

**2 Kings 10:1-36****Ahab's Family Killed**

**10** Now there were in Samaria seventy sons of the house of Ahab. So, Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria: to the officials of Jezreel, to the elders and to the guardians of Ahab's children. He said, <sup>2</sup> "You have your master's sons with you and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city and weapons. Now as soon as this letter reaches you, <sup>3</sup> choose the best and most worthy of your master's sons and set him on his father's throne. Then fight for your master's house."

<sup>4</sup> But they were terrified and said, "If two kings could not resist him, how can we?"

<sup>5</sup> So the palace administrator, the city governor, the elders and the guardians sent this message to Jehu: "We are your servants and we will do anything you say. We will not appoint anyone as king; you do whatever you think best."

<sup>6</sup> Then Jehu wrote them a second letter, saying, "If you are on my side and will obey me, take the heads of your master's sons and come to me in Jezreel by this time tomorrow."

Now the royal princes, seventy of them, were with the leading men of the city, who were rearing them. <sup>7</sup> When the letter arrived, these men took the princes and slaughtered all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu in Jezreel. <sup>8</sup> When the messenger arrived, he told Jehu, "They have brought the heads of the princes."

Then Jehu ordered, "Put them in two piles at the entrance of the city gate until morning."

<sup>9</sup> The next morning Jehu went out. He stood before all the people and said, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master and killed him, but who killed all these?" <sup>10</sup> Know, then, that not a word the LORD has spoken against the house of Ahab will fail. The LORD has done what he announced through his servant Elijah." <sup>11</sup> So Jehu killed everyone in Jezreel who remained of the house of Ahab, as well as all his chief men, his close friends and his priests, leaving him no survivor.

<sup>12</sup> Jehu then set out and went toward Samaria. At Beth Eked of the Shepherds, <sup>13</sup> he met some relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and asked, "Who are you?"

They said, "We are relatives of Ahaziah, and we have come down to greet the families of the king and of the queen mother."

<sup>14</sup> "Take them alive!" he ordered. So, they took them alive and slaughtered them by the well of Beth Eked—forty-two of them. He left no survivor.

<sup>15</sup> After he left there, he came upon Jehonadab's son of Rekab, who was on his way to meet him. Jehu greeted him and said, "Are you in accord with me, as I am with you?"

"I am," Jehonadab answered.

"If so," said Jehu, "give me your hand." So, he did, and Jehu helped him up into the chariot. <sup>16</sup> Jehu said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD." Then he had him ride along in his chariot.

<sup>17</sup> When Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all who were left there of Ahab's family; he destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD spoken to Elijah.

## Servants of Baal Killed

<sup>18</sup> Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. <sup>19</sup> Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his servants and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come will no longer live." But Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the servants of Baal.

<sup>20</sup> Jehu said, "Call an assembly in honour of Baal." So, they proclaimed it. <sup>21</sup> Then he sent word throughout Israel, and all the servants of Baal came; not one stayed away. They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full from one end to the other. <sup>22</sup> And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, "Bring robes for all the servants of Baal." So, he brought out robes for them.

<sup>23</sup> Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rekab went into the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the servants of Baal, "Look around and see that no one who serves the LORD is here with you—only servants of Baal." <sup>24</sup> So they went in to make sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had posted eighty men outside with this warning: "If one of you lets any of the men, I am placing in your hands escape, it will be your life for his life."

<sup>25</sup> As soon as Jehu had finished making the burnt offering, he ordered the guards and officers: "Go in and kill them; let no one escape." So, they cut them down with the sword. The guards and officers threw the bodies out and then entered the inner shrine of the temple of Baal. <sup>26</sup> They brought the sacred stone out of the temple of Baal and burned it. <sup>27</sup> They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal, and people have used it for a latrine to this day.

<sup>28</sup> So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. <sup>29</sup> However, he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit—the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan.

<sup>30</sup> The LORD said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in accomplishing what is right in my eyes and have done to the house of Ahab all I had in mind to do, your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation.” <sup>31</sup> Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit.

