
2KINGS 10: 1 Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, even the elders, and to those who brought up the sons of Ahab, saying,

Jehu sends an ironical letter to the elders of Samaria, telling them to choose one of the best of their master's sons, and put him on the throne; to which they return a submissive answer, 2Kgs 10:1-6. He writes a second letter, and orders them to send him the heads of Ahab's seventy sons; they do so, and they are laid in two heaps at the gate of Jezreel, 2Kgs 10:7, 2Kgs 10:8. Jehu shows them to the people, and excuses himself, and states that all is done according to the word of the Lord, 2Kgs 10:9, 2Kgs 10:10. He destroys all the kindred of Ahab that remained in Jezreel, 2Kgs 10:11. He also destroys forty-two men, the brethren of Ahaziah, king of Judah, 2Kgs 10:12-14. He meets with Jehonadab, and takes him with him in his chariot, 2Kgs 10:15, 2Kgs 10:16. He comes to Samaria, and destroys all that were of the kindred of Ahab there, 2Kgs 10:17. He pretends a great zeal for the worship of Baal, and gathers all his priests together, under the pretense of a grand sacrifice, and slays them all, 2Kgs 10:18-25. He burns Baal's images, and makes his temple a draught house, 2Kgs 10:26-28. But he does not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, and does not prosper, 2Kgs 10:29-31. Hazael vexes Israel, 2Kgs 10:32, 2Kgs 10:33. Jehu dies, having reigned over Israel, in Samaria, twenty-eight years, 2Kgs 10:34-36.

Verse 1

Ahab had seventy sons - As he had several wives, he might have many children. The Israelites, from the earliest part of their history, were remarkably fruitful. How amazingly did they multiply in Egypt, even under the hand of the severest oppression! And as to the individuals of whose families we have an account, they are quite remarkable: Rehoboam had thirty-eight sons; Abdon had forty; Tola had thirty; Ahab, seventy; and Gideon, seventy-one.

Unto the rulers of Jezreel - It certainly should be, unto the rulers of Samaria; for to them and to that city the whole context shows us the letters were sent. See 2Kgs 10:6.

To them that brought up Ahab's children - It appears that the royal children of Israel and Judah were intrusted to the care of the nobles, and were brought up by them, (see 2Kgs 10:6); and to these, therefore, Jehu's letters are directed. It is supposed Isaiah (Isa 49:23) alludes to this custom: Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.

2KINGS 10: 2 "Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons are with you, and there are with you chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and armour.

Verse 2

A fenced city also - All here seems to refer to Samaria alone; in it were the magazines and implements of war, etc. No reader need be told that these letters were all ironical. It was the same as if he had said, "Ye have no means of defense; Israel is with me: if you yield not up yourselves and the city, I will put you all to the sword.

2KINGS 10: 3 Select the best and fittest of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house."

2KINGS 10: 4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Behold, the two kings didn't stand before him! How then shall we stand?"

Verse 4

Two kings stood not before him - That is Joram and Ahaziah.

2KINGS 10: 5 He who was over the household, and he who was over the city, the elders also, and those who raised the children, sent to Jehu, saying, "We are your servants, and will do all that you ask us. We will not make any man king. You do that which is good in your eyes."

Verse 5

He that was over the house, etc. - Thus all the constituted authorities agreed to submit.

Will do all that thou shalt bid us - They made no conditions, and stood pledged to commit the horrid murders which this most execrable man afterwards commanded.

2KINGS 10: 6 Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, "If you are on my side, and if you will listen to my voice, take the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by tomorrow this time." Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who brought them up.

Verse 6

Come to me to Jezreel - Therefore the letters were not written to Jezreel, but from Jezreel to Samaria.

2KINGS 10: 7 When the letter came to them, they took the king's sons, and killed them, even seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent them to him to Jezreel.

Verse 7

Put their heads in baskets - What cold-blooded wretches were the whole of these people!

2KINGS 10: 8 A messenger came, and told him, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons." He said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until the morning."

Verse 8

Lay ye them in two heaps - It appears that the heads of these princes had arrived at Jezreel in the night time: Jehu ordered them to be left at the gate of the city, a place of public resort, that all the people might see them, and be struck with terror, and conclude that all resistance to such authority and power would be vain.

2KINGS 10: 9 In the morning, he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, "You are righteous. Behold, I conspired against my master, and killed him; but who struck all these?"

Verse 9

Ye be righteous - Another irony, intended partly to excuse himself, and to involve them in the odium of this massacre, and at the same time to justify the conduct of both, by showing that all was done according to the commandment of the Lord.

