

Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 13, 1 Kings 16

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 13, 1 Kings 16, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on the books of 1 Kings, specifically chapters 15 and 16, which cover the period between Solomon's death and Ahab's reign. He contrasts the reigns of various kings of Israel and Judah, highlighting the repeated sins of the Northern Kingdom, which consistently followed Jeroboam's idolatrous path. **The lecture emphasizes that these kings are judged based on their loyalty to Yahweh and adherence to the covenant.** Idolatry is portrayed as a grave offense because it diminishes God, and morality is depicted as being rooted in a relationship with the Creator. **Oswalt also explores the consequences of sin across generations, leading up to Ahab's reign, which was the worst so far and provoked God's anger.** He concludes by foreshadowing the arrival of Elijah and Elisha as a response to Israel's spiritual decline and discusses the rebuilding of Jericho as an indication of Israel's impending doom.

2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 13 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → Kings).



**Oswalt_Kings_Sessi
on13.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 13, 1 Kings 16

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the key themes and ideas from Dr. Oswalt's lecture on 1 Kings 15-16:

Briefing Document: 1 Kings 15-16 (Oswalt Lecture)

Overview:

Dr. Oswalt's lecture focuses on 1 Kings 15 and 16, covering the period between Solomon's death (circa 930 BC) and the crowning of Ahab (circa 874 BC). During this time, Asa reigned in Judah while the northern kingdom of Israel experienced instability with the rise and fall of multiple dynasties, culminating in the reign of Omri and setting the stage for the story of Elijah and Elisha. The lecture emphasizes the consistent pattern of Israelite kings "doing evil in the sight of the Lord" by following the ways of Jeroboam (idolatry and altering worship practices), contrasting this with Asa's relative faithfulness in Judah, and exploring the theological implications of these actions.

Key Themes and Ideas:

- **The Standard of Judgment for Kings:** The kings of Israel and Judah are not judged by their political or military successes, but by their loyalty to Yahweh, their avoidance of idolatry, and their adherence to the covenant, particularly in how they treat the vulnerable. As Oswalt states, *"What are these kings being judged on? They're being judged on, number one, whether they were loyal to Yahweh above everything else. Number two, did they make idols of Yahweh or any other god? Number three, did they keep the covenant, particularly the covenant implications for the way they treated those who were helpless? That's the basis for judgment."*
- **The Sin of Jeroboam as a Pattern:** Jeroboam's establishment of golden calves and alteration of the sacred calendar became a template for subsequent kings of Israel. This path is consistently described as "doing evil in the sight of the Lord." The lecture highlights the repetitive nature of this sin, emphasizing its devastating impact on the Northern Kingdom.
- **Idolatry as a Rejection of God's Transcendence:** Oswalt explains that idolatry is not just about worshiping false gods, but about reducing God to something manageable and controllable, and ultimately powerless. *"To make God a part of this world is to make him utterly helpless... Make Yahweh an idol, and he is no*

longer the transcendent God who stands outside of this world, who made it on purpose, who is guiding it to its destined end, who calls us into a relationship with him." This leads to meaninglessness and purposelessness.

