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Telephone: 503 292 4352

• Internet: www.askelm.com •

E-Mail: askoffice@askelm.com

Israel and Judah:

28. The Reign of King Jehu of Israel

by David Sielaff, February 2018

Read first February 1, 2018 Commentary, "[Elijah, Elisha, and Ahab's Descendants](#)"

Then read the accompanying [Newsletter for February 2018](#)

Israel and Judah: 28

The Reign
of King Jehu
of Israel

THE SITUATION: YHWH had Elisha the prophet anoint Jehu as the next King of Israel. Joram, the current King of Israel was in the city of Jezreel recuperating from a war wound he received in battle against the Syrian army. Ahaziah, the King of Judah, was staying with Joram during his recovery. Joram's mother, the lovely Queen mother Jezebel, was also in Jezreel. This episode opens with Jehu leaving the fortress city of Ramoth-gilead and traveling by chariot to Jezreel to confront Joram.

In this episode of "Israel and Judah" we see a prime example of what Daniel, hundreds of years later, explained to his people Israel ... how God exercised His right to rule in the affairs of men, peoples, kingdoms, ... and today, how He intervenes in the affairs of nations:

"Daniel was responding and saying [to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon]: Blessed be the Name of Him Who is the Eloah, from the eon and unto the eon, for the wisdom and the mastery that are His. He is altering the eras and the stated times, causing kings to pass away and causing kings to rise, granting wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those knowing understanding. He is revealing the deep and the concealed things, knowing what is in the darkness, and the stream of light with Him unties knots."

• *Daniel 2:20-22*^a

In this article God acts through the human agency of King Jehu (his name means, "YHWH is he") of Israel, who manifests stunning and sweeping changes in leadership in the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Jehu is at Ramoth-gilead with the Israelite troops guarding and protecting Israel's territory east of the Jordan River.

^a Unless stated otherwise, all Bible quotations are from the Concordant Literal Version of the Old Testament.

TEXT: Jehu, as Anointed King of Israel, Goes to Jezreel

2 Kings 9:14–19

¹⁴ Now Jehu son of Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. As for Joram, he was keeping guard at Ramoth-gilead, he and all of Israel, because of the presence of Hazael king of Syria. ¹⁵ Yet king Joram had returned to get healed at Jezreel from the smiting with which the Syrians smote him when he made war against Hazael king of Syria.

Jehu said to the men, **“If this is your soul’s desire let not anyone seeking deliverance go forth from the city [of Ramoth-gilead], to go and tell it in Jezreel.”**

¹⁶ Then Jehu mounted a chariot and went to Jezreel; for Joram was lying there, and Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to see Joram.

¹⁷ Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel and saw the concourse [a large body of men] of Jehu as he came near. He said, **“I am seeing a concourse.”** Joram ordered, **“Take a rider, send him to meet them and let him say, ‘Is there peace?’”**

¹⁸ Then a rider on his horse went out to meet him; he said, **“Thus inquires the king, ‘Is there peace?’”** Jehu replied **“What have you to do with peace? Turn around to my rear.”**

Now the watchman told, saying, **“The messenger came unto them, but he did not return.”** ¹⁹ So Joram sent a second rider on his horse. When he came to them, he said, **“Thus inquires the king, ‘Is there peace?’”** Jehu replied, **“What have you to do with peace? Turn around to my rear.”** [end text]

Verse 14. With confidence in YHWH’s backing and anointing from Elisha the prophet, Jehu led a far-reaching conspiracy against his own king. King Joram of Israel suspected nothing about the plot. After all, Jehu was a long-serving and trusted military leader under his father Ahab, and now under Joram.

Joram was injured in a battle fighting the army of Syria near Ramoth-gilead (2 Kings 8:28–29). Joram (“**he and all his army**”) was concerned the Syrian army might return to attack his kingdom.

Verse 15. Joram left Jehu in command of the Israelite army at the fortress protecting the valley and trade route of northern Israel east of the Jordan River. Jehu told both the leaders and the troops (Jehu previously told his leaders about his anointing as king), to maintain good security and not allow anyone to go to Jezreel to warn Joram.

Verse 16. Joram, resting in recovery, ordered a messenger sent to ask what Jehu wanted. Ahaziah, King of Judah, was with him. It seems that after the battle, Ahaziah returned to Jerusalem with the army of



Map: Jehu’s Rampage against Ahab’s Descendants

Judah, then he returned to stay with Joram. There is no indication that many of Judah's warriors accompanied Ahaziah.

Verse 17. Jehu traveled quickly to Jezreel, with a body of troops that attracted the notice of a watchman in a tower (probably at the temporary palace) in Jezreel. Jehu was not recognized yet (he will be later). The watchman reports to Joram who ordered a messenger to meet the troops.

Verse 18. Jehu orders Joram's messenger to fall in with the troops behind him. He did not want the messenger to return to Jezreel. The messenger was likely confused at this point, but with armed men around him and receiving Jehu's command, he complied.

Verse 19. A second messenger is sent by Joram and he is given the same command by Jehu.

TEXT: Jehu Kills King Joram of Israel

2 Kings 9:20–26

²⁰ And the watchman told, saying, **“He came unto them, but he did not return. And the driving is like the driving of Jehu grandson of Nimshi, for he drives with madness.”**

²¹ Now Joram ordered, **“Hitch up!”** So they hitched up his chariot, and Joram king of Israel rode forth with Ahaziah king of Judah, each man in his chariot.

They rode forth to meet Jehu. They found him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

²² It came to be as Joram saw Jehu that he said, **“Is there peace, Jehu?”**

He replied,

“What peace is there as long as the prostitutions of your mother Jezebel and her enchantments are so many?”

