

## **WHAT THINGS MATTER MOST TO GOD?**

Part II – II Kings 10: 1-36 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

Every so often, we look at our garage, office, or our property, and we have the incentive to clean house. There are many dump-runs and what we throw away, others at the dump desire to have. Cleaning house is a dirty job, but often it's necessary business. Cleaning house took place in Hebrew homes at the time of the Passover, and especially after the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" (Exodus 12:16-20; 13:5-10). This was a time when the Hebrew homes were to be cleaned and a search was to be made for the presence of any leaven, which, if found, would be removed. This was a time of not one bit of leaven for seven days. When Jehu was anointed king of Israel, it was house-cleaning time in Israel. God desired to sweep the house of Israel clean, by removing all the remnants of the house of Ahab, Jezebel, Baalism and idolatry. As you heard our text today, perhaps you were saying, "I don't fully or completely understand what's going on in this blood bath chapter." I understand your dilemma, and I confess this is a most difficult chapter from which to preach. Yet, this is what happened in history in 841 B.C. and this is the inspired Word of the Lord, meaning, what is written here is true to exactly what happened in the Northern Kingdom called Israel in Jezreel, the summer capital of Israel, with Ahab's palace next to the vineyard of Naboth, his wife, and sons in his family.

Understanding what is happening in history is not always easy. Lieutenant Paul Edward Galanti, was a United States Navy pilot during the Viet Nam War. Paul was captured by the North Vietnamese and placed in prison where he spent six and a half years in North Vietnam as an American Prisoner of War. His experience gave him a heightened sense of the ordinary privileges we have that most of us take for granted. Now three decades after being released, Paul says, "There's no such thing as a bad day when there's a doorknob on the inside of the door." After 2300 straight days in a locked cell, you can understand what Paul Galanti is talking about. Looking at this chapter, I have read many, many commentaries and it seems these commentators line up, for the most part, either exonerating king Jehu as a good or a great king, or condemning him as a bad, evil king. I understand where they all are coming from, but I see danger in sugar-coating our assessment of Jehu to make him a great king, or lambasting Jehu to make him an all evil king. The truth is—wading through this chapter of 36 verses at times made me say, "Well, I see God why You had Jehu anointed to wipe out the house of Ahab and Jezebel." At other times, I gasp at what I read, and I asked the Lord, "Was all Jehu did, was it all really doing what You wanted, and did he do it Your way?" Again, I have been forced as I was in II Kings 9, to ask the Lord, "What Things Matter the Most to You?" The four desires I sense God has revealed to me don't explain everything you will wish I would explain, but I do believe these four desires are close to the heart of God and express what matters most to Him.

**GOD DESIRES WHOM HE KNOWS HE CAN USE TO FULFILL HIS WORD, TO BRING JUDGMENT ON SIN WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE.** (I.)

Notice II Kings 10: 1-11. Let's not be too hard on Jehu as we examine whom God chose to wipe out Baalism and to destroy the evil house of Ahab and Jezebel. Baalism had been a leavening agent in the northern kingdom of Israel for far too long. The time for judgment had finally come to "clean house." God knew Jehu would do a very thorough job carrying out His assignment, with only one exception we will look at later: Jehu did not rid the nation of all false idolatrous worship. Nevertheless, Jehu's rise to power became a day of reckoning for those who worshipped Baal and pulled Israel down into wicked idolatry. Elisha the prophet sent one of his unnamed sons of the prophets to Ramoth-Gilead to anoint Jehu as king over Israel. He clearly instructed Jehu to strike down the house of Ahab and to kill every male member of his family, as a judgment against him for shedding the blood of God's servants and prophets. This young prophet also told Jehu that Jezebel would die; that the dogs would devour her body (2 Kings 9:6-10).

