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2 Kings 7 - 9



2 Kings - Steve Gregg

In this lecture, Steve Gregg discusses the scripture in 2 Kings 7-9. He starts by pointing out the inexplicable nature of the chapter divisions in the Bible and then dives into the story of four leprous men in the midst of a famine. The lecture covers various themes like accumulating wealth, restoration of the Northern Kingdom, the reign of Athaliah queen, and the prophecy of Elisha. Gregg also talks about Jehu's rise to power and his attacks on the house of Ahab. Overall, the lecture provides a detailed explanation of the events and themes presented in these chapters of the Bible.

Transcript

Once in a while, those who stuck the chapter divisions into the Bible did so in an inexplicable way. You know, most of the time the chapter divisions make plenty good sense. So much so that you begin to think that the author wrote them that way.

Like, divided it into chapters. Because there are natural divisions between stories and portions of the books, but this is not one of them. Chapter 7 is simply a continuation of a conversation that was begun at the end of chapter 6, and which really ends two verses later.

That is, at chapter 7, verse 2. So, it would have made a lot more sense to put the chapter division two verses later than it is actually found. I can't account for the choice of its present location, but that's what we have to live with right now. So, the king of Israel has become aware of great starvation taking place in Samaria, the capital city.

In fact, there are women who are eating their children because of starvation there in the city. And he is blaming God for this. He knows that God could change the situation if he wished, and God has not done so.

And therefore, God must be to blame. And so, he's going to take it out on Elisha, he thinks. He comes to Elisha's house, intending to kill him.

But Elisha prevents this, first of all, by holding him out at the door. And then, or holding his messenger out at the door until the king gets there. And then Elisha says to the king,

hear the word of Yahweh.

Thus says Yahweh, tomorrow about this time, a sea of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel, and two seas of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria. Now, a sea is about eight gallons, apparently. Eight gallons of flour is a lot of flour, more than is needed for a family to eat in a day.

And yet, a shekel is about a day's wage, at least it was at a later time in Israel's history. We don't know if it was at this time, but the point is, he's saying food will be cheap. Right now, you have to pay an exorbitant price just to get a donkey's head to eat, it says.

And people are not even able to get those, that's why they're so expensive. There's just no food. But by this time tomorrow, food will be so abundant that you can buy it at a bargain basement price.

Now, an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, Look, if Yahweh would make the windows of heaven open, if he would make windows in heaven, he says, could this thing be? And he said, in fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it. So, Elisha does not appreciate this man's skepticism. And says, well, since you're skeptical, God's going to let you see that I'm right.

However, you're going to be judged and that you won't have the right, won't be able to eat it. And this prophecy, of course, came true, as we shall see in the ensuing story. Now, where did that food come from? Well, verse 3 says, Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate, and they said to one another, Why are we sitting here until we die? If we say we will enter the city, the famine is in the city, and we'll die there.

If we sit here, we die also. Now, therefore, come, let us surrender to the army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we shall die, we'll only die, and that's going to happen anyway.

So, we have nothing to lose. We know somebody has food, and that's the Syrians. If we stay here, we'll die.

If we go in the city, we'll die, because there's no food either place, but there's food over there. So, we have at least the chance that we might get something to eat, and there's also a chance we'll die, but that's a given. We'll die if we don't do it.

So, they really don't have many options open to them. And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians. And when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise, no one was there.

For the Lord had caused the army of the Syrians to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses, the noise of a great army. What sound was that? No doubt those chariots of fire and those horses of fire that Elisha had seen on another occasion in

another location, in Dothan. Here they were surrounding Elisha here in Samaria.

And God allowed the Syrians to hear the hoofbeats of these supernatural armies and to fear that they were being attacked. So, they said to one another, look, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us. Therefore, they arose and fled at twilight and left the camp intact, their tents, their horses, their donkeys, and they fled for their lives.

And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank and carried from it silver and gold and clothing and went and hid them. Then they came back and entered another tent and carried some of them from there also and they went and hid it. So, they're laying up some treasures for themselves.

A lot of good that's going to do them. They're dying of leprosy. Even if they're not going to starve now, they can never really enter normal life.

This really is, you know, the picture of sinful man dying in his condition. He's got only a short time to live, only this life. And yet, he's accumulating for himself things that can never really benefit him long term.

