Kings and Prophets 14-07-18b

2 Kings 9, verse 32, Jehu looks up at the window and says, Who was on my side? Who? Two or three eunuchs looked out at him. So apparently they are on his side. He says, Throw her down.

So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her underfoot. Jehu just cracked the whip on the chariot, and he didn't walk on her. It's his chariot wheels rolling back and forth, back and forth, just making mincemeat out of Jezebel.

And when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Nothing like working up an appetite. He ate and drank.

His conscience is not afflicting him even a little bit. He went in and said, You know, it's been a long, hot, dusty day, been busy killing kings and running over queens, and now it's Miller time. So he goes in to eat and drink.

Then he said, Go now, see to this accursed... Notice woman is in italics there. He says, Go, see to this accursed, and this is arura. Arura is the word for curse, and it's just put in the feminine.

So it's just the adjective. Just go see to this... He won't even name her. He doesn't even dignify her.

He doesn't say, Go look and see if Jezebel's still there. He just says, Go see to this female curse, and bury her, for she was a king's daughter. He's feeling generous now that he's got a full belly and had a cup or two of fine Chianti.

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. All the long bones been carried off. No ribs, no backbone.

So 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 refuse on the surface of the field in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, Here's Jezebel. Here's Jezebel. They're not going to say that.

Can't be found, nothing left to bury. Now, I am interested, as I'm sure you are, in why these three particular portions are left behind. Seems to me like one of the easier things to carry off and chew on if you're a dog, you know, that's part of the sanitation crew in the city of Samaria, or Jezreel, what the significance is of these particular things.

If you keep your finger here and quickly turn to Leviticus chapter 8, this is a passage we have revisited a few times. Israel was to be a nation of people sanctified to God, holy. In one or two places, they are to be a nation of priests.

They are to be dedicated to God. They are to be sanctified and set apart. The most sanctified

and set apart people in Israel are who? The priests.

Where do you get the priests? Where do they come from in Israel? Who can be a priest? What tribe? And what portion of the tribe? Can any Levite be a priest? What do you have to be to be a priest? Got to be descended from... Can't even be a son of Moses. Gershon, you can't be descended from... You got to be descended from Aaron. And so you have the sons of Aaron.

So look at verse 24 of Leviticus chapter 8. Leviticus 8, 24. Moses also brought Aaron's sons forward and put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. Then he splashed blood against the side of the altar.

Now, we have the holder for the ear lobes of Jezebel, her skull. We have her hands, which are the holders for her thumbs. And we have the feet, which are the holders for her toes.

And we have her blood splashed against the wall and the horses. It seems to me to sort of hark back, doesn't it? Doesn't it sort of make you reminisce to the days of the sanctification of the holy priests in Israel? It's not accidental that it's her skull, her hands, and her feet that are left behind. I don't think.

And that her blood is vividly described as splashing. If you do not treat the blood of the covenant wherewith you are sanctified as holy, you yourself are going to have to take the place of the sacrifice that was supposed to take your place. Do you remember Hebrews 10, verse 29? How much worse punishment, how much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the spirit of grace, trampled underfoot? Is it any accident that Jezebel is specifically said to have been trampled underfoot? Point of application.

The same God sits on His throne in heaven now as sat on the throne in heaven in the days of the northern and southern kingdom. He's the same heavenly Father. He is the same supreme and senior member of the Trinity.

The Trinity is not hard. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, three in one. It's not difficult.

It's God incorporated. God the Father is the chairman and CEO. God the Son, co-equal, co-eternal, same essence, same power, has voluntarily subordinated Himself.

He is the vice president. He is the financial officer. He makes sure that the debts are paid.

He makes sure that there are no outstanding deficits. He paid them Himself, paid the debt Himself. God the Holy Spirit, co-equal, co-eternal, equal in power, glory, and essence, with the first two, has voluntarily subordinated Himself to the Father and the Son.

God the Father sets forth the plan, the mission. He issues the orders. God the Son ensures that they are carried out.

God the Holy Spirit is the executive. He is the means by which. He takes care of supply, communications.

