

December 18

Scriptures: Read 2 Kings 9 & 10

Key Verse: “Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth on the word of the Lord... for the Lord has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah.” (2 Kings 10:10)

Overview

Joram, the son of Ahab, had, like his father, attempted to take Ramoth Gilead from the Syrians, since that city had once belonged to Israel. His father had been fatally wounded in his attempt (1 Kings 22:3-4; 34, 37). And now, years later, Joram had also been wounded but had returned to Jezreel to recover. At that very time, God was raising up Jehu to be His instrument of judgment, in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Elijah, whereby the family of Ahab was to be exterminated because of Ahab's wickedness in killing Naboth and worshipping Baal (1 Kings 21:21-22). Jehu was also chosen by God to eradicate the vilest cultic religion of Baalism that Jezebel and Ahab had introduced to Israel.

Elijah had been commissioned to anoint Jehu as king of Israel (1 Kings 19:16), but he transferred this responsibility to Elisha, who in turn gave it to “one of the sons of the prophets” (9:1), the name given to those students of the prophetic guild of which Elisha was a teacher, as Elijah had been before him. This young man faithfully carried out his task by going to Ramoth Gilead and finding Jehu, a commander of Israel's army, and anointing him king. His father's name was Jehoshaphat (9:2), but he is not to be confused with the godly Jehoshaphat who had been king in Judah. Jehu was certainly suited for the bloody job that lay ahead of him. He was zealous, strong, and merciless, but he was just the type of person required to fulfill God's pre-ordained punishment upon Ahab.

With the support of his soldiers, he marched to Jezreel where Joram, the king of Israel, was convalescing. After condemning the wickedness of his mother Jezebel, Jehu slew Joram, and in fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy, the punishment of Ahab came upon his son (9:22-26; 1 Kings 21:19, 29). Jehu, continuing his campaign of purging, slew Ahaziah, the twenty-three-year-old king of Judah. Ahaziah had not walked in the ways of his forefather David, but in the ways of his maternal grandfather Ahab (9:27; 8:26-27). Jehu then slew the notorious Jezebel, who had been mainly responsible for bringing Baalism into Israel from Phoenicia and had killed many prophets and priests of the Lord. Knowing the fate that awaited her, she adorned herself to die as a queen (9:30). When she saw Jehu approaching, she called him a traitor, a murderer of his master, like Zimri (9:31; 1 Kings 16:9-10). Her gory death was also in fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy (1 Kings 21:23). With more blood on his sword, Jehu completed his task, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Elijah and ushering in a new dynasty (1 Kings 21:22).

By a shrewd trick, Jehu was able to kill every worshipper and priest of Baal. Then he destroyed the pillars of Baal (objects of worship), and tore down the temple of Baal, thus eradicating this false worship from Israel. The Lord was pleased with Jehu's thorough execution of His plan of judgment, yet Jehu failed in that he did not abolish the calf-worship that Jeroboam had established, nor did he obey the law of God (10:29, 31). What great things Jehu could have had done for God if only his zealousness had been directed to glorify Him and walk in His ways.

It is amazing to see how God acted in history. He used people and nations to bring about His judgment, although they were far from what they should have been. In our New Testament era, it is often hard to understand all the killing of the Old Testament, but God, who is holy and just, must punish sin. This should bring us to have even more gratitude for the Lord Jesus who bore our sins upon Himself on the altar of the cross that we, who have repented of sin and are following Him, might not be condemned (Romans 8:1).

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, You died in our place. You accomplished a fulfillment of the old covenant between God and man, and then You ushered in a whole new covenant. Thank You God that Your dealings with man are different now. Grant us true repentance and lives which truly glorify You.