Laying up treasures on earth, not laying up treasures in heaven. These guys, you know, are accumulating wealth just because it's there to be had. They're hiding it so no one else can find it.

But what good is it going to do them to own it? And they kind of saw that. In verse 9 says, then they said one to another, we are not doing what is right. This day is a day of good news and we remain silent.

If we wait until morning light, some punishment will come upon us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household. So they kind of felt guilty about this.

They were plundering the enemy's camp after the enemy had fled. There was nothing wrong with that, but they were trying to keep it all to themselves. And they realized there's people starving in this city.

God will be angry at us if we don't share the news. It's like Christians who've discovered the gospel and keep it to themselves. You know, there's a whole bunch of people starving out there for this knowledge.

And some punishment may come upon us if we don't share the information. We've got good news for people. And we shouldn't remain silent.

So they went and they called the gatekeepers of the city and told them, saying, we went to the Syrian camp and surprisingly no one was there. Not a human sound, only horses and donkeys tied and the tents intact. Interestingly, the Syrians left without their horses

when they were fleeing.

I would have jumped on my horse and fled, you know. They apparently were so hasty they didn't even want to saddle the horse. They just wanted to run off into the dark, into the night.

And apparently they kept going. And the gatekeepers called out and they told it to the king's household inside. Then the king arose in the night and said to his servants, let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us.

They know that we're hungry. Therefore, they've gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, when they come out of the city, we should catch them alive and get into the city. This was a reasonable assumption.

I mean, it's not usual that a besieging army who's not being attacked would just walk away and leave everything behind. It looked like a trap, certainly did. And one of his servants answered and said, please, let several men take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city.

Look, they may either become like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it, or indeed, I say, they may become like all the multitude of Israel left from those who are consumed. So let us send them and see. Now, apparently what he's saying is that we've got maybe a few horses left that may end up being eaten like everyone else.

Or why don't we use these horses to go out, send out some scouts to see if there is, in fact, a trap out there. Therefore, they took two chariots with horses, and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, go and see. And they went after them to the Jordan, and indeed, all the road was full of garments and weapons, such as which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste.

So the messengers returned and told the king. Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a sieve of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two sieves of barley for a shekel, according to the word of Yahweh.

Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. So this man got trampled.

These people were so hungry, they just couldn't stop running toward the food, just like trying to get into Walmart, you know, on some of these special sale occasions, New Year's Day or whatever. You know, employees get trampled and killed and so forth. This is what happened here.

This man saw it with his eyes, but he didn't eat it. And it said, so it happened, just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, two sieves of barley for a shekel, and a sieve

of fine flour for a shekel, shall be sold tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria. Then that officer that had answered the man of God had said, look, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be? And he said, in fact, you shall see it with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it.

And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died. The author apparently wanted to make sure that we didn't forget that whole dialogue that had happened only 20 verses earlier. And he gives it back in its entirety, because it happened to the letter.

Chapter 8, Then Elisha spoke to the woman whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise and go, you and your household, and sojourn wherever you can, sojourn. For the Lord has called for a famine, and furthermore it will come upon the land for seven years. Now you can see how many ways God was judging Israel before he actually sent the Assyrians to destroy them.

Ultimately, this country was totally wiped out, and the people were deported to other nations, and they never returned. There was never a restoration of the northern kingdom. But God certainly shot a lot of warning shots over their head first, and gave them warnings that they were under judgment.

Sieges from the Syrians that caused them to eat their own children, a famine now that would be seven years long. They'd had a drought for three and a half years in the day of Elijah. I mean, all these ways God was trying to communicate to them that they were under his judgment, and they never really repented.

They never got rid of those gold calves. It seems like the simplest thing for any intelligent king to do would be, you know what? The prophet says these gold calves are the cause of our problems. Maybe I should take them down and see what happens, you know? But it's just they never did that.

They continued to be addicted to idolatry. And so now there's going to be another judgment hitting the land, a famine for seven years. So this woman who had the son, now we don't read of her husband, maybe he had died.

Remember he was really old? This is perhaps many years later. And the reason that there was a miraculous son given to her was because her husband was too old apparently to father a child or something. And so he may have died in the meantime.

So the woman and her son are warned by the prophet, there's going to be a famine, there's another place you can find to live, go there. So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God. And she went with her household and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years.

It came to pass at the end of seven years, and we pass over that whole famine without

any other information of what was going on in Israel. But this one story is the main thing that's our focus. So the famine comes and goes.

