

A Different Kind Of Savior

Jehu Compared to Jesus

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In the year when Jesus was born, grew up, and began His ministry in the early first century, many Jews in Palestine were infused with a kind of Messianic fervor. It was more than a hope. They expected the prophesied Messiah to appear any time and they were looking, *actively* looking, for Him to reveal Himself. They knew their scriptures, perhaps better than we do. Many of them had great long passages of the Old Testament memorized. They knew what the Bible said about His coming and what the Bible predicted.

We will see, as we go through this that they did not get it right. They ignored passages that they should have emphasized. They got things backwards in many ways, but really, all things being equal, all they should have had to do was connect the biblical dots. They should have been able to figure out what they should be looking for.

As Martin Collins explained in his recent sermon on Daniel 9, the Seventy Weeks Prophecy says very plainly that Messiah would come in sixty-nine weeks, and He would be cut off in the middle of the seventieth week. The only variable in all of the math is: Where do you start? When does that sixty-nine weeks start?

It could have been a certain proclamation of Cyrus to go rebuild Jerusalem, or it could have been another proclamation. There were actually about four proclamations at that time in which to start counting from. God does not tell you which proclamation to go by. When you go through history, you can find these other ones. The Jews did not know any more than we know about the time of Christ's coming, so they kind of hedged their bets and covered the whole period of the four proclamations and the sixty-nine weeks of years.

The Jews were a bit uncertain about when He would come. They had a general time frame in which Messiah would appear. They focused on that time frame which was what we call the early first century. We know God was true to His Word. He sent His Son right on time. He was born just before that first century, probably around 4 BC, and He started His ministry about AD 26 or AD 27. He was right on time.

I want to begin to show that there was a general expectation of Christ's coming. This was the time just after His birth. We see they were already beginning to look around. Where is He? Who is He? Where will He show up? Of course, they all probably thought

He would show up in Jerusalem at the Temple. The ones that were in Herod's court had figured out that He would be born in Bethlehem. That was the city of David. That is where kings come from. They had that to think about. They were looking; they were actively seeking Him.

Luke 2:25-26 Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, (that is code for the Messiah) and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Yahweh's Messiah, in Hebrew. Here we have Simeon, who was evidently an old man, was waiting around for Christ to appear. He had this hope and expectation in him. He had a guarantee through the Holy Spirit that he would lay eyes on the Messiah, on Christ, before he died. That is basically what he was living for. If we read on, we would see that it was fulfilled.

Luke 2:36-38 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

We can assume that she was also looking for the Messiah. It does not say that necessarily. She says as soon as she saw Christ and praised Him, then she would speak of Him and spread the word to all of those who looked for redemption in Israel.

Now we find out that it is not just old Simeon and old Anna who are waiting for Messiah, but there is a group of some number (we do not know how many there were, but seems like a fair number of people), who were looking for redemption. They were looking for their Savior. They knew He was about to come. There were many seekers of Messiah, at least in Jerusalem. We will find out later that they were all over the country. It was a common expectation that Messiah was coming right around that time.

Let us go to the book of John. We find again that not only were the common people looking for Him, but the priests, the Pharisees, the lawyers, and all of the people there.

We might say the high muckety-mucks in religion were all looking for Messiah. They thought that maybe it is this John the Baptist. He comes out of the wilderness and starts baptizing people.

John 1:19-22 Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

They wanted to know what John the Baptist was all about. As we know from the next few verses, he was the precursor to Messiah. He was the one crying out in the wilderness saying, "Hey, He's coming! You'd better get ready!" But there was a whole group of people in Jerusalem that were among the religious elites. The priests and the Levites were sent by the Pharisees. They were all wanting to know, "Are you the Messiah?" So beneath their question, "Who are you?" is actually the more specific question they wanted answered is "Are you the Messiah?"

John does not say, "my name is John the Baptist; my dad is Zacharias; you know he was the guy that went dumb that one Atonement or whatever." No, he knew what they are really getting at, and he said, "Look, I know what you're here for. No, I'm not the Christ." He just goes right to the heart of the matter. John the Baptist must have been one of these "no nonsense" guys. He says, "No, I am not He; you are looking in the wrong direction, although you are close. I am not the One, but I will point you towards that One."

