

CHAPTER 10

We have in this chapter,

- I.** A further account of Jehu's execution of his commission. He cut off,
 - 1.** All Ahab's sons (v. 1-10).
 - 2.** All Ahab's kindred (v. 11-14, 17).
 - 3.** Ahab's idolatry: his zeal against this he took Jonadab to be witness to (v. 15, 16), summoned all the worshippers of Baal to attend (v. 18-23) and slew them all (v. 24, 25), and then abolished that idolatry (v. 26-28).
- II.** A short account of the administration of his government.
 - 1.** The old idolatry of Israel, the worship of the calves, was retained (v. 29-31).
 - 2.** This brought God's judgments upon them by Hazael, with which his reign concludes (v. 32-36).

~~<200>~~ 2 KINGS 10:1-14

DEATH OF AHAB'S SONS

We left Jehu in quiet possession of Jezreel, triumphing over Joram and Jezebel; and we must now attend his further motions. He knew the whole house of Ahab must be cut off, and therefore proceeded in this bloody work, and did not do it deceitfully, or by halves, ~~<2480>~~Jeremiah 48:10.

I. He got the heads of all the sons of Ahab cut off by their own guardians at Samaria. Seventy sons (or grandsons) Ahab had, Gideon's number, ~~<0783>~~Judges 8:30. In such a number that bore his name his family was likely to be perpetuated, and yet it is extirpated all at once. Such a quiver full of arrows could not protect his house from divine vengeance. Numerous families, if vicious, must not expect to be long prosperous. These sons of Ahab were now at Samaria, a strong city, perhaps brought thither upon occasion of the war with Syria, as a place of safety, or upon notice of Jehu's insurrection; with them were the rulers of Jezreel, that is, the great officers of the court, who went to Samaria to secure themselves or to

consult what was to be done. Those of them that were yet under tuition had their tutors with them, who were entrusted with their education in learning, agreeable to their birth and quality, but, it is to be feared, brought them up in the idolatries of their father's house and made them all worshippers of Baal. Jehu did not think fit to bring his forces to Samaria to destroy them, but, that the hand of God might appear the more remarkably in it, made their guardians their murderers.

1. He sent a challenge to their friends to stand by them, v. 2, 3. “You that are hearty well-wishers to the house of Ahab, and entirely in its interests, now is your time to appear for it. Samaria is a strong city; you are in possession of it; you have forces at command; you may choose out the likeliest person of all the royal family to head you; you know you are not tied to the eldest, unless he be *the best and meetest of your master's sons*. If you have any spirit in you, show it, and set one of them on his father's throne, and stand by him with your lives and fortunes.” Not that he desired they should do this, or expected they would, but thus he upbraided them with their cowardice and utter inability to contest with the divine counsels. “Do if you dare, and see what will come of it.” Those that have forsaken their religion have often, with it, lost both their sense and their courage, and deserve to be upbraided with it.

2. Hereby he gained from them a submission. They prudently reasoned with themselves: “*Behold, two kings stood not before him, but fell as sacrifices to his rage; how then shall we stand?*” v. 4. Therefore they sent him a surrender of themselves: “*We are thy servants, thy subjects, and will do all that thou shalt bid us, right or wrong, and will set up nobody in competition with thee.*” They saw it was to no purpose to contend with him, and therefore it was their interest to submit to him. With much more reason may we thus argue ourselves into a subjection to the great God. Many kings and great men have fallen before his wrath, for their wickedness; and how then shall we stand? *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?* No, we must either bend or break.

3. This was improved so far as to make them the executioners of those whom they had the tuition of (v. 6): *If you be mine, bring me the heads of your master's sons by to-morrow at this time*. Though he knew it must be done, and was loth to do it himself, one would think he could not expect they should do it. Could they betray such a trust? Could they be cruel to their master's sons? It seems, so low did they stoop in their adoration to the

rising sun that they did it; they cut off the heads of those seventy princes, and sent them in baskets a present to Jehu, v. 7. Learn hence not to trust in a friend nor to put confidence in a guide not governed by conscience. One can scarcely expect that he who has been false to his God should ever be faithful to his prince. But observe God's righteousness in their unrighteousness. These elders of Jezreel had been wickedly obsequious to Jezebel's order for the murder of Naboth, ^{<1211>}1 Kings 21:11. She gloried, it is likely, in the power she had over them; and now the same base spirit makes them as pliable to Jehu and as ready to obey his orders for the murder of Ahab's sons. Let none aim at arbitrary power, lest they be found rolling a stone which, some time or other, will return upon them. Princes that make their people slaves take the readiest way to make them rebels; and by forcing men's consciences, as Jezebel did, they lose their hold of them. When the separated heads were presented to Jehu, he slyly upbraided those that were the executioners of this vengeance. The heads were laid in two heaps at the gate, the proper place of judgment. There he acquitted the people before God and the world (v. 9, *You are righteous*), and, by what the rulers of Samaria had now done, comparatively acquitted himself: "I slew but one; they have slain all these: I did it by conspiracy and with design; they have done this merely in compliance and with an implicit obedience. Let not the people of Samaria, nor any of the friends of the house of Ahab, ever reproach me for what I have done, when their own elders, and the very guardians of the orphans, have done this." It is common for those who have done something base to attempt the mitigation of their own reproach by drawing others in to do something worse. But,

