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Zimri King of Isra'el
First Kings 16: 15-20

Zimri king of Isra'el DIG: What positions did Zimri and Omri hold in the army? What does Zimri do during his week as king? Did Zimri overestimate his popularity with the military, or did he launch a coup knowing the military wouldn't back him? Is the writer fair to Zimri?

REFLECT: Is popularity important to you? Why or why not? Were you ever shocked to find you weren't as well-liked as you thought? Is hope a dangerous thing? Where does your hope lie? Physically? Spiritually? Emotionally? Do you have a lite touch on the things of this world? Is it a sin to commit suicide?

The Lord wants us to know the power of His grace to help us through the troubles of this life.



The background of the king: When we last met **Zimri**, life seemed to be going rather well for **him**. **His** conspiracy having worked to perfection, **he** was free to sit on **Isra'el's** throne. But unfortunately for **Zimri**, **his** kingship didn't last very long. **It was in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah that Zimri ruled for seven days in Tirzah,** which means **his** only claim to fame is that **he** ruled the shortest period of time in Israelite history **(First Kings 16:15a).**

The significance of his reign: **At that time, the army was besieging Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. The troops in their camp heard it said that Zimri had plotted and killed king Elah** (**to see link click Dq – Elah King of Isra'el**)**, whereupon that same day, there in the camp, all Isra'el made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Isra'el.** Then, **Omri and all Isra'el with him withdrew from Gibbethon and besieged Tirzah (First Kings 16:15b-17).** This set the stage for a dramatic scene at his palace.

The death of the king: Then **Zimri's** fiery ambitions went up in flames. Not numbered among the righteous of the TaNaKh, when **he** realized that **he** was surrounded and deposed, **he** committed suicide by torching **the royal place** around **him**. **When Zimri saw that the city had been captured, he went into the citadel of the royal palace and burned down the royal palace over him, so that he died (First Kings 16:18).** How the mighty had fallen! One day **Zimri** was on top of the world. Enthroned by **his** own ambitions, **he** had taken what **he** wanted out of life. But just a few days later, **he died** in absolute despair, going in one short week from murder to suicide. Sadly, **his** story is not unique. Many people spend their whole lives trying to reach the top, but never truly seeking **God**. In the end, any success they have will prove to be fleeting. They will have to leave everything behind, as **Zimri** did, and like **him**, they may well **die** in despair.

Are we living for what lasts, or will it all turn to ashes?

Zimri's fiery **death** also gives us an opportunity to consider what the Bible teaches about suicide. It is always a cause for great sadness, but what people often wonder is whether it is an unforgivable **sin**. It *is* a **sin**, of course, as every murder is. To commit suicide is to declare lordship over one's own life. It is to claim the right to number one's days – a right that belongs only to **God**. It is to betray the love of family and friends. It is to refuse to serve the Kingdom of **God**. In short, suicide is a sin of self-murder.

We need to know this so that we recognize what is at stake whenever we, or others, are tempted to commit suicide. It is not a sin to be tempted to commit suicide (or to commit any other sin, for that matter). Sooner or later, nearly everyone entertains at least fleeting thoughts of ending their earthly existence, including some of the people we meet in the Bible. "What would happen if . . ." we wonder. But for some people, suicidal thoughts become a preoccupation. We should recognize these thoughts for what they are; a temptation that comes from hell itself. Speaking of

Satan himself, **Yeshua** tells us that **the thief comes only to steal and kill and to destroy (John 10:10a)**. **Messiah** does not want us to die, but to live, saying: **but I have come that you may have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10:10b)**. **The Lord** wants us to know the power of **His** grace to help us through the troubles of this life. While there is life, there is always hope in **Yeshua**. So if we are ever tempted to take our own lives, we should fight that temptation with everything we have. We should not fight it alone, however. Instead, we should talk about our struggle with a trusted mature believer – someone who can care for us with the life-preserving love of **God**. The hope of **Yeshua** can be found if you look for it.

Granted suicide is a **sin**, we still need to ask whether or not it is a forgivable **sin**. First of all, if a person is not saved, they have rejected the wooing of **the Ruach Ha'Kodesh** and if they commit suicide, they will end up where all the lost go . . . to hell. For example, **Judas** was not saved and committed suicide by hanging (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Lm – Judas Hangs Himself**). So, **Judas** is in hell, just as **Zimri** is in hell. But what about the saved person? Do they also go to hell? Heaven forbid! Believers are eternally secure (see **The Life of Christ Ms – The Eternal Security of the Believer**). There is only one unforgivable **sin**, the rejection of **the Spirit of God**. **Yeshua Himself** said: **every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven** (for believers)**, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit** (and therefore not saved) **will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin** (see **The Life of Christ Em – Whoever Blasphemes Against the Holy Spirit Will Never Be Forgiven**). Praise **God** that there is forgiveness for all of our **sins** in **Yeshua**!

More important than the details about **Zimri** is the emergence of **Omri** in the narrative. **He** was a leader and a fighter. **He** faced several challenges. First, there was the ongoing conflicts with **Judah** and **Philistia**. Second, **Tirzah**, the capital city, had been besieged from without and within. Third, **Isra'el** had suffered for some time from political instability due to rapid turnover of leadership. Finally, civil war followed **Zimri's death** and **Omri** had a rival to the throne. How would **he** solve those social and political problems? Would **h**e have any interest in solving **Isra'el's** religious woes (see **Ds – Omri King of Isra'el**)?[396]

The summary of his reign: **Zimri** was the most spectacularly unsuccessful **king** of all. Not only did **he** fail to put a son on the throne of **Isra'el** (however briefly), **he himself** failed to reign more than **one week**! **This came about because of the sins he committed in doing what was evil from ADONAI's perspective, in living as Jeroboam had lived, and in sinning by making Isra'el sin** (see **Dd –**

Golden Calves at Dan and Bethel)**.** This was an act of **God's** judgment. At the human level, **Zimri** took his own life. But under the mighty will of a sovereign **God**, **his death** was also an act of divine judgment. **Zimri** was on the throne for only a single week, yet seven days were enough for him to follow in the footsteps of Jeroboam and **sin** against **God**. So **the Word of God** ruled against **him**, and **Zimri** died in **his sins**. Other **activities of Zimri and his conspiracy are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Isra'el (First Kings 16:19-20).**

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** merciful love! How important it is to make wise eternal choices with our time, money and most of all with whom we love the most-ourselves or **You**. It is not so important how much money we **stored up**, but where is it **stored**? The man who **stores up** much on earth for himself but leaves little for others, is so foolish.* ***But God said to him, "You fool! Tonight, your soul is being demanded back from you! And what you have prepared, whose will that be?" So, it is with the one who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich in God (Luke 12:20-21).***

For no one can lay any other foundation than what is already laid – which is Yeshua the Messiah. Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear. For the Day will show it, because it is to be revealed by fire; and the fire itself will test each one's work – what sort it is. If anyone's work built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss – he himself will be saved, but as through fire (First Corinthians 3:11-15). *Just as **Zimri's** work was burned up by **fire** when **he** died, so will any work we do that is not from a pure and loving heart. We want to honor **You** and serve **You** will a loving and grateful heart. In **Yeshua's** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*