God has command and control. God the Son executes in and through God the Holy Spirit. It's a seamless, beautifully arranged hierarchy.

It is a reminder that if we find ourselves under authority as children, as wives, as employees, as students, to teachers, if God Himself, in the person of the Son and the Spirit, can subordinate, there's no shame in being subordinate. There's no shame in it. There's no devaluation.

There's no denigration. Do you think the Lord Jesus Christ is ashamed of being the Son and being subordinate and dedicating Himself to carrying out the will of the Father? I have come to do Thy will, O God. Do you think this somehow diminishes and denigrates and shames the Lord Jesus Christ? Don't be ashamed if you are subordinate.

There's great honor in being a dedicated, faithful subordinate. It doesn't diminish you in any way. If it diminishes you, then you have to argue that it could diminish the Lord Jesus Christ, which is blasphemy.

Is God the Holy Spirit diminished because He is subordinate to the Father and the Son? No. We need to get our egos out of the way and have this mind which was in Christ Jesus, who did not think equality with God was a thing that He had to hold on to. He emptied Himself, took on the form of a servant, a servant, and came in the likeness of men.

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient even to the point of death, the shameful death of the cross. For this reason, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. There is no shame.

There is no second rate, second class. This is the lie the world tells. Why? Because it is the pry bar to undermine and undercut divine institutions, divine structure, the structure of the family.

It sows discord. It offers the fruit of the tree to Eve and says, look, eat this and you won't have to be subordinate anymore. Wouldn't you like to be wise? Wouldn't you like to know as much as Adam? Wouldn't you like to know as much as God? Raise yourself up.

Being subordinate and secondary is no good. It's the lie of Satan. And that fruit turns to ashes in the mouth because it's false.

So, these details in Kings are significant. Those place names that are associated with the death of the king are significant. You're leaving the garden.

You're sojourning. You're departing from the place of blessing. And fellowship and protection

from God.

You're east of Eden. You're out of the garden. And what do you do when you're sojourning? Are you endeavoring to create a new environment to exploit the provision and protection of God that is offered in this new hostile fallen environment or not? Do you end up with the masses? Do you end up as the place of crowds? Do you end up with the world sharing their fate? Or do we end up being returned in this age in Christ to blessing, provision, protection, and the presence of God within us? If we do not avail ourselves of those blessings in Christ, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

The blood of Jesus Christ sanctifies us and sets us apart uniquely to Him and through Him to God. The blood of Jesus Christ atones, propitiates, redeems. It is our heritage to enjoy those blessings.

If we disregard that, if we get involved in self-aggrandizement, self-gratification, self-satisfaction, if we become subjective and self-interested, how much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who tramples the Son of God underfoot? That's also a graphic image, is it not? The Lord Jesus Christ, high and lifted up, and in this person's behavior, effectively, as it were, trampling him underfoot. Treating as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him and insults the Spirit of Grace. This is an insult to the Father, an insult to the Son, and an insult to the Spirit, all rolled into one.

What do you think is going to happen? I can tell you from the Word of God what's going to happen. Look at Jezebel, and it is symbolic. And this is not just the personal fate of Jezebel.

This isn't a message to Jezebel, she's dead. Jezebel's not learning anything from this experience. Who is learning the lesson? Who is getting the symbolism here? Why is it her skull, her hands and her feet, her blood being splashed around? This story is being told where? Throughout the nation of Israel that is supposed to be dedicated to God, is supposed to be operating under the blood of the covenant.

Right? This is like the Book of Jonah. The Book of Jonah, going to Nineveh, 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed, repenting of sackcloth and ashes. That whole episode isn't for the Ninevites.

Who is it for? The Book of Jonah is not in some collection of ancient Near Eastern literature for people up around Nineveh. It's in the collection of literature that belongs uniquely to Israel. In the same way, this fate of Jezebel at the hands of Jehu is a message.

They're not listening. God didn't send the prophet Elijah and say, stand up on Mount Gerizim and proclaim. Stand up on Mount Ebal and proclaim.

God sends a very graphic. This is one of his last calls to the Northern Kingdom. You'd better pay attention to the blood on the altar down in Jerusalem being shed for you or you're going to pay with your own blood.