We know that not only the common people, but the religious people and the elites of that area of Jerusalem were looking for the Messiah as well. They knew, because they had done the math, that one of those years was up. One of those years was right for right now, and suddenly John appears out of the wilderness. Maybe this guy is the One. He had to say, "No, it is not me, but one is coming after me." They began to think that they were pretty close if they believed.

Let us go on later in the chapter. I am going to read this whole thing and just think about the expectations of Messiah as we go through this.

John 1:35-45 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. [This is Andrew and probably John.] And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said,

"Behold the Lamb of God!" [John the Baptist points Him out: "That is the One!"] The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone). The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

The answer to Jesus' question, "What do you seek?" Andrew later answers when he found his brother, Peter, "We have found the Messiah." That is what they were seeking. Where were they from? They were from the Sea of Galilee. We see people from the north, from the Sea of Galilee, were looking for the Messiah too. It was not just those around Jerusalem. There were a lot of people looking for Messiah.

It is interesting how they answered. Jesus asks them what they are seeking, and they answer, "Where are you staying?" Basically that is code for, "We found You. We're staying with You! Tell us where we need to put our sleeping bags." That is what they told Him. We are following you now. We want to know where you stay because we want to go there and stay with You. We want to be able to go see Peter, tell him the good news, and come back and be Your disciples.

How did they address Him? Rabbi, You are our teacher now. They had committed themselves through the word of John the Baptist that this was the One. They believed Him, and they immediately latched onto Him.

There is more. It does not end with the beginning of Jesus' ministry. People are still looking. They have not found Him. In John 4, we find out that the Samaritans are looking for Him too. These half-Israelite, half-Babylonian people, who had established themselves around the city of Samaria after the Babylonian exile, had syncretistic religion that had part of what God had revealed through Moses and part of their own

beliefs that they had brought from Babylon. They were looking for Messiah too. We have here the woman at the well.

John 4:5-11 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour [noonish]. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

Jesus is giving the woman pretty important information. We will not go through the whole conversation that they have. He slowly begins to convince her that He is something special. He is able to say, "Hey, the husband you have now isn't really your husband, and you've had five other husbands." He is able to look at her and know everything about her, it seems. That is how she thinks. This must be a prophet at least!

John 4:25-26 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called the Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

What had Jesus told the woman? He pretty much told her her life story through their little conversation. It is interesting that this Samaritan woman is one of the first people He told that He was Messiah. So Samaritans and even this confused, adulterous woman was looking for Messiah. Everybody was looking for Messiah. She tells everybody. If we went on a little further in the scriptures, we would see that she tells everybody in the city that she may have found the Messiah. All the men in the city come out to Jacob's well to see if that is so. They are all looking for Messiah too!

Bunches and bunches of people were looking for Him. The whole country, the whole nation was looking for Messiah at that time.

If we were to go to John 7 from about verse 25 on, we would see that it is a big argument about what the Messiah is going to be like. Will He come from here or will He come from there? Will He do these things or not? Do the officers in the Temple know

that this is the Messiah? Can they see all of the things that He is doing? Would any other than Messiah say such things or do such things?

They go back and forth because they are confused. They do know that this Man is different. They try to fit Him in to what they have been taught. Some things fit and some things do not fit. As a matter of fact, in their own eyes, most things do not fit. We will see why.

Their skepticism and their diversity of opinion is very understandable when you understand what had gone on during that time. We in the church tend to think only of Jesus as the Messiah, but in their day and at that time they had already gone through a handful of false messiah's. They were a little bit hesitant and skittish about proclaiming someone else a Messiah. You will figure out why in just a second.

In 4 BC, right about the time Jesus was born, there was a man named Simon of Peraea. He was a former slave of Herod the Great. He rebelled, proclaimed himself messiah, and was killed by the Romans. Then in the next few years, somewhere between 4 BC and 2 BC, there was man named Athronges. He was a shepherd who led a rebellion along with his four brothers. The rebellion was kind of modeled like that of the Maccabees. He and his four brothers rose up against the Romans, and Athronges proclaimed himself the messiah. Herod Archelaus, who followed Herod the Great and the Romans, killed them all.