And at the end of seven years, the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, which is where she had sojourned. And she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. Apparently her house and her land that she had owned before had been seized by somebody else, maybe by the government for lack of payment of property taxes for seven years.

Or maybe some other person, some neighbor had co-opted it on to be part of his farm. In any case, she had lost the title to her land by her absence. And so she went to the king to see if she could get that redressed.

And the king talked with Gehazi, just so happened at that very time when she came to bring her request. Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, was in there talking to the king saying, tell me please all the great things that Elisha has done. So the king was being entertained with stories about miracles and so forth of Elisha.

And Gehazi was there and it happened as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life. That there was the woman whose son he had restored to life appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, my lord, oh king, this is the woman and this is her son whom Elijah restored to life.

Now, this was providential for the woman, obviously, because the king then would be favorably disposed toward her. Because she's the star of a story that he's hearing and enjoying. And so, of course, he's going to be listening to her because she's special.

But it also is providential, perhaps, that she came at that time for the sake of the king. Because the king is hearing these stories of miracles and here comes a living object lesson. Here's the boy.

I'm talking, this is the woman and this is the boy. More or less as a testimony to the king that these were not just legends. That there were real faces and real names and real people that these things happened to.

And therefore, of course, making the king the more accountable for knowing that God was working miracles through Elijah. When the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed a certain officer for her saying, Restore all that was hers and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now.

It seems probable that the government had taken over this property because the king could just restore it. And all the proceeds that had been from the land, that is, it was during a famine. So there couldn't have been an awful lot that it had produced during famine times.

But apparently it was farmed and there had been some produce. And whatever the amount of that was from the past seven years was restored to the woman also. So she lost nothing by her seven year absence in the long run.

Then Elisha went to Damascus. Now this is not in Israel. This is the capital of Syria.

Syria has been the enemy of Israel all this time. Now modern commentators and probably modern translations would refer to this land as Aram. The Assyrians were the Arameans and Syria was Aram.

We even have the word Aram even in the older versions. In some cases, for example, Pad and Aram were Laban that was part of Syria. Damascus was the capital of Aram or of Syria.

And he went to Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria. The king was sick and it was told him saying, The man of God has come here. And the king said to Hazael, Take a present in your hand and go and meet the man of God and inquire of the Lord by him saying, Shall I recover from this disease? Now Hazael is the man that was mentioned back when Elijah the prophet was at Mount Horeb when he was fleeing from Jezebel.

God had told him there's three things more to be done. One is that you're going to anoint Hazael to be the king of Syria or Aram. You're going to also anoint Jehu, king of Israel, and anoint Elisha to be your successor.

Well, Elijah, next thing we know, does anoint Elisha to be his successor. But we do not ever read of Elijah anointing Hazael or Jehu. We do read later in chapter 9 that Elisha sends a servant to anoint Jehu.

And here we don't read of him anointing Hazael, but this is the case where Hazael is basically informed that he's going to be the next king of Syria. And it may be that the prophet also anointed him on this occasion, though it's not mentioned. In any case, it was Elisha, not Elijah, that did these things.

God gave Elijah the instructions to anoint these three men, but he anointed or called Elisha. Instead, Elisha did the other things sort of after Elijah was gone. Apparently, that's how God intended it to happen, though it was spoken as if Elijah was doing it himself.

He was doing it through his own servant, Elisha. So, Ben-Hadad, the Syrian king, has heard things about Elisha. Perhaps about his curing Naaman of leprosy.

And so he says, go ask the man of God if I'm going to be recovered from my sickness, too. So Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him of every good thing of Damascus, 40 camel loaves. And he came and stood before him and said, your son Ben-Hadad, king of Syria, has sent me to you saying, shall I recover from this disease? Now,

he brought 40 camel loaves of gifts.

We don't hear that Elisha accepted them or didn't, but it's just typical when they're sending to the prophet for a favor. They send a royal gift of this sort. And so the question is, will he recover from this disease? Now, Elisha said to him, go say to him, you shall certainly recover.

However, Yahweh has shown me that he will really die. Now, Elisha doesn't say, thus saith the Lord, you shall recover. He doesn't prophesy that the man will recover.

He actually prophesies that the man will die. He just tells Hazael, go ahead and tell him he'll recover. He's not giving him the word of the Lord.

