

II Kings 9; I Kings 21:17-24; Wicked Rulers Receive their Due I. Ahab's Line II. Ahaziah III. Jezebel IV. Jehu

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what is your favorite image or picture given of Jesus in the Bible? The Bible portrays Jesus as the good shepherd, the great physician and healing, as the Lion of Judah and the Lamb who was slain. But one image may not be as popular- and that image of Jesus is found in Rev. 19. In Rev. 19 we find Jesus coming to earth upon a white horse- from His mouth comes a double-edged sword by which He strikes the earth. He bathes the earth in blood- so much that His robe is dipped in it. He will strike down the nations and rule them with an iron rod- treading the winepress of the wrath of God! It is this image of Jesus that we find today- where the Word of God executes judgement upon the rulers of this world. Now we have been waiting for this chapter since I Kings 19. Last week we saw Hazeel king of Syria come to the throne- all that remains of Elijah's commission is for Jehu to become king of Israel. Last week we found the compassionate prophet who weeps over the coming destruction. This week we find the LORD returning to meet out His justice- as Rom. 2 puts it- rendering to each according to His deeds. So today we are going to briefly focus on 4 characters as we see the LORD returns in justice and in vengeance. We consider this theme: the anointed king pours out God's wrath upon His enemies in keeping with the promises of God.

### **I. Ahab's Line**

In our first point, we take Israel's history as we consider the end of Ahab's line. As was foretold back in I Kings 19- which we read last week- and more pointedly in our reading from I Kings 21 a few minutes ago, our God is going to exact justice upon Ahab's line. Now remember the context here- Ahab was one of the worst- the most wicked kings to rule over Israel. He not only committed the sin of Jeroboam- he introduced rank paganism in the worship of Baal and Asherah through the influence of his wife. And who did Ahab marry? The wicked Jezebel the daughter of a pagan priest. Ahab and Jezebel hunted down the LORD'S prophets and put them to death. Added to this, we have just one example of how wicked Ahab was in the seizing of Naboth's vineyard. As you will remember, Ahab wanted Naboth's field and when Naboth refused to sell it, this royal couple had Naboth and his sons killed so they could take his land. So what made Ahab so wicked was his murder of the righteous in addition to his leading Israel into the sin

of idolatry. But at the end of Ahab's life, he softened a little. He turned from his ways in part, so this judgement would fall upon his sons. So in our text, we have one of these sons. Joram, the son of Ahab, is king in Israel. Joram is just like his father and mother, wicked and idolatrous. Already, Joram is being harassed by Hazael King of Syria as we were introduced to last week. But harassment is not enough- Joram has to die! As is promised in Rom. 12:19- vengeance belongs to God- He will repay! So in v. 24- in keeping with the word of the LORD- Joram the son of Ahab is hit with an arrow and dies. Not just anywhere- he dies in the very place foretold. His blood would be required and would fall on the land his father had stolen by the shedding of innocent blood. His body is thrown on Naboth's land in v. 25- the word of the LORD is fulfilled and justice is served. So although it may appear that God's justice is slow in coming, He will keep His word! The work of vengeance will be carried out- the wicked will meet their end and receive the just rewards. As God promised- Joram and in fact all of Ahab's sons in chapter 10- will be killed and Ahab's line would end. No heir on the throne and no descendant in the land for this wicked king. His name and posterity will be removed from the land- purged because of his wickedness.

## **II. Ahaziah**

But there is a second king in our passage- surprisingly we find Ahaziah the king of Judah. Now Elijah and Elisha have been active almost exclusively in the Northern Tribes and surrounding areas- so it is a little shocking to find one of David's sons in our passage today. Well, what do we know of Ahaziah the king of Judah? Back in 8:25 we are introduced to him. Although the physical descendant of David, he, as v. 27 puts it, walks in the way of Ahab! More like Ahab than David! In fact, he married one of the daughters of Ahab! So his late father in law was the most wicked king in Israel- and this king Ahaziah aligns himself with the king of Israel. They join together to fight in v. 28- so the king of Judah not only follows after the idolatry of Ahab and his sons- he sends his troops to support the line of Ahab as well! Through marriage and in action, making himself and his people one with Ahab's line! He is no better than the King of Israel- and as we will see- his end will be the same! But take this one point to heart- who you marry displays something of your priorities! Who you align with shows whose agenda you support! Can two walk together unless they are agreed? It is as if the sons of God were marrying the daughters of men all over again! The

covenantal line is being polluted with idolatry through marriage! Well, Ahaziah agreed to fight Hazael with Joram- and this king of Judah meets a swift end as well. So after shooting and killing Joram of Israel- Jehu turns his bow to Ahaziah of Judah- and he is shot and killed as well. Dying in Megiddo in v. 28. So Ahaziah was king for 1 short year and his rule is ended as well. This is a reminder that being in the household of the covenant does not exempt you from God's wrath! Simply having a godly grandparent is no substituted for faith and obedience! Covenant children can be rebels as well- kings in David's line can be idolaters too! So being in the proximity of those who believe- coming from a godly line does not exempt a person from God's justice! The king of Judah comes to the same end as the king of Israel- both taste God's justice from the tip of Jehu's arrow!

