

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

2 KINGS 8-10

Elisha was a good guy to have as a friend...

Cook up a stew with poisonous herbs? Elisha can make it fit for consumption.

Lose a borrowed ax-head in the river? Elisha can retrieve it.

The dermatologist finds a leprous spot? Elisha will tell you wear to wash.

Need info on the movements of your enemy? Elisha can eavesdrop in on what he's saying to his wife in his own bedroom – he's privy to divine surveillance.

Find yourself surrounded by troublesome circumstances? Are you afraid and alone? Elisha can open your eyes to the angelic army that protects God's people.

And he can blind the eyes of those who would desire to do you harm.

Elisha was a great guy to call your friend... *which illustrates the benefits of having good and godly friends...* A Christian friend can neutralize the poison of this world – help us retrieve losses – heal sore spots – provide divine insight.

It's been said, *"A faithful friend doubles our joys and divides our sorrows."*

And the Shunammite woman would certainly testify that her friendship with Elisha had done just that – *enhance her joys in life, and relieve her sorrows.*

Years earlier this woman and her husband had befriended Elisha. Whenever he passed-by they invited him to dinner.

Eventually, they fixed up a guest room in their home just for him. He stayed at their house when he was in the area.

And as a token of his gratitude Elisha prayed that she would have a son... God granted his request... But years later when that son became ill and died, Elisha again proved to be a good friend. He raised the young boy from the dead.

Now in chapter 8, Elisha again looks out after his old friend and her son.

He divulges to her some strategic information he obtains from God... “Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years."

So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

“It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land.”

Apparently, the Israelite officials thought she was gone forever. In her absence, they had confiscated her property and possessions. Now that she's back she wants to resume her former life and prepares for her appeal...

Verse 4 “Then the king talked with Gehazi, the servant of the man of God...”

Gehazi was Elisha's former servant before he was fired for

his greediness. He coaxed payment from Naaman after Elisha had healed him of his leprosy.

The king of Israel is talking to Gehazi “saying, “Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done.” This must’ve been an interesting conversation.

King Jehoram and Gehazi are sitting around jawing, rapping, hanging out. The King wants to hear about the miracles of Elisha. He’s amazed at God’s power.

Understand this was merely entertainment... The king spent a nice evening admiring Elisha’s special effects. Here was the king’s downfall. He enjoyed watching *Elisha’s miracles*, but could care less about *Elisha’s message*.

Jehoram, the son of Ahab, should’ve repented of Israel’s idolatry.

Which brings up an interesting point... apparently, Elisha had many *admirers*, but few *followers*. This could also have been said about Jesus. There were those who marveled at his miracles, but wanted no part of the way of life He taught.

Remember in Luke 23 when King Herod tried Jesus we’re told “he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.” But when Jesus didn’t perform to his satisfaction Herod “treated him with contempt and mocked Him... and sent Him back to Pilate.” Herod may’ve been a spectator, but he was far from a follower.

This is the case for many people today.

Jesus is a fascination, a hobby – they watch television specials that speculate about Him. They’re admirers – but

they've never embraced Him as Lord and God.

The story continues in verse 5. "Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." The Shunnamite and son walk up right in the middle of their story.

"And when the king asked the woman, she told him." This must've pleased the king – he gets to hear the incredible story straight from the horses' mouth!

"So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now."

She not only gets her land back, but any profits it yielded over the last 7 years.

Remember, Ahab was a land-grabber. He stole Naboth's vineyard. There's no reason not to think his son had the same diabolical tendency. The fact, he gives back land to the widow shows how impressed he was at the timing of her visit.

It was obvious to the king that he'd just experienced an act of providence.

"Then Elisha went to Damascus..." I suppose you could say House Speaker Nancy Pelosi followed in his footsteps last week - but I doubt if her visit had the same impact. "Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." That's not what they said

about Pelosi...

"The king said to Hazael (his servant), "Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?' " So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, 40 camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?'" King Ben-Hadad wants a prognosis...

"And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the LORD has shown me that he will really die." King Ben-Hadad will die, but not from his current illness. He'll recover only to be assassinated by this messenger.

"Then (Elisha) set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God wept." Elisha cast this long, steely stare at Hazael. It must've been unnerving. But as Elisha gazed at Hazael - God revealed the man's future...

The *prophet was starrng while God was speaking...* And what God told Elisha caused him to weep. Hazael would commit atrocities against God's people.