He's just giving him instructions, go ahead and tell him he'll recover. But in fact, I know he's going to die. Then he set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed, and the man of God wept.

Now, this has been interpreted different ways. Most believe it means that the prophet set his gaze upon Hazael for a long time until Hazael felt uncomfortable. And then Elisha began to weep.

Some feel like it's Hazael set a stare on Elisha until he was embarrassed. It's not clear. But I believe just the flow of the story suggests that Elisha was just kind of staring at Hazael and was sort of seeing in a vision, as it were, the atrocities that Hazael would do as he looked upon him.

He could sort of see the future of this man. And he began to weep. And Hazael said, why is my Lord weeping? And Elisha said, because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel.

Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword, and you will dash their children and rip open women with child. So Hazael said, but what is your servant, a dog, that he should do this gross thing? And Elisha answered, Yahweh has shown me that you will become king over Syria. Then he departed from Elisha and came to his master.

It's probable that he anointed him on this occasion to be king of Syria. This is told probably in an abbreviated form. Then Hazael departed from Elisha and came to his master, who said to him, What did Elisha say to you? And he answered, He told me that you would surely recover.

Well, that's not really what he told him. He told him he wouldn't recover, but he, of course, was lying here. But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped it in water and spread it over his face so that he died.

He suffocated him, and it would be not obvious that it was murder because the man was sick anyway, and they'd find him basically not breathing anymore with no injuries. So the assumption would be that there was no foul play. But this thick cloth dipped with water would mean there'd be no pores to let air through, and so he suffocated him.

The king was sick and weak, and this man was probably a strong warrior, so overpowering the king like this was not difficult. And so Hazael reigned in his place. Now in the fifth year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat, having been king of Judah, Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign as king in Judah.

So we have, again, the Jorams in both places, in the north and the south, two Jorams. He was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done.

For he had the daughters Ahab as a wife, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. Now the daughter of Ahab was Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Athaliah was the queen, Joram's wife, and she apparently had the same kind of influence over him as Jezebel had over Ahab, only this was in the southern kingdom.

There had been a marriage between the two kingdoms, again probably a political arrangement, but of course Athaliah was an idol worshipper. Athaliah was a Baal worshipper, like her mother and her father. And so Judah was infiltrated by this evil influence.

And so the king of the south here, Joram, he did evil in the sight of the Lord because he followed the influence of his wife. Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for the sake of his servant David, as he promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever. In his days, Edom revolted against Judah's authority and made a king over themselves.

So Joram went to Zair and all his chariots with him, and he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him, and the captains of the chariots, his people fled to their tents. Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day, and Libna revolted at that time. Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Joram rested with his fathers and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Now this revolt on the part of Edom against Judah was prophesied back in the book of Genesis. In Genesis chapter 27, there is the prophecy that had to do with Esau, and it says in verses 39 and 40, Then Isaac his father answered and said to Esau, Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth and of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother.

And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from

your neck. Now this is uttered to Esau about his relations with his brother Jacob. Now it was uttered before either of these men were born, it was said to Rebekah that the children in her womb, while the older would serve the younger.

They were twins, but the older twin, the one who came out first was Esau. And it was prophesied that he would serve Jacob, the younger one. Well this never happened in the lifetime of those two men, but it happened later through their progeny.

You've got Jacob of course as Israel, and Esau as Edom. And the Edomites did come under the yoke of Jacob and did serve them in the days of Solomon and David and so forth. But now at this point in the reign of Joram, Edom revolted and successfully revolted.

And it was predicted that it shall come to pass when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke off your neck. Genesis 27.40 Which means that Edom would revolt successfully and come out from under the bondage to Israel. Which this is now the story that is the fulfillment of that.

With reference to Joram's reign, there is also more information in 2 Chronicles chapter 21. We have a very short treatment in Kings, but in 2 Chronicles chapter 21, it says, and we'll read the story here. Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and he was buried with his fathers in the city of David.

Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, and Michael, and Shephethiah. All these were the sons of Jehoshaphat, king of Israel.

And their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things with fortified cities in Judah. But he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was his firstborn. Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword and also others of the princes of Israel.

Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done. For he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord.

Yet the Lord would not destroy the house of David because of the covenant that he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and his sons forever. Clearly verbal parallels with what we read in 2 Kings. Although here we see some new information that he killed off his brothers, all anyone who might be a rival to the throne, he killed them.