²³ So Joram turned his hands around and fled; he said to Ahaziah, **“Deceit, Ahaziah!”**

²⁴ As for Jehu, he filled his hand with the bow and smote Joram between his arms, so that the arrow came forth from his heart, and he crouched in his chariot.

²⁵ Jehu said to Bidkar his adjutant,

“Lift him up! Fling him into the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, I and you were riding teams behind his father Ahab when Yahweh Himself lifted up this oracle against him, saying,

²⁶ **‘Assuredly I saw yesternight the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons (this is the averring of Yahweh), and I will repay you in this portion, is the averring of Yahweh. So now lift him up! Fling him into the portion, according to the word of Yahweh.’”**

2 Chronicles 22:7

⁷ It was from Elohim that the complete ruin of Ahaziah came to pass by his coming to Joram. When he had come,

he went forth with Joram to Jehu grandson of Nimshi

whom Yahweh had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab.

[end text]

2 Kings 9:20. Jehu's style of driving a chariot was unique and recognizable, "**he drives like madness.**" Therefore, something was seriously wrong. Why did Jehu himself come to the king from Ramoth-gilead?

2 Chronicles 22:7. We are told directly that God planned Ahaziah to be with Joram so both could be dealt with by Jehu. Ahaziah is the grandson of Ahab through his mother.

Review: God's Prophecy to Ahab, 1 Kings 21:16–27

¹⁶ "So it came to pass, when Ahab heard Naboth was dead, that Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite to take it over.

¹⁷ A word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

¹⁸ 'Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel in Samaria. Behold, he is in Naboth's vineyard where he went down to take it over. ¹⁹ You will speak to him, saying, "Thus speaks Yahweh: Have you murdered and also taken over?"

'Then you will speak to him, saying, 'Thus speaks Yahweh: "In the place where the dogs lapped Naboth's blood, the dogs shall lap your blood, yea, yours too."

²⁰ Ahab said to Elijah, 'Have you found me, my enemy?'

He replied,

'I have found you, because you sold yourself to do what is evil in the eyes of Yahweh to provoke Him to vexation. Thus speaks Yahweh:

²¹ "Behold, I am bringing evil on you. I will wipe out those after you; I will cut off from Ahab any man child, restrained or forsaken, in Israel. ²² I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah, for the vexation with which you provoked Me to vexation and caused Israel to sin."

²³ 'Also regarding Jezebel Yahweh has spoken, saying:

"The dogs, they shall devour Jezebel by the rampart of Jezreel.

²⁴ The one of Ahab [Ahab's relatives] dying in the city shall the dogs eat; and the one dying in the field shall the flyers of the heavens eat. ²⁵ But none came to be like Ahab, who sold himself to do what is evil in the eyes of Yahweh, whom Jezebel his wife incited.

²⁶ He committed very abhorrent acts by going after the idol clods, the same as all the Amorite had done, whom Yahweh had evicted from before the sons of Israel."

²⁷ It occurred as soon as Ahab heard these words, that he tore his garments and put sackcloth on his flesh. He fasted, lay down in sackcloth and walked about gently."

• 1 Kings 21:16–27

Verse 21. Joram was not afraid of Jehu, nor was he a coward. Perhaps he thought Jehu wanted to give him bad news privately. Joram ordered his chariot made ready while Jehu waited outside the walls outside of arrow shot. Joram jumped on his chariot (probably still hurting from his injuries), and drove quickly. Ahaziah drove his own chariot with Joram. We do not know if they drove alone or if they had drivers.

Remember, Joram was Ahab and Jezebel's son. Ahaziah was Ahab and Jezebel's grandson through their daughter Athaliah, who married Jehoram, the King of Judah. Yes, the family relationships are getting complicated again. (See the timeline some pages below).

Jehu waited in a plot of land then owned by Joram, Israel's king. Previously the land belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. His vineyard was obtained by King Ahab when Naboth was murdered, arranged by a conspiracy by the lovely Jezebel (1 Kings 21:1–16). YHWH then told Elijah the prophet to tell Ahab that all his descendants would be killed. That prophecy was about to be fulfilled.

Elijah gave God's prophecy to Ahab on the same land that Jehu was waiting for Joram and Ahaziah, both descendants of Ahab. God's detailed prophecy through Elijah was about to occur, upon Ahab, Jezebel and

their children and grandchildren.

Ahab did not originate the dynasty. It began with Omri and was known as the Omeride Dynasty. This third dynasty of the Kingdom of Israel was to be eliminated like the other two: the dynasties of Jeroboam and Baasha, all males of those extended families were wiped out, except for one young male child in Judah.

2 Kings 9:23–24. Joram fled from Naboth's land. Jehu shoots and kills Joram before he can race away to a safe distance. Jehu is a trained warrior who hits what he aims at, while Ahaziah heard Joram.

Verse 25. Jehu orders his adjutant Bidkar to take Joram's body to Naboth's field and throw it where Naboth's body once lay. There presumably the dogs will later eat it as YHWH prophesied.

Verse 26. Jehu says he and Bidkar were present when they heard Elijah give YHWH's prophecy to Ahab. Jehu's rendition of YHWH's oracle is different than presented in 1 Kings chapter 21 by Elijah. This should not concern us because the version given to us in 1 Kings 21:16–27 is a synopsis of the words that were said.^b When he received the prophecy, Ahab broke down before Elijah and repented to YHWH, who recognized Ahab's repentance and YHWH delayed judgment to one of Ahab's descendants. That judgment happened to Joram, Jezebel, and all Ahab's male descendants.

