

### Jehu Eliminates Everyone Associated with King Ahab

#### 2 Kings 10:1-17

**2 Kings 10:1-17** - *“Now Ahab had seventy 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 them, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel. 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.”*

*In the morning, 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.” 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.*

*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?” So 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.*

*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.” 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.” So they had him ride in his chariot. And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria.”*

#### Background Notes

The prophet Elijah had predicted the downfall of the dynasty of King Ahab. God used Jehu to accomplish His purposes of removing the house of Ahab. In 2 Kings 9, Ahab’s son, King Jehoram, and the wicked queen mother Jezebel, were all killed by the hand of Jehu.

In 2 Kings 10, Jehu made his move to fully establish his dynasty and remove any possible claims to the throne by remnants of Ahab's line. Jehu forced the hands of the officials and elders in Israel, and had them kill all seventy sons of Ahab. The elders sent their heads in baskets to Jezreel, and Jehu had the heads piled up in two heaps outside the gate of Jezreel. Pretty gruesome, isn't it?

Then when Jehu was on his way to Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, he met 42 brothers (or relatives) of King Ahaziah of Judah. What did Jehu do? He killed them too! Why kill the brothers of Ahaziah of Judah? Because King Ahaziah was a grandson of King Ahab through his mother, Athaliah. In 2 Kings 9 Jehu killed King Ahaziah of Judah along with King Jehoram of Israel. Here in chapter 10, he had all of Ahab's sons killed, and then he killed 42 brothers of Ahaziah. All these men were descendants of Ahab, and thus all were possible rivals to the throne.

Finally, we read in verse 17: *"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."*

## Doctrinal Points

### 1. Religious zeal may have a hidden agenda.

Jehu did all this killing in the name of the Lord. It was done with religious zeal. This is Jehu speaking, *"Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the Lord which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab."* And look what Jehu said to Jehonadab in verse 16: *"Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord."*

Who was Jehonadab? He was the founder of a strict conservative sect within Israel. His followers were still around, by the way, in Jeremiah's time, a couple hundred years later. They're mentioned in Jeremiah 35. The fact that Jehonadab joined Jehu in his chariot shows that the very conservative Jehonadab approved of what Jehu was doing, to rid the northern kingdom of the wicked dynasty of Ahab.

The point here is: there is no doubt that King Jehu had a lot of religious zeal. But religious zeal may have a hidden agenda.

What was the bottom line for Jehu? Was it to serve the Lord and turn the northern kingdom of Israel back to the Lord? **No.** As we follow the record of Jehu, we see that he had a hidden agenda. He was out to advance his own political career. His standard operating procedure was, "What's in it for Jehu?"

Inviting Jehonadab to ride in his chariot, for example, was part of his political agenda as well. Why not let people see Jehonadab riding in the chariot with Jehu – what a great visual! That would be like having the religious right and moral

majority on your side. Everyone would think Jehu was acting for the Lord, and that his only motive was to turn Israel back to the Lord.

Jehu had zeal without the Spirit. Jehu was an **instrument of God** - but he was **not a servant of God**. Jehu is a glaring example of the biblical truth that religious zeal may have a hidden agenda. There are many other biblical examples of religious zeal hiding a political or personal agenda.

Is it possible that your religious zeal has a hidden agenda? Why do you always want to lead the Bible study? Why do you volunteer to head up that special ministry committee? Why do you really want to be a spiritual leader? Do we really want to serve the Lord - or do we want control, or we want recognition, or we want power, or we want the limelight, or we want to "run the show"? Is there a possible secret agenda?

Let's examine our hearts. Religious zeal can have a secret agenda.

## 2. Religious zeal can go too far.

Hosea prophesied in the northern kingdom of Israel about 100 years after Jehu's time. In Hosea 1:4, God said through the prophet Hosea, *"For in a little while, I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu."* It's quite obvious here that God was not pleased with something about Jehu's executions in Jezreel. And yet 2 Kings 10:17 says, *"And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, according to the word the Lord had spoken to Elijah."*

How do you harmonize these two Scriptures? You see the problem? I think the answer is found in verse 11: Jehu went too far. 2 Kings 10:11, *"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."* God had not commissioned Jehu to kill off anyone he wanted! Jehu's commission was to only execute everyone of the line of Ahab.

Jehu went too far in his zeal. In addition, the fact that Jehu used gruesome Assyrian methods, such as having the sons of Ahab beheaded, and piling their heads up in two heaps at the gate of the city. That gruesome practice may also be included in God's rebuke in Hosea 1:4. In any case, religious zeal can go too far.

Religious zeal can go too far today as well. For example, I know four Christians who have been "excommunicated" by over-zealous church leaders. These Christians were not put out of their church because they held heretical ideas regarding the Person and work of Jesus Christ, or some other critical doctrine. No! They were sent out of the fellowship because they had *minor* doctrinal differences with the church leaders, and they had worshiped with believers from a different denomination! Religious zeal can go too far.

I know of Christian young people who have left the church because some over-zealous legalistic older Christians told them that they had to do this or couldn't do that! Let's make sure that our religious zeal is not misdirected. Religious zeal can go too far.

## **Practical Application**

### **Let's approve the programs of unbelievers if they are in line with the Word of God.**

Where do we see that lesson taught here? We see it in the actions of Jehonadab in verse 15. There's no doubt that Jehonadab knew that Jehu was not a righteous-living man. And Jehonadab certainly knew that Jehu was not a spiritual believer who was committed to the Lord. But Jehonadab approved Jehu's program because it was in line with the Word of God. He knew that Jehu's commission was to end the wicked dynasty of Ahab, and Jehonadab approved it because it was in line with the Word of God to the prophet Elijah.

Jehu's program also included a purge of Baal worship, as we'll see when we study the second half of 2 Kings 10, and Jehonadab approved that because it was in line with the Word of God. So let's approve the programs of unbelievers when they are in line with the Word of God.

Here are some examples. We can approve the programs of non-Christian organizations that are involved in disaster relief, or helping the poor, and other humanitarian efforts. Those programs are in line with the Word of God. We certainly can approve the programs of non-Christian organizations that fight against abortion, and try to build up family values, because that's in line with God's Word.

We can approve their programs when their goals are in line with the Word of God. We may not approve of everything they say, and certainly the bulk of our time should be spent in evangelizing to the unbelievers. But having said that, let's approve the programs of unbelievers when they are in line with the Word of God.