"And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?"

He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you will dash their children, and rip open their women with child."

So Hazael said, "But what is your servant - a dog, that he should do this gross thing?" Hazael is appalled. How dare Elisha think that he could commit such barbarous acts as

crushing infants, and tearing open pregnant wombs?

“And Elisha answered, **“The LORD has shown me that you will become king over Syria.”** Here’s what happened. Hazael underestimated his depravity. He didn’t think he was capable of the grizzly crimes Elisha predicts he’ll commit.

We too can underestimate our propensity to sin. Have you ever said, **“Oh, I’d never do that...”** only to experience the humiliating pain of actually doing it...

Remember Peter. He said he would never deny the Lord – even if all the other disciples denied Him, Peter would not deny Jesus - yet he did so three times before the rooster crowed twice. Never underestimate your potential for evil.

Spurgeon once wrote, **“Our ignorance of the depravity of our own hearts is a startling fact.”** Hey, apart from God’s grace there are no limits to the depths of sin to which we can sink. We need to live in daily dependence on Jesus.

Verse 14 **“Then (Hazael) departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, “What did Elisha say to you?” And he answered, “He told me you would surely recover.”** Which of course, was only part of the protection...

“But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped it in water, and spread it over his face so that he died...” Hazael suffocated King Ben-Hadad. It was an assassination. **“And Hazael reigned in his place.”**

Archeologists have unearthed an ancient Assyrian inscription, called **“The Berlin Inscription”** - it reads, **“Hazael the son of nobody, seized the throne.”**

Hazael was a usurper. He had no dynastic claim to the Syrian throne.

Verse 16 “Now in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat having been king of Judah, Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.” Here’s where names can cause confusion.

First, Joram and Jehoram are variants of the same name. So for 10 years Jehoram, son of Ahab, rules in the northern kingdom of Israel. While Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, rules in the southern kingdom of Judah.

And Judah’s Jehoram makes a huge mistake. He weds an unbeliever named “*Athaliah*”. She was the daughter of Ahab. And you can bet she followed his idolatrous practices... And this is why *an unequal yoke is no joke*. Marry an unbeliever and you get the devil as a father-in-law.

This evil woman, Athaliah, brings the idolatry of her parents to Judah.

2 Chronicles 21 says after taking the throne Jehoram killed his brothers to wipe out any rivals to the throne. Josephus says this heinous act was carried out at the insistence of Athaliah. She was a very wicked woman with political aspirations.

“And (Judah’s Jehoram) walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD.

Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of his servant David, as He promised him to give a lamp to him and his sons forever.”

Evidently, Jehoram’s godly father, Jehoshaphat, arranged this marriage hoping to strengthen Judah. The opposite occurred. It was ill-advised on his part...

And the next few verses show how Judah’s strength was weakened...

“In his days Edom (Judah’s neighbors to the southwest) revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves.

So Joram went to Zair (an Edomite city), and all his chariots with him.

Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day.

And Libnah revolted at that time.” Libnah may’ve been a Philistine city.

“Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Joram rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David.

Then Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.”

“In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, (the other Joram or Jehoram) Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign.

Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab, for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.” Jehoram of Israel was actually the uncle of Ahaziah of Judah.

“Now he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. Then King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.” His illness was a complication of his battle wounds.

2 Kings 9-10 records God’s judgment on the idolatrous house of Ahab.

Recently, a Ukrainian man walked into the Kiev Zoo. He lowered himself on a rope into a concrete enclosure that held four lions. As he did, he was shouting at and challenging God... “God will save me, if he exists.” He was tempting God.

For some reason the man took off his shoes and walked toward the animals.

One of the lionesses knocked him down and severed his carotid artery, killing him instantly. Helpless zoo officials and a stunned crowd could only watch.

A spokesman for the Kiev Zoo said this was their first incident of this kind.

That might be *true for the zoo*, but in real life this has happened many times.

Hey, *thumb your nose in God's face – and mock Him – and run roughshod over His Laws as if He's impotent to judge – and cast doubt on His existence...* and don't you be surprised if the Lion of the tribe of Judah doesn't knock you down.

This is what happens in chapters 9-10.

No one was more blatant and blasphemous in his idolatry than was King Ahab, and his queen, Jezebel. Ahab treated the Law of God with disdain and made Baal worship the state religion of the northern kingdom. Ahab even put the prophets of Baal on the government payroll. He was Israel's most wicked king. Even after he was dead his idolatrous influence crippled both kingdoms – north and south.