Think of it--put yourself in Jehu's position. Reflect on the level of difficulty of God's anointed assignment give to him. (1) **Jehu was not prepared for this assignment.** He was caught off guard. Has God ever called you to an assignment that has caught you completely off guard? Jehu was just being a faithful commander in the war to take back Ramoth-Gilead, a city of refuge, from the Syrians and their king Hazael. It was a job to either take on immediately or be killed himself. This anointing propelled Jehu into action without an ounce of preparation. Yet God knew what He was doing. (2) **Jehu was given specific directions in what he was to accomplish.** He was called upon to selectively eliminate certain people—from the house of Ahab and Jezebel, and to avenge all the servants of the Lord whom Ahab and Jezebel especially had slain. (3) **Jehu was to locate and execute every male heir of Ahab and Jezebel.** This was no small task as the sons of king Joram, who were the grandsons of Ahab must be flushed out of the capital city of Samaria where those 70 heirs of Ahab were living in the homes of dignitaries and were protected. What an assignment! It must have loomed like an impossible mission. (4) **Jehu, to fulfill his assignment, must not only capture the summer capital of Israel, Jezreel, but also the fortified walled city of Samaria, the main capital of Israel.** As we come to our text in chapter 10, Jehu's strength wasn't as great as we might suppose—he had only deposed Joram, the king of Israel, Ahaziah, the king of Judah, and Jezebel, the evil queen of Israel, the wife of her deceased husband, Ahab. Most of the Israeli soldiers were left in Ramoth-Gilead fighting, and Jehu left that city instructing his commanders to blockade that city so no message could get to Jezreel, 45 miles away. (5) **Jehu had no large army.** He was driving his chariot furiously those 45 miles, and he had no time for a slow-marching army. All Jehu had was a few good men who bowed to make him king. What God was asking of Jehu was nothing short of a miracle.

Jehu knew he must secure the forces of Israel in Samaria to surrender to him, if possible, without a fight. Had the forces of Israel in Samaria known the size and strength of Jehu's tiny force in Jezreel, they would not have surrendered and wiped out the male descendants of Ahab. Jehu's strategy shows a genius God gave to him, rather than marching on Samaria with his few good men. This idea of Samaria taking one of the grandsons of Ahab, the sons of king Joram as their king and to fight him—that challenge was incredibly bold. With king Joram, their king of Israel dead, with the king of Judah dead and queen Jezebel dead, they were petrified, no doubt thinking Jehu had all of Israel's forces at Ramoth-Gilead fighting with him. God knew Jehu drove furiously, and He knew Jehu would work fast. In this case, Jehu's challenge worked, and Samaria surrendered.

It was a bloody act, and the sight of two heaps of 35 heads at the gate of Jezreel is impossible to conceive of. Yet it happened. It all happened in 24 hours, it appears as the Israeli forces in Samaria now became part of the revolution by killing 70, and now they were committing themselves to Jehu. For good or evil, in fear, they now were participants in the revolution and there was no turning back. Jehu was responsible for issuing the order to kill the sons of Joram, but Samaria did it. In explaining this to the people in Jezreel. Jehu was shrewd the next morning and God protected the heads of these sons of the king, as the dogs that ate up Jezebel didn't get to this next meal. In the morning, v. 9, Jehu went out and stood before the people of Jezreel and said, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master and killed him, speaking of king Joram, but who struck down all these?" Then Jehu did explain his mission so far and why God chose him. He said in verse 10, "Know then that there shall fall to the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spoke concerning the house of Ahab, for the Lord has done what He said by His servant Elijah. The city of Jezreel found Jehu's words compelling, and without a fight from the city of Jezreel, v. 11, Jehu struck down all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, all his great men, and his close friends and his priests, until he left none remaining." And lest we become too hard on Jehu, remember these folks were doubtless some of the wicked participants in the mockery of justice which resulted from Jezebel asking the rulers and elders of Jezreel to proclaim a fast and have Naboth at the head of the table—I Kings 21: 9, to falsely accuse him, and his sons so they could be stoned to death and Ahab could get Naboth's vineyard, thereby stealing his property. God must be credited with wisely choosing Jehu 62 years earlier to bring judgment to Ahab and Jezebel. While Jehu's campaign was a violent one, it was exceedingly skillful/precise. 2nd,

