–Save This Page as a PDF–

Elah King of Isra'el
First Kings 16: 8-14

Elah king of Isra'el DIG: What did Zimri have against Elah? Is power hazardous to your health? How was Zimri part of Jehu's prophecy (First Kings 16:3)? Why doesn't Elah suspect Zimri? Why did Zimri execute his friends, as well as the family of Ba'sha (see verse 11)?

REFLECT: Ever been betrayed by a friend, or are you a good judge of character? How so? Can you succeed by being nice in a "dog-eat-dog" world? Do you have to be violent to be safe? Explain? If a person's sin fulfills a prophecy of God's will, how can they be held accountable?

Obedience, not knowledge, was his problem.



The background of the king: Yet another **man** ascends to **the northern kingdom** throne during **Asa's** reign. **It was in the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah that Elah the son of Ba'asha began his reign over all Isra'el in Tirzah, and he ruled for two** very **evil years** that followed in the footsteps of all the other **wicked kings of the North (First Kings 16:8).**

The death of the king Elah: Elah died one of the most ignoble deaths in the Bible. Rather than dying on the field of battle, giving his blood to defend his country, **his** life ended in a **drunken** stupor. **His servant Zimri, commander of half of his chariots,** had access to the king and **plotted against him. Ba'asha** had a natural **death**, but **his son** did not. **Elah** appears to be a self-indulgent **man**

who would rather **get drunk** with **his** friends than serve **ADONAI** and people. **One time when Elah was in Tirzah, drinking himself senseless in the house of Arza, administrator of the palace in Tirzah. Zimri entered, struck him down and killed him.** What a better time to **murder him** than when **he** was **drunk**! **This was in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah; Zimri then took Elah's place as king (First Kings 16:9-10).** Both **Elah** and **his father Ba'asha** forgot the words of **Solomon**, who knew a thing or two about kingship: **Woe to you, land, when your king is immature, and your leaders start their parties in the morning!** Such **a land** is in trouble. It is not only **the king** who lets the nation down, however, it is also **the leaders**. In contrast to the gluttonous **leaders, happy are you, land, when your king is well-born, and your princes eat at the proper time, in order to stay strong, not to get drunk (Ecclesiastes 10:16-17).**[393]

What happened next was all too predictable. Just as **Baasha** destroyed **the house of Nadab**, so **Zimri** destroyed **the house of Elah**. In an act of Mafia-style violence, the commander eliminated any possibility of revenge by killing every member of **Elah's** family. **When Zimri began to reign, as soon as he had seated himself on his throne, he struck down all the house of Baasha. He did not leave him a single male of his relatives or his friends (First Kings 16:11).**

It must be pointed out that a person who fulfills divine prophecy is not innocent of **sin**. Both **Ba'asha** and **Zimri** were **murderers** and guilty of assassinating **their king**, and **the LORD** held them responsible. It's like **Judas** . . . **he** fulfilled a divine prophecy **(Zechariah 11:12-13; Psalm 41:9),** but was still held responsible and accountable for **his** betrayal of **the Messiah**. The dynasty of **Jeroboam** was no more and the dynasty of **Ba'asha** was no more. However, in **Judah**, the dynasty of **David** continued.[394]

The significance of his reign: Like **Elah's father Ba'asha, as soon as Zimri seized the throne, he killed off the entire house of Ba'asha. He left not a single male of his relatives.** Not content to **murder Ba'asha's** entire **family, he** elevated **his sin** to a new level and also **murdered his friends**. **Thus, Zimri eliminated all the house of Ba'asha, in keeping with the word of ADONAI spoken against Ba'asha through Jehu the prophet (First Kings 16:1-4). This word had been spoken because of all of Ba'asha's sins and the sins of Elah his son, which they committed and with which they made Isra'el sin** (**to see link click Dd – Golden Calves at Dan and Bethel**)**, thereby angering ADONAI the God of Isra'el with their worthless idols (First Kings**

16:11-13). Emphasis is placed on the prophecy fulfilled by **Zimri**, even if **he** did so unwittingly. Both **Ba'asha** and **Elah** could have avoided this disaster by serving **ADONAI** instead of **idols** but chose another path. Apparently **the northern kings** did not believe it was possible to govern the people if **they** insisted on righteous behavior and proper worship. Obedience, not knowledge, is **their** problem.[395]

The summary of his reign: Other activities of Elah and all his accomplishments are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Isra'el (16:14).

*Dear Wise and Loving Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** steadfast love **(Psalms 63:3)**! **Your** forever lovingkindness is wonderful! **You** hold out an eternity of peace and joy to all who choose to love and follow **You.** It is so tragic that many choose to follow wordly pleasures that endure for only a short time. **Moses** is a good example for us of setting our eyes on our eternal reward. **By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Instead he chose to suffer mistreatment along with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:24-25). Moses** knew the value of true and lasting riches. Even ruling a kingdom was not enough to entice **him**. Wisely, **he** choose to look ahead to all eternity and follow **You** as the most important thing in **his** life. **He considered the disgrace of Messiah as greater riches than the treasures of Egypt – because he was looking ahead to the reward (Hebrews 11:26).***

*Our time on earth will seem like a blink in time to capered to all eternity. It is so wise to make the right choice to love and follow you now, even if it means persecution. **For I consider the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us (Romans 8:18).** All our trials will soon be over and in their place will be eternity – either an eternal life of peace and joy in heaven with **You**, or separated from **You** in eternal hell. No one can fool **You (Second Timothy 2:19). You** see each heart and you know who loves **You** most and who loves themselves the most. **These shall go off to everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life (Matthew 25:56).** Thank **You** for making such a wonderful home in heaven for those who love **You (John 14:1-3)**! To the One who sits at **Your** right hand. Amen*