
2KINGS 9: 1 Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Put your belt on your waist, take this vial of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead.

Elisha sends one of the disciples of the prophets to Ramoth-gilead, to anoint Jehu king of Israel, 2Kgs 9:1-3. He acts according to his orders, and informs Jehu that he is to cut off the whole house of Ahab, 2Kgs 9:4-10. Jehu's captains proclaim him king, 2Kgs 9:11-14. He goes again Jezreel; where he finds Joram and Ahaziah king of Judah, who had come to visit him; he slays them both: the former is thrown into the portion of Naboth; the latter, having received a mortal wound, gives to Megiddo, and dies there, and is carried to Jerusalem, and buried in the city of David, 2Kgs 9:15-29. He commands Jezebel to be thrown out of her window; and he treads her under the feet of his horses; and the dogs eat her, according to the word of the Lord, 2Kgs 9:30-37.

Verse 1

One of the children of the prophets - The Jews say that this was Jonah the prophet, the son of Amittai.

Gird up thy loins - What thou hast to do requires the utmost despatch.

2KINGS 9: 2 When you come there, find Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from among his brothers, and carry him to an inner room.

2KINGS 9: 3 Then take the vial of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD, "I have anointed you king over Israel."' Then open the door, flee, and don't wait."

2KINGS 9: 4 So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead.

Verse 4

The young man the prophet - This should be translated, The servant of the prophet; that is, the servant which Elisha now had in place of Gehazi.

2KINGS 9: 5 When he came, behold, the captains of the army were sitting. Then he said, "I have a message for you, captain."

Jehu said, "To which of us all?"

He said, "To you, O captain."

2KINGS 9: 6 He arose, and went into the house. Then he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, even over Israel.

Verse 6

King over the people of the Lord - This pointed out to Jehu that he was to rule that people according to God's law; and consequently, that he was to restore the pure worship of the Most High in Israel.

2KINGS 9: 7 You shall strike 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.

Verse 7

Thou shalt smite the house of Ahab - For their most cruel murders they have forfeited their own lives, according to that immutable law, "He that sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." This and the two following verses contain the commission which Jehu received from the Lord against the bloody house of Ahab.

2KINGS 9: 8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish. I will cut off from Ahab everyone who urinates against a wall, both him who is shut up and him who is left at large in Israel.

2KINGS 9: 9 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 Ahijah.

2KINGS 9: 10 The dogs will eat Jezebel on the plot of ground of Jezreel, and there shall be no one to bury her." He opened the door, and fled.

Verse 10

The dogs shall eat Jezebel - How most minutely was this prophecy fulfilled! See 2Kgs 9:33, etc.

2KINGS 9: 11 Then Jehu came out to the servants of his lord: and one said to him, "Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you?" He said to them, "You know the man and what his talk was."

Verse 11

Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? - Was it because he was a holy man of God that he was reputed by a club of irreligious officers to be a madman? In vain do such pretend that they fight for religion, and are the guardians of the public welfare and morals, if they persecute religion and scoff at holy men. But this has been an old custom with all the seed, the sons, of the serpent. As to religious soldiers, they are far to seek, and ill to find, according to the old proverb.

Ye know the man, and his communication - Ye know that he is a madman, and that his message must be a message of folly. Jehu did not appear willing to tell them what had been done, lest it should promote jealousy and envy.

2KINGS 9: 12 They said, "That is a lie. Tell us now."

He said, "He said to me, 'Thus says the LORD, I have anointed you king over Israel.'"

Verse 12

They said, It is false - Or, as the Chaldee has it, Thou liest. Or, perhaps, it might be thus understood, "We know he has said nothing but folly and lies, nevertheless, let us hear what he has said."

2KINGS 9: 13 Then they hurried, and took every man his garment, and put it under him on the top of the stairs, and blew the trumpet, saying, "Jehu is king."

Verse 13

Took every man his garment - This was a ceremony by which they acknowledged him as king; and it was by such a ceremony that the multitudes acknowledged Jesus Christ for the Messiah and King of Israel, a little before his passion: see Mat 21:7 (note), and the note there. The ceremony was expressive: "As we put our garments under his feet, so we place every thing under his authority, and acknowledge ourselves his servants."