And he had a wife, Athaliah, who was evil, and we find that when her son died, she killed off all her grandchildren so that she could make herself queen. So we've got people murdering their own family members here in the south over political issues. And then it

talks about the Edomites, and it gives a little more detail here than it gave in Kings.

This issue with the Edomites revolting apparently is the most important thing to remember about Jehoram's reign. And there's more information in Chronicles than in Kings. It says in verse 8, In his days the Edomites revolted against Judah's authority and made a king over themselves.

So Jehoram went out with his officers and all his chariots with him, and he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. Thus the Edomites have been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time, Lydna revolted against his rule because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers.

Moreover, he made high places in the mountains of Judah and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry and led Judah astray. And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the Lord God of your father David, because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father or in the ways of Ezzah the king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot, like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household who were better than yourself. Behold, the Lord will strike your people with a serious affliction, your children, your wives, and all your possessions, and you will become very sick with the disease of your intestines, this is kind of gross, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness day by day.

Apparently, he had distended intestines that came out through his rectum and he died miserably, as we shall see. The main thing to consider here is that this letter is said to have come from Elijah the prophet. Well, it is possible that there is more than one prophet by that name, but not likely.

It's almost certainly Elijah the Tishbite. Now, usually, Elijah is not referred to as Elijah the prophet in Kings, he's usually referred to as Elijah the Tishbite. Here, it's Elijah the prophet, but it's probably the same man.

I mean, what's the chances? In so short a space of time, there'd be two significant prophets with the same name. The problem here is that Elijah was apparently dead, gone by this time. As far as the chronology goes.

And so, some have thought that this letter coming to Joram at this time could be an indication that Elijah wasn't taken away from there. The whirlwind took him up and God hid him somewhere else. He simply ceased to have any public ministry.

And Elisha took over for that. But for some reason, God kept Elijah on the earth somewhere, and at this point later on, he wrote this letter to King Joram. I don't think that's the most likely scenario.

I think more likely, Elijah wrote this letter to him before being taken up. Though it was before these events, before Joram was even king. But Elijah may well have known that Joram was king and following the ways of Ahab prophetically.

And may have written this letter in advance of the actual relevance of it. As a prophet, we know that the prophets were able to do that kind of thing. And so, the letter may have been written before Elijah was taken up, although it would not have been delivered, apparently, until this point in time.

We don't know who delivered the letter. It's clear Elijah didn't deliver it. So it may be that Elijah had written this letter before being taken up and left it in the custody of the sons of the prophets.

And said, now, at such and such a time, or when such and such things happen, deliver this to the man who will be the king at that time. And so, it may be that one of Elijah's servants or the sons of the prophets who succeeded him, or who was still around after he was gone, brought this letter. We're not given any explanation of this.

It's just kind of a strange intrusion into the story. Elijah, it seems, is a little out of place. It seems anachronistic.

There's every reason to believe that Elijah could have written this prophetically. And it was delivered at a later date, at his instructions, that he gave before he left. Verse 16.

Moreover, the Lord stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who were near the Ethiopians. And they came up to Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, not Athaliah, unfortunately, though she seemed to escape, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons. After all this, the Lord struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease.

Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness, and he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his father's, as they didn't show, I guess, customary honor at his funeral. He was 32 years old when he became king.

He reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and to no one's sorrow departed. However, they buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings. So he not only was displeasing to the Lord, he was displeasing to the populace.

He introduced too much of the paganism of Jezebel and Ahab into their society. He murdered his own brothers. I mean, certainly the man would have been seen as a tyrant and a horrible oppressor by everybody.

So when he died, no one mourned. No one was sorry to see him go. Okay, let's go back

to 2 Kings now, and chapter 9. And now we have the final of the three things that Elijah had left undone.

Elijah had to anoint Jehu as king of Israel. Elijah was gone by this time, but Elisha took care of this for him through an agent, one of the sons of the prophets. Chapter 9. And Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, Get yourself ready.

Take this flask of oil in your hand and go to Ramoth Gilead. Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi. This is, of course, not the Jehoshaphat of the southern kingdom.

This is another man by that name. And go in and make him rise up from among his associates and take him to an inner room. Then take the flask of oil and pour it on his head and say, Thus says Yahweh, I have anointed you king over Israel.

Then open the door and flee. Do not delay. Now to anoint Jehu as king over Israel would be an act of treason, of course.