Jehu was present at Ahab receiving YHWH's judgment. Now Jehu was the agent carrying out that retribution against Ahab's family. Jehu intends to complete the task assigned to him by YHWH when he was anointed king of Israel by Elisha's servant (2 Kings 9:1–13).

Remember also what YHWH told Elijah years earlier after his Mt. Carmel confrontation with the priests of Baal, when Jezebel was trying to kill Elijah, but before Ahab and Jezebel killed Naboth:

“And Jehu son of Nimshi shall you anoint as king over Israel. And Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah shall you anoint as prophet in your stead. It will occur

to the one escaping from Hazael's sword that Jehu shall put him to death, and to the one escaping from Jehu's sword that Elisha shall put him to death.”

• 1 Kings 19:16–17

Reports of such things may have come to Jehu over time, and he may have dismissed them — until Elisha's servant came to anoint Jehu, then past events and prophecies suddenly came into focus. Jehu strangely did not oppose or even question his anointing as king of Israel, nor did he reject the prophecy or question the instructions about Joram's relatives, the descendants of Ahab.

Naboth's Sons

2 Kings 9:25–26 again. Jehu gives us new information. Both Jehu and his adjutant Bidkar were witnesses to Naboth's murder, as he says to Bidkar, **“for remember, I and you were riding teams behind his father Ahab.”** In verse 26 is the new information, **“the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons.”** The fact that Naboth's sons were also killed is given nowhere else in Scripture, not in Elijah's indictment and God's judgment against Ahab in 1 Kings chapter 21. However, because Naboth and his sons were murdered by Ahab and his men, God will avenge them by killing all of Ahab's male descendants. This tells us why Jehu told his adjutant how to deal with Joram's body without ceremony: **“fling him into the portion, according to the word of YHWH.”**

TEXT: Jehu Kills King Ahaziah of Judah

2 Kings 9:27–29

2 Chronicles 22:7, 9

(out of sequence)

⁷ *repeated* It was from Elohim that the complete ruin of Ahaziah came to pass by his coming to Joram.

^b Ahab knew YHWH's power when fire came from heaven at Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal were killed by the people at Elijah's instruction. Ahab watched it all happen.

²⁷ When Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled by way of Beth-haggan. Yet Jehu pursued after him and said, **“Him too!”**

And one smote him while in the chariot on the ascent to Gur which is by Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo and died there.

²⁸ His servants conveyed him by chariot to Jerusalem and entombed him in his tomb with his fathers in the city of David.

²⁹ In the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah.

(verse 8 is in a section below)

⁹ He then sought out Ahaziah;

they seized him while he was hiding in Samaria and brought him to Jehu, and he put him to death.

They entombed him, for they said,

“He was the grandson of Jehoshaphat who sought after Yahweh with all his heart.” So there was no one of the house of Ahaziah to retain vigor for the kingship. [end text]

2 Chronicles 22:7. YHWH is arranging the circumstances of this entire judgment upon all male relatives of Ahab. Now it was the turn of Ahaziah, the King of Judah, to be targeted for death. Jehu and those with him pursued Ahaziah to the fortress of Megiddo, overlooking the plain of Jezreel.

(This was the same broad, flat plain where the future antichrist will gather his armies for the final assault against Jerusalem.)

2 Kings 9:27. After Joram was killed, Jehu turned his attention on Ahaziah who was fleeing in his chariot to the highlands near Megiddo, west of Jezreel. Ahaziah was captured in the highlands (**“on the ascent”**), taken to Megiddo, where he was killed in his chariot.

Verse 9. For a time it seems Ahaziah escaped **“in Samaria”** (a territory within the Kingdom of Samaria) and hid himself. He was soon found and brought before Jehu.

Verse 28. It seems not many of Judah’s warriors traveled with him from Jerusalem, so Ahaziah’s servants brought the young dead king to Jerusalem.

Verse 9 again. Unlike Joram, Ahaziah, King of Judah had full burial rites given to him. Jehu allowed Ahaziah’s servants to take his body to Jerusalem because of his grandfather Jehoshaphat who **“sought after YHWH”** and was righteous, although Ahaziah was not. Also, Ahaziah was the grandson of Jezebel through his mother Athaliah. Ahaziah reigned only one year. He was the 6th king of Judah after the united kingdom of Israel broke up into north and south kingdoms.

TEXT: Jehu Exacts Judgment Upon Jezebel

2 Kings 9:30–37

³⁰ Jehu came to Jezreel, and Jezebel herself heard of it. She applied pigment to her eyes, did her head up well and gazed out through the window. ³¹ When Jehu himself entered at the gate, she said, **“Was there peace, Zimri, killer of his lord?”**

³² He lifted up his face to the window and inquired, **“Who is with me? Who?”** Now two or three eunuchs gazed down at him. ³³ And he said, **“Throw her down!”** So they threw her down; and some of her blood spattered the sidewall and the horses; and they tramped her down. ³⁴ Then he entered and ate and drank.

He said, **“Now look after that accursed woman and entomb her; for she was a king's daughter.”** ³⁵ When they went to entomb her, they found nothing of her save the skull, the feet and the palms of the hands.

³⁶ So they returned and told him. He replied,

“This is the word of Yahweh that He spoke by means of His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

‘In the portion of Jezreel the dogs shall devour the flesh of Jezebel. ³⁷ And the carcass of Jezebel will come to be like manure on the surface of the field in the portion of Jezreel that they may not say, This is Jezebel.’” [end text]

Verse 30. Jehu returns to Jezreel from the area near Megiddo. He is looking for Jezebel. She knows he killed her son, the king, and he is coming for her. She likely knew about Elijah's prophecy about Ahab and his descendants, and that information included her and dogs after her death. Perhaps it was common knowledge or in Ahab's court records, which she may have read.