- **Right and Wrong Defined by God:** The lecture emphasizes that morality is rooted in God's character and purposes, not in subjective human opinions. *"Right is whatever conforms to God's creation purposes, the way he made the world. Wrong is what does not conform to his creation purposes, to the way he made the world. So that the issue is not, is there some eternal standard of right and wrong to which God conforms? No. No. Right and wrong conform to Yahweh."* The key question is not "Am I a good person?", but "Am I pleasing God?"
- **God's Personal Response to Sin:** God is not an impassible, distant being, but a person who is affected by human actions. Sin "provokes" God to anger, not because He is easily offended, but because He is jealous for His people and hates to see them destroy themselves. *"God is a person. He is a person who can be hurt and angered... He's not jealous for his own reputation. He's jealous for what we are doing to our lives."*
- **The Consequences of Sin Across Generations:** While individuals are responsible for their own sins, the sins of previous generations can create patterns and influences that impact subsequent generations. Elah's sins are linked to Basha's, highlighting the ongoing repercussions of unrighteousness, though this is not presented as an absolute, inescapable fate. *"Your sins have consequences. In terms of their influence on succeeding generations, in terms of how succeeding generations will receive what you have done."*
- **The Significance of Omri:** Omri, though briefly mentioned, is presented as a pivotal figure. He establishes Samaria as the capital, signaling a new era of outward focus and engagement with the world. However, he also "did more evil than all who were before him," possibly by opening Israel to foreign gods and religious syncretism. *"Amri did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and did more evil than all who were before him... My guess is he's not only opening Israel to the commerce of the world, he's also opening Israel to the gods of the world."*
- **Ahab's Descent into Baal Worship:** Ahab's marriage to Jezebel and his active worship of Baal represent a low point in Israel's history. This is viewed as the culmination of a "slow leak" in faith, a gradual departure from exclusive worship of Yahweh. *"Ahab, the son of Omri, did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all*

who were before him. And as if it had been a light thing for him, he took for his wife Jezebel and went and served Baal and worshipped him."

- **The Rebuilding of Jericho as a Warning:** The rebuilding of Jericho in Ahab's time, despite Joshua's curse, serves as a symbolic warning of potential loss of the Promised Land due to disobedience. *"And here, now, is Jericho rebuilt. In real sense, this moment says, hey, you are on warning. You could lose this land. I gave it to you."*
- **Judah vs. Israel:** Asa's reign in Judah is contrasted with the chaos and idolatry in Israel. While Asa is not perfect, his commitment to Yahweh provides stability and a positive example. This highlights the diverging paths of the two kingdoms.

Key Figures:

- **Asa:** King of Judah, noted for his relative faithfulness to Yahweh.
- **Jeroboam:** His idolatrous practices set a negative precedent for subsequent Israelite kings.
- **Baasha, Elah, Zimri:** Kings of Israel who continued in Jeroboam's sinful ways.
- **Omri:** King of Israel, established Samaria as the capital and potentially introduced foreign religious influences.
- **Ahab:** King of Israel, married to Jezebel, actively promoted Baal worship.
- **Elijah/Elisha:** The prophetic ministry that emerges in response to Ahab's apostasy.

Implications and Application:

Oswalt concludes with a personal application, urging listeners to examine their own hearts and ensure that they are wholly devoted to Yahweh, avoiding any compromises or gradual departures from faith. He warns against the "slow leak" of faith and emphasizes the importance of exclusive devotion to God.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 13, 1 Kings 16

The Rise and Fall of Kings: A Study Guide to 1 Kings 15-16

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was Asa's primary contribution to the kingdom of Judah?
2. What two sins were consistently attributed to the kings of Israel following Jeroboam?
3. Why is idolatry considered such a grave sin in the context of 1 Kings?
4. What message did the prophet Jehu deliver to King Baasha?
5. Why was Elah's reign so short?
6. How did Omri become king of Israel?
7. What was significant about Omri's decision to build Samaria as the new capital?
8. How did Omri's sins surpass those who came before him?
9. What specific act of Ahab demonstrated the tragic downward spiral of the Northern Kingdom?
10. What is the significance of Hiel rebuilding Jericho during Ahab's reign?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Asa established the kingdom of Judah on a solid footing during his 41-year reign, providing stability in contrast to the tumultuous Northern Kingdom. He was loyal to Yahweh, did not create idols, and kept the covenant.
2. The kings of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and walked in the way of Jeroboam, leading Israel to sin through idolatry and altering religious practices. This pattern was consistently repeated, signifying a continuous rejection of God's covenant.
3. Idolatry is a sin because it diminishes God by making Him part of the world, thereby denying His transcendence and His role as Creator. It leads to meaninglessness and the loss of a relationship with the true God.