It was only a matter of time before God's judgment came to the house of Ahab.

Chapter 9 **“And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead.”** Jewish tradition identifies the young prophet as Jonah.

“Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among his associates, and take him to an inner room. Then take the flask of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel." '

Then open the door and flee, and do not delay.” Simple instructions for a monumental act... God will raise up a man

to take vengeance on Ahab.

Verse 4 “So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. And when he arrived, there were the captains of the army sitting; and he said, "I have a message for you, Commander." These were generals in the Israeli army.

Jehu said, "For which one of us?" And he said, "For you, Commander."

Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel.'" Anointing with oil was symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

Jehu is anointed with the power of God for a specific mission. His reign will be focused on a primary task. He'll exercise God's judgment on Ahab's lineage.

Verse 7, “You shall strike down the house of Ahab your 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. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free.”

Here it is again. The OKJ renders verse 8, “For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall...” That's a Hebrew expression for male. If you've raised boys you understand the idiom.

God is saying that Jehu will kill all the males of the house of Ahab. Verse 8 quotes verbatim Elijah's prophecy against the house of Ahab in 1 Kings 21.

The young prophet continues in verse 9 **“So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah.”** Both dynasties were ended in a coup, and new families took over.

He concludes, **“The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.”** And he opened the door and fled.”

Verse 11 **“Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and one said to him, "Is all well? Why did this madman come to you?"** Notice these army generals call the prophet a **“madman.”** It was a derogatory term. **“Why did this Jesus freak come to you?”** The world always views a man sold out to God as a little crazy.

Don't be surprised if you're treated as a *“fool for Christ's sake...”* Trust me, if you shy away from that sort of persecution you won't walk very far with God.

Jehu responds, **“You know the man and his babble.”** Perhaps Jehu wanted time to think – maybe he doubted the prophecy – but he tries to downplay the prophet's visit. Ah, **“You know the man and his babble.”** *It was nothing!*

But Jehu has just been anointed by the prophet. He's drenched with olive oil. He's standing there with his head as slick as the Alaskan pipeline.

Everyone knows something went on in the back room with this prophet...

“And they said, "A lie! Tell us now." So he said, "Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have

anointed you king over Israel." Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps..." The red carpet treatment... "And they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

"So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.)

And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, let no one leave or escape from the city to go and tell it in Jezreel." Jehu is about to launch a government overthrow. He hopes to rely on the element of surprise. He needs to maintain his secrecy.

Verse 16 "So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there; and Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.

Now a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company of men." And Joram said, "Get a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?'" So the horseman went to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king: 'Is it peace?'"

And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me."

He probably read the look in Jehu's eyes. He has violence and judgment – not peace - on his mind. Jehu means business. The messenger decides to defect.

“So the watchman reported, saying, "The messenger went to them, but is not coming back." Then he sent out a second horseman who came to them, and said, "Thus says the king: 'Is it peace?'" And Jehu answered, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me." So the watchman reported, saying, "He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!" Jehu was a man of action. He had a no-nonsense reputation. He was on his way to do battle – not pay a friendly visit.

“Then Joram said, "Make ready." And his chariot was made ready.

Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite.” This was the very plot of ground coveted by the greedy Ahab.

Naboth’s vineyard was next door to King Ahab’s palace. Ahab wanted to buy the parcel from his neighbor. When Naboth refused to sell Jezebel had a plan.

The wicked queen hired scoundrels to falsely accuse Naboth. He was stoned to death – allowing Ahab to take possession of his land. It’s an act of God’s providence that Jehu meets the house of Ahab at the scene of the crime.

“Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?"

So he answered, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?" You

can hear righteous anger in his words!

How can there be peace with God, when His laws are neglected and His people bow to idols? Real peace begins when we surrender our will to God.

I like the phrase, “Know Jesus, know peace. No Jesus, no peace.”

But Jehu’s blunt words tip Joram off to Jehu’s true intentions. He starts to run, and calls for his nephew to get out of Dodge... “Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!" He wants to kill us.

“Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick him up, and throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the LORD laid this burden upon him: 'Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,' says the LORD, 'and I will repay you in this plot,' says the LORD. Now therefore, take and throw him on the plot of ground, according to the word of the LORD." He was *shot* on the stolen *plot*.

