omir purchased the hill of Samaria and 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 with no previous tribal associations and in a strong defensive position (on top of a hill).

“Excavations at Samaria… show that Omri was the first builder on the one-hundred-meter-high hill. This site was a good choice, for it was to withstand several sieges.” (Wiseman)

**Vs 25-28 -** Here in verse 25, we see this continued theme of bad to worse! Again, God is by nature is loving, kind, merciful and patient. The nation continues to “provoke” God to anger with their idolatry.

***16:29 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. 17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 And the word of the LORD came to him: 3 "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.”***

**Vs 29 -** In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah: Asa reigned for 41 years in total (1 Kin 15:10). During his 41 year reign, there were **seven different kings of Israel**, Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and finally Ahab!

Here is number seven, in our hearts we keep hoping for a king of the northern kingdom to turn things around.

**Vs 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.

**Vs 31 -** Jeroboam and those who followed had intended to serve the LORD through idolatrous images (such as the golden calf) and in disobedient ways (altars and high places other than Jerusalem).

For Ahab, those sins were only trivial, slight, trifling; 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.”

Further, Ahab took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians; and he went and served Baal and worshiped him: Ahab’s foreign wife Jezebel led him and the nation into deep idolatry and what appears to be a rejection of Yahweh all together.

On the face the marriage of Ahab, king of Israel with Jezebel daughter of the King of the Sidonians was a prudent, indeed shrewd political maneuver.

We have said this so much I will only say it once again in passing. God told them not to do this and warned what would happen if they did.

**APPLICATION:** We cannot go against God’s word and not incur the judgment of God or at a minimum the chastening hand of God!

Jezebel’s name has become synonymous with idolatry and filthiness.

**Vs 32 -** The new capital city now has the addition of a temple built specifically for Baal, within that temple is an altar for Baal worship. Ahab, is taking the southern kingdom down a new and disastrous path!

You will see something going forward. As David was the **gold standard**. Ahab becomes the **rust standard**. Ahab becomes the standard of absolute and total idolatry. He becomes the **standard of wickedness**!

**Vs 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 and he hires out Hiel to build Jericho.

*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”* (Jos 6:26).

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).

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***17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word." 2 And the word of the LORD came to him: 3 "Depart from here and turn eastward and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. 4 You shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD. He went and lived by the brook Cherith that is east of the Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.***

**Vs 1 -**  Here a prophet bursts on the scene. His name is Elijah, he is from the city of Tishbe in the inheritance of Gilead.

His name means **“My God is the Lord”** at a time when there is total darkness, at a time when it seems like all is lost. Elijah shows up to challenge the apostate king!

At this point we know nothing of him. This is how the writer of Kings introduces him. In fact, this is the first time his name is mentioned in the Bible, we know nothing about him… Until now!

This mighty prophet of God will become the central figure for good for the remainder of I Kings, while Ahab will become the central figure for evil for the remainder of I Kings.

God sends his man to Ahab and his first stinging rebuke is a reminder that the God who I serve and who sent me is the **“living god.”**

Get Elijah’s point, you are serving a pagan, dead, false, god. I serve the God of Israel, who lives! **This is the first rebuke.**

**Vs 1b -** Notice the message to King Ahab - ***"As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."***

There was the message and God’s man delivered it faithfully.

Why no rain, God could have told Elijah. But this is also a warning:

*“16 Take care lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them; 17 then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain, and the land will yield no fruit, and you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.” (De 11:16-17 ESV)*

Like the plagues of Israel, this is a direct attack upon the false god Baal. Supposedly Baal is the god of thunder, the god lf lightening, the god of rain, the god of fertility.

It is noteworthy that the Bible proclaims children were offered to Baal:

*“4 Because the people have forsaken me and have profaned this place by making offerings in it to other gods whom neither they nor their fathers nor the kings of Judah have known; and because they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, 5 and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or decree, nor did it come into my mind —  6 therefore, behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when this place shall no more be called Topheth, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.” (Jer 19:4-6 ESV)*

This is the second rebuke. Yahweh, is about to attack this false god, right at his specialty, and the fertility of the land. **It will not rain or even dew “for these years” until and except I say so!**

**APPLICATION:** Our pastor’s job is to deliver God’s word faithfully. My job, as a teacher, is to deliver God’s word faithfully. Our job as believers, is to live by God’s word and speak truth into the lives of others, faithfully. **You and I are just like Elijah!**

*“****16*** *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.* ***17*** *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth.* ***18*** *Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.” (Jas 5:16-18 ESV)*

**Vs 2-4 -** Here the Lord specifically directs Elijah to leave there, go eastward, and hide himself by the brook Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. You shall drink from the brook and the ravens will bring you food.

**APPLICATION:** The Lord rarely delivers us from the fire; He more often than not delivers us through the fire. Think of Noah (through the flood), think of Israel in Egypt (through the plagues), think of Daniel (into and though captivity) and now think of Elijah (through the draught).

*“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.” (1Co 10:13 ESV)*

**APPLICATION:** Even in the darkest hours, the Lord cares for and provides for his people. This ultimately culminates in eternity with Him in heaven.

**Vs 5-6 -** So Elijah did what the Lord told him to do. His **provision** and his **safety** were tied up in his obedience to God’s word!

**APPLICATION:** Our provision and our safety are tied up in our obedience to the Word of God!

Sure enough, as Yahweh had promised the ravens brought meat and the brook provided water, while the nation of Israel was going through a very rough draught. All with one main point… To show the nation, that Yahweh was God.

**APPLICATION:** The rebukes of God (even a draught) are the mercy of God, for He could have simply judged people. He could have brought final calamity and ushered men and women into judgment.

But instead a drought, with the express aim of showing the foolishness of the false god they were following and the legitimacy of the true and living God!

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