4. Jehu delivered a message from God to Baasha, reminding him that God had exalted him from the dust to be leader over Israel. However, because Baasha walked in the way of Jeroboam and led Israel to sin, he had provoked God to anger.
5. Elah's reign was short because he was assassinated by Zimri while drunk, reflecting his own sinful nature and the consequences of his father Baasha's sins. His own self-serving behavior and lack of leadership contributed to his downfall.
6. After Zimri assassinated Elah, the army, away at war, refused to accept Zimri as their ruler and proclaimed Omri, the commander of the army, as king in the field. This led to a conflict between Omri and Tibni, another claimant to the throne.
7. Building Samaria signified a new phase for Israel, turning away from the defensible position of Tirzah, as it faced outward toward the world. This was viewed as a way to participate in what the world had to offer.
8. Omri surpassed his predecessors in evil by not only continuing the idolatrous practices of Jeroboam, but also by opening Israel to the worship of other gods. This set the stage for his son Ahab's even more blatant embrace of Baal worship.
9. Ahab's marriage to Jezebel, daughter of the king of the Sidonians, and his subsequent worship of Baal marked a significant escalation in the Northern Kingdom's apostasy. This symbolized a full embrace of foreign gods and a rejection of Yahweh.
10. The rebuilding of Jericho during Ahab's reign symbolized the Northern Kingdom's disregard for God's commands and warnings, particularly the curse Joshua had placed on anyone who rebuilt the city. It signaled that they were on warning that they could lose the promised land because they disobeyed the owner of the land.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the cyclical pattern of sin and judgment in the Northern Kingdom as depicted in 1 Kings 15-16. How does the author use the phrase "walked in the way of Jeroboam" to emphasize this pattern?
2. Compare and contrast the reigns of Asa in Judah and the various kings of Israel in 1 Kings 15-16. What does this comparison suggest about the author's perspective on true leadership and faithfulness to God?
3. Analyze the significance of idolatry as presented in 1 Kings 15-16. How does the text portray the consequences of idolatry, both for individuals and for the nation as a whole?
4. Examine the role of divine judgment and prophecy in 1 Kings 15-16. How do the prophets and their messages serve as a commentary on the actions of the kings and the fate of the kingdoms?
5. Explore the political and social implications of Omri's decision to build Samaria as the new capital. How did this decision reflect a shift in the Northern Kingdom's identity and its relationship with the surrounding nations?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Asa:** King of Judah who reigned for 41 years and established the kingdom on a solid footing through loyalty to Yahweh.
- **Jeroboam:** The first king of the divided Northern Kingdom of Israel, known for establishing idol worship with golden calves.
- **Baasha:** King of Israel who followed the ways of Jeroboam, leading Israel into sin and provoking God's anger.
- **Elah:** Son of Baasha and king of Israel, whose short reign ended with his assassination due to his own sins and the legacy of his father.
- **Zimri:** A commander who assassinated Elah and briefly became king of Israel before being overthrown by Omri.
- **Omri:** Commander of the army who became king of Israel and established Samaria as the new capital.

- **Ahab:** Son of Omri and king of Israel, known for his wickedness, particularly his marriage to Jezebel and his worship of Baal.
- **Jezebel:** Wife of Ahab, a Sidonian princess who promoted the worship of Baal and persecuted the prophets of Yahweh.
- **Idolatry:** The worship of idols or false gods, a major sin in the Old Testament that is a violation of the covenant with God.
- **Samaria:** The new capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel established by Omri, symbolizing a shift towards worldly engagement.
- **Tirzah:** The former capital of the Northern Kingdom before Samaria, located in a canyon and easily defensible from the south.
- **House of Amri:** A term used by the Assyrians to refer to Israel, highlighting the significance of Omri's dynasty.
- **Elijah/Elisha:** A prophetic ministry that extends from 1st Kings 17 all the way to 2nd Kings 13.
- **Jehu:** The prophet who gave a message from God to Baasha.
- **Hiel of Bethel:** The man who rebuilt Jericho in Ahab's days, defying the curse of Joshua.
- **Bethel and Dan:** The two cities where Jeroboam placed golden calves, establishing idol worship in the Northern Kingdom.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 13, 1 Kings 16, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on 1 Kings 15 and 16