It had been 12 years since Ahab’s crimes, but to the Lord it seemed like yesterday. Sin has no statute of limitations. Time does not heal with God.

If you want to resolve your sin with God you need to repent not ignore.

Verse 27 “But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled by the road to Beth Haggan. So Jehu pursued him, and said,

"Shoot him also in the chariot." And they shot him at the Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam." Ahaziah was headed south.

He was about half-way from Jezreel to Samaria – when he was hit. He knew he was losing blood and sought a hideout, so he turned eastward toward Megiddo.

Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

And his servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the City of David. In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah." Another member of the house of Ahab perishes at the hand of Jehu. He fulfils his mission with a vengeance!

Verse 30 "Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window."

Jezebel is so vain she won't show her face without putting on her make-up.

"Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?" This was a judgmental comment dripping with hatred and sarcasm. Zimri was the man who murdered a previous king of Israel named Baasha.

There's also an implied threat in her words. Ahab's father, Omri, was the assassin who killed Zimri and created a new dynasty that Ahab inherited. In essence, she's saying the house of Ahab and Omri will overthrow Jehu.

"And he looked up at the window, and said, "Who is on my

side? Who?"

So two or three eunuchs looked out at him." Hey, Jezebel was probably mean to her servants. They jumped at a chance to play a role in her downfall (*literally*).

"Then he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot."

Imagine Jehu, rearing up his steed and pounding the life out of Jezebel. This guy was not horsing around. Jezebel was crushed under the hoofs of a horse.

"And when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Then he said, "Go now, see to this accursed woman, and bury her, for she was a king's daughter."

So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. Therefore they came back and told him."

One commentator writes, "Her brains and heart that devised such mischief against the servants of God, are strewed upon the walls."

And (Jehu) said, "This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite (1 Kings 21:23), saying, 'On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as refuse on the surface of the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, "Here lies Jezebel." All that was left of Jezebel were her skull, feet, and palms because she was devoured by the wild dogs. The dogs played fetch with her bones.

The old gal who worked such wickedness in Israel in the end goes from princess to Purina. At Jezebel's funeral the pastor said, "*Dog gone it!*"

In reality the pastor could've preached a message on God's justice.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote, "The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all." God is patient. He desires for us to repent. But if we don't, though it may take awhile for God to execute judgment, He is always faithful to do so.

And the judgment doesn't end with Jezebel. Jehu fulfils God's word that all males connected to the house of Ahab will also be cut off. In chapter 10 Jehu wages a campaign of genocide against any one related to Ahab and Jezebel.

"Now Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote and sent letters to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to those who reared Ahab's sons, saying: Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons are with you, and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons, choose the best qualified of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Look, two kings could not stand up to him; how then can we stand?"

And he who was in charge of the house, and he who was in charge of the city, the elders also, and those who reared the sons, sent to Jehu, saying, "We are your servants, we will do

all you tell us; but we will not make anyone king. Do what is good in your sight." Then he wrote a second letter to them, saying: If you are for me and will obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow. Now the king's sons, seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who were rearing them."

"So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel." They were hoping to win Jehu's favor – to really get *ahead... 70 heads.*

And speaking of the king's 70 sons... *They were a real basket case!*

"Then a messenger came and told him, saying, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons." And he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning."

Everyone entered in and out of the gate. This was a public display that highlighted God's judgment on Baal worship and the family that initiated it in Israel. *Two piles of 35 skulls each would've got my attention.*

"So it was, in the morning, that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, "You are righteous. Indeed I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these? Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah." God promised to judge the house of Ahab for their wicked influence in Israel and His word is being fulfilled.

“So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left him none remaining.” Here’s the first clue that Jehu doesn’t have the purest of motives.

Up until now he’s done God’s will, but God never told him to kill Ahab’s generals, and advisors, and priests – just the house or family of Ahab.

Certainly it took a brave man, a warrior, a man not afraid of violence and the sword to do the job God had for Jehu, but I believe he grew too bloodthirsty.

“And he arose and departed and went to Samaria. On the way, at Beth Eked of the Shepherds, Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, "Who are you?" And they answered, "We are the brothers of Ahaziah; we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother."

And he said, "Take them alive!" So they took them alive, and killed them at the well of Beth Eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.” He captured the brothers of Ahaziah – also relatives of Ahab - and executed them publicly.

