



Jehu's Purge of the Baal Cult: Execution of the Princes Royal of Judah at Beth-eketh, 2 Kings 10:12-14, & the Worshipers of Baal at Samaria, 2 Kings 10:18-28

Execution of the Princes Royal of Judah (2 Kings 10:12-14):

2 Kings 10:12 - Then Jehu arose and departed, and went to Samaria. On the way while he was at Beth-eked of the shepherds,

v. 13 - Jehu met the relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and said, "Who are you?" And they answered, "We are the relatives of Ahaziah; and we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother."

v. 14 - And he said, "Take them alive." So they took them alive and killed them at the pit of Beth-eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.

On the way from Jezreel to Samaria, Jehu meets up with a group of 42 men who are described in the King James Version as the "brothers of Ahaziah." The NIV and New American Standard Bible give a better translation of "relatives." These could not have been Ahaziah's brothers. We have already noted 2 Chronicles 21:14 where Elijah prophesied that the Lord would "strike your (Jehoram's) ... sons ... with a great calamity." This prophecy was fulfilled in verse 17 when they were taken hostage by the invading Philistine-Arabian coalition army and then, in 2 Chronicles 22:1, were slain. The only survivor was the 22-year-old Ahaziah.

So who were these "relatives"? They were a combination of the children of Ahaziah's six slain uncles and their children and possibly half-brothers from among the wives of Jehoram's concubines and their children. (1 Chronicles 21:1-4)

They explained their presence on the road north to Jezreel as a mission to go visit the "sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother." Who are these folks? First of all they had no idea that a successful coup d'état had been carried out by Jehu who had assassinated both King Jehoram of Israel and King Ahaziah of Judah.

They apparently knew that Jehoram had retired to Jezreel because of injuries sustained in the Battle of Ramoth-gilead and that Ahaziah had gone to check on him. But beyond this they knew nothing more, therefore meeting Jehu on the road to Samaria caused no concern. He was their uncle and a well-known veteran of the Israeli army. Jehu however had been away from Judah a long time and obviously did not recognize his nephews who had grown from boys to men, thus he inquired who they were.

The nephews immediately told him they were the relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah, on their way to visit their Uncle Jehoram and Cousin Ahaziah.

Jehu immediately realized that because of his brother Jehoram's marriage to Athaliah that not only were these men his nephews but they posed yet another unresolved threat to the stability of his newly established regime. He wanted their blood and he wanted their souls and he wanted them both right now.

Turning to his men he ordered them to capture the entire party. He had them executed in the pit of Beth-eked, **בֵּית עֵקֶד** *Beth-eketh*: a house for shearing sheep, on the highway to Samaria. On this occasion Jehu's men slaughtered the remnants of the royal line of Ahab in Judah. All that were left alive were the small children of Ahaziah who remained for the moment, safe in the palace back in Jerusalem.

Execution of the Worshipers of Baal (2 Kings 10:18-28):

Next on Jehu's agenda were the reversionists who had taken up the worship of Baal. Here his subterfuge was put to good use since the job of smoking out each and every devotee would be extremely difficult.



Jehu's plan was ingenious and required the insidious device of presenting a rhetorical veil to conceal while it advanced his hidden agenda. First the rhetorical veil:

2 Kings 10:18 - Then Jehu gathered all the people and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much."

Jehu's objective is to convince the people that he is a follower of Baal and not *YHWH Elohim*. In order to identify those who followed Baal as opposed to those who followed the Lord he first identified himself with the former. This is a rhetorical veil. It can be a statement of truth, of a lie, or of a combination of the two. But its purpose is to conceal while advancing a hidden agenda. In this case it is a lie, although Jehu is more of a functionary of the Lord rather than a serious follower. He took on the task of eliminating the house of Ahab not because he was all that bothered about its behavior but because the end result would be his personal ascendancy to the throne of Israel.

In monarchies, the position of rulership is referred to as "the throne." This phrase is a metonymy, a figure of speech that replaces the name of one thing with the name of something else closely associated with it, e.g., "the press" for journalism, or "the oval office, for the presidency. Thus, "the throne" represents the power of the one who sits upon it but with the idea that the throne is what imputes the power. The throne bestows great privileges and prestige to the one it supports. Consequently, the throne becomes a symbol of government and thus represents the system which grants power and authority to its occupant.

The throne in a monarchical client nation grants power and authority delegated by God. It was His directive will that the united monarchy be ruled by a member of the tribe of Judah and the line of David. Those who so ruled were considered by God to be His representatives on earth.

It was God's permissive will that allowed the united monarchy to become divided into the Northern and Southern Kingdoms. When the rulership in the Northern and Southern Kingdoms came to accept and then participate in the worship of Baal it was His overruling will that decreed to take both kings off their thrones. The man he appointed the task was Jehu, tribe of Judah, line of David, but not the line of Christ.

Nevertheless, Jehu was the man for this crisis. He was a highly successful military leader with campaign ribbons in both battles of Ramoth-gilead. He was born in Judah but became associated with Israel during the reign of Ahab. He served under both King Ahab and his son King Jehoram. He was well-known in both kingdoms. He had the name, the smarts, the power, and the disposition needed to rid the land of the Baal cult.

