

# Dr. John Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.1, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 1 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 25.1, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL**

Dr. Oswalt's lecture explores the reigns of several kings in 2 Kings 15-16, particularly Uzziah and Menahem, comparing the accounts in Kings and Chronicles. The lecture notes the differing criteria used to evaluate kings, with Kings focusing on adherence to God's law, especially regarding care for the poor. Uzziah's reign is examined in light of these standards, suggesting Kings might downplay his reign due to a lack of emphasis on social justice. The lecture then transitions to the violence and instability during the reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem, linking it to economic disparities and a self-serving mentality. Menahem's reliance on foreign alliances for security is critiqued as misplaced trust, prompting reflection on contemporary sources of security. The lecture finishes by emphasizing the importance of trusting in God as our ultimate source of security.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.1 – 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  
on25\_1.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.1, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 1

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. John Oswalt's lecture on 2 Kings 15-16:

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on 2 Kings 15-16**

**Source:** Excerpts from "Oswalt\_Kings\_EN\_Session25\_1.pdf"

**Overall Theme:** This lecture focuses on evaluating the reigns of various kings in Israel and Judah, particularly Uzziah, and examining the consequences of prosperity, the importance of caring for the poor, and the nature of God's promises. It also touches on the dangers of seeking security in worldly power rather than in God.

#### **Key Ideas and Facts:**

- **Evaluating Kings by Different Standards:** Oswalt highlights the different criteria used in Kings versus Chronicles to evaluate rulers. Kings focuses primarily on whether the king removed idols and cared for the poor, aligning with Deuteronomy's philosophy of history: "Worship the Lord alone. Do not worship idols of other gods or Yahweh... in particular, as they relate to the poor and the helpless." Chronicles, on the other hand, seems more concerned with the king's faithfulness to the temple, Levites, and priesthood. Uzziah, for example, received less attention in Kings because, while he didn't worship idols, there's little indication he cared for the poor. "But for Kings, there's no evidence that he really took care of the poor and the helpless."
- **The Importance of Caring for the Poor:** Caring for the poor is presented as a key indicator of genuine faith and a demonstration of God's character: "Caring for the poor is evidence that you really know God...God gives himself away for free. And the question is, do his followers do that?" This resonates with modern issues of faith in action and how Christians should treat those who can't repay them. The reference to Reverend Keith Boyett's chapel talk about "Sunday Christians" reinforces this point, questioning whether faith translates into everyday actions, especially toward the vulnerable.
- **The Consequences of Prosperity and Self-Reliance:** The lecture connects the bloodletting and instability during the reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem to the preceding period of prosperity under Jeroboam II. This suggests that wealth can lead to a selfish "I'm going to get mine" attitude, undermining

social cohesion and leading to violence. "When we're wealthy and comfortable, it's easy to take matters into our own hands and say, well, they got theirs; I'm going to get mine." Oswalt notes that the Bible views wealth ambivalently: it can be a gift from God to be used for His glory, but more often, it is grasped by individuals acting under their own judgment.

- **God's Promises and their Fulfillment:** The lecture emphasizes God's promise-keeping nature, illustrated by the fulfillment of the prophecy regarding Jehu's dynasty lasting four generations: "The word of the Lord spoken to Jehu was fulfilled. Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." Oswalt uses this as evidence for the veracity and authority of the Bible: "Right through the Bible, we have God saying, now, this is what's going to happen. And lo and behold, there it is."
- **Seeking Security in Worldly Power is Foolish:** Menahem's decision to pay Tiglath-Pileser (Pul, king of Assyria) to secure his reign is presented as an example of misguided reliance on worldly power. "Here again, you have the feeling that he's feeling pretty shaky on his throne. And so, he's going to buy his way into Tiglath-Pileser, not merely to keep Tiglath-Pileser away, but for Tiglath-Pileser to prop him up." Oswalt asserts that relying on one's enemy for security is foolish and equates it to being "dumb" due to sin. He connects this to the audience's lives by asking, "Where is your security? What is propping you up? What is propping me up? Am I really depending on what is finally my enemy for my security?"
- **Brutality and Violence:** The lecture highlights the senseless brutality of the time, mentioning Menahem's sacking of Tiphshah and ripping open pregnant women: "So, he sacked Tirzah and ripped open all the pregnant women. Right through the Bible, that picture is the picture that is used to depict senseless brutality." This image serves to depict the widespread violence and disregard for human life during this period.

#### Key Quotes:

- "He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Amaziah had done." (Referring to Uzziah, highlighting the relative nature of "doing what is right.")
- "Caring for the poor is evidence that you really know God."
- "When we're wealthy and comfortable, it's easy to take matters into our own hands and say, well, they got theirs; I'm going to get mine."

- "The word of the Lord spoken to Jehu was fulfilled. Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."
- "His security is in his enemy."
- "Sin makes you dumb."
- "So, he sacked Tirzah and ripped open all the pregnant women... to depict senseless brutality."

