



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

2 Kings 9: 1-37

Lesson 6 of 6

4-5-2020

"God's Mill"

TRANSCRIPT

Elder, Mark Newman with opening greetings,

Good morning. Good to be with you all again this morning. We were trying to remember, is this the third or the fourth time that we have done the live stream broadcast? I think it's the fourth. But it's definitely different. I have been on so many Zoom conference calls and different conference calls where you wait for all the beep, beep, beep, beeps to happen while people are joining the call. So I'm talking a little bit right now, to give people time to get their laptops set up, and join our service this morning. It is the Lord's day. Always a good day. What a privilege it is for the church to gather together, even in this unusual way.

“Shout joyfully to the LORD all the earth. Serve the LORD with gladness. Come before Him with joyful singing. Know that the LORD Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; *We are* His people, and the sheep of His pasture.” (Ps 100:1-3)

Again, I want to welcome all of you this morning, the huddled masses, scattered, but gathered together today to worship the LORD God, and hear His Word proclaimed. “The Lord Himself is God. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.”

I trust that all of you are persevering through all this newness. And I want to remind you, as we have the last few Sundays now, that if you have any special needs, to

please let us know. Call the office; talk to Sheri, talk to Stephanie, leave a message, or call an elder, and we will be eager to respond to you, whatever your need is. We are all in this together, and all of us are the arms and hands of the Lord in caring for and loving His people.

We can do that in various material ways, certainly, but the most powerful is the ministry of prayer that each of us have from the Lord. So let's all remember to be faithful to that ministry for which we have all been equipped to pray for our church, for our country, for the world, for God's mercy upon us during this difficult and unusual time.

We also want you to know, with many in our nation in rather desperate straits, that we have made a contribution to Samaritan's Purse. That means you have made a contribution to Samaritan's Purse. And we will continue to monitor that situation as the days proceed ahead of us.

I hope you all received the notice this week by email that immediately following the Ministry of the Word from Dan in a few moments, we will have an observance of the Lord's Supper. You may have seen the table before the pulpit. And we intend to make that our practice going forward, as long as we are meeting in this live stream way. So we look forward to observing the Lord's Supper today, and week by week. But first, Dan will come forward now and read our scripture passage for this morning.

Well, good morning. In these unusual circumstances, I greet you wherever you are throughout the city, throughout the metroplex, the state, and even beyond. We are here, not in body but in spirit, and I trust that this will be a good worshipful time for you, a time of instruction, but also a time of lifting our hearts to the Lord.

I am finishing this morning in our studies on the 'Life of Elijah'. Then next week we will have a special service, an Easter service. So I thought it would be good just to conclude the series that we have been in and turn to 2 Kings, chapter 9. This text is something of a sequel to the life and ministry of Elijah for it covers the fulfillment of his promises. It is not really a happy passage for it is a chapter on judgment. I think we are

all, at this time, looking for something 'sunny', yet this passage is stormy. But nevertheless, there are rays of grace in it, and it should encourage us in some ways. In many ways, really, for it is a reminder, as God's prophecies, (the prophecies of Elijah), are fulfilled by God, it is our reminder that He is still on His throne, and He is in complete control of time and space—then, and as well now. And that is certainly a principle or point that we should remember. — God is faithful.

I am going to read much of the passage, but not all of it, for it is a lengthy text. So I am going to read verses 1 through 10, and then pick up again with verse 30:

¹ Now Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, "Gird up your loins, and take this flask of oil in your hand and go to Ramoth-gilead. ² When you arrive there, search out Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in and bid him arise from among his brothers, and bring him to an inner room. ³ Then take the flask of oil and pour it on his head and say, 'Thus says the LORD, "I have anointed you king over Israel.'" ' Then open the door and flee and do not wait."