- **Why are the kings of Israel and Judah judged so harshly in the books of Kings, seemingly disproportionate to their political or military accomplishments?**
- The kings are judged primarily on their loyalty to Yahweh, whether they engaged in idolatry (including creating idols of Yahweh), and whether they upheld the covenant, especially in their treatment of the vulnerable. Political or military successes are secondary to these measures of spiritual integrity and obedience. The text emphasizes that God's standard of what is right and wrong is the ultimate basis for judgment, and that the kings' primary duty is to please God.
- **What was the significance of Jeroboam's actions, and why is his "way" mentioned so frequently as a negative example?**
- Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel after the split, is repeatedly condemned for instituting idolatrous practices. Specifically, he made golden calves and placed them in Bethel and Dan and changed the sacred calendar which promoted idolatry and went against God's established order and commandments. His actions led Israel into sin and set a pattern of disobedience followed by subsequent kings, solidifying his "way" as a symbol of rebellion against God. This is portrayed as a continual deviation from God's creation purposes, which determines what is right and wrong.
- **How does the text portray God's response to the sins of the kings and the people of Israel?**
- The text depicts God as a personal being who is not only offended by sin but also provoked to anger. It's not simply a matter of God's reputation being tarnished but also a deep concern for the well-being of his people, who are harming themselves by deviating from his commands. The language of "provoking" God suggests that human actions have a real effect on God.
- **What is the role of personal responsibility vs. inherited sin or the influence of predecessors?**
- While the text acknowledges that the sins of previous generations, like those of Jeroboam and Baasha, can influence subsequent generations (as seen in the

examples of Elah and Ahab), it also emphasizes personal responsibility. Individuals like Elah are punished for their own sins as well as for perpetuating the sins of their fathers. People have a choice and are responsible for it. It acknowledges that everyone has choices, and their choices have impacts. While it doesn't follow a lock-step pattern, sin has consequences that can play out through generations.

- **How did Omri contribute to the spiritual decline of Israel, even if he brought some political stability?**
- While Omri established a dynasty and a new capital at Samaria, potentially opening Israel to greater international influence and trade, the text suggests that he may have also opened Israel to foreign religious practices. Omri's reign sets a precedent for Ahab's more blatant worship of Baal, with the possibility of his having opened Israel to other gods and being inclusive of all ways to heaven.
- **Why is Ahab considered the worst of the kings so far, and what specific actions led to this assessment?**
- Ahab is described as doing more evil in the sight of the Lord than all the kings before him. This is primarily attributed to his marriage to Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, which led to the widespread worship of Baal in Israel. Ahab built an altar and a temple for Baal in Samaria, the capital city, and promoted the worship of the fertility goddess Asherah, directly challenging the exclusive worship of Yahweh.
- **What is the significance of the rebuilding of Jericho in Ahab's time?**
- The rebuilding of Jericho by Hiel of Bethel is portrayed as a deliberate act of defiance against God's word spoken through Joshua. Jericho represented the inauguration of the Promised Land, and the curse placed on anyone who rebuilt it symbolized the consequences of disobedience. Rebuilding it shows that they are disobeying the owner of the land.
- **What overarching themes or lessons can be drawn from these chapters in 1 Kings?**
- Several key themes emerge: the importance of unwavering loyalty to God above all else, the destructive consequences of idolatry and spiritual compromise, the impact of leadership on the spiritual well-being of a nation, and the long-term effects of sin across generations. The passage also highlights God's personal engagement with his people and his active response to their actions, even when those actions provoke his anger.