As goes the king and the monarchy. This transfers all the way down to the days of Herod. What happened to Herod is a preview of what happens to the nation.

It's emblematic. So, no accidents in the Word of God, no wasted details. They went to barrier but they could not.

These symbolic elements are left behind. And nobody can say, here lies Jezebel. You look for the nation of Israel over the last 2,000 years up until this past century.

Where are they? There's people. There's pieces. But their land is occupied by others.

Now, chapter 10. 2 Kings 10. Ahab had 70 sons in Samaria.

How many people came down with Jacob into the land of Egypt to eventually multiply and go back up to Canaan? How many people came down there? It's kind of chiastic, is it not? 70 sons in Samaria. 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 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. I am coming.

You'd better get ready. He gives them fair warning. Pick any one of these guys.

You've got 70 candidates. Pick one, put him on the throne, and get ready, because I'm going to come down and overthrow him and you. Well, naturally.

See, Jehu is sort of the Theodore Roosevelt of northern Israel. He writes letters, but he carries a big stick, and they are exceedingly afraid. They said, Look, we can put a king on the throne, and he's going to get wiped out.

We can put two kings on the throne, and they would both get wiped out. Two kings could not stand up to him. The previous two that just died, how can we stand up to him? So, Jehu was in charge of the house, and Jehu was in charge of the city.

The elders also, and those who reared the sons, sent a letter back to Jehu. They said, We are your servants. We will do all you tell us.

We are not going to make anyone king. Do what is good in your sight. So, 2nd Jehu, the 2nd epistle of Jehu, is much shorter than the 1st epistle of Jehu.

If you're for me, remember what he shouted up to the window? If you're 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, 70 persons, were the great men of the city, were with the great men of the city who were rearing them. They were being groomed, you know, sort of princes in waiting.

So it was when the letter came to them that they took the king's sons and slaughtered 70 persons, put their heads in baskets, and sent them to him at Jezreel. Now, here's the thing. Jehu said, Take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow.

So they put their heads in baskets. It's one thing to say, Kill the king's sons and let me know. Okay, we have killed the king's sons.

No, their heads are in baskets. Jehu can recognize a lot of these guys. Remember, he's been associated with the house of Ahab for a long time.

He can recognize these guys. He'll know if they've been killed or not because here are their faces. He can just line them up, turn them over.

Oh yeah, recognize him. I don't really recognize him, but him, him, him, him. All the important guys, all the ones, there are their heads.

There's no doubt that his commission has been carried out. Right? And he's smart because you'll notice that all of this stuff is happening by proxy. The only person that Jehu has actually killed by his own hand is who? Remember Ahaziah? Remember Arrow Through the Chest? Who shot the arrow? Who killed Jezebel, technically? Eunuchs.

Who killed the 70 sons of Ahab? Those who were entrusted with their care. Who killed Jezebel? Those who were entrusted with her care. There is a principle here that the things you look to for security, for guidance, for comfort, for providing your pleasures, will be turned against you when God's hand of judgment comes down.

It wasn't an army that came in. You know, the one who cares for me, who does my nails, who does my, you know, these eunuchs probably did her hair, bought her paint, prepared her meals, did her laundry. These prominent men of the city are the ones entrusted with raising these guys to be gentleman scholars, militarily trained and so on.

They've turned around and slaughtered them. Their most trusted confidants have turned against them. This is what happens when we abandon our relationship with God, when we trample underfoot the Son of God, do despot to the Spirit of Grace, count the blood of the covenant that we have been sanctified with as a common thing.

It's meaningless. It's unimportant. We consider important the things around us.

Those things will turn against us. It is a judgment from God. It is consistent in Scripture.

The things that you think are your friends, the things that you think are there for comfort and encouragement and strength and sustenance, will be the means of your downfall. When you belong to God and you ignore it, you can expect to be betrayed by what you trust instead. It's just a principle of the Word of God.

You can see it graphically illustrated here. There's a reason why Jezebel dies the way she does. Do you think Jehu could have drawn his bow with all his strength and sent an arrow through Jezebel at that distance? Of course.