⁴ So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. ⁵ When he came, behold, the captains of the army were sitting, and he said, "I have a word for you, O captain." And Jehu said, "For which *one* of us?" And he said, "For you, O captain." ⁶ He arose and went into the house, and he poured the oil on his head and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel. ⁷ You shall strike the house of Ahab, your master, that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD at the hand of Jezebel. ⁸ For the whole house of Ahab shall perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male person both bond and free in Israel. ⁹ I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah. ¹⁰ The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreel, and none shall bury *her*.'" " Then he opened the door and fled.

And following this, Jehu was recognized as king and then he moves out to carry out the judgment of the LORD, first against Ahab's son, king Joram. And then we read in verse 30,

³⁰ When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it*, and she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out the window. ³¹ As Jehu entered the gate, she said, "Is it well, Zimri, your master's murderer?" ³² Then he lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" And two or three officials looked down at him. ³³ He said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her underfoot. ³⁴ When he came in, he ate and drank; and he said, "See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter." ³⁵ They went to bury her, but they found nothing more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. ³⁶ Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; ³⁷ and the corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, "This is Jezebel." ' "

2 King 2:30-37

May the Lord bless this reading of His Word and bless our time of studying it together. Let us bow together in a word of prayer.

Father, these are difficult days in which we are in and they are very unusual days, with times of great anxiety for some. But they need not be times of anxiety for us for we can say with the psalmist in Psalm 118, verse 24, "This is the day that the LORD has made; Let us rejoice and be glad in it." We can say that with confidence because we know that You are on Your throne, and You are in control of all things. But we can also

pray, as the psalmist does in the next verse, "O LORD, do save, we beseech You; O LORD, do send prosperity."

And that, too, is something that we pray. We ask Your great blessing upon us, Father. We ask for prosperity. We ask for an end of this virus, this plague that is devastating so many, and creating very difficult times for us. But we pray that our time together this morning would be of benefit. We pray that You would bless us spiritually as we consider this passage, which is something of a dark passage, a difficult passage. We pray that You would enable us to see the grace that is there, and we pray that You would help us to focus upon the greatness of Your sovereignty—that You do rule over time and space—and we can take great confidence of that in this moment.

This is not a day that has happened apart from Your will. And while we may not understand it completely or perfectly, we know that You are in control, and You are guiding all things, and You are watching us, You are guiding us with Your eye. We are in Your hand, and we are secure. So, may we reckon that to be true, Father and we commit that to You. And we pray Your blessings on us in this hour to that end.

But we also, Lord, pray for our physical needs. We have many. These are difficult times, and we pray that You would keep the plague from us. Lord, You know all of our conditions, and I pray that You would encourage and strengthen. We think of the businessmen, and all of those who have jobs in our congregation. And there is this anxiety, no doubt, we have. What is going to happen to the economy? We wonder. I pray, Father, that You would preserve the economy, that You would preserve jobs, that those who have work will have it in the weeks to come, and that You would preserve the small businesses that some in our congregation have.— That You would preserve them and prosper them. We look to You to bless. We pray that You bless our government. We pray for our President and Vice-President as they make difficult decisions. And the medical task force around them, that You would give them wisdom. And give us all wisdom, Lord, as we seek to manage our lives in these difficult times.

We pray again, that You would keep us safe, and that You would end this soon. But Lord, we pray things will go according to Your will, as we know they will, and that You would enable us to deal patiently with it and look to You to bless. We know You will.

And we pray You would strengthen our faith in these days, and we pray that You would use this time of study together to do that. So we look to You to bless, and then bless us at the end of this sermon, as we observe the Lord's Supper, and remember our Savior and all that He has done for us. We pray these things in His name. Amen.

It has been said that 'God's mill grinds slowly but sure'. That is an old proverb that has appeared in various forms over the ages. One version is, the wheels of justice turn slowly. Justice doesn't always come when we expect it. But it always comes. The guilty never escape, ultimately. That 'God's mills grind slowly' is His patience, His mercy. That 'they grind sure' is His righteousness.

