

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

All In The Family II Kings 8:16-9:37

Intro: Eliphaz is remembered as one of Job's "friends" – "miserable counselors" is what Job called them. Eliphaz said a lot of foolish things in his conversation with Job but he also occasionally stated some eternal principles. One of those statements was "Even as I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same" ([Job 4:8](#)). King Solomon echoed this truth in [Prov 22:8](#), "He who sows iniquity will reap sorrow..." and the prophet Hosea put it even more graphically when he declared, "they sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" ([Hosea 8:7](#)). Jeroboam had led the northern kingdom of Israel into idolatry; the dynasty of Omri and Ahab had introduced Baal worship into Israel and as we will see, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, introduced Baal worship into the southern kingdom of Judah. Both kingdoms were now in a state of open rebellion against their covenant God and polluted by idolatry. Now, the day of judgment is about to arrive for Ahab's house, the day prophesied by Elijah way back in [I Kings 21:21, 29](#).

16-19 – Marriage has consequences. This is true for every marriage but especially for Christian marriages. You're not just getting a spouse, you're getting a different mindset, a new family with new family traditions – it's kind of a package deal...and you have to deal with it, there's no getting around it. You better know what you're getting into. This was true for Jehoram, king of Judah. Who? We haven't heard much from the kingdom of Judah lately. In fact, not a peep since I Kings 22 concerning the reign of Jehoshaphat. Since then, the camera's been focused exclusively on the northern kingdom of Israel. But, Jehoram's appearance here isn't random information. He plays a small but important part in our text today.

Jehoram is introduced as Jehoshaphat's successor and will reign for only 8 years. It seems Jehoram's marriage carried some extensive consequences, not the least of which is that it produces one big, evil family. It's all very simple: Jehoram of Judah walked in the way of the kings of Israel – he did whatever the house of Ahab did because he had Ahab daughter as his wife! That daughter was Athaliah. If you marry Ahab's daughter, you will be influenced by Ahab's mindset and you will follow Ahab's ways ([18](#)). The cancer from Israel has metastasized to Judah. It's probably only a matter of

time now...

The writer will make this point even stronger when he describes the reign of Ahaziah, Jehoram's son in [v27](#). 3 times in one verse he emphasizes the house of Ahab so there is no doubt about what is the dominant force in the policies of the kingdom of Judah at this time. The house of David is marching to the pagan beat of Athaliah's drum. Why did Jehoshaphat ever entertain the idea of cementing an alliance with Israel by marrying off his son to Ahab's daughter?

At the time, he probably thought it was a clutch move to forestall the threat of a rising Assyrian Empire. It may have been a smart political move but it was a spiritual, moral national disaster. Jehoshaphat seemed to have been long on spiritual piety and short on spiritual sense and because of this, northern infidelity reigns in the southern kingdom – and apostasy never dies a natural death.

Now, upon hearing how thoroughly the Ahab virus has infected Judah, you might expect to hear rumblings of a near and present judgment. Instead, we get an explanation of why Yahweh didn't wipe out Judah despite their following in Ahab's nasty footprints ([19](#)). This verse refers to the Davidic covenant ([II Sam 7:12-16](#)) using the image of a lamp. Originally, David was the lamp of Israel ([II Sam 21:17](#)). He's thought to embody both the life and prosperity of Israel. The ongoing line of Davidic kings carried that lamp for David, culminating in the ultimate lamp of [Ps 132:17](#), the coming Messianic king who climaxes the Davidic line.

[V19](#) is simply stating that Yahweh's Davidic policy is still in force and the wickedness of some 2-bit Ahab wannabe in Judah isn't going to thwart it. Yahweh's policy is called His covenant; in this case, His covenant with David, which is just His plan for how He will bring His kingdom into and over this world. There are plenty of adverse circumstances that seem bound to thwart Yahweh's policy; like Jehoram's taking Athaliah as his wife and the northern kingdom as his platform. He even slaughters all of his brothers when he ascends to the throne, probably by Athaliah's influence. But, Jehoram will lose his own guts but Yahweh will not lose His kingdom. The breaking of the covenant will not prevent the coming of the covenant. Why? Because "the Lord would not destroy Judah..."

[20-22](#) – While there may not have been fire and brimstone falling on Judah,

that doesn't mean there weren't some adverse circumstances for Jehoram. It seems that both Edom and Libnah revolted during his reign. Edom was a vassal kingdom so that's understandable but Libnah was a town of Judah. What prompts a Jewish city to secede from under Jehoram's authority? Maybe pressure from the Philistines forced a change in local government. Regardless, the city was lost to Jehoram and these losses are disturbing.