<sup>32</sup> In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Israelites throughout their territory <sup>33</sup> east of the Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aroer by the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.

<sup>34</sup> As for the other events of Jehu’s reign, all he did, and all his achievements, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

<sup>35</sup> Jehu rested with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son succeeded him as king. <sup>36</sup> The time that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

### Sermon: Above All Else Guard Your Heart

Please have your **Bibles opened** at **2 Kings 10**

You have an **outline** – if you’d like to take notes. Let me **pray**...

### Intro (Proverbs 4:32)

Proverbs 4:23 tells us:

**[Slide – Proverbs 4:23]**

## SCRIPTURE

Above all else,  
guard your **heart**,  
for everything you  
do flows from it.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

We need to understand that when this verse says “**heart**” it’s not talking about the organ inside our body that pumps blood.

The **Hebrew word (lev)** is the most comprehensive term for the authentic person. It is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. It has been described as "*the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity*," "*the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; our feelings, desires, passions, thoughts, understanding and will*," and "*the centre of a person. The place to which God turns*."

So, this verse is saying that if our hearts are wicked and rebellious, then our thoughts, words and actions will be wicked and rebellious. And if our hearts are loving and obedient, then our thoughts, words and actions will be loving and obedient.

We see that's what has happened in the last week or so in **Israel and Palestine** – when there is **hatred and wickedness in hearts** – then look what flows from it – **hatred and wicked and despicable actions!**

There's no love for God and no love for others.

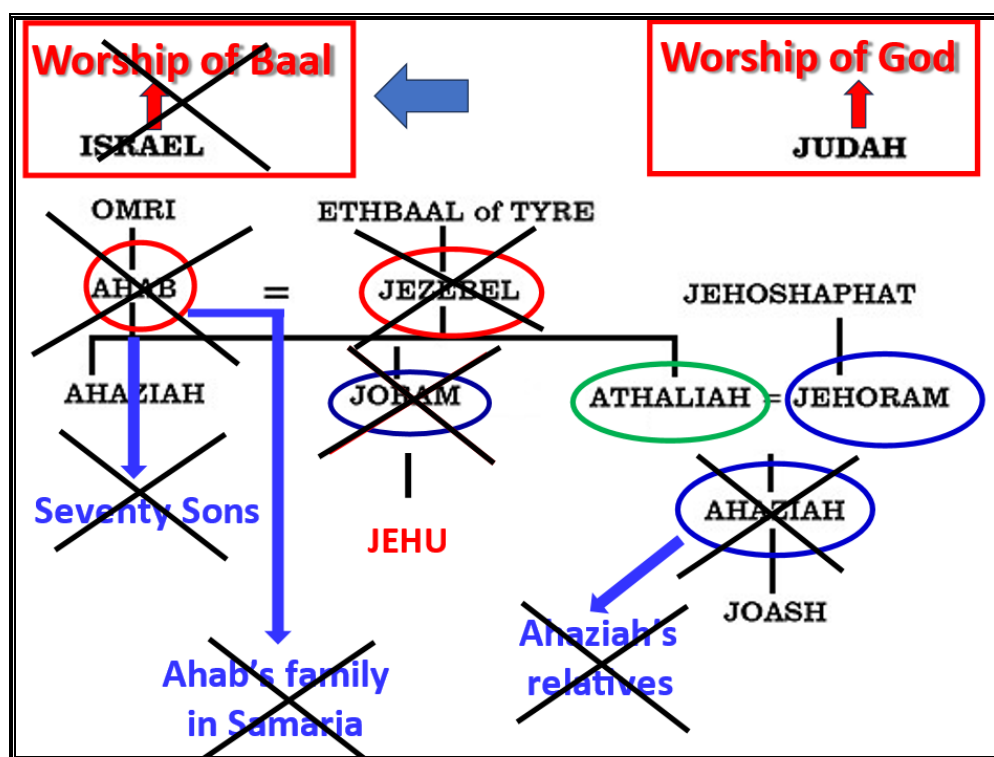
And that's what we've been seeing in our look at the OT books of **1 and 2 Kings**.

