

THE DAYS OF ELIJAH

LESSON 10: JEHOVAH JUDGES HIS PEOPLE (2KINGS 8-10)

In our last few lessons we have been tracing the fall of Ahab and his house as foretold by Elijah: "Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked Me to anger, and because you have made Israel sin. Of Jezebel also has the Lord spoken, saying, 'The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.' The one belonging to Ahab, who dies in the city, the dogs will eat, and the one who dies in the field the birds of heaven will eat." (1Kings 21.21-24). In our last lesson we noted the death of Ahab, fulfilling a portion of this prophecy (1Kings 22.37-38), but for the rest of the prophecy to be fulfilled another portion of Scripture would have to be fulfilled.

Recall that when Elijah was despondent and appeared before the Lord at Mt. Horeb, the Lord gave him this commission: "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus, and when you have arrived, you shall anoint Hazael king over Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint king over Israel; and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall come about, the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall put to death." (1Kings 19.15-17) As we come to 2Kings 8.7, Elijah had anointed Elisha (1Kings 19) but had himself been called up to heaven (2Kings 2). Yet, Elisha would fulfill the commission by anointing both Hazael and Jehu. God's judgment would come upon Ahab's family, and upon all of Israel.

Note: given that this is a large portion of text, we will focus on a few main points from the passage.

THE RISE OF HAZAEL:

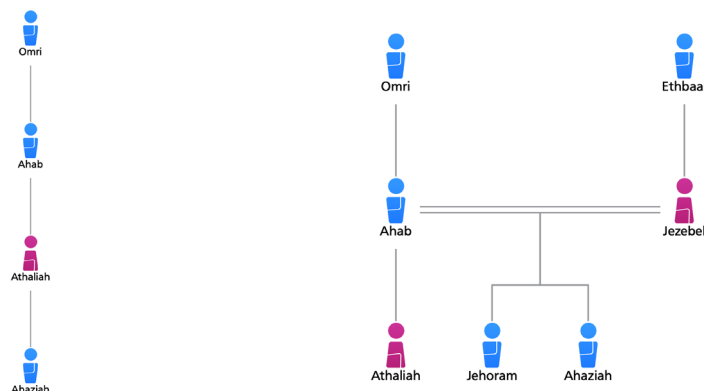
- "Hazael was a strong king of Aram (c. 843–796/7 bc). He is named in contemporary Assyrian records as the 'son of a nobody', i.e. his lineage is not recorded, probably as a commoner and not necessarily as a usurper. He seized the throne after the assassination of Ben Hadad II and was forced to pay a hundred talents of gold and a thousand talents of silver as tribute to Shalmaneser III of Assyria who besieged his capital Damascus" (Tyndale Bible Commentary)
- Vs. 8, interesting that Ben-hadad had more regard for God's prophet than Ahab demonstrated. Likely due to the curing of Naaman (2Kings 5).
- Vs. 10, this prophecy could be explained by the fact that Ben-hadad did not die from his sickness but was assassinated (vs. 15).
- Vs. 12, Hazael would inflict much damage to Israel (2Kings 8.28; 9.14; 10.32; 12.17-18; 13.3,22).

DISLIKE FOR THE DYNASTY OF AHAB?

- It could be that Ahab and his house were not well liked among the people of Israel. Note how many were willing to join in the uprising against his house:
 - » The servants of Ahab were quick to proclaim Jehu as king (9.13)
 - » The messengers of Joram fell-in behind Jehu (9.18-19)
 - » Officials of Jezreel threw Jezebel down to her death (9.32-33)
 - » The guardians of Ahab's 70 sons slew them and proclaimed Jehu as their king (10.1-11)
 - » Jehonadab joined himself to Jehu in order to eradicate the house of Ahab and the prophets of Baal (10.15ff)
- Yet, even though the people may have been against Ahab and his house, they were still not for Jehovah. They would continue in the sins of Jeroboam (10.28-31) and thus they would suffer judgment from God. First at the hands of Hazael (10.32-33), but ultimately from the hands of the Assyrians (2Kings 17).

DESTRUCTION OF AHAB'S FAMILY

- As we noted in our last lesson, the thrones of Israel and Judah were now intertwined. Jehoshaphat had allied himself with Ahab (2Chronicles 18.1) by taking Ahab's daughter as a bride for his son. Thus, when we come to 2Kings 9 both thrones were occupied by Ahab's descendants: Joram, son of Ahab, ruled in Israel and Ahaziah, grandson of Ahab (2Kings 8.25-27) reigned in Judah.
- Thus, Jehu's actions in 2Kings 9-10 show how he eradicated Ahab's house in both Israel and Judah.
 - » Jehu slew Joram, king of Israel (2Kings 9.14-26)
 - » Jehu slew Ahaziah, king of Judah (2Kings 9.27-28)
 - » Jezebel was thrown down to her death (2Kings 9.30-37)
 - » Ahab's 70 sons were slain (2Kings 10.1-11)
 - » Relatives of Ahaziah were slain (2Kings 10.12-14)
 - » Rest of Ahab's house in Samaria was slain (2Kings 10.15-17)
 - » Baal prophets were slain (2Kings 10.18-28)



THE TRAGEDY OF JEHU

- Jehu did much to please the Lord in executing His judgment, so he was rewarded with the promise that four generations of his sons would rule on the throne (10.30).
- However, Jehu did not follow the Lord with all of his heart: "But Jehu was not careful to walk in the law of the Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, which he made Israel sin." (10.31)
- Thus, Hazael began to take pieces of the promised land away from Israel (10.32-33).
- The commission of Elijah in 1Kings 19.15-17 was fulfilled. Those who escaped from Jehu would be taken by Hazael. None of Israel would escape the Lord's justice.