

10. The bloodbath of Israel

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Whether you look at it from spiritual, physical or emotional aspect, the Bible is not, by any means, an easy reading book. In my opinion, chapter 9 and 10 of 2 Kings show probably the most gruesome, gory and grizzly detail of bloodbath in the history of Israel. It should be rated 'R' for violence.

However, this portion of the OT was written for us to learn from other people's sins that we may not repeat them for ourselves. Someone who was very wise once said, "Those who fail to learn from history, are doomed to relive it."

1 Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

The kings of Israel that was the northern kingdom, and Judah that was the southern kingdom made unholy and ungodly alliances with pagans, such as Jezebel who became a queen of Israel. By Jezebel, even a king of Judah was influenced to be ungodly. Leading others to worship anything other than God is far worse than following false spiritual leaders blindly.

Our God is a jealous God. He does not share our love with anyone, any idol, or anything for that matter. It is not because He is an insecure God, rather He knows what would happen to us at the end if we put our allegiance with the ungodly. He is jealous for us, our safety and our eternal future. After all, our God is a loving, merciful and gracious God.

A. ANOINTING JEHU AS A KING OF ISRAEL

2 Kings 9:1-13 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. 2 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. 3 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." 4 So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. 5 And when he arrived, there were the captains of the army sitting; and he said, "I have a message for you, Commander." Jehu said, "For which one of us?" And he said, "For you, Commander." 6 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. 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. 8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free. 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. 10 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. 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?" And he said to them, "You know the man and his babble." 12 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."'" 13 Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

The scene now shifts to Ramoth Gilead where Israel and Judah had combined their forces to recover the city from the Syrians. One of the key commanders of the Israeli army was Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, but not to be confused with Jehoshaphat who was king of Judah.

Unknown to Jehu, the prophet Elisha had dispatched one of the sons of the prophets to anoint him king of Israel.

It's interesting that the young prophet called the people of Israel "the people of the Lord" in v6. Even though Israel and Judah were separate kingdoms and not obedient to the covenant and they practically forsook the Lord, God's grace is so amazing and He still called them "the people of the Lord".

Jehu's new and divine assignment was to wipe out the family of Ahab in Israel and execute God's judgment upon them because of the innocent people they had killed and Ahab's family led the nation to pagan worship.

Jehu was the only king of the northern kingdom Israel to have been anointed. The act of spreading out the garments by the fellow officer was one of recognition, loyalty and promise of support. We find the same example when Jesus was entering into Jerusalem, the people did that.

Matthew 21:8 And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

B. JEHU'S REVOLT AGAINST JORAM

2 Kings 9:20-26 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!" 21 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. 22 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?" 23 Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!" 24 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. 25 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: 26 '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."

Jehu was such an intense man that his personality could be easily seen in the way he drove a chariot. I don't know why, but I imagine Jehu was looked like one of those "Hell's Angels" biker dude with big bulging muscles, thick dark beard and mustache and tattoos all over his body and riding his chariot with his high handle bars with loud mufflers.

Maybe some of you are like Jehu when you drive your car. People can tell it is you by the way you drive – you take off fast as soon as the light changes and weave in and out of the lanes, then you practically stand on the brake when you get to the next red light and you are only two inches away from the car in front of you.

I used to have a dinky blue Mitsubishi Mirage like this one. It went top speed of 50 miles per hour on good day, but on bad day it used to die in a middle of intersection. Once I pulled up to a traffic light and waited for the light to change. A brand new Pontiac Firebird with a pure muscle engine pulled up next to me. I couldn't resist. I put my shift in neutral and revved it up to make that pathetic engine noise. What do you know, the Firebird driver took the bait and he took off like a jack rabbit as soon as the light changed. Too bad there was no cop around. They were probably having donuts somewhere. What has this silly story got to with the sermon? Absolutely nothing. Let's move on.

This was the land that Ahab and Jezebel had so wickedly obtained by murdering the innocent owner of the land – Naboth. On this very land – which, as far as God was concerned, still belonged to Naboth – the family of Ahab would meet its judgment.

None of them wanted peace with God; nor did Ahab and Jezebel want peace with Naboth. Now the wicked, compromising Joram wanted peace with Jehu.

That is a typical mindset of unbelievers. They have nothing to do with God until something disastrous and catastrophic things happen in their lives, then they seek God's help and blessings or think that He owes them some favors. There is a Hebrew word for that – 'NOT'! Our God does not owe anything to anyone. We owe everything including the very lives we have and the breath we take to God.