2KINGS 10: 10 Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the LORD's word, which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab. For the LORD has done that which he spoke by his servant Elijah."

2KINGS 10: 11 So Jehu struck all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, with all his great men, his familiar friends, and his priests, until he left him no one remaining.

Verse 11

Jehu slew all - So it appears that the great men who had so obsequiously taken off the heads of Ahab's seventy sons, fell also a sacrifice to the ambition of this incomparably bad man.

2KINGS 10: 12 He arose and departed, and went to Samaria. As he was at the shearing house of the shepherds on the way,

Verse 12

The shearing house - Probably the place where the shepherds met for the annual sheep shearing.

2KINGS 10: 13 Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, "Who are you?" They answered, "We are the brothers of Ahaziah. We are going down to greet the children of the king and the children of the queen."

Verse 13

The brethren of Ahaziah - The relatives of his family; for it does not appear that he had any brethren, properly so called: but we know that the term brethren among the Jews signified the relatives of the same family, and especially brothers' and sisters' children: and that these were such, see 2Chr 22:8.

We go down to salute, etc. - So promptly had Jehu executed all his measures, that even the nearest relatives of the murdered kings had not heard of their death, and consequently had no time to escape. They were all taken as in a net.

2KINGS 10: 14 He said, "Take them alive!" They took them alive, and killed them at the pit of the shearing house, even forty-two men. He didn't leave any of them.

Verse 14

The pit of the shearing house - Probably the place where they washed the sheep previously to shearing, or the fleeces after they were shorn off.

2KINGS 10: 15 When he had departed from there, he met Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him. He greeted him, and said to him, "Is your heart right, as my heart is with your heart?" Jehonadab answered, "It is." "If it is, give me your hand." He gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

Verse 15

Jehonadab the son of Rechab - For particulars concerning this man, his ancestry, and posterity, see the notes on Jeremiah 35 (note).

Is thine heart right - With me, in the prosecution of a reform in Israel; as my heart is with thy heart in the true religion of Jehovah, and the destruction of Baal?

It is - I wish a reform in the religion of the country; I am his friend who shall endeavor to promote it.

Give me thine hand - This has been generally considered as exacting a promise from Jehonadab; but does it mean any more than his taking him by the hand, to help him to step into his chariot, in which Jehu was then sitting? Jehonadab was doubtless a very honorable man in Israel; and by carrying him about with him in his chariot, Jehu endeavored to acquire the public esteem. "Jehu must be acting right, for Jehonadab is with him, and approves his conduct."

2KINGS 10: 16 He said, "Come with me, and see my zeal for the LORD." So they made him ride in his chariot.

Verse 16

Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord - O thou ostentatious and murderous hypocrite! Thou have zeal for Jehovah and his pure religion! Witness thy calves at Dan and Bethel, and the general profligacy of thy conduct. He who can call another to witness his zeal for religion, or his works of charity, has as much of both as serves his own turn.

2KINGS 10: 17 When he came to Samaria, he struck all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, until he had destroyed him, according to the LORD's word, which he spoke to Elijah.

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

Verse 18

Ahab served Baal a little - Jehu had determined to have no worship in Israel but that of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel; therefore he purposes to destroy all the worshippers of Baal: and that he may do it without suspicion, he proclaims a great sacrifice; and that he may do it the more easily, he gathers them all together into one place.

2KINGS 10: 19 Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all of his worshippers, and all of his priests. Let no one be absent; for I have a great sacrifice to Baal. Whoever is absent, he shall not live." But Jehu did it in subtlety, intending that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

Verse 19

Whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live - Because, as he will thereby show himself without zeal for the service of his God, he will justly forfeit his life. All this was done in the very spirit of deceit.

2KINGS 10: 20 Jehu said, "Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal!" They proclaimed it.

2KINGS 10: 21 Jehu sent through all Israel; and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that didn't come. They came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was filled from one end to another.

2KINGS 10: 22 He said to him who was over the vestry, "Bring out robes for all the worshippers of Baal!" He brought robes out to them.

Verse 22

He said unto him that was over the vestry - The word vestry comes from vestiarius, and that from vestes, garments, from vestio, I clothe; and signifies properly the place where the sacerdotal robes and pontifical ornaments are kept. The priests of Baal had their robes as well as the priests of the Lord; but the garments were such that one could be easily distinguished from the other.

2KINGS 10: 23 Jehu went with Jehonadab the son of Rechab into the house of Baal. Then he said to the worshippers of Baal, "Search, and look that there are here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only."