Do you think Jehu could have gotten a team of guys and gone in and slaughtered these overfed princes? Of course. They're killed by the very things that are designed to provide, protect, and encourage them. And it's on purpose, in the Word of the Lord.

Verse 8, 2 Kings 10, A messenger came and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. Notice these guys had all trot up to Jehu with a bag in hand and say, You know, here's Eliab, here's Jehil, here's this guy, here's that guy. They're all afraid of Jehu.

Everybody's afraid of Jehu. Even the guy that anointed him, you know, scurries away. He's a fearsome, formidable guy.

And so a messenger comes and says, There's a bunch of bags out in the... They have brought the heads of the king's sons. He says, Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning. If you put them in two heaps instead of one big heap, what do you think the arrangement is? If there's two heaps and it's at the gate, do you think you've got to step over two heaps to get out of the gate or do you think there's one on each side and you walk between? Remember when Abraham's covenant with God, he divided the animals and God came like a smoking lamp and furnace and walked between the pieces? This is sort of a reverse covenant idea here, right? Remember when Israel went through the divided waters of the Red Sea and there was water heaped up on each side? They were baptized with Moses.

They're identified. It's under the blood of the Passover lamb, which was on each side of their doorpost. Remember that? Blood on the doorpost.

All of this is, as they say, pregnant with meaning. It's fulsome. It is designed to communicate in a graphic way.

There's not... He didn't say, Call the sons of the prophets and have them preach a sermon at the gate. These people are too numbed to hear that. Be aware, and this is another point of application from this passage, if we become insensate to the import of the Word of God, such as we hear in Bible class, if we do not hear, think about, meditate upon, concentrate on, revisit, cycle it through our minds, if it isn't meaningful to us when we hear it, God is going to present it in another more graphic way.

It is a way that is designed to make an impact in our thinking because the simple Word won't do it anymore. Hands up everybody that would rather have God use that method instead of communicating to us through His Word and through His Spirit. Do you really want to have disaster and bloodshed and heaps of severed heads on each side of your gate? Or would it be better to listen and to heed instruction? Remember Proverbs 2, My son, listen, think, lift up your voice, cry out, apply your heart to understanding.

This is the way of blessing. Be not deceived, God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.

If you become apathetic and indifferent, if you get casual about God, it's easy for us because we're in the modern age and there aren't swords and there isn't bloodshed, there aren't stacks of heads. I tell you from the Word of God, because you have been purchased with a great price, God takes it personally if you don't value that purchase. I remind you again, Hebrews 10, verse 29, How severely is someone going to be punished who tramples the Son of God underfoot? When you spend day after day without taking seriously who you are in Christ, you're trampling the Son of God underfoot, you're wasting His sacrifice on the cross, you're wasting the purchase, you're wasting the time that He bought us to invest in the plan and purpose of God, you're trampling it underfoot, you're treating the blood of the covenant that sanctified and set us apart as a common thing, and you are doing despot, you are insulting the Spirit of grace.

That's what you and I do when we don't take seriously each day that we have been given in Christ. And God puts passages like this passage in 2 Kings chapter 10, in our path and before us from His Word to remind us that He's serious, He's not kidding. God is not casual about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and what His purpose was in redeeming you and me.

These two heaps of severed heads, probably 35 to a side, maybe somebody got to count them and said, well, take one over here from the right and put it on the left, let's just even them out. Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning. They're in baskets.

Notice they're not in sacks, as I said earlier, they're in baskets. The thing about a basket is you can see what's in it. Wasn't there a movie, Seven Heads in a Suitcase or something like that? Well, these are in baskets.

So there's this head display. Somebody probably had the chance to arrange them, set them upright so that they could view the people that passed by. I want you to get this in your mind.

This is graphic for a reason and we need to try to recover the graphicality of it. You're coming out of the gate in Jezreel. Maybe you're going to go out because you've got a job out there.

Maybe you're coming into the gate because you've got a job inside. And as you go through, here aligned on each side are 35 baskets on the left, 35 baskets on the right, each with a bloody, severed, pale, blue-green around the edges, head, face, staring at you. Thus shall it be done for the man whom God does not delight to honor.

