

HEADS WILL ROLL. 2 KN. 10:1-11. 12/03/23. #21.

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10 Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote and sent letters to Samaria, to the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to those who reared Ahab's sons, saying: **2** Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons are with you, and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons, **3** choose the best qualified of your master's sons, set him on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house. **4** But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Look, two kings could not stand up to him; how then can we stand?" **5** And he who was in charge of the house, and he who was in charge of the city, the elders also, and those who reared the sons, sent to Jehu, saying, "We are your servants, we will do all you tell us; but we will not make anyone king. Do *what is good* in your sight." **6** Then he wrote a second letter to them, saying: If you are for me and will obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow. Now the king's sons, seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, who were rearing them. **7** So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads in baskets and sent them to him at Jezreel. **8** Then a messenger came and told him, saying, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons." And he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning." **9** So it was, in the morning, that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, "You are righteous. Indeed I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these?" **10** Know now that nothing shall fall to the earth of the word of the LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what He spoke by His servant Elijah." **11** So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left him none remaining.
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1. 70 heads in 70 baskets

- a. Jehu's mandate was to wipe out Ahab's line
- b. Jehu had a tactical problem
 - a1. He had killed 2 kings & the queen mother, but he had not solidified power
 - a2. Samaria would be a difficult city to conquer with Jehu's limited force
- c. Jehu uses a tactic of intimidation
 - a1. Jehu challenges the guardians of the 70 princes to choose one of them to be king to lead a force against him (or to fight him one-to-one)
 - a2. The leaders of the city had heard what Jehu had done & were in the dark as to his support level
- d. Jehu's fear tactic worked
 - a1. Even though they had chariots, an army, weapons, & a walled city, they were not willing to risk combat for any of Ahab's sons
 - a2. The city acknowledges Jehu's victory & in a sense surrenders to him unconditionally

- e. Jehu cleverly orders the city to send the heads of the princes to him in Jezreel the next day (35 miles north)
 - a1. This could mean "send the 70 sons to parlay" or "behead the 70 sons & send their heads to me"
 - a2. The city officials took the message to mean *behead Ahab's sons & send the heads to me*
- f. The time constraint was designed to intimidate the leaders into action before their fear dissipated
 - a1. Jehu implied that he was ready & able to force his will on Samaria (actually, he could not)
 - a2. At times, a strong bluff is mightier than strong arms & forces a surrender that could not be won
- g. The next day the heads of Ahab's sons were sent to Jehu

2. Partners in crime & justice

- a. Jehu has to heads piled up on both sides of the gate
- b. Jehu makes a speech in the morning:
 - a1. The people had done righteously (fulfilled the prophecy of Elijah from 1 Kn. 21)
 - a2. Jehu points out that he did not kill the princes
 - b1. The people killed the princes, so they were guilty of their deaths
 - b2. By pointing out that he had killed Joram, but the people had killed Ahab's sons, Jehu indicates that not only were they a part of carrying out God's sentence, but that their fates were now linked together
- c. Jehu completes his mission without a battle, tracing down Ahab's sons, or meeting any resistance

3. A crazed zeal

- a. Jehu had accomplished his mission after he had killed the rest of Ahab's family members (grandsons, nephews...)
- b. God's sentence was carried out, but Jehu continued his blood lust far beyond his commission
 - a1. He killed Ahab's advisors, priest, friends, nobles, & every one of his acquaintances
 - a2. God did not order the destruction of Ahab's friends, advisors, priests, & leaders
- c. Jehu's pride sought out anyone who could possibly be a threat to his rule in the remotest way
 - a1. His lust for power & blood showed him to be a wicked self-indulgent man like King Saul
 - a2. Serving the Lord must be for devotion to God, not a means of power & prestige