On the top of the stairs - The Chaldee, the rabbins, and several interpreters, understand this of the public sun-dial; which in those ancient times, was formed of steps like stairs, each step serving to indicate, by its shadow, one hour, or such division of time as was commonly used in that country. This dial was, no doubt, in the most public place; and upon the top of it, or on the platform on the top, would be a very proper place to set Jehu, while they blew their trumpets, and proclaimed him king. The Hebrew מעלות maaloth is the same word which is used 2Kgs 20:9-11, to signify the dial of Ahaz; and this was probably the very same dial on which that miracle was afterwards wrought: and this dial, מעלות maaloth, from עלה alah, to go up, ascend, was most evidently made of steps; the shadows projected on which, by a gnomon, at the different elevations of the sun, would serve to show the popular divisions of time. See the notes on 2Kgs 20:9 (note), etc.

2KINGS 9: 14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram was keeping Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria;

Verse 14

Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead - The confederate armies appear to have taken this city; but they were obliged to watch their conquests, as they perceived that Hazael was determined to retake it if possible.

2KINGS 9: 15 but king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) Jehu said, "If this is your thinking, then let no one escape and go out of the city, to go to tell it in Jezreel."

2KINGS 9: 16 So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.

Verse 16

Jehu - went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there - From the preceding verse we learn, that Joram had been wounded in his attack on Ramoth-gilead, and had gone to Jezreel to be cured; and neither he nor Ahaziah knew any thing of the conspiracy in Ramoth-gilead, because Jehu and his captains took care to prevent any person from leaving the city; so that the two kings at Jezreel knew nothing of what had taken place.

2KINGS 9: 17 Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company."

Joram said, "Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?'"

Verse 17

A watchman on the tower - These watchmen, fixed on elevated places and generally within hearing of each other, served as a kind of telegraphs, to communicate intelligence through the whole country. But, in some cases, it appears that the intelligence was conveyed by a horseman to the next stage, as in the case before us. At this time, when the armies were at Ramoth-gilead, they were, no doubt, doubly watchful to observe the state of the country, and to notice every movement. See on 2Sam 13:34 (note).

2KINGS 9: 18 So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king, 'Is it peace?'"

Jehu said, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me!"

The watchman said, "The messenger came to them, but he isn't coming back."

Verse 18

What hast thou to do with peace? - "What is it to thee whether there be peace or war? Join my company, and fall into the rear."

2KINGS 9: 19 Then he sent out a second on horseback, who came to them, and said, "Thus says the king, 'Is it peace?'" Jehu answered, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me!"

2KINGS 9: 20 The watchman said, "He came to them, and isn't coming back. The driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he drives furiously."

Verse 20

He driveth furiously - Jehu was a bold, daring, prompt, and precipitate general. In his various military operations he had established his character; and now it was almost proverbial.

2KINGS 9: 21 Joram said, "Get ready!" They got his chariot ready. Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out to meet Jehu, and found him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.

Verse 21

Joram - and Ahaziah - went out - They had no suspicion of what was done at Ramoth-gilead; else they would not have ventured their persons as they now did.

2KINGS 9: 22 When Joram saw Jehu, he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" He answered, "What peace, so long as the prostitution of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft abound?"

Verse 22

What peace, so long as the whoredoms - Though the words whoredom, adultery, and fornication, are frequently used to express idolatry, and false religion, in general; yet here they may be safely taken in their common and most obvious sense, as there is much reason to believe that Jezebel was the patroness and supporter of a very impure system of religion; and to this Jehu might refer, rather than to the calf-worship, to which himself was most favourably disposed.

2KINGS 9: 23 Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "There is treason, Ahaziah!"

Verse 23

There is treachery, O Ahaziah - This was the first intimation he had of it: he feels for the safety of his friend Ahaziah, and now they fly for their lives.

2KINGS 9: 24 Jehu drew his bow with his full strength, and struck Joram between his arms; and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.

Verse 24

Drew a bow with his full strength - The marginal reading is correct: He filled his hand with a bow. That is, "He immediately took up his bow, set his arrow, and let fly." This is the only meaning of the passage.