Then there was Judas of Galilee. In AD 6, he led a violent resistance to a Roman census (kind of like the one listed in Luke 2). They did not like that. They did not like the fact that the Romans were trying to count them and take their money, so they rose up in rebellion. The Romans brutally crushed the revolt and crucified a couple thousand people. Then there was Menahem ben Judah, Theudus, John of Gischala, Simon bar Kokhba, and Lukuas. The last two were in the second century.

Every one of these false messiahs led rebellions against the Romans. That was just the way they did things. If you were going to be messiah, you were going to kick those Romans out. They were warriors. They were rebels. They wanted to free the Holy Land of the Roman taint, the Roman troops, all of their legions. They wanted to establish their own kingdoms.

Where did they get this idea that this is what Messiah does? Going back to the Old Testament is where it all starts. It is not necessarily that they understood it properly, but they got their ideas from the Book.

Let us go to II Samuel 7, back into the reign of David. Nathan, the prophet, comes to David. Because David was a man after God's own heart, a man who really tried to please God most of the time, repented and was humble before God, he tried to fix things as best he could and live the right way. Because of this, God decided to send Nathan to David and say this.

II Samuel 7:8-16 "Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth." [Listen to these words. David had God with him and He made him great. David is among the greatest of all the earth.] "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel [The nation of Israel will have a place.], and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more [It is permanent.]; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously [God promised David not just that he would be king and God would be with him in his endeavors, but He would plant Israel and give them a permanent place. He would kick out the oppressors. Israel will not be oppressed anymore! Sound familiar?], since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the Lord tells you that He will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. [This is a dual thing here. We have the house of David and also his heir, Solomon, will be allowed to build the house of God, the Temple. These things are all part of God's promise.] I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.'"

The false messiahs and most of the religious people of the time, whether it is the Essenes, the Pharisees, or whoever else, get the idea from this passage that the Messiah is going to do all these things. He will be a Messiah like David. God will be with him in his battles. They will set up a place for themselves. They will have a land where they will not be kicked out. They will be planted forever. They will kick out all of the

oppressors. They will have the Temple there. David's throne will be established forever and they will establish the Kingdom of God through him.

We know that this is partially correct. That is what God intends. Being physical people, without the Spirit of God, these people thought that it had to be done all by themselves. They thought that it had to be done first. That was the way that God's Kingdom was going to be established on earth through this military might, through this messiah, who would wield the sword, kill the enemies, throw them out of the land, and establish the house of David. Then you get things like Amos 9.

Amos 9:11-12 "On that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down, and repair its damages; I will raise up its ruins, and rebuild it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the Gentiles who are called by My name," says the LORD who does this thing.

Ooh, hate those Edomites! We especially hate the Edomite that rules over us! Herod! We want to kick those Edomites out! When they look at this passage, they think, "Hey, Messiah is going to come and kick out the Edomites, and we will have dominion over them!" We hate the Edomites as much as we hate the Romans. When they look at this passage, they think that all of the signs seem to be right there to be fulfilled. All we need is a sign of David to come and raise up the ruins. Then we have Isaiah 9.

Isaiah 9:6-7 For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

They were looking for an heir of the throne of David with zeal to come. They expected judgment and justice over these wicked people who had taken over the land and oppressed us! Not knowing that this Child who would be born was going to do a few other things first. They looked at these prophecies and ignored other prophecies. They thought, "This has got to be the way that it's done. Somebody has to rise up against the Romans."

Isaiah 11:1-5 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a

Branch shall grow out of his roots. The Spirit of the LOORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LOORD. His delight is in the fear of the LOORD. He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall stay the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.

They did not worry about the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. It was not quite as important to them. Oh, but they saw the martial imagery there. They thought He is coming back as a warrior, this Messiah. "He is going to judge for us because we are the poor, the meek, and the oppressed. The wicked are going to be slain." That is what they concentrated on.

Jeremiah 23:5-6 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LOORD, "that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LOORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

That is what they saw. "That is what we need. We need a David to come and save us from these oppressors! Bring His mighty sword, bring Goliath's sword! We have people that are giants that we need to slay. Let us just go ahead and slay, slay, slay all of these wicked people. Kill the Romans! Kill the Edomites!"