And, therefore, the man who did it would have to just disappear before he could be identified. Elisha couldn't do it himself because he was too well known. If he did this, of course, there would be a warrant out for his arrest from the king, if the king survived to issue such warrants.

This was an act of treason against the existing king. Jehu was a general, not a king, not a prince even. And, therefore, this was going to be a military coup.

Jehu, as the leader of the military, was going to overthrow the king and the king's family and take the throne. So this would be highly illegal, of course, and the man who anointed him and encouraged him to do this would be a co-conspirator in the coup. And, therefore, an anonymous, unknown son of the prophets was to do it and then run away before anyone knew who he was.

So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. And when he arrived, there were the captains of the army sitting. And he said, I have a message for you, O commander.

Jehu said, For which one of us? And he said, For you, commander. Then he arose and went into the house, and he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, Thus says the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed you king over the people of the Lord, over Israel. You shall strike down the house of Ahab, your master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants, the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel.

For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab all the males of

Israel, both bond and free. Meaning all the male descendants of Ahab. So I will make the house of Ahab, well, actually, I'll cut off all males in Israel, bond and free.

We might even look further forward to the deportation of all the people of the ten kingdoms, but I'm not sure of the king, ten tribes, excuse me. But here he's probably talking about all the males of Ahab's lineage. He had, no doubt, lots of wives and lots of offspring, and they're all going to be wiped out.

So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahaziah. But both of these kings, they were not assassinated, but their sons were. Their successors were assassinated, and all their offspring were wiped out by the assassins.

There were a lot of military coups and usurpations of the throne in Israel, and the house of Jeroboam had been wiped out by a successor to his dynasty, which was Baasha, and Baasha's dynasty was wiped out the same way by its successor. And now Ahab's dynasty. Now Ahab has had four kings of his dynasty.

Well, not his own. His father, Omri, was the first of his line. Then Ahab.

And then two of his sons had reigned separately. At different times, because the first one only reigned for two years. So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahaziah.

The dog shall eat Jezebel in the vicinity of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her. And he opened the door and fled. Now Ahab had died previously in the war, and the prophet's prediction that dogs would lick his blood had occurred, because his blood had been in the chariot, and when they cleaned the chariot out, the dogs licked the blood that was washed out.

But Jezebel had survived to see two of her sons reign, and yet she was going to die and the dogs were going to eat her too. This would be fulfilled. This prophet is repeating what Elijah himself had told Ahab, that Jezebel would be eaten by dogs.

He said that on the occasion when he confronted him about Naboth's vineyard being seized illegally. Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and one said to him, Is all well? Why did this madman come to you? And he said to them, You know the man and his babble. Probably he was saying, You know these sons of the prophets, they have their nonsense that they talk about.

He was evasive. And they said, A lie. Tell us now.

So he said, Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, Thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel. Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on top of the steps, and they blew trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. Apparently his

subordinates in the army agreed that he'd make a better king.

And so they acknowledged that he was the king. They could have seen the oil all over him. He was anointed with oil.

They could see that something had happened. There hadn't just been a conversation. So now he's got the army commanders under him on his side, and of course he can easily overpower the king who doesn't have an army on his side.

So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.

So Joram had left, of course, Jehu and the armies under him to besiege Ramoth Gilead. But now Jehu's going to give up Ramoth Gilead and go take Samaria from the king who's there recovering from battle wounds. And Jehu said, if you are so minded... He said this to the men who'd hailed him king.

He said, if you are so minded, let no one leave or escape from this city to go and tell it in Jezreel. So... I'm sorry, he was in Jezreel, not Samaria. Did I say Samaria? So anyway, Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there.

And Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram. Now, this was just bad luck for Ahaziah. He happened to be really in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Now a watchman stood on the tower of Jezreel. And he saw the company of Jehu as he came and said, I see a company of men. And Joram said, get a horseman and send him to meet them.

And let them say, is it peace? So the horseman went to meet him and said, thus says the king, is it peace? And Jehu said, what have I to do with peace? Turn around and follow me. And the watchman reported saying, the messenger went to them, but he's not coming back. Then he sent out a second horseman who came to them and said, thus says the king, is it peace? And Jehu answered, what have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me.

And the watchman reported saying, he went up to them and is not coming back. And the driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi. He drives furiously.