Verse 23

None of the servants of the Lord - Though he was not attached to that service, yet he would tolerate it; and as he was led to suppose that he was fulfilling the will of Jehovah in what he was doing, he would of course treat his worship and worshippers with the more respect.

He might have ordered the search to be made on pretense of expelling any of those whom they would consider the profane, especially as this was "a solemn assembly for Baal," as was the custom with the heathen when any extraordinary exhibition of or for their god was expected; thus Callimachus, (Hymn to Apollo), after imagining the temple and its suburbs to be shaken by the approach of Apollo, cries out, Εκάς, ἑκάς, ὅστις, ἀλιτρός. To prevent any suspicion of his real design, such might have been Jehu's plea, else alarm must have been excited, and perhaps some would have escaped.

2KINGS 10: 24 They went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed him eighty men outside, and said, "If any of the men whom I bring into your hands escape, he who lets him go, his life shall be for the life of him."

2KINGS 10: 25 As soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in, and kill them! Let no one escape." They struck them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

Verse 25

As soon as he had made an end of offering - Had Jehu been a man of any conscientious principle in religion, he would have finished the tragedy before he offered the burnt-offering; but to a man of no religion, the worship of Jehovah and of Baal are alike. If he prefers either, it is merely as a statesman, for political purposes.

To the guard and to the captains - לרצים ולשלשים leratsim uleshalashim; to the couriers or runners, and the shalashim, the men of the third rank, those officers who were next to the nobles, the king and these being only their superiors. The runners were probably a sort of light infantry.

The city of the house of Baal - Does not this mean a sort of holy of holies, where the most sacred images of Baal were kept? A place separated from the temple of Baal, as the holy of holies in the temple of Jehovah was separated from what was called the holy place.

2KINGS 10: 26 They brought out the pillars that were in the house of Baal, and burned them.

2KINGS 10: 27 They broke down the pillar of Baal, and broke down the house of Baal, and made it a latrine, to this day.

Verse 27

Made it a draught house - A place for human excrement; so all the versions understand it. Nothing could be more degrading than this; he made it a public necessary.

2KINGS 10: 28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

2KINGS 10: 29 However from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin, Jehu didn't depart from after them, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan.

2KINGS 10: 30 The LORD said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in executing that which is right in my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel."

Verse 30

Thy children of the fourth generation - These four descendants of Jehu were Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam the second, and Zechariah; see 2 Kings 14 and 15. This was all the compensation Jehu had in either world, as a recompense of his zeal for the Lord.

2KINGS 10: 31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He didn't depart from the sins of Jeroboam, with which he made Israel to sin.

Verse 31

Jehu took no heed - He never made it his study; indeed, he never intended to walk in this way; it neither suited his disposition nor his politics.

2KINGS 10: 32 In those days the LORD began to cut off from Israel; and Hazael struck them in all the borders of Israel;

Verse 32

The Lord began to cut Israel short - The marginal reading is best: The Lord cut off the ends; and this he did by permitting Hazael to seize on the coasts, to conquer and occupy the frontier towns. This was the commencement of those miserable ravages which Elisha predicted; see 2Kgs 8:12. And we find from the next verse that he seized on all the land of Gilead, and that of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; in a word, whatever Israel possessed on the east side of Jordan.

2KINGS 10: 33 from the Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the valley of the Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan.

2KINGS 10: 34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, aren't they written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Verse 34

Are they not written in the book of the chronicles - We have no chronicles in which there is any thing farther spoken of this bad man. His reign was long, twenty-eight years; and yet we know nothing of it but the commencement.

For barbarity and hypocrisy Jehu has few parallels; and the cowardliness and baseness of the nobles of Samaria have seldom been equalled. Ahab's bloody house must be cut off; but did God ever design that it should be done by these means? The men were, no doubt, profligate and wicked, and God permitted their iniquity to manifest itself in this way; and thus the purpose of God, that Ahab's house should no more reign, was completely accomplished: see 1Kgs 21:19, 1Kgs 21:21, 1Kgs 21:29. And by this conduct Jehu is said to have executed what was right in God's eyes, 2Kgs 10:30. The cutting off of Ahab's family was decreed by the Divine justice; the means by which it was done, or at least the manner of doing, were not entirely of his appointing: yet the commission given him by the young prophet, 2Kgs 9:7, was very extensive. Yet still many things seem to be attributed to God, as the agent, which he does not execute, but only permits to be done.

2KINGS 10: 35 Jehu slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria. Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place.

2KINGS 10: 36 The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.