### **III. Jezebel**

As you may know, the only way to stop a most weeds from coming back is by pulling that weed out by the roots. Over the last years, Ahab and some of Jezebel's sons have been killed. But Jezebel as the queen mother in Israel continues to produce poisonous fruit! Ahab's wife is still around- and she is pulling the strings behind the scene- continuing to support the worship of Asherah and the persecution of God's prophets. As the daughter of a Baal Priest- she endorses both idolatry and murder. She is the personification of Satan's seed. So Jehu is going to have to deal with her as well. So Jehu comes knocking in v. 30. Jezebel sees Jehu- and she puts on a bold face. Instead of running in fear or cowering in dread, Jezebel gets gussied up! She paints her eyes and adorns herself! She is brazen as she mocks Jehu- and if this is her end- she is going out looking her best. So Jezebel does her makeup and puts on her best cloths. She shouts down to Jehu- you Zimri- you murderer of your master. Zimri was king for 7 days back in I Kings 16- so she is basically saying that Jehu won't last the week as king. And to accuse Jehu of murder- knowing the blood on her own hands- is almost laughable! But is becomes clear- external adornment and costly apparel cannot satisfy truth and justice! God is not swayed by the outside- He sees through the beauty of this world- He looks at the heart and sees this snake queen for all she is. In fact, in the Middle Eastern art of this time, a woman with painted eyes looking down from a palace tower had become an image of Astarte. So the goddess of fertility- one of Baal's wives- is in our view as well. So the goddess of erotica is calling down scorn on the LORD'S agent of

wrath. She meets her end when a couple of eunuchs throw her down and she is trampled by the horses in v. 33. As a clear sign of judgement- trampled under foot- reduced to nothing- eaten by dogs until little is left. Jezebel was under a curse- and God would make good on His word! God avenges the blood of His prophets- the blood of Able and all the prophets cried out for justice! Naboth's blood cried out- avenge me! And as the LORD says in Rom. 12, vengeance is mine- I will repay! Guilty by the blood they shed and defiled by the idols they made. So her blood is spilled and the sword of God's justice is satisfied!

#### **IV. Jehu**

As we have been seeing the justice of God fall upon His enemies, in our last point we consider this one who is the instrument of His wrath. Who is this appointed agent who carries the sword of God's justice? Jehu was a general in Israel's army- known for driving his horses like a crazy man. Almost like the Angel of the LORD- here acting like the angel of death! He was not a man of peace- but God would use him to bring peace. It is kind of like what happens after a forest fire. It takes the raging fire to clear the land and prepare the soil so that new, green growth might appear. In many ways, Jehu is like the forest fire of God's wrath that burns hot in the land. Having heard the command of the LORD by the word of the prophet, Jehu will carry out God's command and covenantal curse upon the land. But we need to be clear, Jehu is not acting on his own accord! As v. 7 makes clear, Jehu was anointed to avenge on Jezebel the blood of the prophets and of the servants of the Lord. The whole house of Ahab shall perish! As I said, it was specifically the killing of the prophets that warranted this punishment of Ahab's house. And Jehu was identified as the agent of God's wrath to bring about this punishment. And Jehu saw himself as such and acted accordingly. So Jehu says in v. 26 and 36. "The blood of Naboth and his sons is on your hands- thus Ahab is repaid according to the LORD'S word. This is the Word of the LORD spoken by Elijah- the dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel and her course will be as dung in the field." So it becomes clear- the destruction of Ahab's line was the LORD'S doing! Sometimes people take offense at all the bloodshed in the Bible- particularly in the OT. But we need to keep in mind- Jehu is not acting independently. He is an agent of the LORD- fulfilling God's wrath and pouring out God's curse upon these- who are in fact the seed of the serpent who have been trying to wipe out the seed of the woman!

In many ways, we can see that God is defending His people! He is protecting the remnant- the few faithful ones that remain within the land will find peace only after these wicked ones have been dealt with! As Proverbs 11 says, the righteous rejoice when the wicked perish from the land. Or as Psalm 58:10 says, “the righteous rejoice when he sees vengeance. He will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked. Surely there is a God who judges the earth!” The fact remains, the judge of all the earth will do what is right! Shalom- or peace- will come only after the wicked have been dealt with and their grip on power broken! This theme of peace runs through our passage. Is it peace (shalom)- is everything well? No- there can be no peace until the wicked are cut down and the murderous idolaters are dealt with! So what we find in our passage is this- the judge is making all things right! He is visiting the iniquity of the murderer upon their own heads. As Rev. 6:10 says, God will repay His enemies! And when the righteous see it- they rejoice!

To conclude, the justice of God is an attribute that demands action. In the book of Revelation, we read about the blood of the martyrs. Their blood cries out- how long LORD until you come judge the earth? Innocent blood shed demands action- response from a just and holy God! This is true even today! Rules and government agents who shed the blood of the saints will be held to account! Woe to those who place their hands on God’s chosen bride! Added to this, our God will protect and defend His people! As we saw earlier, Rev. 19 reveals the image of Jesus having a double-edged sword. Jesus rides forth and strikes the nations! We can leave room for the justice of God- because vengeance belongs to Him- He will repay! When Jesus comes back on that final day, the blood of the martyrs will be avenged! We need not take matters into our own hands. As our theme states: the anointed king pours out God’s wrath upon His enemies in keeping with the promises of God. Jehu’s name means- the LORD is He! Or the LORD is the One! So it is; Jesus-not Jehu- is our anointed King! He is the one who will make it right- He will bring peace- shalom- to this earth when He returns on the clouds of glory! Kiss the Son- lest you be terrified by His wrath when He returns! Repent of you sins- and believe in Jesus Christ- or else you will taste the fury of God’s agent of wrath!