We cannot be certain if she knew about the death of her grandson, Ahaziah, king of Judah. His death is not mentioned in this part of the story. (It seems that all these events took place within a few days or a few weeks at most.)

Remember, Jezebel murdered the prophets of YHWH, and tried to wipe out all of them from within Israel, including making a direct threat and taking an oath against Elijah. She did this to promote the prophets of Baal, her pagan god. She was also instrumental in promoting peace and cooperation with the southern kingdom of Judah. Her daughter, Athaliah, was the queen mother of Ahaziah, the king of Judah killed by Jehu. Ahab, Jezebel, their sons who were king, and the Judah royalty and officials, all looked back to a time when all the tribes of Israel were united into one kingdom. They sought to restore that reunification on their own basis and not according to God's wishes. They seemed to work toward that goal by creating a mood between the Israelite people of the north and south kingdom, and arranging a marriage to accomplish that goal.

Whatever Jezebel was thinking and whatever she knew, when Jehu came through the gate of the city of Jezreel, she directly confronts Jehu, her son's killer, a military man she knew for many years.

She does not hesitate, but she taunts Jehu with the words: **“Was there peace, Zimri, killer of his lord?”** Who was Zimri? He was a prior king of Israel.

“His official Zimri, chief of half the chariots, conspired against him, while he [Elah, king of Israel] was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza who was over the household at Tirzah. Zimri came in, smote him and put him to death ... and he reigned in his stead.

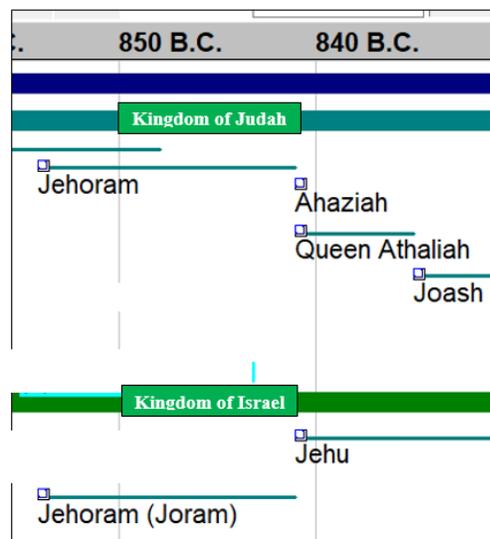
It occurred as he became king and as he sat on his throne that he smote all the house of Baasha; he let remain to him neither a man-child nor his kinsman redeemers nor his associates. Thus Zimri exterminated all the house of Baasha according to the word of Yahweh that He had spoken against Baasha by means of Jehu the prophet, because of all the sins of Baasha and the sins of his son Elah ... provoking Yahweh Elohim of Israel to vexation with their idols of vanity. In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri became king for seven days in Tirzah.”

• 1 Kings 16:9–13, 15

Zimri was a military man who assassinated his king and ruled just 7 days before he was overthrown by Omri, founder of the third dynasty of Israel. Ahab was Omri's son.

Zimri murdered King Elah of Israel, the last of the dynasty from Baasha. Elah killed all of Baasha's relatives, just as King Jehu killed all of Ahab's male relatives, like other kings have done throughout history. It eliminated one source of revenge.^c

It is interesting that Elah's doom was prophesied by a prophet named Jehu.^d The prophet Jehu predicted that Baasha's dynasty and lineage would cease, just like Jeroboam's dynasty and descendants ended, and just as Elijah predicted Ahab's lineage would cease. By calling Jehu “Zimri,” Jezebel taunted him with her own prediction that he would last only days as king, just like Zimri. She was wrong.



Relationships of the Kings of Judah and Israel

^c Remember that even King David was careful which descendants of King Saul he left alive, and which he killed.

^d The prophet Jehu has no relationship to King Jehu anointed by YHWH. The only connection between them was they both were anointed. Prophets are anointed and so are kings.

Zimri was not supported by the people. Both the army and the people supported Jehu. He often demonstrated that support by calling on people to act ... and they did what he told them to do.

Verse 32. Jehu looks up at her and asks to anyone in earshot, **“Who is with me? Who?”** Notice it says **“two or three eunuchs”** looked down at Jehu. We are not told if they said any words, but they did act.

Verse 33. Jehu commanded them to throw her down ... and they did! **“They threw her down”** through the window. The damage described done to her suggests the residence was several stories above street level where Jehu was. Whether the horses **“tramped her down”** because they were frightened, or because they were war horses trained to trample and commanded to do so, we are not told.

Verses 34–35. Jehu calmly entered the residence, calmly sat down, ate, and drank. Royalty must have its due, so he ordered her remains be entombed. Only body parts remained, the rest having been dragged away by dogs. Apparently, while Jehu was eating, no one cared what happened to her or her body until Jehu said something. By that time the dogs (likely half domestic and half wild) were drawn by the smell of blood and, had their way with her body. All that happened to Jezebel occurred as YHWH predicted and arranged.

Verses 36 and 37. Jehu gives his version of what YHWH said in the prophecy. The reference to manure likely refers to the waste from the dogs in the field. That way no one could say where Jezebel truly was. She was everywhere. This may indicate that Jezebel was famous, and in some circles beloved (especially by Baal worshippers), and people might have gone to her tomb to honor her. In this worship of Baal, she was a powerful voice for “gods” other than YHWH.