**GOD DESIRES ZEAL IN EVERY SERVANT HE CHOOSES TO FULFILL HIS ASSIGNMENTS, GODLY ZEAL, BUT NEVER TWISTED ZEAL. (II.)**

Notice II Kings 10: 12-17. Now on Jehu's way to the capital of Israel, Samaria, whom should he meet but relatives of the wicked king of Judah, whom Jehu had

put to death. These princes or relatives of the king of Judah, Ahaziah, whom Jehu had killed also, these 42 people were unaware of the events of the past couple days. They had no idea their king was dead in Judah. You remember that the king of Judah had made an alliance with the king of Israel, and their answer of who they were, became their death sentence. Jehu had them seized, put to death, and thrown into the cistern or pit of Beth-eked—which means the shearing house for sheep. Since king Ahaziah had married into Ahab’s family—I Kings 8: 18, it seemed certainly justifiable to Jehu that anyone belonging to Ahaziah was God’s enemy. Yet, in Jehu’s zeal, he went outside God’s assignment. These 42 men were not related by blood to Ahab, but they were descendants of David. Jehu now, justified his attacking these 42 men in David’s line because of their Ahab connection.

Zeal is a sometimes wonderful, but at times awful characteristic of each of our lives in our devotion to God. Let’s read more about Jehu’s zeal in meeting up with a respected friend—an ally for Jehu. This was Jehonadab, a very zealous man of God. This man was a Rechabite, people belonging to the Kenites, relatives of Jael, the lady who smote the general, Sisera with a tent-peg. Judges 4: 11 tells us that these Rechabites were descendants of Moses’ father-in-law—Hobab, the brother-in-law of Moses. These people stayed in Judah, but were separatists, tent-dwellers who would not drink a drop of wine. This Rechabite, Jehonadab, had heard of Jehu’s zeal for God, and he was coming to meet Jehu. Listen again to II Kings 10: 15-17. Certainly, Jehonadab hated Baal worship and he rejoiced to hear Ahab’s family was being eradicated. Jehonadab however in his zeal, was not totally aware of all the zeal, and even twisted zeal of Jehu. Warren Wiersbe wisely says, “Every ambitious leader needs a respectable second man to help sell his policies and practices to the public. Jehu knew what he was going to do next, and Jehonadab had no idea. Jehu’s call for Jehonadab to join him was couched in ambitious terms that fooled Jehonadab. Jehu said, “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.” So, this Rechabite was on his team and got up to ride in Jehu’s chariot. Arriving in Samaria with Jehonadab, Jehu struck down all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had wiped them out, according to the word of the Lord that He spoke to Elijah. Jehu was still fulfilling God’s Word, but his ambition was getting mixed up in the process. “Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord.” That zeal had just murdered 42 sons of David because they were relatives of Ahaziah, the king of Judah, in David’s dynasty. Remember this about zeal. Zeal is wonderful and sometimes awful. It is hard to keep it under God’s control. Zeal gets ambitious, self-serving, and it even uses the commands of the Lord to fulfill selfish ambitions in our lives. Let me give you a few examples of how the sin of Jehu can get into each of us, and, may be working in us today.

Here are a few examples to give us pause to pray and examine our zeal. There are plenty of people zealous for the cause of Christ, and for causes like saving the lives

of the unborn, but their zeal is without knowledge of Jesus. They are yet unregenerate. Many believers in Jesus are zealous for godly worship, but they are addicted to pornography or gossip. Some leaders in God's church are zealous to plant churches for God, but they are doing it to gain a name for themselves and not for the glory of Jesus. There are many believers who are zealous for morality, but they know nothing of embodying the grace of God to fallen believers. It is common for believers to be zealous for Bible truth, but who hate others who disagree with them. Preachers can be zealous to preach, but they want to be famous or use preaching to hurt other preachers. Paul wrote in Philippians 1: 15, "Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry, not sincerely, thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment." Many believers have a zeal for social causes for Christ, but have no desire for Jesus. Millions of believers are busy in church doing tasks needed to be done, but have no devotion or desire for Christ. Like Jehu, Paul says in II Timothy 3: 5 that we may have the appearance of godliness, but deny the power of the Gospel. Paul was the most zealous of all the persecutors of God's church until God met him on the Damascus Road. I call us today to examine our motives and our zeal. Paul told the church in Corinth in II Corinthians 13: 5, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? Unless indeed you fail the test." God needs zealous workers for Him. We need more willing zealous workers for Jesus. Many believers refuse to be willing to do jobs God is calling them to in His church. But never, never do a job for Jesus for selfish reasons—it's not, "Come see my zeal," that God wants, but "Come see how Jesus can work in our lives as we surrender to Him." Thirdly,