(1.) He resolves all into the righteous judgment of God (v. 10): *The Lord hath done that which he spoke by Elijah*. God is not the author of any man's sin, but even by that which men do from bad principles God serves his own purposes and glorifies his own name; and he is righteous in that wherein men are unrighteous. When the Assyrian is made the *rod of God's anger*, and the instrument of his justice, *he meaneth not so, neither does his heart think so*, ^{<2307>}Isaiah 10:7.

II. He proceeded to destroy all that remained of the house of Ahab, not only those that descended from him, but those that were in any relation to him, all the officers of his household, ministers of state, and those in command under him, called here his *great men* (v. 11), all his kinsfolks and acquaintance, who had been partners with him in his wickedness, and his

priests, or domestic chaplains, whom he employed in his idolatrous services and who strengthened his hand that he should not turn from his evil way. Having done this in Jezreel, he did the same in Samaria (v. 17), *slew all that remained to Ahab in Samaria*. This was bloody work, and is not now, in any case, to be drawn into a precedent. Let the guilty suffer, but not the guiltless for their sakes. Perhaps such terrible destructions as these were intended as types of the final destruction of all the ungodly. God has a sword, bathed in heaven, which will come down upon the people of his curse, and *be filled with blood*. ^{<2345>}Isaiah 34:5, 6. Then *his eye will not spare, neither will he pity*.

III. Providence bringing the brethren of Ahaziah in his way, as he was going on with this execution, he slew them likewise, v. 12-14. The brethren of Ahaziah were slain by the Arabians (^{<421>}2 Chronicles 22:1), but these were the sons of his brethren, as it is there explained (v. 8), and they are said to be princes of Judah, and to minister to Ahaziah. Several things concurred to make them obnoxious to the vengeance Jehu was now executing.

- 1.** They were branches of Ahab's house, being descended from Athaliah, and therefore fell within his commission.
- 2.** They were tainted with the wickedness of the house of Ahab.
- 3.** They were now going to make their court to the princes of the house of Ahab, to *salute the children of the king and the queen*, Joram and Jezebel, which showed that they were linked to them in affection as well as in affinity. These princes, forty-two in number, being appointed as sheep for the sacrifice, were slain with solemnity, *at the pit of the shearing-house*. *The Lord is known by these judgments which he executeth*.

^{<12015>}2 KINGS 10:15-28

THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL DESTROYED

Jehu, pushing on his work, is here,

I. Courting the friendship of a good man, *Jehonadab the son of Rechab*, v. 15, 16. This Jehonadab, though mortified to the world and meddling little with the business of it (as appears by his charge to his posterity, which they

religiously observed 300 years after, not to drink wine nor dwell in cities, ^{<4876>}Jeremiah 35:6, etc.), yet, upon this occasion, went to meet Jehu, that he might encourage him in the work to which God had called him. The countenance of good men is a thing which great men, if they be wise, will value, and value themselves by. David prayed, *Let those that fear thee turn to me*, ^{<4879>}Psalms 119:79. This Jehonadab, though no prophet, priest, or Levite, no prince or ruler, was, we may suppose, very eminent for prudence and piety, and generally respected for that life of self-denial and devotion which he lived: Jehu, though a soldier, knew him and honoured him. He did not indeed think of sending for him, but when he met him (though it is likely he drove now as furiously as ever) he stopped to speak to him; and we are here told what passed between them.

1. Jehu saluted him; he *blessed him* (so the word is), paid him the respect and showed him the good-will that were due to so great an example of serious godliness.
2. Jehonadab assured him that he was sincerely in his interest and a hearty well-wisher to his cause. Jehu professed that *his heart was right with him*, that he had a true affection for his person and a veneration for the crown of his Nazariteship, and desired to know whether he had the same affection for him and satisfaction in that crown of royal dignity which God had put upon his head: *Is thy heart right?* a question we should often put to ourselves. "I make a plausible profession, have gained a reputation among men, but *is my heart right?* Am I sincere and inward with God?" Jehonadab gave him his word (*It is*), and gave him his hand as a pledge of his heart, *yielded to him* (so giving the hand is rendered, ^{<4808>}2 Chronicles 30:8), concurred and covenanted with him, and owned him in the work both of revenge and of reformation he was now about.
3. Jehu took him up into his chariot and took him along with him to Samaria. He put some honour upon him, by taking him into the chariot with him (Jehonadab was not accustomed to ride in a chariot, much less with a king); but he received more honour from him, and from the countenance he gave to his present work. All sober people would think the better of Jehu when they saw Jehonadab in the chariot with him. This was not the only time in which the piety of some has been made to serve the policy of others, and designing men have strengthened themselves by drawing good men into their interests. Jehonadab is a stranger to the arts of fleshly wisdom, and has his *conversation in simplicity and godly*

