

# SECOND KINGS

## Chapter 9

### *Jehu Anointed King of Israel*

The prophet Elisha summoned a man from the company of the prophets and said to him, “Tuck your cloak into your belt, take this flask of oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead. <sup>2</sup> When you get there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go to him, get him away from his companions and take him into an inner room. <sup>3</sup> Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head and declare, ‘This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.’ Then open the door and run; don’t delay!” <sup>4</sup> So the young man, the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. <sup>5</sup> When he arrived, he found the army officers sitting together. “I have a message for you, commander,” he said. “For which of us?” asked Jehu. “For you, commander,” he replied. <sup>6</sup> Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu’s head and declared, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anoint you king over the LORD’s people Israel. <sup>7</sup> You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD’s servants shed by Jezebel. <sup>8</sup> The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free. <sup>9</sup> I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. <sup>10</sup> As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.’ ” Then he opened the door and ran. <sup>11</sup> When Jehu went out to his fellow officers, one of them asked him, “Is everything all right? Why did this madman come to you?” “You know the man and the sort of things he says,” Jehu replied. <sup>12</sup> “That’s not true!” they said. “Tell us.” Jehu said, “Here is what he told me: ‘This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.’” <sup>13</sup> They hurried and took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is king!”

**9:1–13** Jehoram, king of Israel, was fighting against Hazael, king of Syria, at Ramoth-gilead, where Ahab had opposed Ben-hadad (see note, 1Ki 22:3). While the battle was in progress, Elisha sent “one of the sons of the prophets” to carry out the second task assigned to Elijah: to anoint Jehu “to be king over Israel” (1Ki 19:16). (TLSB)

**9:1** *company of the prophets.* See note on 2:3. (CSB)

*Tie up your garments.* Tucked into the belt to free the legs for running. (TLSB)

**9:2** *inner chamber.* Perhaps he was to act discreetly until things were settled with Jehu (vv 11–13). (TLSB)

**9:3** *I anoint you king.* See notes on 1Sa 2:10; 9:16; 1Ki 19:16. (CSB)

*flee; do not linger.* Jehu would lead a violent coup, from which the prophet should distance himself. (TLSB)

**9:5** *in council*. Leaders of the Israelite army were considering the battle with the Syrians who occupied Ramoth-gilead (8:28). (TLSB)

**9:6** *the people of the LORD*. Some Israelites still belonged to the Lord. (TLSB)

**9:7** *destroy the house of Ahab*. Jehu learned that he was the divinely appointed agent to inflict the judgment Elijah had pronounced many years earlier in his own hearing against the house of Ahab (see vv. 25–26; 1Ki 21:21–24). (CSB)

King Joram of Israel was descended from Ahab, whose wife Jezebel had led him into greater sin. (TLSB)

*blood of all the LORD's servants shed by Jezebel*. A reference to people such as Naboth and his family (1Ki 21:13), who were unjustly put to death through Jezebel's influence. (CSB)

**9:8** *slave or free*. See note on 1Ki 14:10. (CSB)

The Lord would do away with wicked Ahab's descendants just as He had cut off previous dynasties. Jeroboam, Israel's first king, had only one successor, who was murdered (1Ki 14:10, 20; 15:29). The fate of Baasha, the third king, and his son was similar (1Ki 16:3–4, 12–13). *every male*. See note, 1Ki 14:10. *bond*. Slaves were regarded as members of a master's household. (TLSB)

**9:9** *like the house of Jeroboam*. See 1Ki 14:7–11; 15:27–30. (CSB)

*like the house of Baasha*. See 1Ki 16:1–4, 8–12. Elijah had spoken the same words to Ahab years before (see 1Ki 21:21–24). (CSB)

**9:11** *this madman*. The epithet betrays a scornful attitude on the part of the military officers of the northern kingdom toward members of the prophetic companies. (CSB)

The way the prophet tore in and raced out drew suspicion. Jehu used a derogatory reference to put off his curious fellow officers. (TLSB)