Between his arms - That is, between his shoulders; for he was now turned, and was flying from Jehu.

2KINGS 9: 25 Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick him up, and throw him in the plot of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember how, when you and I rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this burden on him:

Verse 25

Cast him in the portion of the field - This was predicted, 1 Kings 21; and what now happened to the son of Ahab is foretold in 1Kgs 21:29 of that chapter.

2KINGS 9: 26 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons,' says the LORD; 'and I will repay you in this plot of ground,' says the LORD. Now therefore take and cast him onto the plot of ground, according to the LORD's word."

Verse 26

The blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons - We are not informed in 1 Kings 21 that any of Naboth's family was slain but himself: but as the object both of Ahab and Jezebel was to have Naboth's vineyard entirely, and for ever, it is not likely that they would leave any of his posterity, who might at a future time reclaim it as their inheritance. Again, to secure this point, Jezebel had Naboth convicted of treason and atheism; in order that his whole family might be involved in his ruin.

2KINGS 9: 27 But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. Jehu followed after him, and said, "Strike him also in the chariot!" They struck him at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo, and died there.

Verse 27

Fled by the way of the garden - The account of the death of Ahaziah, as given in 2Chr 22:8, 2Chr 22:9, is very different from that given here: When Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab - he sought Ahaziah; and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu; and when they had slain him, they buried him. "The current of the story at large is this," says Dr. Lightfoot: "Jehu slayeth Joram in the field of Jezreel, as Ahaziah and Joram were together; Ahaziah, seeing this, flees, and gets into Samaria, and hides himself there. Jehu marcheth to Jezreel, and makes Jezebel dogs' meat: from thence he sends to Samaria for the heads of Ahab's children and posterity: which are brought him by night, and showed to the people in the morning. Then he marcheth to Samaria, and by the way slayeth forty-two of Ahab's kinsmen; and findeth Jehonadab, the father of the Rechabites. Coming into Samaria, he maketh search for Ahaziah: they find him hid, bring him to Jehu, and he commands to carry him up towards Gur, by Ibleam, and there to slay him.

It may be, his father Joram had slain his brethren there, as Ahab had done Naboth, in Jezreel. They do so; smite him there in his chariot; and his charioteer driveth away to Megiddo before he dies. The story in the book of Kings is short: but the book of Chronicles shows the order." Lightfoot's Works, vol. i., p. 88.

2KINGS 9: 28 His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the city of David.

2KINGS 9: 29 In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

Verse 29

In the eleventh year of Joram - The note in our margin contains as good an account of this chronological difficulty as can be reasonably required: Then he began to reign as viceroy to his father in his sickness; 2Chr 21:18, 2Chr 21:19. But in Joram's twelfth year he began to reign alone; 2Kgs 8:26.

2KINGS 9: 30 When Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her eyes, and attired her head, and looked out at the window.

Verse 30

She painted her face, and tired her head - She endeavored to improve the appearance of her complexion by paint, and the general effect of her countenance by a tiara or turban head-dress. Jonathan, the Chaldee Targumist, so often quoted, translates this **בצידא עינהא** vechachalath bitsdida eynaha: "She stained her eyes with stibium or antimony." This is a custom in Astatic countries to the present day. From a late traveler in Persia, I borrow the following account: - "The Persians differ as much from us in their notions of beauty as they do in those of taste. A large soft, and languishing black eye, with them constitutes the perfection of beauty. It is chiefly on this account that the women use the powder of antimony, which, although it adds to the vivacity of the eye, throws a kind of voluptuous languor over it, which makes it appear, (if I may use the expression), dissolving in bliss. The Persian women have a curious custom of making their eye-brows meet; and if this charm be denied them, they paint the forehead with a kind of preparation made for that purpose." E. S. Waring's Tour to Sheeraz, 4th., 1807, page 62.

This casts light enough on Jezebel's painting, etc., and shows sufficiently with what design she did it, to conquer and disarm Jehu, and induce him to take her for wife, as Jarchi supposes. This staining of the eye with stibium and painting was a universal custom, not only in Asiatic countries, but also in all those that bordered on them, or had connections with them. The Prophet Ezekiel mentions the painting of the eyes, Eze 23:40.