TEXT: Jehu Orders the Murders of Ahab's Remaining Sons

2 Kings 10:1–11

¹ Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. So Jehu wrote scrolls and sent them to Samaria [1] to the chiefs of the city and [2] to the elders and [3] to the foster fathers of Ahab's children, saying,

² **“Now then, upon the coming of this scroll to you, there are with you the sons of your lord; and with you are chariots and horses and a fortress city and weapons. ³ You will select which is the best and the most upright of the sons of your lord, and you will place him on the throne of his father. Then fight for the house of your lord.”**

⁴ But they became very intensely fearful and said, **“Behold the two kings, they did not stand before him. How shall we ourselves stand?”**

⁵ So the one over the house and the one over the city, the elders and the foster fathers sent to Jehu, saying,

“We are your servants, and whatever you say to us we shall do. We shall not make anyone king. What is good in your eyes, do.”

⁶ Then he wrote them a second scroll, saying,

“If you are on my side and you are hearkening to my voice, take the heads of the men who are sons of your lord, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow.”

Now the king's sons, seventy men, were with the great men of the city who were bringing them up.

⁷ It came to pass as the scroll came to them, that they took the king's sons and slew them, seventy men. Then they put their heads in large pots and sent them to him at Jezreel.

⁸ When the messenger came in and told him, saying, **“They brought the heads of the king's sons,”** he [Jehu] replied, **“Place them in two piles at the portal of the gateway until morning.”** ⁹ It came to be in the morning that he went forth and stood in the gateway of the city; he said to all the people,

“You are just. Behold, I myself conspired against my lord and killed him. Yet who smote all of these? ¹⁰ Know indeed that nothing from Yahweh's word shall fall to the earth that Yahweh spoke against the house of Ahab; for Yahweh Himself has done what He spoke by means of His servant Elijah.”

¹¹ And Jehu smote all who had remained from the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his redeemers and his

close acquaintances and his priests until he had let no survivor remain for him.

[end text]

Verse 1. The text specified that the sons of Ahab in Samaria number seventy. “Samaria” here means the capital city. There were other male descendants of Ahab (who are not sons) outside of the capital. Jehu deals with them later. I wonder why the “**sons of Ahab**” (Joram’s brothers) were not with Joram’s army?

Jehu’s letters were sent to three groups of men noted in the text.^e It is unknown if letters were sent to the three groups or to every individual in the three groups. It makes a difference because writing so many scrolls is time consuming even with many scribes. Then they would have to be delivered by hand, whether to three groups, or to dozens or perhaps to seventy men. Apparently Jehu’s letters were kept secret from all of Ahab’s seventy sons.

Verses 2–3. Jehu’s first letter tells them to gather the sons of Ahab and appoint one of them to be the new king and be willing to protect and fight for him.

Verse 4. The readers were confused and they did not know what to do. Was this a test of loyalty by Jehu, would the city chiefs, elders, and foster fathers be fighting against Jehu who just killed both the king of Israel and the king of Judah? No, Jehu was challenging their king against himself and his troops. He knew he was God’s anointed, and he had the army behind him. The leaders in Samaria took another path, they surrendered to Jehu’s wishes.

Verse 5. “**The one over the house,**” likely meant the official in charge of the palace while the (now dead) King Joram was away from the capital. “**The one over the city**” also meant the official in charge while the king was away. They wrote a letter back to Jehu asking for clarification, trying to discern his motives.

Verse 6. A letter came back clarifying Jehu’s intentions. Kill all of Ahab’s sons and send their cut-off heads to Jehu, postmarked to Jezreel. Jehu added “**by this time tomorrow.**” He did not leave them much time to think about other options. Jehu was a very decisive man, confident they would follow his orders.

Verse 7. In this verse a single scroll is referred to. The officials took all the sons and did as Jehu commanded and sent Jehu the heads in Jezreel.

Verse 8. They laid the 70 heads of Ahab’s sons at Jehu’s doorstep.

Verse 9–10. Jehu explained to the people that he conspired against Joram. His audience did not seem upset that Joram is dead. He was likely unpopular. Jehu “spreads the guilt” by indicting the leaders of Samaria who killed more men than Jehu did. He defends himself (and rightly so) that YHWH had prophesied against the house of Ahab, and then he says, “**YHWH Himself has done what He spoke by means of His servant Elijah.**” Jehu was merely carrying out YHWH’s command. That is an amazing statement.

Verse 11. Jehu has his forces round up all four groups of people in Jezreel: (1) from the house of Ahab; (2) all his redeemers; (3) Ahab’s close acquaintances; and (4) his priests, all pagan and particularly the priests of Baal who served Ahab and Jezebel. Jehu killed them all, how many is unknown.

TEXT: Jehu Kills Relatives of Ahaziah, King of Judah

2 Kings 10:12–14

¹² Then he arose and set out and went to Samaria. On the way when he was at Beth-eked of the

2 Chronicles 22:8 (out of sequence)

^e The King James Version as follows (and most English translations are similar), 2 Kings 10:1, KJV:

“**And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to them that brought up Ahab’s children, saying, ...**”

The phrase “**the rulers of Jezreel**” is in the Hebrew text, but not in the Greek Old Testament of this verse. The Concordant Literal Version agreed with the Greek for that verse. One does wonder, why would “**the rulers of Jezreel**” be in the city of Samaria and not in the city of Jezreel? The Net Bible has a useful note on this verse giving a possible explanation. The note correctly points out that Hebrew text says:

“**to the officers** [rulers, KJV] **of Jezreel, the elders, and to the guardians of Ahab, saying. ...**” It is not certain why the officials of Jezreel would be in Samaria. They may have fled there after they heard what happened to Joram and before Jehu entered the city. They would have had time to flee while Jehu was pursuing Ahaziah.”

shepherds,

¹³ Jehu himself came upon the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah. He said, **“Who are you?”**

And they replied,

“We are brothers of Ahaziah. We are going down to bid peace to the sons of the king and the sons of the queen-mother.”

