

## 2 Kings 9-10

### The Siege of Samaria

These two chapters are the conclusion of the story of Ahab and God's judgment on him and his family for leading Israel father from him and deeper into idolatry. The characters for this drama were prophetically appointed way back in 1 Kings 19:15-17. When Elijah went to mount Horeb after fleeing from Jezebel, the Lord revealed himself to the prophet and then commissioned him to do three things: anoint Hazael as king of Aram, Jehu as king over Israel and Elisha as his successor. These three leaders will be used by the Lord to break the power of Ahab's family and bring judgment upon them. One foreign power, one challenger to the throne and one prophet empowered by the word of the Lord. The sin that triggers the judgment of God will be the stealing of Naboth's vineyard and his murder by the treachery of Jezebel and Ahab. It took, however, 13 years to see God's justice revealed from the time of the death of Ahab to the circumstances of the coup of Jehu. Sometimes God's justice seems slow to us but it is sure. He does not tolerate it when his leaders are involved in abuse and exploitation of the weak and when they lead his people away from Him. God had a plan to bring judgment all along and we see it in the words he spoke to Elisha on the Mountain, but his people just have to be patient and wait for his time to bring about justice in his way.

Chapter 9 opens up with Elisha sending a young prophet to affirm the anointing of Jehu that presumably has already happened years ago by Elisha. He is told that now is the time to destroy the house of Ahab and he begins a process of violent overthrow of the dynasty. See 2 Kings 9:6-10. So Hazael is fighting against Israel and King Joram (the son of Ahab) is leading the army – they are east of the Jordan River in Ramoth Gilead. Joram is injured and returns to his palace in Jezreel to recover and is accompanied by Ahaziah, king of Judah (who is married to Joram's sister). Jehu, a commander of the army, leaves his subordinates in charge of the battle while he takes a contingent of troops and goes to the palace in Jezreel. There he kills King Joram and throws his body into Naboth's vineyard. Ahaziah, king of Judah, escapes but is wounded and ends up dying from his injury at the fortress of Megiddo. He is returned to Jerusalem and buried. Next he goes to Jezebel, the queen mother's residence, and her servants throw her out the window and her body is trampled by Jehu's horse. Jehu went in to eat lunch and left her body on the ground and it was eaten by dogs. Next Jehu sends words to Samaria, the capital, for the royal princes of the family of Ahab to be killed by their care-takers and all 70 of their heads are brought to Jezreel in baskets and then placed at the gates of the city. Next Jehu killed all of the advisors and priests and close friends of the house of Ahab. He then goes to Samaria and does the same – killing all of the loyal associates of the king's family.

Jehu's final act of the purge was to call together all of the priests of Baal in the entire country for a special sacrifice in Samaria at the temple to Baal there. They thought that he was looking to draw them in and the favor of their god to support his new dynasty. They were all gathered in the temple and dressed in their priestly garments and Jehu surrounded the temple with 80 of his troops and sent them in to slaughter all of the priests and then he burned the temple and crushed and burned the sacred stone of the worship center thus eradicating Baal worship in Israel. Did he do this because he was so committed to the worship of the LORD? Probably not! He was doing what was

politically expedient. The Baal cult was loyal to Jezebel and therefore a potential source of resistance to his new administration. By destroying it, he could return Israel's religion to something more native rather than foreign. But instead of returning to the true worship of God, he returned to the worship of the golden calf idols that Jeroboam has set up in Bethel in the south and Dan in the north. In 2 Kings 10:30 God blesses Jehu for doing all that he had been commanded in the destruction of the house of Ahab and because of that he was given a dynasty that would last four generations – about 100 years. But because of his refusal to honor God in pure worship, his dynasty was relatively weak and suffered from foreign encroachment.

God uses even unrighteous and violent people to accomplish his purposes. Hazael and Jehu are not men of God but they are used as the rod of God's judgment on the abusers of his people. This foreshadows greater "rods of God's anger" like the Assyrians and the Babylonians who will be used by God to complete the judgment on his people for the violation of the covenant they had with God.