*the fellow and his talk*. Luth: "As [Isaiah] himself testifies in chapter 5 they put out their tongues at him and pointed their fingers at him; and except for a few devout children of God in the crowd, such as King Hezekiah, they all regarded his preaching as foolishness. For it was the custom among the people to mock the prophets and consider them madmen, ... as has always happened to all servants of God and preachers, is happening every day, and will continue to happen" (AE 35:278). (TLSB)

**9:12** *tell us now*. Jehu's fellow officers saw through his crass dismissal of the prophet. They may have anticipated the prophet's real purpose. (TLSB)

**9:13** *bare steps*. Lit, "the bone of the steps." The phrase suggests that the soldiers put their clothes on the stones much as flesh covers the bare skeleton of the body. When Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey (as Solomon rode a mule at his coronation), the people spread their

garments before Him, acclaiming “the Son of David” as their king (Mt 21:7–9; cf 1Ki 1:32–34). Jehu’s accession to the throne marked the end of the brief period of cooperation between the two kingdoms. Much blood was to flow before Jehu’s revolt had eliminated all possible sources of opposition. By Jehu’s own hand, or on his orders, the following lost their lives: the king of Israel, Jehoram (vv 14–26); the king of Judah, Ahaziah, who was visiting his brother-in-law Jehoram (vv 27–29); Jezebel, queen mother of Israel (vv 30–37); “seventy sons” of Ahab, Jehoram’s father (10:1–11); 42 relatives of Ahaziah (10:12–14); Ahab’s remaining descendants (10:15–17); a templeful of Baal worshipers (10:18–27). (TLSB)

**9:1–13** Elisha sends a “son of the prophets” to anoint Jehu ruler over Israel, to fulfill God’s promise of judgment against the dynasty of Ahab. Just as this apprentice to the prophet fulfills his duty diligently, so fulfill your calling diligently in the Lord’s name, no matter how others may dismiss it or jeer at you. God will fulfill His purpose for you and bless you with the strength for dedicated service, through Jesus Christ, who bore all your scorn and served you diligently for the sake of your salvation. • O Lord swing wide the door of opportunity for me, that I may run to serve You in all confidence of Your Word. Amen (TLSB)

### ***Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah***

<sup>14</sup> So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram and all Israel had been defending Ramoth Gilead against Hazael king of Aram, <sup>15</sup> but King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him in the battle with Hazael king of Aram.) Jehu said, “If this is the way you feel, don’t let anyone slip out of the city to go and tell the news in Jezreel.” <sup>16</sup> Then he got into his chariot and rode to Jezreel, because Joram was resting there and Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to see him. <sup>17</sup> When the lookout standing on the tower in Jezreel saw Jehu’s troops approaching, he called out, “I see some troops coming.” “Get a horseman,” Joram ordered. “Send him to meet them and ask, ‘Do you come in peace?’ ” <sup>18</sup> The horseman rode off to meet Jehu and said, “This is what the king says: ‘Do you come in peace?’ ” “What do you have to do with peace?” Jehu replied. “Fall in behind me.” The lookout reported, “The messenger has reached them, but he isn’t coming back.” <sup>19</sup> So the king sent out a second horseman. When he came to them he said, “This is what the king says: ‘Do you come in peace?’ ” Jehu replied, “What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me.” <sup>20</sup> The lookout reported, “He has reached them, but he isn’t coming back either. The driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi—he drives like a madman.” <sup>21</sup> “Hitch up my chariot,” Joram ordered. And when it was hitched up, Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. <sup>22</sup> When Joram saw Jehu he asked, “Have you come in peace, Jehu?” “How can there be peace,” Jehu replied, “as long as all the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?” <sup>23</sup> Joram turned about and fled, calling out to Ahaziah, “Treachery, Ahaziah!” <sup>24</sup> Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and he slumped down in his chariot. <sup>25</sup> Jehu said to Bidkar, his chariot officer, “Pick him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. Remember how you and I were riding

together in chariots behind Ahab his father when the LORD made this prophecy about him: <sup>26</sup> ‘Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, declares the LORD, and I will surely make you pay for it on this plot of ground, declares the LORD.’ Now then, pick him up and throw him on that plot, in accordance with the word of the LORD.” <sup>27</sup> When Ahaziah king of Judah saw what had happened, he fled up the road to Beth Haggan. Jehu chased him, shouting, “Kill him too!” They wounded him in his chariot on the way up to Gur near Ibleam, but he escaped to Megiddo and died there. <sup>28</sup> His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem and buried him with his fathers in his tomb in the City of David. <sup>29</sup> (In the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king of Judah.)

