

Old Testament History

The Divided Kingdom – Lesson 7

Background:

Introduction:

Even though Joram was still ruling in Israel, God had other plans for this wicked king. Elisha, led by God, sent a young prophet to the battlefield at Ramoth-gilead to anoint the successful military commander, Jehu (841-814 BC), as the next king of Israel (2 Kings 9:6). The prophet instructed him to cut off the house of Ahab, including the old queen Jezebel, and avenge the blood of all the prophets who had suffered at his hands. Jehu left the battlefield to others and returned to Jezreel as quickly as possible. He knew Joram, who had been sick, was recuperating there. Without delay, Jehu encountered Joram, took his bow and arrows, and slew the wicked king (2 Kings 9:24). Jehu also found Ahaziah, king of Judah, who was also related to Ahab's dynasty, and assassinated him at the same time (2 Kings 9:27).

In one act of revenge, both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah suddenly found themselves without kings. Jezebel, who had heard the commotion, looked out the window of her chamber. When Jehu saw her, he ordered her chamberlains to cast her bodily through the opening. They did as they had been ordered. As Elijah had prophesied, the dogs immediately came and ate her flesh so that there was barely any remains of the vial queen to be buried.

Jehu didn't stop there. He proceeded to slaughter the seventy sons of Ahab, and even went so far as to annihilate the family of Ahaziah of Judah, whom he found along the way. Then he took measures to rid the land of the worship of Baal.

Jehu invited the priests of Baal to assemble at the great temple of Baal at Samaria under the pretense of holding an important religious observance. When they had all come and were securely locked inside the building, Jehu turned his soldiers loose on the defenseless priests who were all mercilessly slaughtered. "Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel" (2 Kings 10:28). From that time the worship of Baal was a matter of little concern. However, it seems Jehu did more than the will of God in some ways in his haughty pride and utter ruthlessness. Although he had dealt such a devastating blow to the followers of Baal, Jehu failed to remove the golden images from the shrines at Dan and Bethel and apparently resorted to worshipping them, as the kinds of Israel had done before him.

All this violence and brutality shortened the rule of Jehu. For years later another family took the throne. However, during this time Jehu faced other challenges. His kingdom began facing a renewed threat by the Assyrians, and in particular, Shalmaneser III (c.

858-824 BC) who forced Jehu to pay tribute to Assyria. Jehu also faced encroachments into Israel by Hazael, the king of Damascus (2 Kings 10:32-33)

Historical Notes:

The archaeologist Henry Layard discovered this black limestone obelisk in 1846 during his excavations of the site of Kalhu, the ancient Assyrian capital. The obelisk (6.5 x 1.5 feet) was erected by king Shalmaneser III as a public monument in 825 BC during a time of war. The relief sculptures glorify the achievements of Shalmaneser III (c. 858-824 BC) and his chief minister. It lists their military campaigns over a period of more than thirty years, and lists the tribute they received from their conquered lands: including camels, monkeys, an elephant and a rhinoceros. According to history, Assyrian kings apparently were fond of collecting exotic animals and plants as an expression of their power and dominance over foreign lands.



There are five scenes of tribute on the obelisk, each of which occupies four panels on the face of the obelisk, and are identified by a line of cuneiform script above the panels. One of those scenes shows Shalmaneser III receiving tribute from Jehu, king of Israel.

This is the earliest surviving picture of an Israelite, Jehu, who paid tribute to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III during the first year of Jehu's reign (c. 841 BC). The caption

above the scene, written in Assyrian cuneiform, can be translated:



The tribute of Jehu, son of Omri: I received from him silver, gold, a golden bowl, a golden vase with pointed bottom, golden tumblers, golden buckets, tin, a staff for a king [and] spears.

Outline:

I. Jehu King in Israel (2 Kings 9:1-10)

- A. Jehu anointed King of Israel (2 Kings 9:1-10)
- B. Jehu's divine commission (2 Kings 9:11-37; 2 Chronicles 22:7-9)
- C. Jehu purges the house of Ahab (2 Kings 10:1-36; 2 Chronicles 22:8)

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The Exposition:

I. Jehu King in Israel (2 Kings 9:1-10)

A. Jehu anointed King of Israel (2 Kings 9:1-10)

1. Elisha sent one of the children of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead for what mission? (2 Kings 9:1-3)
2. Who was Jehu? (2 Kings 9:4-5)
3. The prophet told Jehu he was anointed as king of Israel by whom? (2 Kings 9:6)
4. Who had been instructed by God previously to anoint Jehu as king? (1 Kings 19:16)
5. What message did the prophet deliver to Jehu regarding the house of Ahab and Jezebel? (2 Kings 9:7-10)

B. Jehu's divine commission (2 Kings 9:11-37; 2 Chronicles 22:7-9)

1. What conversation transpired between Jehu and his servants? (2 Kings 9:11-13)

2. Who did Jehu, who had been left in charge at Ramoth-gilead by Joram, conspire against and went to what city? (2 Kings 9:14-16)

3. Describe Jehu's approach to Jezreel in his chariot. (2 Kings 9:17-20)

4. How was Joram, king of Israel, slain? (2 Kings 9:21-24)

5. Where was his body cast? (2 Kings 9:25-26)

6. Describe the death of Ahaziah, king of Judah. (2 Kings 9:27-28; 2 Chronicles 22:7-9)

7. When Jehu entered Jezreel, who spoke to him from an upper window? (2 Kings 9:30-31)

8. What did Jehu command the servants to do? When they complied, what did he do? (2 Kings 9:32-33)

9. Why did Jehu command his servants to bury Jezebel? What did they find when they went to bury her? (2 Kings 9:34-35)

10. What prophecies did the death of Jezebel fulfill? (2 Kings 9:36-37; cf. 1 Kings 21:23; 2 Kings 9:10)

C. Jehu purges the house of Ahab (2 Kings 10:1-36; 2 Chronicles 22:8)

1. How were the seventy sons of Ahab slain? (2 Kings 10:1-8)

2. How did Jehu justify his deed? (2 Kings 10:9-10)

3. Who did Jehu slay in Jezreel? (2 Kings 10:11)

4. Describe Jehu's execution of the princes of Judah. How many did he kill? (2 Kings 10:12-14; 2 Chronicles 22:8)

5. Who did Jehu slay in Samaria? (2 Kings 10:15-17)

6. The destruction of the house of Ahab was a fulfillment of the prophecies of what prophet? (2 Kings 10:17; cf. 1 Kings 21:21-24)

7. Describe Jehu's destruction of the Baal worshippers and the house of Baal. (2 Kings 10:18-28)

8. What sins did Jehu commit? (2 Kings 10:29, 31)

9. What promise did the Lord make to Jehu? (2 Kings 10:30)

10. Who began to afflict Israel during the reign of Jehu? (2 Kings 10:32-33)

Application:

In your own words, explain the lessons we can learn from these events, and how those lessons can be applied to present-day situations?