That the Romans painted their eyes we have the most positive evidence. Pliny says, *Tanta est decoris affectatio, ut tinguantur oculi quoque*. Hist. Nat. lib. xi., cap. 37. "Such is their affection of ornament, that they paint their eyes also." That this painting was with stibium or antimony, is plain from these words of St. Cyprian, *De Opere et Eleemosynis*, *Inunge aculos tuos non stibio diaboli, sed*

collyrio Christi, "Anoint your eyes, not with the devil's antimony, but with the eye-salve of Christ." Juvenal is plain on the same subject. Men as well as women in Rome practiced it: -

Ille supercilium madida fuligine tactum

Obliqua producit acu pingitque trementes

Attollens oculos.

Sat. ii., ver. 93. "With sooty moisture one his eye-brows dyes,

And with a bodkin paints his trembling eyes."

The manner in which the women in Barbary do it Dr. Russel particularly describes: - "Upon the principle of strengthening the sight, as well as an ornament, it is become a general practice among the women to black the middle of their eye-lids by applying a powder called ismed. Their method of doing it is by a cylindrical piece of silver, steel, or ivory, about two inches long, made very smooth, and about the size of a common probe. This they wet with water, in order that the powder may stick to it, and applying the middle part horizontally to the eye, they shut the eye-lids upon it, and so drawing it through between them, it blacks the inside, leaving a narrow black rim all round the edge. This is sometimes practiced by the men, but is then regarded as foppish." Russel's Nat. Hist. of Aleppo, page 102. See Parkhurst, sub voc. פך

2KINGS 9: 31 As Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, "Do you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?"

Verse 31

Had Zimri peace, who slew his master? - Jarchi paraphrases this place thus: "If thou hast slain thy master, it is no new thing; for Zimri also slew Elah, the son of Baasha;" which words were rather intended to conciliate than to provoke. But the words are understood by most of the versions thus: Health to Zimri, the slayer of his master!

2KINGS 9: 32 He lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked out at him.

2KINGS 9: 33 He said, "Throw her down!" So they threw her down; and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses. Then he trampled her under foot.

Verse 33

So they threw her down - What a terrible death! She was already, by the fall, almost dashed to pieces; and the brutal Jehu trampled her already mangled body under his horse's feet!

2KINGS 9: 34 When he had come in, he ate and drink; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman, and bury her; for she is a king's daughter."

Verse 34

She is a king's daughter - Jezebel was certainly a woman of a very high lineage. She was daughter of the king of Tyre; wife of Ahab, king of Israel; mother of Joram, king of Israel; mother-in-law of Joram, king of Judah; and grandmother of Ahaziah, king of Judah.

2KINGS 9: 35 They went to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.

Verse 35

The skull - the feet, and the palms of her hands - The dogs did not eat those parts, say Jarchi and Kimchi, because in her festal dances she danced like a dog, on her hands and feet, wantonly moving her head. What other meaning these rabbins had, I do not inquire. She was, no doubt, guilty of the foulest actions, and was almost too bad to be belied.

How literally was the prediction delivered in the preceding book, (1Kgs 21:23, The dogs shall eat Jezebel, by the wall of Jezreel), fulfilled! And how dearly did she and her husband Ahab pay for the murder of innocent Naboth!

2KINGS 9: 36 Therefore they came back, and told him. He said, "This is the LORD's word, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'The dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel on the plot of Jezreel,

2KINGS 9: 37 and the body of Jezebel shall be as dung on the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they shall not say, "This is Jezebel."'"

Verse 37

And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung - As it was not buried under the earth, but was eaten by the dogs, this saying was also literally fulfilled.

They shall not say, This is Jezebel - As she could not be buried, she could have no funeral monument. Though so great a woman by her birth, connections, and alliances, she had not the honor of a tomb! There was not even a solitary stone to say, Here lies Jezebel! not even a mound of earth to designate the place of her sepulture! Judgment is God's strange work; but when he contends, how terrible are his judgments! and when he ariseth to execute judgment, who shall stay his hand? How deep are his counsels, and how terrible are his workings!