¹⁴ He said, **“Grab them alive.”** So they grabbed them alive and slew them at the cistern of Beth-eked, forty-two men; and he let not one of them remain.

⁸ So it came about while Jehu was bringing the house of Ahab to judgment, he found the chief officials of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah’s brothers ministering to Ahaziah,

and he killed them.

[end text]

2 Kings 10:12. Jehu next traveled to the city of Samaria. The term “Beth-eked” is used as if it was a well-known place, but the term simply means “house of binding” which refers to binding of sheep for shearing. The usual English translation is “house of shearing.”

2 Chronicles 22:8. This verse does not designate where Jehu met Ahaziah’s brothers (his sons). They were going to Jezreel to visit their brother. They had not heard that he was dead. It is reasonable to suppose that they did not meet those carrying the King of Judah’s body back to Jerusalem; they took separate routes.

2 Kings 10:12 and 2 Chronicles 22:8, together. There is discrepancy between these two texts. Verse 10:12 says **“the brothers of Ahaziah”** and Verse 22:8 says **“the sons of Ahaziah’s brothers.”** Which is correct? Both are correct. The Hebrew word “brothers” is a general word translated widely and generally it means “relatives” unless additional information is given as in 22:8 where the text reads **“the sons of Ahaziah’s brothers** (or relatives).”

2 Kings 10:13. They were going to make a social call on relatives from their extended family into, so they thought, a friendly kingdom.

Verses 14 and 8. Again, Jehu killed every one of them because they were related to Ahab through marriage and through Ahab’s daughter Athaliah, Ahaziah’s mother. So ... the slaughter continues.

TEXT: Jehu Meets an Ally on the Road

2 Kings 10:15–16

¹⁵ He went on from there and came upon Jehonadab son of Rechab who was on the road to meet him. He blessed him and said to him, **“Is your heart upright with my heart just as my own heart is with your heart?”** Jehonadab replied, **“It is.”**

So Jehu said, **“If it is, do give me your hand.”** He gave him his hand; and he made him get up into the chariot with him. ¹⁶ He said to him, **“Do come with me and see my zeal for Yahweh.”** And he let him ride in his chariot.

[end text]

Verse 15. When you began reading this section, did you think, “This fellow Jehonadab will soon die”? But no, Jehu greets a like-minded ally. Jehonadab was known to Jehu and to many Israelites in both kingdoms as being trustworthy. Jehu certainly thought so. Jehu judged that he and Jehonadab were of like hearts with regard to upholding the correct worship of YHWH. Jehonadab (sometimes spelled Jonadab) was a leader of the Rechabite subtribe of Kenites (1 Chronicles 2:55). He intended to encounter Jehu, as he **“was on the road to meet him.”** Jehu was obviously traveling with a group of soldiers. It seems Jehonadab also was traveling with others.

Verse 16. Jehu recognized in Jehonadab a zeal for YHWH just as he had. Jehu honored Jehonadab by asking him to ride in his chariot.

The Jewish historian Josephus gives us some additional information known in the 1st century AD. Although it is not Scripture, it does fill in some details:

“After these, there met him a good and a righteous man, whose name was Jehonadab, and who had been his friend of old. He greeted Jehu, and began to commend him, because he had done everything according to the will of God, in **extirpating** [completely eliminating] the house of Ahab.

So Jehu desired him to come up into his chariot, and make his entry with him into Samaria; and told him that he would not spare one wicked man, but would punish the false prophets and false priests, and those who deceived the multitude, and persuaded them to leave the worship of God Almighty and to worship foreign gods; and that it was a most excellent and most pleasing sight to a good and a righteous man to see the wicked punished.

So Jehonadab was persuaded by these arguments, and came up into Jehu’s chariot, and came to Samaria. And Jehu sought out all Ahab’s kindred, and slew them.”

• *Antiquities of the Jews 9:132–134*

Next, Jehonadab helped Jehu wipe out the nest of Baal worship in Samaria.

TEXT: Jehu Destroys Baal Worship

2 Kings 10:17–28

¹⁷ When he came to Samaria, he smote all who had remained from the house of Ahab in Samaria until he had exterminated it, according to the word of Yahweh that He had spoken to Elijah.

¹⁸ Then Jehu convened all the people and said to them,

“**Ahab, he served Baal a little; Jehu, he shall serve him much more.** ¹⁹ **So call now to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants and all his priests. Let not one be missing, because I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Everyone who should be missing shall not live.**”

As for Jehu, he acted furtively in order to destroy the servants of Baal.

²⁰ When Jehu ordered, “**Hallow a day of restraint** [sacredness] **for Baal**,” they called it out.

²¹ Then Jehu sent word through all of Israel, and all the servants of Baal came, and not one remained who did not come. They entered the house of Baal so that the house of Baal was full, end to end.

²² Jehu said to the one over the wardrobe, “**Bring forth clothing for all the servants of Baal**”; and he brought forth the clothing for them.