And that is the lesson of this chapter. It is a kind of epilogue to the story of Elijah. Elijah met king Ahab in Naboth's vineyard, whom Jezebel, (and Ahab), had conspired to murder in order to seize his property, thinking that they had pulled it off. And while he was inspecting his coveted plot of land, Elijah unexpectedly appeared among the grape vines, and pronounced judgment on Ahab and his house. The dogs would lick his blood. Every male in his house, slave and free, would be swept away—and dogs would eat up Jezebel. (1 Kings 21:20).

As our text begins today, Ahab is gone. He had met his end just as Elijah prophesied. But now, years later, Jezebel was alive and well in Jezreel, and her son, Joram, was king. The house of Ahab was still prospering. The Lord is not neglectful. He is longsuffering— patient with the wicked. Not quick to judge. But all of that was about to change with the coming of Jehu.

Earlier, on Mt. Horeb, the Lord instructed Elijah to anoint Hazael, king of Syria, anoint Jehu king of Israel, and anoint Elisha prophet in his place. (1 Kings 19). He had anointed Elisha but was taken to heaven before he could anoint the kings. The task

would fall to Elisha. Maybe Elijah had passed it on to him in their conversation before the whirlwind took him.

Jehu was a dynamic personality, famous for driving his chariot fast and furious. He was ambitious and intent on his business, with zeal for the Lord. So he was a well-chosen instrument. He is the only king of Israel whose image has been preserved for us. It is in the British Museum, on a large stone called the Black Obelisk. There he is shown bowing before the Assyrian king, Shalmaneser III. The Bible is true. History supports it. The Bible is history.

And the account of the fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy begins with the prophet Elisha sending one of the young prophets to anoint Jehu king. He instructed him to, 'take the flask of oil, go to Ramothgilead, find Jehu, anoint him with oil and say, "Thus says the Lord, I have anointed you king over Israel." Then get out. Run.' Ramothgilead was on the east side of the Jordan river, where Ahab was killed in battle. It was regained by his son, Joram, who was wounded there, but is recovering in Jezreel. Jehu was a captain and commander in both Ahab's and Joram's army—but soon he would be God's Arm. So from Ramothgilead, where justice came to Ahab, from there it would go out to his house.

Jehu was sitting with his fellow officers, maybe in a war council, when the young prophet came. And without a word of apology or pardon said, "I have a word for you, O captain." They went to a private room. There the prophet said, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel..." '“.

Now that is worth noting. Even though Israel was in unbelief, in a spiritually wretched state, worshiping Baal, still, they are 'the people of the LORD'. He had not rejected them. He won't. He can't. As Paul put it in Romans 11, verse 29, "...for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable." He had made an unconditional covenant with Israel, with Abraham and his descendants, and He will always be true to His Word. And although Israel is in the same spiritual state today, all of His promises are still valid and

trustworthy. —Just as they are for us, the church body, for we are also His people.

I think that comes out in our text.

But this word was specifically for Jehu. He was anointed king over the people of the LORD. So, it would be his duty, as king, to guide them, to be a shepherd for them in righteousness according to the Law.

Now that was all this young prophet was to say; at least that is all we are told that he was instructed to say. But he was a prophet, and so he goes on. And, as a prophet, he expanded on the message to Jehu to strike down all in Ahab's house, every male and one female, Jezebel, to avenge the blood of the prophets. Then he opened the door and he ran.

When Jehu came out of the room alone, his fellow officers were anxious to know what happened. 'What was this all about? Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you?' Now that tells us a lot about the spiritual conditions of these officers. They called God's prophet 'a mad man'. The Hebrew word is 'meshugga'. I mention that because it is also a word that has been taken up into Yiddish, and we sometimes have in English, Yiddish words like 'bagel' and 'klutz' and 'mensch'. This also is one that you might hear sometimes, 'meshugga'. It is what David was called when he was in the Philistine city of Gath, and faked madness by drooling into his beard and scribbling on the doors of the gate. That is what the generals thought of God's prophet—a mad man—when he was really the most sane man in the room.

But these men of war were men of the world and they did not have much use for prophets. And this is true of the world— We, (believers), are fools and we are strange to the world. The more that we act like prophets—that is the more we carry the Word of God with us and live according to the Word of God; and we speak the gospel to those around us, we are going to seem like fools.