**Implications:**

The lecture encourages listeners to examine their own lives and consider where they place their trust, whether they are truly caring for the poor and vulnerable, and whether they are succumbing to the temptations of prosperity and self-reliance. It also reinforces the trustworthiness of the Bible and God's promises.

## 4. Study Guide: Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.1, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 1

### A Study Guide to 2 Kings 15-16

#### Review of Key Concepts

- **Evaluation of Kings:** The Book of Kings evaluates kings based primarily on their religious fidelity to Yahweh, focusing on the removal of idols and high places. Their treatment of the poor is also an indicator of their faithfulness.
- **The Standard of David:** Hezekiah, in 2 Kings 18:3, is measured against the standard of his ancestor David, indicating a higher level of faithfulness expected of later kings.
- **Chronicles' Perspective:** The Book of Chronicles provides a different perspective, often focusing on a king's contributions to the temple, the Levites, and the priesthood.
- **Deuteronomic Theology:** The source emphasizes the Deuteronomic theology, which links obedience to Yahweh with blessings and disobedience with curses, particularly in the context of social justice and care for the vulnerable.
- **Jehu's Dynasty:** The fulfillment of God's promise to Jehu regarding four generations of his dynasty demonstrates God's covenant faithfulness, even in the context of incomplete obedience.
- **Wealth and Social Justice:** The source highlights the potential dangers of wealth and comfort, suggesting they can lead to social inequality, injustice, and a reliance on self-interest.
- **Assyrian Influence:** The interactions between Israelite kings and the Assyrian empire, such as Menahem's alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, illustrate the political and military pressures of the time, as well as the folly of seeking security in foreign powers rather than in God.
- **Violence and Brutality:** The text describes acts of violence, such as the sacking of Tirzah and the ripping open of pregnant women, to depict the senseless brutality and moral decay of the time.
- **The Promise-Keeping God:** The excerpt emphasizes the testimony of the Old Testament, which reveals that God keeps his promises. This demonstration of faithfulness provides his word with authority.

- **Depending on God:** The source calls the reader to search their heart about their own dependency on the Lord, comparing the reader to the faithfulness of Joseph when he had lost everything.

### Quiz: Short-Answer Questions

1. According to Dr. Oswalt, what was the primary criterion used in the Book of Kings to evaluate whether a king was good or bad?
2. How does the Book of Chronicles' evaluation of kings differ from that of the Book of Kings, and why might this difference exist?
3. Explain the significance of God's promise to Jehu regarding his dynasty and how its fulfillment relates to the veracity of the Bible.
4. How does the source connect the reigns of Jeroboam II with the bloodletting by Zechariah, Shalom, and Menahem?
5. According to the source, how is wealth viewed in the Bible, and what are some of the potential dangers associated with it?
6. Why does the source argue that Menahem's alliance with Tiglath-Pileser was a foolish decision?
7. What does the ripping open of pregnant women and the smashing of babies on rocks represent in the Bible, according to the source?
8. What evidence is cited in the source to suggest that God was faithful to Joseph even when everything went wrong?
9. What is the significance of the "high places" mentioned in the reading?
10. According to Deuteronomy's philosophy of history, what two things demonstrate that a person belongs to God?

### Quiz: Answer Key

1. The Book of Kings primarily evaluates kings based on their religious fidelity to Yahweh, focusing on the removal of idols and high places, as well as adherence to the law. Their treatment of the poor is also an indicator of their faithfulness.
2. The Book of Chronicles focuses more on a king's contributions to the temple, the Levites, and the priesthood, whereas Kings focuses on religious purity and social justice; this difference might reflect Chronicles' interest in promoting temple worship and the priestly class.

3. God promised Jehu four generations on the throne because of his faithfulness in destroying Ahab; the fulfillment of this promise demonstrates God's covenant faithfulness and validates the Bible's claim to divine authority.
4. The source connects Jeroboam II's reign of prosperity with the subsequent bloodletting by suggesting that the period of wealth and comfort led to increased social inequality, self-interest, and a disregard for justice, ultimately contributing to the instability and violence.
5. The Bible views wealth as a gift from God that should be used for His glory, but it also recognizes that many wealthy people obtain it through selfish means and are therefore under judgment; potential dangers include greed, complacency, and a neglect of the poor.
6. Menahem's alliance with Tiglath-Pileser was foolish because it involved seeking security in a foreign power rather than in God, and because Tiglath-Pileser, as a representative of a pagan empire, was ultimately an unreliable ally.
7. According to the text, these acts of violence represent senseless brutality and a complete disregard for human life, often used to depict moral decay and the consequences of sin.
8. The phrase "God was with him" indicates a trust in God that never wavers, even in the face of hardship. Joseph's life testifies that God does not abandon us even when circumstances become adverse.
9. The high places were sites of pagan worship in ancient Israel, often associated with idol worship and practices that were considered to be a violation of God's covenant.
10. According to Deuteronomy's philosophy of history, the two pieces of evidence that a person belongs to God are that they do not worship idols and that they care for the poor and helpless.

## Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the evaluations of Uzziah in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. What does this tell us about the different priorities and perspectives of the two books?
2. Discuss the relationship between wealth, social justice, and religious fidelity in 2 Kings 15-16. How does the text suggest that wealth can be both a blessing and a curse, and what responsibilities does it place on those who possess it?
3. Analyze the political and military context of 2 Kings 15-16, focusing on the interactions between Israelite kings and the Assyrian empire. How did these interactions shape the course of Israelite history, and what lessons can be drawn from them?
4. Explore the theme of covenant faithfulness in 2 Kings 15-16, focusing on the fulfillment of God's promise to Jehu and the consequences of disobedience. What does this tell us about the nature of God's relationship with his people?
5. Examine the acts of violence and brutality described in 2 Kings 15-16. What do these acts reveal about the moral and spiritual state of Israel at this time, and what warnings do they offer to contemporary readers?



## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Azariah (Uzziah):** King of Judah who reigned for 52 years. Chronicles describes his accomplishments.
- **Hezekiah:** A later king of Judah who is compared to David in terms of his faithfulness.
- **High Places:** Sites of pagan worship in ancient Israel.
- **Idols:** Images or representations of false gods, whose worship was forbidden by Yahweh.
- **Jehu:** King of Israel whose dynasty lasted for four generations, fulfilling God's promise.
- **Jeroboam II:** A king of Israel whose reign was marked by prosperity and social inequality.
- **Menahem:** A king of Israel who allied with Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria.
- **Pul:** Another name for Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria.
- **Shalom:** Briefly king of Israel before being assassinated.
- **Tiglath-Pileser:** King of Assyria who exerted influence over the Israelite kingdom.
- **Tirzah:** A city sacked by Menahem, where he committed acts of extreme violence.
- **Zechariah:** The last king of Jehu's dynasty, assassinated after a short reign.

## 5. FAQs on Oswalt, 1 & 2 Kings, Session 25.1, 2 Kings 15-16, Part 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

### FAQ

- **Why does 2 Kings give Uzziah (Azariah) such little attention compared to Chronicles, despite his long reign and doing "what was right in the eyes of the Lord"?**
- 2 Kings evaluates kings based on their adherence to Deuteronomic principles: worshipping the Lord alone, avoiding idols, obeying the Torah (especially regarding the poor and helpless). While Uzziah seemingly avoided idolatry, there is no indication he actively cared for the poor. Chronicles, on the other hand, focuses on the king's faithfulness to the temple, Levites, and priesthood. Uzziah evidently met Chronicles' criteria but not necessarily Kings'.
- **What is the significance of comparing Hezekiah's actions to those of David, while Uzziah's actions are compared to his father, Amaziah?**
- The comparison highlights the standard by which kings are being judged. Hezekiah is held to the highest standard, David, implying a comprehensive faithfulness to God. Uzziah's comparison to Amaziah suggests a lower bar; while Uzziah may have been better than his predecessor, he did not necessarily achieve true righteousness in God's eyes.
- **What does the text suggest about the relationship between wealth and faith?**
- The text presents wealth as ambiguous. While wealth can be a gift from God to be used for His glory, it often leads to people grabbing for themselves, creating a disparity between rich and poor, and inviting God's judgment. The pursuit of wealth can lead to individuals prioritizing their own interests, potentially at the expense of others and neglecting the poor.

- **What is the meaning of the phrase, "How do you treat those who cannot bless you?"**
- This question probes the nature of genuine faith and discipleship. God gives freely and unconditionally. The question is whether his followers also give freely to those that cannot pay them back. Treating those who cannot bless or repay you is a reflection of God's character, who gives himself freely and generously.
- **How did God keep his promise to Jehu?**
- God promised Jehu four generations of descendants on the throne of Israel because of his zeal in destroying Ahab's line. The reign of Zechariah, Jehu's great-great-grandson, marked the end of that dynasty, fulfilling God's limited promise. God's promise shows that God is a promise keeper even if the promise is limited due to Jehu's remaining sins.
- **What does the bloodletting and political instability during the reigns of Zechariah, Shallum, and Menahem suggest about the state of Israel at that time?**
- The political turmoil points to the breakdown of societal order driven by a culture of greed and self-interest, especially as the long, prosperous reign of Jeroboam II comes to an end. The instability suggests that people were increasingly willing to seize power by any means necessary, reflecting a decline in moral and spiritual values.
- **Why did Menahem pay Tiglath-Pileser (Pul, king of Assyria) a thousand talents of silver? What does this act reveal about Menahem's leadership?**
- Menahem paid Tiglath-Pileser to secure his support and strengthen his hold on the kingdom. This action reveals Menahem's insecurity and lack of trust in God. Instead of relying on God for protection, he sought security through a political alliance with a foreign power, highlighting a lack of faith and ultimately depending on an enemy.
- **What is the significance of the casual brutality described in the text, such as ripping open pregnant women?**
- These acts represent senseless brutality and the depths of human depravity when individuals prioritize their own interests above all else. Such acts are frequently invoked as examples of the extreme inhumanity that results from moral decay.