At this point, Jehu's mind was not filled with thoughts of political gain and royal glory. He did this for the honor of God, as a conscious executor of divine judgment against the house of Ahab. He simply was doing what he was told to do.

I believe that Jehu was an excellent marksman to hit a man's heart on a fast moving chariot, but it was God that guided his arrow.

C. AN EXTENDED THOUGHT

Before we go any further, we have to think about the fate of king Ahaziah of Judah. Ahaziah was a son of Athaliah who was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. We are going to learn more about Athaliah next study. Though he had a family tie with this ungodly king Joram, he didn't have to be with him by choice. By putting himself with the association with Joram, Ahaziah was killed by Jehu.

Whom do you hang around with? Who are your friends? Do you prefer to hang around with the people who love Jesus and want to do what the Lord wants and obey His commands? Or would you prefer to be around the people who want carnal things, worldly things and enjoy dirty jokes and filthy movies and songs.

If you'd like to hang around with ungodly people, it is because you want to be carnal and flesh from deep inside of your heart rather than seeking to be a godly person of God. We can evaluate a person's character by the people he or she hangs around.

1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

I am not saying that Christians can not be with unbelievers at all. Then they would never get to know about Jesus. And the coworkers at your workplace and the majority of your neighbors are unbelievers. We need to be salt and light in this dark, decaying and dying world.

But you don't want to associate with them to be edified or to encourage one another. What you get from the world does not edify your spirit. These are what you get from the world:

Galatians 5:19-21 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But when you cultivate your spirit with the Word of God and godly people, this is what you get:

Galatians 5:22-23a But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control.

In the OT, we find a couple of godly men – Abraham and Moses – very close to God. *Exodus 33:11* So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend

James 2:23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God.

We don't need to envy them. Actually, they should envy us. Because Jesus calls us His friends.

John 15:15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

But before we get all excited and think that we can get away with whatever we want since we are friends of God, there is a little string attached, but not burdensome.

John 15:14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

My wife Karen is my best friend. As an expression of my love and friendship for her, I try to do what pleases her. Do I do everything right for her all the time? Are you kidding me? Just ask her. No, don't ask her. But I try.

This obedience to God should not be too hard because of whom we are obedient to. This is Jesus asking for our obedience. That changes everything, because we love Him. When we are in love with God, obedience will not be a duty, rather it will be a delight. And if our Christian life has become drudgery, merely consisting of rules and regulations, then we are missing out on what friendship with God is all about.

I'd rather be a friend of God which is the greatest privilege anyone can have than a friend of the world.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

D. JEZEBEL'S VIOLENT DEATH

2 Kings 9:30-37 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. 31 Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?" 32 And he looked up at the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" So two or three eunuchs looked out at him. 33 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. 34 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." 35 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. 36 Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, "This is the word of the Lord, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; 37 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.'"

Jezebel was the queen mother at that time. She realized that her destiny was about to end, but she still wanted to show off her power even though she had none.

I am not gonna make any comment about women and their make-up. My mama might raise a stupid, but not a suicidal.

Thrown out through a castle window, trampled under the horse's feet, eaten by wild dogs – this gruesome scene was predicted by Elijah. God's Word never fails but accomplishes His purposes on the earth.

E. JEHU'S KILLING SPREES CONTINUED

2 Kings 10:29-31 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. 30 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." 31 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.

I believe in short time, Jehu killed and had people to kill all the family members of Ahab, their close acquaintances and priests, even king Ahaziah's relatives. God commanded him to do this.

In my opinion, v31 should be an alarming verse for all of us. Jehu served God and did what he was told by God, yet he did not have a heart for the Lord. How can it be? Actually, it is very easy. We can do about God's business, yet too busy to spend time to love Him and get to know Him through His Word and prayers.

You all remember the story of Martha and Mary in the Gospels. Martha was all work while Mary was all worship of Jesus when He visited them at their home in Bethany. We need to love the Lord with all of our hearts, minds and souls and serve Him with our hearts and bodies. Otherwise, we end up doing the work of God without loving the Lord.

F. APPLICATIONS

- 1) We need to choose carefully whom will be our close friends. Either they will help us to be closer to the Lord or drag us down and away from Him.
- 2) We can remain as friends of God by constant obedience and fellowship with Him through the Word of God and prayers.