Nevertheless, these generals, these commanders knew this incident was unusual. A prophet had called Jehu out for a special word. It was given in secret, so they wanted to know why this mad fellow came to him. Jehu was evasive. Maybe he was not sure how they would respond—for or against him. Or perhaps he was still taking all of

this in since it is quite a message to be given to a person. So he says, 'Oh, you know these prophets. Just talk.' But they were not buying that. "It is a lie," they said. (Literally, "It is lie.") The prophet spoke to him and Jehu was standing there with oil dripping off his beard; they knew there was more. So they demanded that he tell them what happened. 'What was said? Declare it. ', they insisted. So, he did. (vs 12), "...he said to me, 'Thus says the LORD, "I have anointed you king over Israel." ' " The generals may have been spiritually obtuse, but they understood political opportunity and immediately rallied to Jehu. They cast their coats at his feet, blew trumpets and shouted, "Jehu is king!"

Now the wheels of justice that turn slowly, quicken. Events move rapidly. Verse 14 states, "Jehu...conspired against Joram." And that was not treason. —It was judgment commanded by God. Daniel said that 'God removes kings and establishes kings.' And two kings and a queen were about to fall.

Again, king Joram was not in Ramothgilead, he was in Jezreel on the other side of the Jordan, recovering from wounds received in battle with the Syrians. That is where Jehu drove his chariot. A lookout on the tower saw him coming with troops and reported it. "I see a company," he said. "And Joram said, "Take a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?' "(vs17). When the horseman arrived Jehu told him, 'No peace. Fall in behind me.' When the watchman reported that the messenger was not returning, Joram sent a second messenger, who got the same response, and also fell in behind Jehu. And so, verse 20 says, "The watchman reported, "He came even to them, and he did not return; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously." "

That word 'furiously' comes from that earlier word, 'meshugga' and it can be translated, 'he drives madly'. It was Jehu's trademark, but also showed the zeal and determination he had to carry out the oracle of God. He was not negotiating with any of the king's messengers, and he was coming on fast. So Joram decided to challenge Jehu directly and rode out to meet him. His cousin, Amaziah, king of Judah, had come down to Jezreel to visit during his recuperation, and he rode out with him.

They and Jehu met, of all places, on the property where Naboth's vineyard was. That's providence. They spoke, in verse 22. "When Joram saw Jehu he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" And he answered, "What peace, so long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?" " In other words, there is no negotiating or compromising with evil and unbelief. 'Harlotry' is 'an adultery' or 'standard description' of unbelief and apostasy in the Old Testament. Following false Gods is like a husband being unfaithful. It's like a person committing immorality. These flagrant sins illustrate the seriousness of it, but they also give us a realistic glimpse into Baal worship, and how vile it really was. And throughout the ancient world, paganism involved cult prostitution—and it also involved witchcraft.

Jezebel was in league with the devil and deeply involved in the occult—in the black arts. She had power from Satan. (Of course, she thought her power was from Baal.) But Satan had blinded the eyes of the unbelieving then, just as he does today. He blinds the mind of the unbelieving and persuades them to trust in other things than the Lord—To trust in magic, in charms, in incantations and sorcery (at least that is the case with Jezebel); to rely on superstition for help, not the Lord. And there is demonic power involved in all of this, to convince people of the truth and the reliability of it. But it's all a lie. Satan is a great deceiver—and he deceived the house of Ahab.

Joram now knew what was up. He knew that a coup d' etat was underway. Too late he cried out to his cousin, "There is treachery, O Amaziah!", as Jehu loaded his bow with an arrow and shot him through the heart. Then Jehu told his officer, Bidkar, to throw the body into Naboth's field, and reminded him how they had both heard Elijah's prophecy against Ahab. He quotes the oracle in verse 26, 'The Lord had seen the blood of Naboth and said, I will repay you in this property.' So, into that property, Naboth's vineyard, the body of Ahab's son was thrown.