**9:14–26** Trusting that the army was of a mind to support him, Jehu at once went c 45 mi W to Jezreel, where King Joram was recuperating from wounds sustained at Ramoth-gilead (8:28–29). Apparently not suspecting his commander of unfriendly intent, King Joram rode out. Jehu pierced his heart with an arrow. “In accordance with the word of the LORD” (v 26; 1Ki 21:19), his corpse was thrown on the plot of ground stolen from its former owner, Naboth (1Ki 21:1–19). (TLSB)

**9:15** *don’t let anyone ... go and tell the news in Jezreel.* For the success of Jehu’s revolt and to avoid a civil conflict it was important to take Joram totally by surprise. (CSB)

Jehu would race to Jezreel to beat any messengers who might warn the king. (TLSB)

**9:16** *Jezreel.* About 45 miles from Ramoth Gilead. (CSB)

*Ahaziah ... had gone down to see him.* See 8:29. (CSB)

*tower in Jezreel.* Jezreel overlooked an important east-west pass in Israel’s highlands. From the tower, the watchman could see down the Valley of Jezreel toward the Jordan River plain c 12 mi away. (TLSB)

*company.* Military unit. (TLSB)

**9:18** *horseback.* Israelites typically rode mules or donkeys, not horses, which were used for drawing chariots. But here the rider apparently mounts the horse itself. (TLSB)

*Is it peace?* Rider may be inquiring about the war at Ramoth-gilead rather than Jehu’s intentions. Jehu dismisses the man’s concern and formal question in a manner that may have characterized him (cf v 11). (TLSB)

*ride behind.* In order to keep his mission secret, he commanded the horseman, sent out from the city to meet him, to ride behind him. (TLSB)

**9:19** *second horseman.* Receives the same treatment as the first horseman (v 18). (TLSB)

**9:20** *furiously.* Lit, “with madness.” Jehu’s fast and furious driving became proverbial. (TLSB)

**9:21** *went to meet Jehu.* Anxious for news of Ramoth-gilead, the kings left the security of the city. (TLSB)

*plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth.* See notes on 1Ki 21:2–3, 13, 19. (CSB)

Highly ironic, given that Jezebel (Joram’s grandmother) had orchestrated Naboth’s death in order to seize his property (1Ki 21:1–19). (TLSB)

**9:22** *whorings.* By her Baal worship, Jezebel “whored after other gods.” Biblical writers and Jesus do not mince words in describing unfaithfulness to God (Jgs 2:17; Jer 3:2; Hos 2:2–3; Mt 12:39; 16:4). (TLSB)

*idolatry and witchcraft.* Both punishable by death (see Dt 13; 18:10–12). As long as these evils were promoted in the northern kingdom, there could be no peace. (CSB)

**9:23** *Treachery.* Joram knew from Jehu’s answer what he intended to do. (TLSB)

**9:24** *shot ... between the shoulders.* In some cultures, striking an enemy in the back is considered cowardly. Not so in ancient Canaan, as demonstrated by a Ugaritic myth about the victories of Baal. (TLSB)

**9:25** *his aide.* Chariots typically carried two or three warriors. (TLSB)

*behind Ahab.* In his retinue. (TLSB)

**9:26** *in accordance with the word of the LORD.* Jehu saw himself providentially placed in the position of fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah given years before (see 1Ki 21:18–24). Even though Ahab’s own blood was not shed on Naboth’s field (see 1Ki 21:29 and note), Jehu saw in Joram’s death the fulfillment of Elijah’s prophecy (see note on 1Ki 21:19). (CSB)

**9:27** *Ahaziah ... fled.* Warned by his uncle’s cry of “Treachery!” (v 23), the king of Judah escaped southward in the direction of Beth-haggan, c 7 mi S of Jezreel. A little farther south, near Ibleam and at an unknown ascent of Gur, Jehu’s men wounded him. From there he backtracked c 10 mi NW to Megiddo. According to 2Ch 22:9, the fugitive did not die until he made his way back to Samaria, where Jehu killed him. (TLSB)