What do you think the people of Jezreel come away from that experience realizing? We are in big trouble up here in northern Israel. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has come to visit our sins on our heads. So it was, verse 9, in the morning that He went out and stood and said to all the people, You did well.

You did well. In your New King James it says, You are righteous. He says, What's He saying? I am not going to hold you to account.

I am treating you as righteous. By sacrificing these sons, you're off the hook. You are righteous.

Indeed, I conspired against my master and killed him, my Lord, my Adoni, 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. Is this not the fifth time now that Jehu has quoted God and the word of the Lord in the mouth of the prophet? 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.

If you add these up, this is like seven separate references to the word of the Lord which God spoke in the mouth of Jehu. 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. Now, I just want to leave you with this thought as we close.

Yes, Jehu killed his predecessor and took his place. Yes, Jehu ensured that all of the sons of Ahab are slaughtered as some of these others have done, as Athaliah does down in Judah. However, as with so many things, it isn't just what you do, it is why you do it.

Why does Jehu do this? Why does he take the king's body and throw it into the field? Because this is what the word of the Lord spoke. Why does he have Jezebel thrown into the courtyard? Because this is what the word of the Lord said. Why does he have these 70 sons slaughtered? Because this is what the word of the Lord says.

And he quotes it each time. When his predecessor's body is bleeding, he quotes the word of the Lord. When Jezebel's body splatters, he quotes the word of the Lord.

When these guys are slaughtered and their heads are lined up in sort of a reverse parade outside the gate, he quotes the word of the Lord. You don't see Baasha doing this. You don't see the other evil kings who slaughtered their predecessors and all of their brothers, the Ahaziahs and the Jorams and the Elahs and the Zimris and Omris and so on.

You don't see them saying, you know, I view this as the word of the Lord. Jehu, whatever other faults he may have, he is zealous in carrying out his commission, which he was anointed to carry out. He's zealous almost to a fault in carrying it out.

But he views it differently. He doesn't see this as self-preservation. He doesn't see this as eliminating potential rivals or threats.

He says this is what God said would happen and I'm happy to be a part of making it happen. That makes it different. Two men can be in military conflict, firing their weapons.

One of them is doing it out of hatred for the enemy. One is doing it out of desire for professional glory or whatever. Another one is doing it because he's a believer and he says, you know what, blessed be the Lord that teaches my hands to war and my fingers to fight.

I am defending my country, my family, my fellow military left and right and I do it as under the Lord. One of them may be committing a great evil and the other is rewarded by God. It's not just what we do, it is why we do it.

This is what we're going to be watching for as we reach the final evaluation of Jehu in comparison and in contrast with some of his predecessors. Keep in mind, however, primarily and mainly, all these things have been written for our instruction. When we think back this coming week about the fate of Jezebel, the fate of Ahaziah and Joram and the 70 sons of Ahab, what conclusion should we draw? You go back to Numbers, actually Leviticus, chapter 8, verse 24.

This is what a priest should be. Remember Romans 12, 1 and 2? Present yourselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable God, which is your reasonable service. Be not conformed to this world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Think back to Leviticus, chapter 8, verse 24. And think forward to Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 29. Those two passages bracket our study, our passage.

This is what we should be. We should be like the sons of Aaron, dedicated to God. Hebrews 10, 29, this is what happens when we're not.

How much sorer punishment. And it's graphically portrayed to us right here. It is one of those warnings that encourages us to be positive, be motivated, to do the positive things we see in Ephesians, chapter 4, which is where we'll be on Sunday, but we'll close here in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you that you do not leave us as orphans. You have sent the Holy Spirit to lead us and to guide us into all truth, to take these passages of scripture that begin just as words on paper and make them live and breathe and work as your effective double-edged sword to cut to the very center of our being, to convict us, to encourage us, to motivate us, and to thoroughly equip us for every good work.

We pray that as we think about these things, as we spend time reflecting on them, that we will be able to see the practical outcome, the effective decisions and actions that we can take day by day to truly be those that are chastened, that are motivated, that are those who are walking the road of endurance to inheritance and to service now and in the ages to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.