

## Who was Abiram in the Bible?

There are two men named Abiram in the Bible. Although the name Abiram means “exalted father” in Hebrew, neither of these two men is connected to an exaltation in Scripture.

The first Abiram mentioned in the Bible was a son of Eliab from the tribe of Reuben (Numbers 16:1). Along with his brother Dathan, Abiram participated in Korah’s rebellion against Moses’ leadership (Numbers 16:2). When summoned by Moses to appear before the Lord, Abiram and Dathan refused, saying, “We will not come! Isn’t it enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? And now you also want to lord it over us! Moreover, you haven’t brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Do you want to treat these men like slaves? No, we will not come!” (Numbers 16:12-14). Not only did Korah and his followers question the leadership of Moses and the priesthood of Aaron, but they ultimately grumbled against the Lord (Numbers 16:11). As a result of their rebellion, God made the earth swallow them up. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram “went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned” (Numbers 16:33). They died upon being swallowed alive, and the earth closed back over them again, confirming that the event was a supernatural judgment of the Lord.

A second Abiram is briefly mentioned in the book of 1 Kings. During the time of Ahab’s rule in Israel, Abiram’s father, Hiel the Bethelite, sought to restore Jericho to its original condition. Joshua had earlier pronounced a curse and judgment on the man who would try to rebuild the wicked city that had been miraculously taken by the Israelites. According to Joshua 6:26, this curse was worded like this: “The man who undertakes the rebuilding of this city, Jericho, is cursed before the LORD. He will lay its foundation at the cost of his firstborn; he will set up its gates at the cost of his youngest”

(HCSB). Abiram died when his father Hiel began to rebuild Jericho (1 Kings 16:34). Not only did Hiel sacrifice Abiram's life to rebuild Jericho, but the city's completion also came at the cost of his youngest son, Segub (1 Kings 16:34).

Where Abiram is mentioned in the Bible, only wrath and judgment are connected to the name. Both instances vividly demonstrate the consequences of disobedience and rebellion to God. When Abiram chose to follow Korah's rebellion, he received just punishment from God. Yet his actions also affected his entire family and 250 co-conspirators who were killed in the aftermath of the event (Numbers 16:35). Likewise, Hiel's decision to restore a wicked city over which God had already pronounced judgment proved fatal to his sons, Abiram and Segub. Rebellion against God and His Word carries eternal repercussions and will inevitably lead to death.