Nothing has changed for centuries!

### Context (Ahab didn't guard his heart)

Let's remind ourselves where we are up to in 2 Kings

[Slide 2 – Family Tree]



We have **King Ahab of Israel** – who **married Jezebel** – she's from **Tyre** which is on the coast just north of Israel. **[Ahab and Jezebel are the red circles]**

Jezebel's home land of Tyre – **worshipped a false god called Baal**

Jezebel convinced her husband to worship this false god Baal instead of the one true God of Israel YHWH.

And then Ahab forced this new religion upon all the citizens of the Northern Kingdom of Isarel – **[red rectangle on PowerPoint – click]**

Let's be clear how bad this worship of Baal was: It involved human sacrifice, usually the first born – sacrifices were made to get favours from the god Baal and the goddess Asherah – for things like fertility of crops, to get rain or to end a drought or to have children. Worship also involved excessive drinking and sexual orgies.

God was not going to stand for that - so through the prophets Elijah and Elisha – God promised that Ahab and his family and the worship of Baal would be wiped out!

Ahab died in battle as God said – back in 1 Kings 22. **[black cross on PowerPoint – click]**

But Baal worship continued with Ahab's family. Ahab's son Joram became King **[blue circle on PowerPoint – click]** and he continued the worship of Baal.

And Ahab's daughter Athalia **[green circle on PowerPoint – click]** married Jehoram King of Judah **[blue circle on PowerPoint – click]** – now remember the

Southern Kingdom of Judah were still worshipping the one true God YHWH **[red box on PowerPoint]**

But because of this intermarriage between Ahab's daughter Athalia and Jehoram of Judah – Baal worship corrupted Jehoram and then corrupted Jehoram's son Ahaziah of Judah **[blue circle on PowerPoint – click]**

All this has happened – because Ahab did not guard his heart – and he then corrupted the worship of all of the Northern Kingdom and now it's crept into the Southern Kingdom too!

And we saw last week that God through the prophets Elijah and Elisha – raised up a new King of Israel – Jehu – **[red cross and Jehu on PowerPoint]** he wasn't related to Ahab – but was an army commander!

And **Jehu's is God's instrument of judgment** on Ahab and his family for this corrupt worship

So, last week Jehu began implementing this judgment - by killing - King Joram of Israel, King Ahaziah of Judah and Queen Jezebel **[Black crosses on PowerPoint]**  
Which brings us to our story today in 2 Kings Chapter 10

### Jehu's Zealous Heart for the Lord (2 Kings 10:1-28)

Jehu still has more work to do - to eliminate Ahab's family and wipe out Baal Worship.



We discover in v1 – Ahab has been a busy boy – and he has **seventy sons** [blue arrow and seventy sons on PowerPoint – click]

This means the **false Baal worship will continue with these sons** – as well as the fact that **one of them could challenge Jehu who has been anointed King by God.**

What we see in verses 1-17 is **Jehu's zealous heart for the Lord**

Jehu offers the elders and guardians of Ahab's sons to **make one of these sons the new King and challenge Jehu if they are game!**

But they are not game – they've seen that **Jehu has got rid of two kings and a queen Jezebel** already.

So, **Jehu makes them prove they are on his side** by telling them to kill Ahab's sons.

And without going into any more gory details – **Ahab's seventy sons are eliminated** [black cross on PowerPoint – click] – as well as the rest of Ahab's family in Jezreel (v11)

But as Jehu travels to Samaria – vv12-14 - **he comes across relatives of Ahaziah King of Judah** – the son of Ahab's daughter Athaliah [blue rectangle on PowerPoint – click] – so Jehu eliminates all them!

Why? [black cross on PowerPoint – click]

Because **Ahaziah's relatives been corrupted into Baal worship** because of that intermarriage.