sincerity; and therefore, if Jehu be a servant of God and an enemy to Baal, he will be his faithful friend. “Come then” (says Jehu), “come with me, *and see my zeal for the Lord*; and then thou wilt see reason to espouse my cause.” This is commonly taken as not well said by Jehu, and as giving cause to suspect that his heart was not right with God in what he did, and that the zeal he pretended for the Lord was really zeal for himself and his own advancement. For,

(1.) He boasted of it, and spoke as if God and man were mightily indebted to him for it.

(2.) He desired it might be seen and taken notice of, like the Pharisees, who did all to be seen of men. An upright heart approves itself to God and covets no more than his acceptance. If we aim at the applause of men, and make their praise our highest end, we are upon a false bottom. Whether Jehu looked any further we cannot judge; however Jehonadab went with him, and, it is likely, animated and assisted him in the further execution of his commission (v. 17), destroying all Ahab's friends in Samaria. A man may hate cruelty and yet love justice, may be far from thirsting after blood and yet may *wash his feet in the blood of the wicked*, ~~1580~~ Psalm 58:10.

II. Contriving the destruction of all the worshippers of Baal. The service of Baal was the crying sin of the house of Ahab: that root of this idolatry was plucked up, but multitudes yet remained that were infected with it, and would be in danger of infecting others. The law of God was express, that they were to be put to death; but they were so numerous, and so dispersed throughout all parts of the kingdom, and perhaps so alarmed with Jehu's beginnings, that it would be a hard matter to find them all out and an endless task to prosecute and execute them one by one. Jehu's project therefore is to cut them all off together.

1. By a wile, by a fraud, he brought them together to the temple of Baal. He pretended he would worship Baal more than ever Ahab had done, v. 18. Perhaps he spoke this ironically, or to try the body of the people whether they would oppose such a resolution as this, and would resent his threatening to increase his predecessor's exactions, and say, “If it be so, we have no part in Jehu, nor inheritance in the son of Nimshi.” But it rather seems to have been spoken purposely to deceive the worshippers of Baal, and then it cannot be justified. The truth of God needs not any man's lie. He issued a proclamation, requiring the attendance of all the worshippers

of Baal to join with him in a sacrifice to Baal (v. 19, 20), not only the prophets and priests, but all, throughout the kingdom, who worshipped Baal, who were not nearly so many as they had been in Elijah's time. Jehu's friends, we may suppose, were aware of what he designed, and were not offended at it; but the bigoted besotted Baalites began to think themselves very happy, and that now they should see golden days again. *Joram had put away the image of Baal,* ~~<1181>~~ 2 Kings 3:2. If Jehu will restore it, they have what they would have, and come up to Samaria with joy from all parts to celebrate the solemnity; and they are pleased to see the house of Baal crowded (v. 21), to see his priests in their vestments (v. 22), and themselves perhaps with some badges or other to notify their relation to Baal, for there were vestments for all his worshippers.

2. He took care that none of the servants of the Lord should be among them, v. 23. This they took as a provision to preserve the worship of Baal from being profaned by strangers; but it was a wonder that they did not, by this, see themselves brought into a snare and discern a design upon them. No marvel if those that suffer themselves to be deceived by Baal (as all idolaters were by their idols), are deceived by Jehu to their destruction.

3. He gave order for the cutting of them all off, and Jehonadab joined with him therein, v. 23. When a strict search was made lest any of the servants of God should, either for company or curiosity, have got among them — lest any wheat should be mixed with those tares, and when eighty men were set to stand guard at all the avenues to Baal's temple, that none might escape (v. 24), then the guards were sent in to put them all to the sword and to *mingle their blood with their sacrifices*, in a way of just revenge, as they themselves had sometimes done, when, in their blind devotion, they *cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out,* ~~<1183>~~ 1 Kings 18:28. This was accordingly done, and the doing of it, though seemingly barbarous, was, considering the nature of their crime, really righteous. *The Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.*

4. The idolaters being thus destroyed, the idolatry itself was utterly abolished. The buildings about the house of Baal (which were so many and so stately that they are here called a *city*), where Baal's priests and their families lived, were destroyed; all the little images, statues, pictures, or shrines, which beautified Baal's temple, with the great image of Baal himself, were brought out and burnt (v. 26, 27), and the temple of Baal was broken down, and made a dunghill, the common sink, or sewer, of the

city, that the remembrance of it might be blotted out or made infamous. Thus was the worship of Baal quite destroyed, at least for the present, out of Israel, though it had once prevailed so far that there were but 7000 of all the thousands of Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal, and those concealed. Thus will God destroy all the gods of the heathen, and, sooner or later, triumph over them all.