So Joram said, make ready. And his chariot was made ready. Then Joram, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah, went out, each in his chariot, and they went out to meet Jehu and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Interestingly, Naboth was the one whose vineyard had been taken through the

conspiracy of Ahab and Jezebel against the former owner. And it was on that property that they actually met their doom. Now it happened when Joram saw Jehu, they said, is it peace, Jehu? So he answered, what peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many? Then Joram turned around and fled and said to Ahaziah, treachery, Ahaziah.

You know, we need to get out of here, this is a coup. Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Joram between his arms. That would be between his shoulder blades apparently because he was fleeing.

And the arrow came out of his heart and he sank down in his chariot. Then Jehu said to Bidkar, his captain, pick him up and throw him into the tract of field of Naboth the Jezreelite. For remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the Lord laid this burden upon him.

Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his son, says the Lord. And I will repay you in this plot, says the Lord. Now therefore, take and throw him on a plot of ground according to the word of the Lord.

Okay, so we've got a dead king in Israel, but Jehu's not satisfied to stop there. He's going to conduct an incredibly thorough purge, not only of the wicked leadership in Israel, but he's going to punish the southern kingdom too, at least those that come within his range. It says, but when Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled by the road to Beth-hagan.

So Jehu pursued him and said, shoot him also in the chariot. And they did so at the ascent of Ger, which is by Iblium. Then he fled to Megiddo and died there.

So he was apparently wounded at Iblium, but not dead, and he made it to Megiddo before he died. And his servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem and buried him in the tomb with his fathers in the city of David. In the eleventh year of Joram, the son of Ahaziah had become king over Judah, but he was now dead.

And when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. And she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head and looked through a window. Now why she painted her eyes and adorned herself, we don't know.

Perhaps she still thought she was a young beauty. She would have been an old woman by now. Once in a while you see really old women who don't seem to know they're old, and they put on a lot of makeup and they think no one notices that they're old.

Maybe she was just thinking she still had those charms. Maybe she could, you know, win Jehu over by being beautiful. Or maybe she just didn't like to be seen in public without her makeup on, I don't know.

But the point is, she came out and looked out a window. Then as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, Is it peace, Zimri, murder of your master? Now, Zimri, of course, is not Jehu, but Zimri was a man who had an earlier king who had murdered his master, the king. But had himself, seven days later, burned his own house down upon him because he was besieged by Omri.

So she's saying, You're like Omri. You're like Zimri. He killed his king, and look what happened to him.

And so she's saying, You've killed your king. You're no better than Zimri. And she's suggesting, you know, you'll die too, like he did.

And he looked up at the window and said, Who is on my side? Who? And two or three of the eunuchs looked out at him. Now, eunuchs were men who were given charge over the harem. They were castrated so that they could be trusted around the women.

And this was very typical in ancient kingdoms to castrate a certain number of men who could watch over the women and not be, you know, not be distrusted with them. And so there were two or three eunuchs that were attending Jezebel at this time, and they looked out at him. And he said to them, Throw her down.

So they threw her down. And some of her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her underfoot. So she was apparently dead at that point from the fall.

Then he had gone. Then when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Then he said, Go now and see there's a cursed woman and bury her, for she was a king's daughter.

She was the daughter of the king of Sidon, a foreign land. So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. Therefore, they came back and told him.

And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, On the plot of ground at Jezreel, dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel, and the corpse of Jezebel shall be as a refuge on the surface of the field, in the plot of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, Here lies Jezebel. So Jezebel was eaten by dogs rather quickly, ravenous dogs apparently, because it was just while Jehu and his companions were indoors eating that the dogs were outdoors eating. And when Jehu emerged, there was nothing left but her hands, feet and skull.

The rest of her was picked clean and dragged off in pieces of bone to various places. Now, he said that the word of the Lord was that her corpse would be a refuge on the surface of the field. Well, she didn't have a corpse except one that had passed through the bowels of dogs.

So her corpse was really dog poop out on the field. That was her end. She didn't actually

get buried.

No dignity was bestowed to her body. She really became just dog feces out on the field, is what it says. And so we find the very righteous end of that very unrighteous woman.

Jehu, however, who is actually really being quite zealous in his prosecution of his mission to destroy the house of Ahab, has more to do, and he'll also banish Baal worship, which makes him sound like a good guy. But he wasn't a good guy. He also, unfortunately, like all the other kings of the Northern Kingdom, did evil in the sight of the Lord with idolatry.