*And they shot him.* In the Tel Dan Stela, a victory monument, Hazael of Damascus credits his god Hadad for victory over Yahweh, Joram, and Ahaziah. (TLSB)

*escaped to Megiddo and died there.* It may be questioned whether Jehu was justified in extending the purge of Ahab’s house (see Hos 1:4) to the descendants of the house of David through Ahab’s daughter Athaliah (see 8:18, 26). (CSB)

**9:29** *eleventh year*. A postscript, repeating in part the summary of Ahaziah's reign given in 8:25, according to which his accession occurred in the 12th year. (TLSB)

**9:14–29** The Lord's judgment against Ahab's household is fulfilled with vicious irony when Jehu shoots Joram and has his body cast into the vineyard of Naboth. The Lord will fulfill His Word of condemnation and also His Word of deliverance, removing a wicked ruler from over His people. He puts to death and gives life; to us who believe, He gives life everlasting in Christ.  
• Lord, give me life according to Your Word. Amen. (TLSB)

### ***Jezebel Killed***

**30** Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she painted her eyes, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. **31** As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, "Have you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?" **32** He looked up at the window and called out, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. **33** "Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot. **34** Jehu went in and ate and drank. "Take care of that cursed woman," he said, "and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." **35** But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands. **36** They went back and told Jehu, who said, "This is the word of the LORD that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's flesh. **37** Jezebel's body will be like refuse on the ground in the plot at Jezreel, so that no one will be able to say, 'This is Jezebel.' "

**9:30** *Jezebel*. Now a widow (cf 1Ki 22:29–40). (TLSB)

*painted her eyes*. Eye shadow and other cosmetics were well known to women in the ancient world. See note, Jb 42:14. Groomed in her queenly finery as if she were about to hold court, Jezebel faced her executioners with iron nerve. (TLSB)

*looked out of the window*. Phoenician ivory carvings depict women wearing headdresses looking out of windows. Perhaps there is some significance to this action. (TLSB)

**9:31** *Zimri, you murderer of your master*. In bitter sarcasm Jezebel called Jehu by the name Zimri. About 45 years earlier Zimri had seized the throne from Elah by assassination and then had destroyed the whole house of Baasha. He ruled, however, for only seven days before Omri seized power (see 1Ki 16:8–20). (CSB)

Proverbial for a traitor. More than 50 years earlier, Zimri assassinated Baasha, the third king of Israel (1Ki 16:8–10). (TLSB)

**9:32** *eunuchs*. Servants whose testicles were removed so that they might oversee a king's harem without the risk of becoming romantically involved with the women. Could also describe an official who may not have had such an operation. (TLSB)

**9:33** *horses*. Those driven by Jehu or others of his company. (TLSB)

*trampled*. Startled horses rear and paw at what they perceive as a threat. (TLSB)

**9:34** *ate and drank*. Showing indifference for Jezebel's death. Trip had also been very long from Ramoth-gilead (cf v 14). (TLSB)

*a king's daughter*. Her father was the king of Sidon. (TLSB)

**9:35–36** *bury her*. Violating the prophet's wording in v 10, anticipating future disobedience and evil (10:29). (TLSB)

*dogs shall eat*. Fulfillment of God's Word, spoken by Elijah. Similar gruesome account appears in Egyptian "Story of Two Brothers." (TLSB)

**9:36** *the word of the LORD that he spoke through his servant Elijah*. In the manner of Jezebel's death the word of the Lord was confirmed—the word she had defied during her life (see 1Ki 21:23). (CSB)

**9:30–37** Jehu executes and disdains the body of Jezebel the wicked queen mother of Israel. Despite Jehu's unwillingness to follow the Lord's Word completely (see note, vv 35–36), the Lord brought the prophecy to absolute completion through trampling horses and biting dogs. Not a letter of His Word shall fail! Though we fail, God's Word will and does succeed for His sake and for our sakes in Christ the Savior. • King of heaven, reign in justice and compassion for the sake of Your Church. Amen. (TLSB)