Clearly, the writer wants us to see Edom and Libnah as God's initial scourges on Jehoram, though he makes his point subtly. He first describes Jehoram's wicked reign and then goes on to list his substantial losses. We are to see God's hand behind this – that there is a connection between the two. Jehoram reign in a more northern style and preliminary judgment begins. Of course, we need to be careful when we apply this point on an individual level. There are plenty of believers who, when facing troubles or reverses in life, wonder if God is chastening or judging them for some past sin. Self-examination is not a bad thing but we need to highlight **Ps 103:10** and let that be our comfort when faced with these doubts and fears.

What the text is describing is the trouble God brings when a person departs from their covenant commitment to God. It's not about dredging up this or that sin, this failure or that bit of unfaithfulness. It has to do with having a sacred obligation to serve God alone and then turning your back on Him. If you have pledged yourself to Jesus Christ and have turned away from Him then don't be surprised when you start to experience the Jehoram treatment.

23-29 – The last 2 verses set the stage for what's to come in ch9. Ahaziah, king of Judah, decided to make a sick call on Joram, king of Israel. Little did he know that it was the last sick call he would ever make. So Joram is on R&R in Jezreel, convalescing from his wounds and Ahaziah is making a royal visit to his uncle. Little did either of them know what was planned for them. From their comfortable surroundings in Jezreel they will walk straight into the judgment of God.

The stage is set; the characters are in place; judgment is ready. "We're in the end game now." All that's needed is a little anointing oil...

9:1-16 – Yahweh had outlined His judgment policy of Israel to Elijah on Mt Horeb back in **1 Kings 19**. At the same time He also ordained the

instruments of His judgment upon Israel: Hazael, Jehu and Elisha. Elisha had begun his work in **I Kings 19** and Hazael began his in **II Kings 8**; so it's shouldn't be surprising to see Jehu begin his work here in **ch9**. Yahweh announced His plan in **I Kings 19** and we're seeing its execution in **ch8-9**. So, we've been waiting expectantly for the other shoe to drop for some time now. Don't forget, Elijah's prophecy against Ahab was put on delay status until the days of Ahab's sons and Joram is Ahab's second son to reign over Israel. **Ch2-8** muddle along through Joram's reign revealing much grace and mercy, which he ignores, so we know disaster is on its way.

There are 2 main divisions in **ch9**: 1st) the power of Yahweh's word; 2nd) the path of Yahweh's justice.

It's an odd scene: Israelite brass sitting around the room when a breathless young prophet bursts in saying he has a message for the commander (**Jehu**). The other officers refer to him as a madman, maybe that's their term for all faithful prophets of Yahweh but they certainly wanted to know what he told Jehu and virtually demanded to know after he fled the building. Jehu tried to play it off as nothing but unless he had access to a shower and shampoo, he couldn't hide the sight and smell of anointing oil dripping down his face. That's stuff was better than Brill cream! After Jehu came clean the officers enacted a spontaneous coronation.

The young prophet's message is the focal point of the text (**6-10**). There's a 2-beat emphasis in this announcement: the house of Ahab (**7a**) and Jezebel (**7b**); then again, the house of Ahab (**8-9**) and Jezebel (**10**). And, although the prophecy sites Jehu as the instigator (**7a** you shall strike down), Yahweh Himself is revealed as the primary actor (**I** may avenge; I will cut off, I will make...). The officers called the prophet mad and the implications of his prophecy do seem a bit mad but then, God's Word is never boring so what can we say about His word here?

1) God's word is the catalyst of history. No sooner had Jehu reported the message to his comrades than a revolt began! What stirred it up? What was the catalyst? No doubt they were only too happy to rebel but it was God's word that incited them to do it. We saw the same thing in **ch8**. Elisha told Hazael all the disaster he would inflict on Israel and then wept. Hazael was clueless as to how he would be in a position to do such things and then Elisha told him he would be king over Syria. That word seemed to give

Hazael and idea – he administered the last rights to old, sick Ben-hadad and took the throne. It was Hazael’s decision to murder but Elisha’s word was the catalyst behind it.

The Word of God incited Jesus too, but to submission, not rebellion (**Mt 26:53-24**). Again, Jesus had all the defense He could need but if that option were taken...how then could the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus? The Scriptures have said that the Messiah’s work will be accomplished through the weakness of the cross not by the power of the sword and so the Scriptures moved Him to choose the path of humiliation and suffering in order to fulfill the Scriptures! We like to say the Word of God controls history but our text implies a bit more: it shows us that the Word of God drives history.

2) Politics stands under the judgment of God. You may doubt it but it’s clearly an undeniable reality in our text. God says He’s going to make the house of Ahab like that of Jeroboam and Baasha. Who are they, you ask? Exactly! Here are some of the also-rans piled in the trash can of history where they were consigned by God’s word. With Joram’s imminent demise, the dynasty of Omri/Ahab will join it’s predecessors in the landfill of God’s royal rejects.

