

The LORD had warned of the coming judgment against the descendants of Ahab and this lesson looks at how the LORD carried out that judgment through a man named Jehu. Jehu kills the kings of both Israel and Judah, as well as Jezebel, Ahab's wife. Despite his initial zeal for the LORD, Jehu unfortunately does not serve the LORD after he becomes king of Israel but follows the example of Jeroboam, the king that initially led the nation into idolatry.

Verses 1-4: Elisha sends one of sons of the prophets to Ramoth-Gilead to find a man named Jehu. Jehu was the captain of the army of Israel under king Joram, the son of Ahab. Once he found Jehu, the young prophet was to anoint him as king of Israel and then flee the scene.

2 Kings 9

5 And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain.

“And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain” – Jehu is apparently sitting outside with the captains that serve with and under him when the young prophet sent by Elisha enters the room. They may have been relaxing or perhaps having a military meeting. The young prophet states that he has business with the captain.

“And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain” – Since the young prophet did not specify which captain, Jehu naturally asks that the prophet clarify which captain he had come to see. The prophet identifies Jehu as the one he has come to see.

6 And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel. 7 And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel.

“And he arose, and went into the house” – Jehu and the prophet go in the house for privacy, as instructed by Elisha (v. 2b).

“and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel” – The prophet anoints Jehu with oil (the standard practice when the LORD had chosen a man to be king) and proceeds to give him the message from the LORD.

“I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel” – Jehu has been chosen and anointed by the LORD Himself to be king of Israel.

“And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master” – Jehu's first responsibility after being anointed as king is to carry out the judgment against the house of Ahab that the LORD had promised years earlier (1 Kings 21:21-24).

“that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel” – Jehu also was to execute the LORD's vengeance against Jezebel, who had ordered the slaying of the prophets of the LORD (1 Kings 18:4, 13) and was the mastermind in the deaths of many people who had served the LORD, such as Naboth (1 Kings 21:1-15).

Verses 8-20: The prophet continues the message from the LORD, which declared the complete destruction of the house of Ahab and Jezebel. When he finished, the prophet dashed out of the house and ran away, which stirred up the curiosity of other captains who saw him leave. When he can't avoid the questioning of the captains, Jehu admits that the prophet had anointed him as king of Israel. These captains immediately began sounding trumpets and announcing that Jehu was king. Not wanting to lose the element of surprise, Jehu gets in his chariot and rides to Jezreel, where king Joram had gone to recover from the wounds he had suffered from battle against the Syrians. The watchman at Jezreel sees Jehu's chariot approaching the city and recognizes Jehu by his aggressive driving.

21 And Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Apparently Joram had recovered enough from his wounds that he felt able to ride out in his chariot to meet Jehu. Jehu was one of the king's captains so Joram did not suspect any danger at the hands of Jehu. He had his chariot prepared, as did Ahaziah, king of Israel, who was also there at Jezreel. The two kings ride out to meet Jehu, apparently expecting to hear news of the war against Syria. It is significant that the place where they intercept Jehu happened to be in the parcel of land that once belonged to Naboth, the man who was killed on the orders of Jezebel.

22 And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace*, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so many*? 23 And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery*, O Ahaziah.

“And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace* [shalome: *tranquility; safety; welfare; friendship*], Jehu?” – Thinking that Jehu had news from the war front, Joram was under the impression that this news must be important since Jehu had personally driven hard to get there instead of sending a messenger. Joram asks if it was “peace” (good news) that had compelled Jehu to come to Jezreel.

“And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so many*?” – How could there be peace in Israel while Jezebel was still alive and influencing the nation to sin? The word “whoredoms” refers to the idolatry inspired by Jezebel. She had caused Israel to sell themselves to serve other gods besides the LORD. Witchcraft refers to the seeking of information from demonic sources rather than seeking the guidance of the LORD. These sins had placed Israel under the judgment of the LORD.

“And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery*, O Ahaziah” – Joram suddenly realizes that he is in danger because Jehu has turned against him. As he turns to flee, Joram warns the king of Israel that Jehu is betraying them.