Next **Jehu** **meets** a guy called **Jehonadab** in v15 – and Jehu discovers that **Jehonadab is a believer in the one true God** – and invites Jehonadab to join him in his chariot – **so he can see Jehu's zeal for the Lord** – v16.

We are **meant to see here that Jehu's pride is starting to get the better of him** – and that perhaps Jehu's zeal for the Lord is more about zeal for himself.

Jehu then rides to Samaria – v17 - where the rest of Ahab's family are **[blue rectangle on PowerPoint – click]** – and **he destroys them** as God had said through the prophet Elijah **[black cross on PowerPoint – click]**

So that's it – **Ahab's corrupt family all gone**.

But what about all the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel who are still worshipping Baal – remember almost the **whole nation is involved in this corrupt worship!** **[blue arrow and intensify – PowerPoint - Click]**

Well - in verses 18 to 28

**Jehu comes up with an elaborate plan** to gather all of the people in the Northern Kingdom to come and worship Baal at the Baal temple.

**Jehu pretends he is going to worship Baal** even more than Ahab did (v18)

And once Jehu had all the Baal worshippers together – **he cuts them down with the sword (v25)** – and demolishes the sacred stone of Baal and tears down the temple of Baal – and it is **used as a latrine**.

All of Baal worship down the toilet! **[black cross on PowerPoint – click]**

What are we to make of this?

Is Jehu out of control?

Or is He just doing what God said would happen through the prophets Elijah and Elisha?

We may be tempted to ask **why** does God work like this? **Why** does He allow the **gore of man to carry out the will of God?** Couldn't God operate in a cleaner way? Perhaps.

But we must remember **two points**. First, the Bible shows that God frequently works, we might say, **indirectly** – through human instruments like Jehu – and unlike surgeons **who have sanitized/sterilized instruments** – God's instruments like Jehu **are not sanitized nor sterilized** – all of God's human instruments are **flawed and fallen** and many of them are **opportunistic** – and can be **self-serving like Jehu**. So, God uses wicked people to carry out His divine judgment. Second, this is a situation involving the judgment of God upon wicked Baal worship – and it's very difficult to make such judgment **pleasant!**

**Jehu Didn't Guard His Heart** (2 Kings 10:16, 29-36)

Despite Jehu carrying out God's judgment

Jehu didn't guard his heart properly

**[Slide – Jehu's heart]**

### **Jehu didn't guard his heart** (2 Kings 10:16, 29-36)

#### ***Because:***

- *Jehu was showing off to Jehonadab about his “zeal” for the Lord (verse 16)*
- *Jehu was show-boating!*
- *Jehu continued to worship the golden calves introduced by Jeroboam*
- *Jehu was not careful to keep the Law of the Lord*

We saw in v16 – that **Jehu was showing off** with this new found friend Jehonadab about how he had zeal for the Lord.

But the way Jehu goes about things – **we'd have to admit he's showboating a fair bit.**

And worse still in v29 – **we have a “however”**

V29 says – ***However, Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which had caused Israel to commit.***

What were the sins of Jeroboam?

V29 tells us – the **worship of golden calves in Bethel and Dan.**

So, Jehu's clean-up campaign didn't go far enough – **the worship of these golden calves continued!**

And if we skip down to v31 – there's *another problem for Jehu* – ***he was not careful to keep the law of the Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart!***

And so, **there's consequences for Jehu and Israel** – in v32-33 – God uses another instrument of judgment – **King Hazael** from Aram (Syria) to **reduce the size of Israel quite substantially.**

This is a sobering thought – that one instrument of God's judgment – **Hazael** – is raised up to bring judgment on a previous instrument of God's judgment – **Jehu.** We need to look out for this pattern again – in the coming weeks – when **God uses Assyria to judge and punish the Northern Kingdom – and uses Babylon to judge and punish the Southern Kingdom.**

Jehu's story shows that a person can be - **used by God** - AND - **judged by God**.

