**THOUGHTS FROM THE LIFE OF KING ZIMRI**

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In the midst of the reigns of the wicked households of Baasha and Omri during the divided kingdom period of Israel lies the insignificant reign of King Zimri. I am not singling him out from between Baasha and Omri’s households because he was righteous, because he wasn’t; rather it explicitly stated he did “*evil in the sight of the LORD*” (1 Kgs. 16:19). I would like to make a couple observations about his brief story and how we might be more like him than you may think. But first, take a few moments to open your Bible and read his story in I Kings 16:8-20.

Zimri is said to be a “*servant*” and commander under the authority of King Elah, son of Baasha. He had a secret desire to become king, so he conspired to kill his superior in a traitorous act. He was a disloyal servant who wanted more than what he was given. This act of conspiracy and murder was not uncommon. For example, Elah’s father, Baasha, does the exact same thing to Jeroboam’s son Nadab (1 Kings 15:27-28). By this action of betrayal Elah was able to inherit the throne, only to soon lose it as well.

But something interesting about Zimri is that he is referenced later in the book of 2 Kings by Queen Jezebel. Jezebel says to Jehu when he comes to carry out the LORD’s commands of destroying the household of Ahab, “*Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master*?” (2 Kings 9:31). It is interesting that Zimri is the character referred to by Jezebel as opposed to someone else more significant, such as Baasha. It further displays the traitorous nature of Zimri, since even the evil Jezebel refers to his wickedness and betrayal. Zimri not only slaughtered Elah but destroyed the whole household, which was an attempt to cement his kingship. So Zimri is a traitorous, betraying servant who murdered his superior.

The other reason that Zimri’s reign stands out is not because of his accomplishments or feats, but for the insignificance of his reign. Zimri’s reign is the shortest of any of the kings in the divided kingdom era. For comparison, the 9th U.S. President, William Henry Harrison, is the shortest-serving president in history by serving only 31 days. Do you know how long King Zimri reigned in Israel? One week: 7 days! Zimri spent his time, focus, thoughts and energy to conspire and murder Elah. What did he get in return? Seven days on the throne and then a violent death in a burning fire. It would be hard to believe that it was worth it.

The truth of the matter is we are all Zimri’s. Zimri was a servant and became a traitor by turning on his king and killing him. We have all done the same. We were created by God to be His servants, but we became traitors when we spent our time and energy to sin and turn our backs on Him to follow the pleasures of this world. We, like Zimri, murdered to partake in the lusts of this world. Jesus Christ, our King, had to die for our sins. Every time we sin we put Him back up on the cross with no gratitude for His sacrifice. We, like Zimri, wanted something more than to just be a servant; we wanted the world. We wanted to reign. Where did it get Zimri? DEATH. Where will it get us? Matthew 16:26 asks “*for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul*?” To pursue the world brings death. Zimri may have gained the kingdom, but he gave up his soul.

Another lesson: Zimri achieved what he wanted, but it did not last. The pleasure Zimri held as king was brief. Sin is the same for us. When we sin, we may feel pleasure for a moment, but it does not last (Heb. 11:24-26). Zimri traded his soul for seven days on the throne. What are you willing to give up your soul for?

Zimri’s reign serves as a reminder and warning of the brevity of life. Zimri was at the height of his powers before he lost it all and his life. I’m sure he thought he would have more than seven days on the throne! You may think that time is on your side, that you can continue to enjoy earth’s pleasures and ignore God, and that you can repent later. Do not be fooled! Death does not look at your driver’s license; it does not care what age you are. It can occur to anyone at any time. You must be ready for it! The day of the Lord “*will come just like a thief in the night*” (1 Thess 5:2). It will be unannounced. It could be in 100 years, or 6 months, or 7 days, or even this very night! You must prepare yourself to not be overtaken, as Zimri was. If you died today, where would you go? Do you know? If you cannot say heaven, why not? Get prepared, for we are not promised tomorrow.