This is all they saw when they read the Old Testament. Because of their physical circumstances as an oppressed people, they demanded, in their own minds, a Messiah like this. So Messiah, in their minds, would be a warrior of Davidic lineage who would save Judah from oppression and restore them as God's chosen people. He would make them the earth's leading nation. Everyone will bow to the Jew. They will say, "He's from God's people; He's one of them."

The Messiah would be a righteous man, of course. You would not expect God to work through a person who was not righteous, would you? But, most of all, he is going to be an avenging warrior king! "That is what we want." That is what they look for.

From our vantage point, we realize that they were expecting Christ to do at His first coming what He says that He will actually do at His *second* coming. They were flipping the poles around, as it were, getting things out of order. They completely ignored all of the prophecies of Messiah as coming to redeem them from their sins. They ignored Isaiah 53 and the Suffering Servant and Him taking, as the Lamb of God, their sins upon Himself.

They did not see a need for that because they were righteous, were they not? They followed God's law. They did all of those 613 things, or they did not do all of those 613 things, that would cause them to break the Sabbath. They did not do those sorts of things. They were strict in the way they kept the law. They were God's people, were they not?

For the rest of the sermon, we are going to look at the career of an Old Testament savior. Perhaps one they modeled their ideas upon. I do not know. Maybe, maybe not. But we are going to see as we go through his career how empty that kind of physical salvation is. Then, we are going to compare that to the superiority of the salvation of Christ and His model of being a Savior.

The savior whose career we are going to look at is Jehu, the king of Israel. We do not normally think of him as a savior. God anointed him and sent him to save the Kingdom of Israel from Baal worship and from all of the depredations that the family of Ahab had done to Israel. He was to save them from all of the things that Ahab and Jezebel had wrought upon the people. The nation's allegiance to God, at that time under Ahab, was so bad. They had fallen so far down that Elijah thought he was the only believer left. Let's go there.

We will start in I Kings 19. We will be going through many scriptures because I want you to see all that we can in the time that we have left.

I Kings 19:1-3 Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

Remember, in I Kings 18, Elijah had challenged the prophets of Baal. He said for them to put the sacrifice on the altar, dig a trench around the altar along with all of the things

that they did, and then try to get fire down from heaven. Then Elijah did the same. He put the trench around his altar and then soaked everything so that it was pretty much floating in the water. Then he prayed a short prayer to God, and God sent fire down from heaven and consumed not only the sacrifice, but the altar, dust, and water—was all gone. Whoosh! It disappeared; it was totally consumed! Then Elijah said to get the prophets of Baal and kill them all. So that is what Ahab tells Jezebel about.

When Elijah hears Jezebel's threat, he runs for his life. He makes his way down to the mountain of God, toward Horeb. So Elijah is running for his life! Jezebel is after him in I Kings 19:9. By the time he gets to Horeb, he is still afraid.

I Kings 19:9-10 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LOORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" So he said, "I have been very zealous for the LOORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

"Pretty soon, God, you are not going to have anybody! It is just me and the cave here. That is it!" But that is not true.

I Kings 19:15-18 Then the LOORD said to him: [Go! Get off of your bottom and go do the work that I sent you to do!] "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

There were 7,000 others, but in a large country, that is not very many people. Elijah was wrong; there were still people who were believers in the true God, but it was a small number. It was a remnant of the people. They were, obviously, keeping a low profile from the priests of Baal, priests of Ashtoreth, and from the royal family themselves. They were keeping their heads down from Elijah too. He obviously did not see them at all.

There were worse things going on. There were a lot of things going on. Ahab and Jezebel had managed to contract a marriage between their daughter, Athaliah, and the crowned prince of Judah, whose name was Jehoram. He was the son of Jehoshaphat. Ahab and Jezebel's sins were spreading into Judah. It would actually continue to spread into Judah after Jehu cleaned Israel up, because the woman who was sent down there as princess and wife of the crowned prince was Athaliah. She eventually ended up ruling as queen of Judah for seven years. Providentially, one heir was saved from her wrath and the eradication of the royal line of Judah. It is the king we know as Joash. You can see how wicked this family was. Those sorts of people doing the wickedness were in Israel and Judah at that time.