In the meantime, Amaziah tried to escape. But Jehu's troops wounded him, and he later died in the city of Megiddo. The historian does not explain why Jehu killed him for he was not a part of the house of Ahab. He was, though, married to Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter, a woman who was every bit as wicked as she was. But since he was

not of the house of Ahab, this may be an example, or part of what is referred to later when Jehu is accused of having exceeded what the Lord had stated that he was to do. But for Amaziah, it was certainly a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. And that often happens when people associate with bad company, with evil people. Evil comes on them.

The next fulfillment of Elijah's prophecy occurs when Jezebel meets her end in the final verses, verses 30 through 37. It is judgment, and it is well deserved. She was a witch, literally, and a sorceress and murderer. She has been compared to lady Macbeth, but that's unfair to Macbeth because she had a conscience that drove her mad. Jezebel was without a conscience. She was Baal's evangelist, and she spread idolatry. She killed the Lord's prophets. She instigated the murder of righteous Naboth. She was the power behind the throne that directed weak Ahab to do evil. Jehu called her 'this cursed woman', who was evidently informed of her son's death and Jehu's march on Jezreel, because she took time to 'adorn herself, put on a heavy dose of mascara, fix her hair, and make her head beautiful', as the text says.

Then, when Jehu entered the gate, Jezebel stuck her head out of the upper story window and shouted, "Is it well, Zimri, your master's murderer?" (vs 31). In other words, Jehu was an assassin, she was saying. And it was intended, I think, as an insult. But it is also ironic, because she was queen due to Zimri, who carried out a coup against king Elah and took power. Zimri's reign lasted only a few days, because Omri, the commander of the army led a popular revolt against him, and became king in his place, and established the house of Omri. He was responsible for this infernal marriage between his son, Ahab, and Jezebel. (see 1 King 16).

But she could ignore her own history because sin sears the conscience, so that people cannot see their own guilt. Sin robs people of perception, of wisdom. —It distorts perspective. And Jezebel was so enslaved to sin, so deeply in a dark pit, that she considered herself rightly the queen, and considered herself the entitled person. She faced her executioner fearlessly and self-assured. She mocked him, basically calling him

an assassin. Matthew Henry wrote, "See how a heart, hardened against God, will brave it out to the last." Brave it out, ignorantly and foolishly. She was unrepentant, she was defiant. She is the captain of her soul, the master of her fate, courageous, she thought—but really stupid. She is insane. She is the one that is a mad person. And that is what sin produces, a darkened and foolish mind. Whatever power she thought she had as queen was imaginary.

Jehu was the master now. He knew it and he did not respond to Jezebel's impotent taunt. He just looked up at the window and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" And very quickly, everybody was on his side, especially the two or three servants standing in the window at Jezebel's side. So when Jehu said, "Throw her down," they didn't hesitate. And it made a mess. Some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses. And he, Jehu, trampled her underfoot. Then coolly, calmly he went inside and had lunch at Jezebel's table. This was a tough guy, a man of war, who could eat a meal after that grisly killing.

While he was eating another meal was being consumed, which was discovered when Jehu commanded that Jezebel's body be given a decent burial, since she was a king's daughter. But there just was not much to bury. All they found of Jezebel was her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands. The dogs had made a meal of her in short order. It was a shameful, humiliating death, but a death fitting for her. When Jehu heard of it, he recognized that a prophecy was fulfilled. Verses 36 and 37, "Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, "This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; and the corpse of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the property of Jezreel, so they cannot say, "This is Jezebel." ' " " .

That was not the end. A bloodbath followed this gruesome execution when the rest of Ahab's house was eliminated, fulfilling the remainder of Elijah's prophecy. Then Jehu destroyed the priests of Baal and Baal worshipers. (That is in the next chapter, in 2 Kings 10, when the status quo is suddenly overthrown.) In a moment, what seems permanent is gone. It was an amazing, true event that happened. And that is the

Providence of God. "God is not mocked," Paul told the Galatians (6:7). Eventually, 'people reap what they sow'. God demonstrated that here. This was the consequence of Jezebel's evil influence on Israel. 'God's mill grinds slowly', and sure. And what a terrifying thing it must be to be caught in those millstones and realize, with a clear mind, justice has come, and judgment is real.