That's what Jesus talks about in Matthew 7:21-23 – when He says *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and, in your name, perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup> Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”*

Jehu could legitimately come to the Lord and say “***I drove out the demons of Ahab's house and the false worship of Baal***” but because Jehu continued to worship golden calves; the Lord will say “***I never knew you, away from me, evildoer***”

It's so important to make sure **our hearts are always** for the Lord.

Which is what we'll look at now and finish with.

What about **our hearts**?

How can we **guard our hearts**?

[Slide – What about our hearts – heading]

What About Our Hearts?

[Slide – 1<sup>st</sup> way]

1<sup>st</sup> way to guard our hearts is to - **Examine our hearts and repent**

As Psalm 139:23-24 says:

*<sup>23</sup> Search me, God, and know my heart;  
test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

*<sup>24</sup> See if there is any offensive way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting.*

As we examine our hearts:

We must ask ourselves – **are our thoughts pure and loving?** As the Apostle Paul reminds us “*whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things*” (Phil 4:8)

We must ask ourselves – **are the words we speak words that God would approve of?** As the Apostle Paul remind us “*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen*” (Eph 4:29)

And we must ask ourselves – **are our actions reflecting our claim to be Christians?** As the Apostle Paul reminds us - “*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*”

As we reflect on our actions – we need to be careful we don't get like Jehu and we're so zealous for the work of the Lord – that it becomes about how good we are – and we get the glory – not God! The Apostle Paul reminds us - *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God* (1 Cor 10:31). Having examined our hearts – **we must then repent of our corrupt hearts** – and we must realize that we can't fully obey God's commandments – and **that's why we need Jesus - and must come to Him – the only one who can fix our sins!**

**[Slide – 2<sup>nd</sup> way]**

2<sup>nd</sup> way to guard our hearts is - to Pray.

We can pray that *God would remove our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh* (Ezekiel 11:9; 36:26).

We can not only pray THAT for ourselves but for others too.

As we think about what is going on in Israel and Gaza at the moment – and other places around the world.

A great prayer to pray right now is what God said to King Solomon when the Temple in Jerusalem was dedicated. God said in 2 Chronicles 7:14 - *if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

You see – God allows events like Israel and Gaza - to remind people to humble themselves and pray and seek His face and turn from their wicked ways.

Yes – God is in these events – but more importantly - God is in the response to these events!

How will people respond – with wickedness or will they turn to God?

**[Slide – 3<sup>rd</sup> way]**

3<sup>rd</sup> way to guard our hearts is to – Study Scripture.

Scripture tells us what God expects.

His commandments tell us how we should live.

As the Apostle Paul tells Timothy - <sup>16</sup>*All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

But if we don't read and study the Bible – we won't know what's right or wrong – we won't learn the lessons from Israel's mistakes and sins – we won't learn how to behave – and we won't be equipped to serve God!

**[Slide – 4<sup>th</sup> way]**

4<sup>th</sup> way to guard our hearts is to – Surround ourselves with spiritually uplifting people.

As we learnt last week from the Apostle Paul – *bad company corrupts good character* (1 Cor 15:33) and Proverbs 27:17 tells us – *As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another* – and as the writer of Hebrews tells us - *let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up*



*meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching* (Heb 10:24-25)

Hanging around fellow Christians **helps guard our hearts!**

Let's pray.

*Heavenly Father, please show us what is in our hearts so that we can repent.*

*Help us to be in constant prayer about our hearts – praying that you would remove our hearts of stone – and replace them with hearts of flesh.*

*Help us to be diligent in praying for those who have hearts that are turned against you and who don't know Jesus – so that they would turn their hearts to you.*

*Help us to be diligent in reading and studying your word and applying it to our lives – so that we become more like Jesus.*

*Help us to spur one another on toward love and good deeds and not giving up meeting together – but to encourage one another—as we wait for our Lord Jesus to return. Come Lord Jesus, Come. In His Name. Amen.*