Ahab, Jezebel, their son Joram, their daughter Athaliah, could not be trusted. They were all doing evil things. No one was safe; even Elijah did not feel safe. There was a kind of "no holds barred" dynastic power-struggles occurring in Israel. They were trying to take over Judah as well. The devil take the hindmost, as we say. Nobody was safe! They would kill anybody. They would deceive anybody. They had no compunction about doing anything evil, as long as it worked toward their favor.

Remember what happened when Ahab coveted Naboth's field. He said, "Oh, that's a beautiful field. I want it!" Naboth said, "No, the laws of Israel are very clear. This has to stay in my family. I can't sell it to you." So Ahab goes into his bedroom and starts crying, pouting, and whining. "Naboth won't give me his field." Jezebel, who could not drink her wine with all of this going on, decides that she will help this situation out. She says to the people of Jezreel, "We need to figure out this situation because the king is very sad. Why not invite Naboth to come here. I'll make sure that we get a couple of scoundrels to make false witness against Naboth." They do this. They say that Naboth had blasphemed the Lord and blasphemed the king. They said to stone him, so they did. Then Ahab said, "Oh look, I have some land here that I can take!" and he took it.

That is the kind of people they were. It is a taste of the tenor of the times. They used their power to get their way.

Religiously, Israel was a mess because of Ahab and Jezebel. Let us go back to I Kings 16 and see what God said about Ahab.

I Kings 16:29-33 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who were before him. And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam

the son of Nebat, that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonian's, and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. Then he set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a wooden image. Ahab did more to provoke the LOORD God of Israel to anger than all the king of Israel who were before him.

Ahab was not a good guy. Then, he went and married that woman. She just made everything so much worse. She was like a catalyst to him. The two of them together were very powerful in evil. Through Ahab and Jezebel's active support, they allowed idolatry to take a strangle-hold of Israel. All of this was facilitated by Ahab's marriage to Jezebel and an alliance with Sidon, a foreign nation. He put Baal and Ashtoreth worship front and center. He made it a major part of his domestic policy, as we would say today. He supported the priests at his own table. He gave them money and food from the royal coffers. He encouraged everyone to join him in pagan worship. He persecuted those who clung to the God of Israel.

I Kings 18:17-21 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LOORD and have followed the Baals. Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table." So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LOORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word.

Ahab and Jezebel have tightened control over religion throughout the whole country. The people are caught in the middle. We find them of two opinions here. When they are directly asked, "Are you going to follow the true God or are you going to follow Baal and Asherah?" They do not say anything. They do not know where to turn. You can see by their lack of response that they are confused. They are demoralized. They are uncertain; they do not know the truth any more. Everything has been so undermined that they do not know what is what!

Therefore, they need this great miracle of the fire coming out of the sky just to show them the power of the true God. To show them the true God who is really active, the

One who can do the things that need to be done. But their silence shows that they are totally cowed. In a way, you could even say that they are uncommitted. They just do not know which way to turn. They need a savior. They are like sheep milling without a shepherd to lead them which way to go. They are totally confused. So we have God's answer to this for us in I Kings 19.

I Kings 19:15-17 Then the LOORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

God's answer to this problem of Israel being totally undermined by Ahab and Jezebel is:

- 1) He would send a strong foreign king to punish Israel for their apostasy.
- 2) He would raise up a strong rebel king to overthrow Ahab and purge Israel of his influence.
- 3) He would set up a strong prophet to oversee everything.

I Kings 19:17 says, "It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill." Elisha was kind of the backstop of all of this. If any of the wickedness gets through, I will have Elisha deal with it. God sends these three men to make these changes in Israel.

We are going to focus on Jehu. We will see that he is the kind of savior that the Jews in the first century actually wanted to come. They wanted somebody like Jehu because he would kill the Romans and purge Judah of all of that bad stuff that was going on. We will see that Jehu follows the pattern that all of those kinds of physical, militaristic types of saviors do. It does not end well at all.