This is really the message of the passage: God's Word is sure. It is certain to occur in God's time and in His way. His promises are completely reliable for mercy and blessing—but also for His judgment. And here the promise and prophecy were of judgment on Ahab's house—and by extension—judgment on the unbelieving world in the future. Divine judgment is the lesson here. We cannot miss that.

But this is not the only lesson, for there is a lesson for the church in all of this, as well. Just as Jezebel came to Israel, 'Jezebels' enter the church. One did in the church at Thyatira. That is stated in Revelation, chapter 2, in verse 20. It is one of the seven churches of Asia Minor. It was a good church, but it had a problem. It tolerated a woman named Jezebel. Like the ancient Jezebel, she influenced people towards spiritual compromise. She seduced God's children into idolatry, and by her evil influence caused many to sin. The Lord said, "...she teaches and leads My bond-servants astray, so that they commit *acts of* immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols."

This probably had to do with the trade guilds in Thyatira. Membership was important in order to practice one's trade as a silversmith or a tent maker—or whatever. But membership involved pagan practices. Christians could not participate in toasting a god or engaging in immorality. So they faced a choice. Be out of a job, or compromise. Jezebel encouraged compromise. Maybe she explained it from distorting the Word of God saying, 'Really, an idol is nothing. Paul taught that in 1 Corinthians 8:4. And grace is greater than all of our sins. In fact, we should sin that grace might abound! So it is okay', and thus distorting Romans chapter 6, verses 1 and 2. 'Well after all, a man has to provide for his family. He has to eat. He has to live.' There are lots of ways people can twist scripture and rationalize their way into compromise and sin.

This was Israel's problem. You will remember when Elijah was on Mt. Carmel, he accused the people of hesitating between two opinions, between worshiping Yahweh and worshiping Baal. And that was happening in Thyatira as well. People were compromising. "No!", Elijah would have said, "A person does not have to eat or live. What we have to do as God's people is obey." That is, in this situation we are to trust the Lord to provide...And He can provide. And this story of Elijah, this history of the life and times of Elijah supports that. He did that for Elijah during a famine, feeding him every day for three and a half years.

And so the Lord threatened to throw this Jezebel of Thyatira on a bed of sickness, and those who followed her counsel "...into great tribulation unless they repent of her deeds." Now that is the kindness and the severity of God that Paul speaks of in Romans 11, verse 22. The Lord holds out mercy; He gives time for repentance; He is patient; He is slow to anger; —But His patience ends; It must; And tribulation comes.

Spiritual compromise is always a danger and a challenge for the church, as it was for Israel. Jehu would not compromise with king Joram when he tried to sue for peace. He told the messengers to fall in line. I think it was 'fall in line or perish'. And with Joram, he did not even consider his offer for peace. He said, "What peace?" and executed justice. And it was the same with Jezebel. There would be no compromise with evil or half measures with God's Word and that is the lesson for Christians: No compromise with error. Theological error, moral error—we must reject it 'root and branch', and live by faith in the Lord and trust Him daily.

More positively, the lesson here is the lesson 'to be faithful'. The promise to the faithful in Thyatira is 'hold fast until I come'. That is the great hope that we have. This world is not just going to roll on and on for eternity. We are moving toward a great moment in history when the Lord comes. And he says to that congregation, "Hold fast until I come. Those who do," He said, "to him I shall give authority over the nations." Authority over the nations. And then He said, "I will give him the morning star." Christ is the bright morning star. So He will make the faithful to shine brightly with His glory, the glory of Christ, and to rule with Him. Rule over the nations. What a glorious promise that

is. 'Be faithful' is the message that He was giving. He is coming again. His reward is with Him. Now that is our hope, and we are to live in light of that hope, daily.