~~1219~~ 2 KINGS 10:29-36

JEHU'S INCONSISTENCY

Here is all the account of the reign of Jehu, though it continued twenty-eight years. The progress of it answered not to the glory of its beginning. We have here,

I. God's approbation of what Jehu had done. Many, it is probable, censured him as treacherous and barbarous — called him a rebel, a usurper, a murderer, and prognosticated ill concerning him, that a family thus raised would soon be ruined; but God said, *Well done* (v. 30), and then it signified little who said otherwise.

1. God pronounced that to be right which he had done. It is justly questionable whether he did it from a good principle and whether he did not take some false steps in the doing of it; and yet (says God), *Thou hast done well in executing that which is right in my eyes*. The extirpating of idolaters and idolatry was a thing right in God's eyes, for it is an iniquity he visits as surely and severely as any: it was *according to all that was in his heart*, all he desired, all he designed. Jehu went through with his work.

2. God promised him a reward, that his children of the fourth generation from him should *sit upon the throne of Israel*. This was more than what took place in any of the dignities or royal families of that kingdom; of the house of Ahab there were indeed four kings, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Joram, but the last two were brothers, so that it reached but to the third generation, and that whole family continued but about forty-five years in all, whereas Jehu's continued in four, besides himself, and in all about 120 years. Note, No services done for God shall go unrewarded.

II. Jehu's carelessness in what he was further to do. By this it appeared that his heart was not right with God, that he was partial in his reformation.

1. He did not put away all the evil. He departed from the sins of Ahab, but not from the sins of Jeroboam — discarded Baal, but adhered to the calves. The worship of Baal was indeed the greater evil, and more heinous in the sight of God, but the worship of the calves was a great evil, and true conversion is not only from gross sin, but from all sin — not only from false gods, but from false worships. The worship of Baal weakened and diminished Israel, and made them beholden to the Sidonians, and therefore he could easily part with that; but the worship of the calves was a politic idolatry, was begun and kept up for reasons of state, to prevent the return of the ten tribes to the house of David, and therefore Jehu clave to that. True conversion is not only from wasteful sins, but from gainful sins — not only from those sins that are destructive to the secular interest, but from those that support and befriend it, in forsaking which is the great trial whether we can deny ourselves and trust God.

2. He put away evil, but he did not mind that which was good (v. 31): *He took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel.* He abolished the worship of Baal, but did not keep up the worship of God, nor walk in his law. He had shown great care and zeal for the rooting out of a false religion; but in the true religion,

(1.) He showed no care, took no heed, lived at large, was not at all solicitous to please God and to do his duty, took no heed to the scriptures, to the prophets, to his own conscience, but walked at all adventures. Those that are heedless, it is to be feared, are graceless; for, where there is a good principle in the heart, it will make men cautious and circumspect, desirous to please God and jealous of doing any thing to offend him.

(2.) He showed no zeal; what he did in religion he did not do with his heart, with all his heart, but did it as if he did it not, without any liveliness or concern. It seems, he was a man that had little religion himself, and yet God made use of him as an instrument of reformation in Israel. It is a pity but that those that do good to others should always be good themselves.

III. The judgment that came upon Israel in his reign. We have reason to fear that when Jehu took no heed himself to walk in God's law the people were generally as careless as he, both in their devotions and in their conversations. There was a general decay of piety and increase of

profaneness; and therefore it is not strange that the next news we hear is, *In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short*, v. 32. Their neighbours encroached upon them on every side; they were short in their duty to God, and therefore God cut them short in their extent, wealth, and power. Hazael king of Syria was, above any other, vexatious and mischievous to them, *smote them in all the coasts of Israel*, particularly the countries on the other side Jordan, which lay next him, and most exposed; on these he made continual inroads, and laid them waste. Now the Reubenites and Gadites smarted for the choice which their ancestors made of an inheritance on that side Jordan, which Moses reproved them for, Numbers 32. Now Hazael did what Elisha foresaw and foretold he would do. Yet, for doing it, God had a quarrel with him and with his kingdom, as we may find, Amos 1:3, 4. Because those of Damascus have *threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron*, therefore (says God) *I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Benhadad*.

Lastly, The conclusion of Jehu's reign, v. 34-36. Notice is taken, in general, of his might; but, because he took no heed to serve God, the memorials of his mighty enterprises and achievements are justly buried in oblivion.