And I’m sure all of Ahab’s family was idolaters. It’s not as if God is judging an entire household solely for the father’s sin. The offspring were just as guilty.

“Now when he departed from there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab, coming to meet him; and he greeted him and said to him, "Is your heart right, as my heart is toward your heart?" And Jehonadab answered, "It is."

The Rechabites were a reform movement in Israel that tried

to restore purity and morality to the northern kingdom of Israel. Jehonadab was their founder.

In Jeremiah 35 the Rechabites are used as an example of faithfulness in the midst of rebellious times. Josephus says Jehu and Jehonadab were friends. And they both detested the luxurious and extravagant lifestyles of Israel's monarchs.

“Jehu said, "If it is, give me your hand." So he gave him his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot. Then he said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD." *Do you detect some pride in Jehu's voice?* Perhaps! Yes, judgment had finally come to Israel – and though it was predicted and necessary - all this bloodshed was breaking God's heart. Jehu is enjoying his role a little too much.

Now Jehu invites Jehonadab to come along for the bloody ride. He knows his friend will be delighted in the fact that God is cleaning house in Israel.

“So they had him ride in his chariot. And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to Elijah.” Judgment has finally come.

In my mind, verse 18 is where Jehu goes too far. “Then Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much. Now therefore, call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live." But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal. And Jehu said, "Proclaim a solemn assembly for

Baal." So they proclaimed it." Jehu feigns allegiance to Baal to draw out all the idolaters.

He wants to centralize the diehard Baal worshippers for mass destruction.

"Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left who did not come. So they came into the temple of Baal, and the temple of Baal was full from one end to the other." God's orders for Jehu were to kill all the house of Ahab – not all the house of Israel!

"And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal." So he brought out vestments for them.

Verse 23 "Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you, but only the worshipers of Baal." He doesn't want to kill an innocent Hebrew who mistakenly stumbled through the wrong door.

"So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings.

Now Jehu had appointed for himself 80 men on the outside, and had said, "If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, whoever lets him escape, it shall be his life for the life of the other." Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in and kill them; let no one come out!"

And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the

guards and the officers threw them out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal.

And they brought the sacred pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. Then they broke down the sacred pillar of Baal, and tore down the temple of Baal and made it a refuse dump to this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.”

The site of the Temple of Baal became a public toilet - an outhouse. And it probably indicates what God thinks of any worship that does not bow to Him.

God will reward Jehu for his anti-Ahab crusade. The next four kings are all Jehu’s descendants. But as I’ve mentioned, God was not completely happy with Jehu’s actions. In Hosea 1:4 God predicts, “I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu...” Evidently, God also thought Jehu went a little overboard.

God hates sin, but He loves the sinner. And though He desired to rid the land of Baal worship, I’m sure it grieved God to watch all the worshippers slaughtered.

God had run out of patience with the initiators of the idolaters – the household of Ahab and Jezebel – but was not ready to judge the whole nation. God wanted Israel to repent. Jehu had a righteous zeal, but he lacked compassion.

And neither does Jehu completely abolish Israel’s idolatry. The next verse tells us, like all Israel’s kings, he succumbed to a more subtle form of idolatry...

Verse 29 “However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. And the

LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."

But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin."

How in the world does this work... the instrument of God's judgment falls prey to the very sin he was used to judge. Jehu started well, but ended a failure.

Surgeon had harsh words for Jehu, "Hating one sin he loved another. Thus he proved the fear of the Most High did not reign in his heart. He was merely a hired servant, and received the throne as his wages, but a child of God he never was."

Jehu was the classic example of the man Jesus mentioned in Matthew 7. A guy has a board in his own eye while he tries to remove a spec from his brother's eye.

It's been said, "We are all umpires at heart. We love to call balls and strikes in other people's lives." And I'll add to that... We call balls and strikes on us too, but our strike zone is a lot more lenient when we're pitching than when we're at bat.

Don't play the hypocrite. Clean up your own life – *then* help your brother.

Verse 32 "In those days the LORD began to cut off parts of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead - Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh - from Aroer, which is by the River

Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan.” The land east of the Jordan is conquered by Syria.

“Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Jehu rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place. And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was 28 years.”

Chapter 10 closes with one more descendant of Ahab still on the loose. Remember *the Jezebel of Judah*? Athaliah was Ahab’s daughter.

And we’ll find out what happens in Judah next time...