But in the present, we also have the same comfort that the Lord is with us and He is faithful now in the midst of this national crisis. In Romans 8, verse 32, Paul wrote, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" If He gave the greatest gift for us when we were His enemies, when we were in unbelief, won't He give us every other gift that we need, now that we are His friends, now that we are His children?—Of course He will! If He gained for you eternal life at such a great cost to Himself, He will not neglect you now in this present life, in this temporal life and world.

God will take care of us. He promises to do that. We exist in Him. 'We are in His hand', Christ said. John 10, verse 29. 'We cannot be plucked out.' We cannot be separated from Him. He will provide. Nothing can touch us that is not according to the sovereign will of God, and that is not ultimately for our blessing. He will bless. Rest in Him.

Still, the main lesson of 2 Kings 9 is justice. And it is a warning to unbelievers. And the warning is, judgment is coming. Justice delayed is not always justice denied—and never is when it is Divine justice. The Lord is patient. He delays, as it were, the execution of justice out of His abundant mercy. Ahab and Jezebel and their household knew the prophecy that was executed here. They had time and opportunity to repent— but did not. So justice came and swept them all away, righteously. Wrong was righted.

But that is only a picture, and I would say a pale one at that, of the judgment coming at the end of the age. The Bible speaks often of it, but most vividly of it in Revelation, chapter 19, with Christ's second coming. He will come more suddenly, more swiftly, furiously, and justly than Jehu. And all resistance will be as futile as Jezebel's. That will be the end of the age.

But justice actually occurs every day, when life ends—as is will for everyone. People may be dismissive of Divine justice and dismissive of a day of reckoning, even defiant of it to the end. But that changes nothing. Hamlet was wrong; ‘Thinking does not make it so’. Reality is not what we imagine it to be, what we may hope for it to be. It is what the Bible reveals it to be. The Bible is very clear. Some of its statements are quite stark. Hebrews 10, verse 31 states, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 12, verse 29 states the reason. "...for our God is a consuming fire." He is righteous. He cannot ignore sin. But again, He is also patient—He is longsuffering. This is the day of His patience. So as the author of Hebrews also counsels, "...Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..." (Heb 3:15).

If you are watching and without Christ, our hope for you is that you will realize the peril of your soul and turn to Christ the Savior. He died in our place. He paid the penalty of our sin, so that all who believe in Him will be saved. King Joram asked, "Is it peace?" Queen Jezebel asked, "Is it peace?" But “There is no peace for the wicked, says the LORD.” (Isa 48:28). Sin, unbelief, is never a way of peace. We have peace with God, we have peace with men, we have peace with ourselves, only through the sacrifice of Christ, which removes our sin, “As far as the east is from the west...” (Ps 103:12), removes our guilt forever, and it reconciles us to God. That is the work of Christ. That is what He has done in our place. That is the love of God, and the love He has even for His enemies, that He would send His own Son to die in our place. So the invitation to you is ‘Come to Him. Trust in Him. Be reconciled to God. Be saved.’ God help you to do that. Let us pray.

Father, this is a difficult text to preach at a time like this, and yet it is reality. It reminds us that You, Who are a loving God, known for Your lovingkindness, Your grace, Your mercy, Your goodness, and Your good pleasure created this world and You created the inhabitants of it. You provide for us all the time, daily. When man fell, (man sinned), and the race became a rebellious race, You did not turn away from us. You sent Your

Son to redeem a people for Yourself, like the number of the stars of the heaven, the sand of the seashore, the dust of the earth. That is Your grace and Your mercy, and You save sinners who don't deserve it. We give You praise and thanks for that.

Now Father, I pray that You would encourage Your people with this message from Scripture. If You did the greatest for us, You will do the less for us as well. You will take care of us in this time of need and anxiety. Bless us, Lord, with a sound mind. Bless us with strong faith. We thank You for all that we have in Your Son, and it is in His name we pray. Amen

(End of Audio)