**GOD DESIRES THE TRUTH OF HIS WORD TO BE FULFILLED, BUT NEVER AT THE EXPENSE OF A MAN'S LIE.** (III.) Notice II Kings 10: 18-27. Jehu was bent on destroying all the prophets of Baal, and that was God's desire. Jehonadab now too was going to witness and participate first-hand with Jehu in his dealings with the Baal worshippers of Samaria and all the Baal worshippers in Israel. It was shrewd of Jehu to call a solemn assembly of all the Baal worshippers. But God didn't need deception and a lie to do it. Jehu here assembled all the people and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him much." That's how Jehu filled the temple of Baal in Samaria with all the prophets of Baal, because those prophets believed his lie.

Now don't be too hard on Jehu. How would you have done Jehu's job. We need to ponder the difficulty of the task at hand. If we were given his assignment of identifying all the Baal worshippers in the country, and executing them, how would we do it? How would we identify them? How would we track them down and execute them? Jehu did not pursue the Baal worshippers; he got them to come to him. When Jehu arrived in Samaria, no one there was likely to have known

about his God-given mission. His words may not have surprised anyone, and Jehu's words would have delighted the Baal worshippers: If they thought Ahab was a Baal worshipper, they had not seen anything yet. Jehu was swearing to outdo Ahab in his Baal worship. Since Mt. Carmel and Elijah's slaying of the prophets of Baal, there had never been such a breakthrough for Baal worshippers and prophets of Baal. These idolatrous prophets must have been ecstatic. Since the appearance of Elijah and Elisha, Baal worship was under siege, and embattled. but now here was Jehu, the new king saying he would make Baal worship bigger and better than it had ever been. No Baal worshipper could miss this convocation. All the Baal worshippers were to put on the vestments or the robes of Baal for worship. No worshipper of God could stay in the house of Baal. These vestments were Jehu's lie and deception to make sure his 80 soldiers outside the house of Baal wouldn't miss a Baal worshipper or they would be executed. Then Jehu with Jehonadab went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings to Baal. Notice v. 25, "So as soon as Jehu made an end of offering the burnt offering to Baal, he said to the guard and to the officers, "Go in and strike them; let not a man escape." The pillar of Baal was burned, and the house of Baal was made into a toilet/a latrine. Baal worship was nearly eradicated that day, though it came back. God wanted a job done, but he needed no lies, no deception, no God-following king sacrificing in mockery to Baal, to get His work done. God forbid that we lie. Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord every bit as greatly as Baal worship. Fourthly and lastly,

**GOD DESIRES OUR HEARTS TO BE RIGHT WITH HIM, FOR WE CAN CARRY OUT WHAT GOD ASKS US TO DO IN THE WRONG WAY. (IV.)**

Notice II Kings 10: 28-36. Especially look at verses 28-29. You see, Jehu was willing to strain out all Baalism, but willing to swallow the worship of the two golden calves of Israel in Bethel and Dan. To keep the Northern Kingdom from going to Jerusalem to worship God, Jeroboam the king, built two golden calves he said were symbols of Jehovah God, nationally acceptable idols to take the place of the Lord God of Hosts. Jehu, in spite of his wiping out Baal worship, was an idolater at heart. He used the Lord's Name to cover up his sins. By being a part of Israel's golden calf national religion, Jehu united the nation behind him to get their full support. What a corrupt politician Jehu was! Now, you may say, "Pastor, read verse 30. Let's read it. "And the Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in My eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in My heart, your sons of the 4th generation shall sit on the throne of Israel." But hurry on and listen to verse 31. Jehu wasn't careful to walk in the law of God with all his heart as he did not turn from the sins of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin. Lastly, to seal the truth to our hearts, turn as we close to Hosea, who was told to marry a wife of whoredom and have children. The first child was named Jezreel. Hosea tells us God wasn't fully pleased with Jehu. He obeyed God, but he did it the wrong way with a divided heart. (Repeat) Amen.