²³ Then Jehu entered the house of Baal with Jehonadab son of Rechab; he said to the servants of Baal, “**Search and see lest any one be here with you from the servants of Yahweh, save the servants of Baal, they alone.**” ²⁴ Then he came in to make sacrifices and ascent offerings. Jehu himself had posted eighty of his men outside and had ordered,

“**The man who should allow escape to anyone from the men whom I am bringing into your hands, his soul shall be instead of his soul.**”

²⁵ It came to be as he finished making the ascent offering that Jehu ordered the runners and the adjutants, “**Come, smite them! Not one must come forth.**” So they smote them with the edge of the sword. The runners and the adjutants flung the bodies out and went into the innermost sanctuary of the house of Baal.

²⁶ They brought forth the monument of the house of Baal and burned it. ²⁷ They tore down the altar of Baal; they also tore down the house of Baal and turned it into latrines until this day. ²⁸ Thus Jehu exterminated the house of Baal in Israel. **[end text]**

Verse 17. Almost as an aside the narrative tells about further slaughter in the city of Samaria where more males “**who had remained from the house of Ahab**” were exterminated “**according to the word of YHWH that He had spoken to Elijah.**” Jehu was God’s agent fulfilling His word.

Verse 18. I find this interesting. Jehu slaughters all from the house of Ahab within Samaria. You would think people would be wary of Jehu, but apparently not. Jehu's killing was specifically targeted. The ordinary man and woman had nothing to fear. Friends of Ahab or his sons had nothing to fear (unless they helped them escape judgment). Even pagan religions and their priests thought they had nothing to fear.

Verse 19. Jehu's letter proclaimed his love for Baal. He (suspiciously in my view) strengthened his call for priests of Baal to attend by threatening death to those who did **not** attend. It was all a ruse to destroy Baal's priests. All of Jehu's words were a trick to lead the priests of Baal to their death.

Verse 20. The priests echoed Jehu's words throughout the city. They thought Baal was to be honored in Samaria. That is what the new king told them. Josephus said not only priests were there, but also the prophets as well as the servants of Baal (*Antiquities of the Jews* 9:125).

Verse 21. The house of Baal was in the Israelite capital city of Samaria. Here is the reminder of how Ahab began Baal worship to the northern kingdom of Israel and constructed the temple to Baal:

“So it came to pass (as if it was lightly esteemed by him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat) that he took as wife Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians. Then he went to serve Baal and worshiped him. He set up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal that he built in Samaria.”

• *1 Kings 16:31–32*

All of these acts of Ahab were to be reversed in one day at God's command. Jehu suddenly made every priest of Baal a very important person. All of them were present, suspecting nothing. It was crowded in that pagan temple.

What went on in the rituals inside the temples of Baal? About three hundred years after Jehu, the prophet Jeremiah tells us what Baal worship involved in Jerusalem in the Valley of Hinnom.

“Because they have forsaken Me and are making this place foreign and are fuming incense in it to other elohim that they have not known, they or their fathers or the kings of Judah, and they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, and because they have built the high places of Baal [for what purpose?] to burn their sons with fire as ascent offerings to Baal, which I did not instruct nor even speak of, nor did it come up on My heart, ...”

• *Jeremiah 19:4–5*

Jeremiah mentions this horror later about abominations occurring in the Temple in Jerusalem:

“They placed their abominations in the House over which My Name is called [why?], to defile it. And they built the high places of Baal which are in the ravine of the son of Hinnom, to have their sons and their daughters pass through fire for Molech (which I did not instruct them, nor did it come up on my heart), to do this abhorrence that it may cause Judah to sin.”

• *Jeremiah 32:34–35*

Does anyone think less defiling activities went on in the temple of Baal in Samaria centuries before the time of Jeremiah? Does anyone think that the arrival of Baal worship with Jezebel made her less murderous?

Verse 22. They had religious raiment to separate the Baal clergy from the people. Jehu provided all of this to the priests.

Verse 23. The king himself entered the temple of Baal with Jehonadab, ordering those of Baal to point out everyone who was not a true worshipper of their god, perhaps spies. This was to be a special event, exclusive to Baal officials only.

Verse 24. Jehu was inside preparing to make sacrifices and offerings, meanwhile 80 soldiers gathered outside the temple. When the Baal priests tried to get out, the soldiers had orders to kill all of them. None was to escape, and if they did, the soldier letting that happen would die.

Verse 25. Jehu ordered that all of those inside the temple were to be killed. The bodies were carried outside. At the place of sacrifice, Jehu sacrificed the priests in the house of Baal.

Verse 26. The “monument” is usually translated as “pillar,” “stele,” perhaps it was a phallus. Pagans were not prudish. It was probably made of wood because they burned it.

Verse 27. The altar of Baal was demolished, the “**house of Baal**,” the temple, was torn down and dug under to make latrines for the people of the city.

Verse 28. Jehu’s work of extermination was finished. This work must have sent shudders throughout the Middle East, particularly in Phoenicia with its largest cities of Tyre and Sidon. Jezebel’s father was a king of Sidon. She brought priests of Baal into Israel. That time there were 450 of them. That is how many died at Mt. Carmel in the confrontation with Elijah as to who was supreme, YHWH or the pagan god Baal (1 Kings 18:1–40; the number of Baal prophets killed in 1 Kings 18:22 is 450).

Now again, probably hundreds more priests were killed by Jehu. It wiped out Baal worship in Israel, but pagan worship continued alongside worship of YHWH. Other gods were continually worshipped in the northern kingdom.

TEXT: Jehu’s Faults and Death

2 Kings 10:29–36

²⁹ But as for the sins of Jeroboam son of Nabat with which he caused Israel to sin, Jehu did not withdraw from following them: the calves of gold that were in Bethel and in Dan. ³⁰ So Yahweh said to Jehu,

“Because you did well in doing what is upright in My eyes and you did to the house of Ahab according to all that was in My heart, sons of yours to the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel.”