Jehu had all the assets necessary to become a great leader of Israel. But his primary objective was not to selflessly serve the Lord but promote Jehu. The Lord gave Jehu the power and authority to remove the house of Ahab and Jezebel. But Jehu was not in it for the glory of the Lord. He was in it for the power and authority that came with the throne. Therefore, all his calculations were designed to solidify his regime which the Lord had already done by anointing him.

Since the prophet Elisha's protégé made it known at Ramoth-gilead that Jehu was king of Israel, then once he had removed the Baal cult and its followers from the land the Lord would have made it known to the people that Jehu was His anointed and the one the people were to follow.

Jehu, however, was convinced that he had to manage the change of regimes and thus went into human-viewpoint modus operandi. His plan is to win the approval of the followers of the Lord after he eliminates the followers of Baal. Jehu is about to do the right thing in a wrong way.



2 Kings 10:19 -“And now, summon all the prophets of Baal, all his worshipers and all his priests; let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal; whoever is missing shall not live.” But Jehu did it in cunning, in order that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

v. 20 - And Jehu said, “Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal.” And they proclaimed it.

Jehu convinced the followers of Baal that he was one of them. He then confirmed their confidence by proclaiming as his first official act a national festival to honor Baal. He summoned all the worshipers and priests of Baal to Samaria to participate in a special sacrifice at the National Cathedral. The Temple of Baal was large enough to accommodate the priests, the prophets, and a host of worshipers.

The Temple rituals included the burning of incense, offering animal sacrifices—and on occasion a human sacrifice—and ecstatic dervish dances where participants slashed themselves with knives. According to verse 21, once everyone arrived they had a full house. At this point Jehu takes advantage of the fact that the worshipers wore a special robe while in the temple.

2 Kings 10:22 -And he said to the one who was in charge of the wardrobe, “Bring out garments for all the worshipers of Baal.” So he brought out garments for them.

v. 23 - And Jehu went into the house of Baal with Jehonadab \je-hon' a-dab\ the son of Rechab \rē' kav\; and he said to the worshipers of Baal, “Search and see that there may be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but only the worshipers of Baal.”

On the road to Samaria, Jehu met a man named Jehonadab, a member of peculiar tribe descended from the Medianites, or the Medes, who originated around the Zargos Mountains in present-day Iran. Jehonadab was a member of the Kenite tribe who were among nomadic Arabs called Bedouins and who led a monastic lifestyle. Their sect was called the Rechabites.

After gaining assurances that Jehonadab supported his campaign to rid Israel of the Baal cult, Jehu invited him to ride in his chariot down to Samaria. Once there, Jehu accomplished the task of accumulating all of Baal’s devotees into one small geographic location. His intent is to kill them all. They think they have arrived to witness their new king perform a sacrifice to Baal with all them as witnesses, but Jehu has used their own tradition of wearing special robes to mark them for execution.

What Jehu is going to do to the followers of Baal is exactly what Lucifer desires desperately to do to the Jews. Since 1948 the Jews have sought to reestablish themselves in the land of ancient Israel. It has resulted in a tempting opportunity for Lucifer. There is no question that the ambassador demons are extremely active in the Near East and especially within the Palestinian Authority. President Bush’s “Roadmap to Peace” could well lead to the Jews into making a treaty with cobras.

In Samaria of 841 B.C., Jehu is about to exterminate the cobras. He got them all decked out in their vestments and sent them off to search the temple to verify that none of the worshipers of **YHWH** were present.

His plan is now set. He is about to execute all who are involved in the Baal cult. Once done he will be hailed by the Jews who remained loyal to the Lord. His entire plan is predicated on self-promotion. The mechanics are simply the process and procedure for getting there.



The delegated power and authority invested in him by the anointing performed by Elisha's protégé gives Jehu permission to proceed. He is following orders, which is the right thing to do. But he does so with ulterior motives, which means it will be accomplished in the wrong way. Jehu now is ready to spring his trap:

2 Kings 10:24 - Then they [**the worshipers of Baal**] went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had stationed for himself eighty men outside, and he had said, "The one who permits any of the men whom I bring into your hands to escape, shall give up his life in exchange for theirs."

Jehu has one more visual veil to perform to seal the deal. He offered a burnt offering to the priests inside the temple of Baal. He did not want to offend the followers of the Lord by participating, but by offering an animal for sacrifice he further convinced the cultic gathering that he was legit. With everyone inside carrying out the sacrifice, Jehu gave the signal that began the massacre.

2 Kings 10:25 - Then it came about, as soon as he [**the priest of Baal**] had finished offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard [**messengers or runners**] and to the royal officers [**captains**], "Go in, kill them; let none come out." And they killed them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the royal officers threw them out, and went to the inner room of the house of Baal.

The guards were actually messengers who sprinted outside with the message to the officers to enter the temple and begin the slaughter. The eighty, armed with swords, cleaned house against hundreds of unarmed pagans caught by utter surprise. Once the worshipers were wiped out then the cleansing of the temple began.

2 Kings 10:26 - And they brought out the sacred pillars [**wooden images of Baal**] of the house of Baal and burned them.

v. 27 - They also broke down the sacred pillar of Baal [**the stone altar**] and broke down the house of Baal [**razed the building**], and made it a [**מוֹצֵאָה**] *mosa'ah*] latrine to this day.

v.28 - And Jehu eradicated Baal out of Israel.

The question now becomes, what will take the place of the burned and broken idols.