24 And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

Jehu must have been an excellent archer, because he was able to quickly pull back on the bow to its furthest extent and hit Jehoram (Joram), who was fleeing in his chariot. The arrow hit Jehoram in the back between his shoulder blades with such force that it penetrated his heart and protruded out of the front of his chest. Jehoram died instantly and his dead body sank down in the chariot.

25 Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden upon him; 26 Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat of *ground*, according to the word of the LORD.

Jehu recognized that it was no coincidence that Jehoram, the son of Ahab, had died on the plot of land that had been Naboth's vineyard. He remembered the prophesy that was given when Jehu and Bidkar, his second in command, served under Ahab which declared that the blood of Ahab's son would be spilled on that plot of land. Jehu instructs Bidkar to cast Jehoram's body from the chariot onto the ground there within Naboth's plot in accordance with the prophesy.

27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

When Ahaziah saw the way Jehoram was killed, he fled for his life as well. He apparently had enough of a head start that Jehu wasn't able to kill him on the spot but Jehu and his men pursued him until they were able to wound him a few miles away on the road to Gur, a city in the tribe of Manasseh. Ahaziah survived long enough to make it to Megiddo where he eventually died of his wounds.

30 And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window.

Jezebel hears that Jehu has returned to Jezreel so she prepares herself by putting on make-up and a regal headdress and then looked out of an upstairs window where he could see her as he arrived at the palace. The Hebrew word for "painted her face" means to "put her eyes in painting." The practice at the time was for women to paint their face in such a way as to enhance the beauty of their eyes. Jezebel's intent was to impress Jehu with an image of her royalty so that he might spare her life. She tries to dissuade Jehu from his intentions by reminding him of another man who became king by killing the king that he served (v. 31). Jehu calls through the window for anyone who was on his side and two or three eunuchs came to the window (v. 32).

33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. 34 And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's daughter.

"And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down" – Jehu understood that Jezebel was also under the LORD's condemnation (v. 10), so he knew that she also had to die. He commands the eunuchs that had indicated their allegiance to throw Jezebel down from the upstairs window where she stood. She no doubt struggled but was no match for these two or three eunuchs.

"and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot" – The height she fell from was enough to splatter her blood in all directions, hitting the wall and the horses that pulled Jehu's chariot. In a final act of disrespect for Jezebel, he drove his chariot over her, further mangling her body.

"And when he was come in, he did eat and drink" – Jehu came in like a conquering king and consumed a meal in the palace of Jehoram, the king he had just killed. Obviously Jehu did not lose his appetite over the blood that he had just shed.

"and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter" – While eating, Jehu had time to think and decided that Jezebel still deserved the dignity of being buried because was a king's daughter (she was the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians). She was not worthy of this dignity for being the wife of a king condemned by the LORD, but because she was the daughter of a foreign king. Jehu, however, must have forgotten that the judgment on Jezebel included the fact that she would not be buried (2 Kings 9:10).

35 And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of *her* hands. 36 Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This *is* the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel: 37 And the carcase of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel; so that they shall not say, This *is* Jezebel.

While Jehu was dining inside the palace, the dogs were dining on Jezebel's body outside the palace. Those who came to bury her body found nothing but her skull, feet and hands remaining. Jehu acknowledged that this was exactly what the LORD had predicted through Elijah the prophet (1 Kings 21:23). Apparently Elijah said more about Jezebel's fate than was recorded in 1 Kings 21:23, declaring that there would not be enough of Jezebel left to identify it as being her body.

2 Kings 10

10 Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant Elijah. 11 So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

There were seventy sons (descendants) of Ahab that could potentially challenge Jehu for the throne, but Jehu sent letters throughout Samaria for the people to either fight for their right to rule or else surrender by handing over the heads of these seventy men. When they chose the latter, Jehu had the heads placed in two piles outside the gate of Jezreel where they could be seen (vs. 1-8). He then went out to the gate and proclaimed that these heads illustrated that everything the LORD said about Ahab and his descendants had come true. He continued to clean house by killing everyone associated with the house of Ahab (vs. 12-28).

31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.

Despite his zeal for the LORD (v. 16) and the fact that he destroyed Baal worship in Israel (v. 28), Jehu followed the example of Jeroboam and supported the worship of the golden calves that he had placed in Bethel and Dan. It seems that Jehu's zeal was merely a means to an end.