3) God is vigilant to avenge His suffering people. Through Jehu, Yahweh will avenge His servants murdered by Jezebel. He had a tally of every prophet silenced and every servant butchered. In return, Jezebel will become dog chow. This may shock you but it shouldn’t surprise you because the Bible is clear in showing that the vindication of His people is at the top of God’s agenda and their welfare is the constant concern of His heart (**Lk 18:7-8**). Jesus even goes so far as to say that it’s better for someone to have a millstone tied around their neck and be cast into the sea than to face the consequences of bringing ruin to one of His disciples. The most horrendous death is preferable to what the disciple destroyer will receive. No matter what the ruler of this world throws at us, there is an eye that sees and a Judge who takes note. Yahweh declares, “I will avenge the blood of My servants.”

17-29 – Here we see a bit of the irony in God’s justice. Now, you might say that Joram had nothing to do with his father’s murder of Naboth but notice in **vs26** that it wasn’t just Naboth who lost his life over that vineyard; it seems

his sons were executed as well, most likely to eliminate any claims to Naboth's inheritance. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Jehu remembers the scene vividly and thinks it would just suit Ahab's descendent to be planted in the same dirt his parents murdered to acquire. Naboth may be no more than dirt to Jezebel and may even have been completely unknown to Joram but Yahweh knows His name and avenges him with a little poetic justice.

Jehu had no direct command or commission to bring judgment upon the king of Judah but he did anyway. Whether consciously or unconsciously, he was guided by God and he ordered his men to kill Ahaziah. Now, we can cry "unfair" all we want but Ahaziah was happy to associate himself with the northern kingdom of Israel and her wicked kings so it is only fitting that he die in the same judgment that came upon the kings of Israel. Also, we can't forget that Ahaziah was also a blood relative of Ahab's (grandson) so that alone made him liable recipient of the judgment declared against the house of Ahab, which would include all of his male descendents.

30-37 – Here we see the horror of God's justice. It's a graphic scene: Jehu shows up at the palace and there's Jezebel, all gussied up and as defiant as ever. Why'd she blow all that makeup if she knew she wouldn't be going to town? Well, because she was a Queen, the daughter of a King! She's going to go out in style...or so she thinks! Jehu hollers up, looking for volunteers and it seems there were a few eunuchs who had had just about as much of Jezebel as they could take. Apparently, they had long despised this wicked, pagan queen and were more than happy to give the old sow the heave-ho! What goes up must come down and down she goes, like an overripe watermelon. Of course, it doesn't help that Jehu let his chariot horses tap dance on her corpse.

Now, all this mad driving, arrow shooting and queen chucking makes a fellow hungry so he retires to the mess hall for a bite of lunch. I wonder what he had: a rare steak, a corned beef sandwich? In ancient near eastern cultures, the desecration of a dead body was considered to be a fate worse than death. And yet, Jehu is completely unmoved by the ugly end of Jezebel. But, once his belly was full, he thought they should probably do something for her since she was, after all, a blue blood. But, it seems while he was enjoying his sandwich the local pack of scavenger dogs were busy dispatching their own surprise supper. So, there wasn't much left of Jezebel

to bury.

All of this brought to Jehu's mind the prophecy against Jezebel spoken by Elijah in [I Kings 21:23](#). Jehu quotes more than what is reported there but that may be because he wasn't a whiz at scripture memorization or it could be that Elijah have actually said more and Jehu remembers it here. Either way, Yahweh's word had predicted the dogs and the ignominious way Jezebel's body would be dealt with (37). Her body was to be as refuse on the surface of the field, how was that to be accomplished? This was well before the invention of the wood chipper! God didn't need a wood chipper; he has something better...and quieter. Instead of a marble monument to mark her burial plot, all that was left of old queen Jezebel could be found in little piles strewn all over the field. Disgusting? Yes, but in this case the grossness of the judgment aptly fits the wickedness of the offender.

What we learn from this scene is that wicked people can face death with great flair. Jezebel was godless but gutsy. She had paint on her face and sarcasm on her lips and she faced Jehu head on. But, one's boldness in death does not exempt them from judgment after death. You can put on a dramatic show at death and still be damned.

God's plan for His people was well in hand and moving right along on schedule. There is judgment, to be sure, but there was plenty of grace and mercy offered well before that. God takes no pleasure in executing judgment on anyone; He would much prefer we accept His offer of grace and submit to His perfect will for our lives. For those who do, we become His servants, His children, the apple of His eye. No matter what comes our way, He has us in His hand; he controls the circumstances of our lives for His kingdom and His glory.

We trust Him because He is good. We praise Him because He is worthy. We obey Him because He knows and wants what's best for us. We love Him because he first loved us. 😊