³¹ Yet Jehu, he was not on guard to walk in the law of Yahweh Elohim of Israel with all his heart. He did not withdraw from the sins of Jeroboam with which he caused Israel to sin.

³² In those days Yahweh started to cut away parts of Israel; and Hazael smote them in all the territory of Israel ³³ from the Jordan toward sunrise, all the land of Gilead, the Gadite, the Reubenite and the Manassite, from Aroer that is on the ridge of Wadi Arnon, up to Gilead and Bashan.

³⁴ As for the rest of the affairs of Jehu, all that he did, and all his masterful deeds, are they not written on the scroll of the annals of the days of the kings of Israel?

³⁵ Then Jehu lay down with his fathers, and they entombed him in Samaria; his son Jehoahaz reigned in his stead. ³⁶ The days that Jehu was king over Israel were twenty-eight years in Samaria. **[end text]**

Verse 29. No one ever was perfect except Christ, and Jehu certainly was not sinless by any means. He continued the risky game of polytheistic worship begun with Jeroboam the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel. That means YHWH was worshipped, that is certain, but the worship of other gods was permitted and openly practiced. That had never been good enough for the true God of creation.

Verse 30. YHWH gives Jehu credit for strictly following His commands regarding Ahab’s family and gives him and Israel a temporary reprieve for the idolatry of the people.

Jehu was founder of the fourth dynasty of the northern kingdom. Jeroboam founded the first, Baasha the second, Omri the third dynasty. All three dynasties had their male line wiped out, just as Jehu exterminated Ahab’s male descendants from the Omeride dynasty. The dynasty founded by Jehu went for four generations, the longest of the four dynasties. The end to Jehu’s dynasty and the kingdom is announced in Hosea 1:4:

“Yahweh said to him: ‘Call his name Jezreel, for in a little while I will visit the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu, and I will cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.’”

Verse 31. Jehu seemed to be agnostic about God. Perhaps it was all the blood he shed in obedience to God’s judgment upon Ahab’s family. Or, more likely, he simply did not care which “god” people worshipped, just so it was not Baal. We know from the text that Jehu referred frequently to YHWH, so he cared about YHWH’s opinion. He experienced YHWH’s actions in his own life. He was a witness to Elijah giving

YHWH's prophecy to Ahab. He respected Elisha enough to receive, listen to, and obey YHWH's anointing and mission. Note the mentions of Jeroboam are in verses 29 and 31, before and after YHWH's praise of Jehu. This foreshadows God's future judgment upon Jehu's royal descendants.

Only with regard to Baal worship did Jehu obey YHWH. He did not care if people worshipped other gods. Perhaps he thought the golden calves were harmless, or they represented minor gods of no importance compared to YHWH. Whatever the case, Jehu did not do what YHWH clearly stated through Moses, what the people of Israel were to do:

“You shall destroy, yea destroy all the places where the nations (whom you are dispossessing) have served their elohim on the high mountains, on the hills and under every flourishing tree. You will tear down their altars and break their monuments; their Asherah poles you shall burn with fire, and the carvings of their elohim you shall hack down; thus you will destroy their name from that place.”

• *Deuteronomy 12:2–3*

Verses 32–33. The prophecy and weeping lament of Elisha the prophet came true in 2 Kings 8:12, that Hazael, King of Syria (a tough king-killer like Jehu) would attack, harass, and conquer portions of Israel with great loss of life and horror. Hazael did that during the reign of Jehu of Israel.^f

Remember the fears and weeping of Elisha for his people Israel:

“Now Hazael said, ‘for what reason is my lord lamenting [weeping]?’

He [Elisha] replied, ‘Because I know what evil you shall do to the sons of Israel. Their fortresses shall you consign to fire; their choice young men shall you kill with the sword; their infants shall you dash to pieces; and their pregnant women shall you rend open.’

Then Hazael said, ‘Indeed, what is your servant, a mere dog, that he might perform this great thing?’

Elisha replied, ‘Yahweh has shown me you as king over Syria.’”

• *2 Kings 8:12–13*

YHWH punished Israel and Jehu by bringing the foreigner to attack the Promised Land. Hazael would have success against Israel east of the Jordan River, the very evils that caused the prophet Elisha to weep, evils done to the people Elisha loved. Again the Jewish historian Josephus gives us additional commentary on Jehu's lack of success defending Israel east of Jordan. His sources other than Scripture are unknown:

“Now Hazael, king of Syria, fought against the Israelites and their king Jehu, and spoiled the eastern parts of the country beyond Jordan, which belonged to the Reubenites and Gadites, and to [the half tribe of] Manassites; as also Gilead and Bashan, burning, and spoiling, and offering violence to all that he laid his hands on, and this without impeachment from Jehu, who made no haste to defend the country when it was under this distress:

nay, he was become a condemner of religion, and a despiser of holiness, and of the laws, and died when he had reigned over the Israelites twenty-seven years. He was buried in Samaria, and left Jehoahaz his son as his successor in the government.”

• *Antiquities of the Jews 9:159–160*

Elisha's lament over YHWH's prophecy about Hazael came true. It seems Jehu made little effort to defend his country. Why? We will not know until we are resurrected. Then we can ask Jehu ourselves.

David Sielaff, February 2018

^f In the anointing of Hazael of Syria, Elisha gave YHWH's message to Hazael and personally anointed him as King of Syria. For Jehu, Elisha sent a messenger to give YHWH's prophecy and anoint him as the future king. He did not go himself. Elisha distanced himself from the future act of Jehu's regicide, but fulfilling God's command.