II Kings 9:1-4 Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Get yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among his associates, and take him to an inner room. Then take the flask of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LOORD: "I have anointed

you king over Israel.” Then open the door and flee, and do not delay.” So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead.

For your information, Elisha was centered over in the central Jezreel Valley area. Shunam, Jezreel, Samaria, so he was west of the Jordan River in the northern part of the Promised Land. Just about where the Sea of Galilee is, but on the west side. Ramoth Gilead is across the Jordan River and almost all of the way to Syria on the other side. It was a border town that the Syrians and Israelites were fighting over at the time. This young prophet had to go a fair distance.

II Kings 9:5-10 And when he arrived, there were the captains of the army sitting; and he said, “I have a message for you, Commander.” Jehu said, “For which one of us?” And he said, “For you, Commander.” Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, “Thus says the LORD God of Israel: ‘I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. You shall strike down 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. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and I will cut off from Ahab all the males in Israel, both bond and free. So 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. The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the lot of ground at Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her.’” And he opened the door and fled.

The servant did exactly as he was told to do. Obviously Elisha had given him more instructions than were given earlier in the chapter. This is the full rendition of them.

II Kings 9:11-13 Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and one said to him, “Is all well? Why did this madman come to you?” [They thought that all religious people were a little foolish and a little mad.] And he said to them, “You know the man and his babble.” [He talked like he really did not want to say anything, but from insight into Jehu’s character, he was leading them on. He was making them want to know what had really gone on there.] And they said, “A lie! Tell us now.” [This is the first clue to Jehu’s character. What is it? He is a liar. It does not look good.] So he said, “Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD: “I have anointed you king over Israel.”’” Then each man hastened to take his garment and put it under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, “Jehu is king!”

This gives you the idea that they were all afraid of Jehu. As soon as he said, "This prophet anointed me king over Israel," they hurried to put their garments down so they did not appear disloyal at all! They wanted to be the first to congratulate Jehu on his new office. They wanted to be the ones who seemed to be the sycophant because this man had power. This man was something more than them. They wanted to get 'on the wagon before it left town'.

Notice, God told Elijah to go anoint Jehu. He did not do it, but he did anoint Elisha. Elisha then had the responsibility of anointing Jehu. You know what? Elisha said, "Here, you son of a prophet, my servant, you go and anoint Jehu. When you are done anointing him, get out of there fast!"

This tells us two things. It tells us something about God, and it tells us something about Jehu's reputation. One, you do not mess with Jehu. You do not want to be around when he gets something in his head and decides to do it. The other thing about God is, in this case, by giving the job to Elijah, Elijah giving it to Elisha, Elisha giving it to the servant, we see God moving farther and farther away from Jehu. It is being delegated down and down and down.

It gives us a clue about what God thought about Jehu. He gave him what he needed to do, but he wanted to keep Jehu at arm's length. Jehu was not a good man. He could do the job that God wanted him to do, but he was not a good man. He was not a righteous man by any means. We see God holding him at arm's length, giving us a clue into Jehu's character and a clue about what was going to be happening here.

God tells Jehu what he wants to have done. Then he lets the man have his head and do it. How he does it reveals his character. It does not bode well for his character. We can see that God does not really approve of Jehu in the methods that he takes. But, he is the people's savior!

II Kings 9:14-18 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. [Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. But King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.] And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, let no one leave or escape from the city to go and tell it in Jezreel." So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there; and Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram. Now a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came,

and said, "I see a company of men." And Joram said, "Get a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, 'Is it peace?'" So the horseman went to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king: 'Is it peace?'" And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me." So the watchman reported, saying, "The messenger went to them, but is not coming back."

The conspiracy was, "No one leaves; everyone stays, we all go at once. You all follow me. I do not want to give any advance notice to the king or his people in Samaria or Jezreel or anywhere of what is coming." The messenger defects. When Joram sends another one, he defects.

II Kings 9:20-26 So the watchman reported, saying, "He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!" Then Joram said, "Make ready." And his chariot was made ready. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu, and met him on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. [How ironic!] Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" So he answered, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft are so many?" Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!" Now Jehu drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick him up, and throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that the LORD laid this burden upon him: 'Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons', says the LORD, 'and I will repay you in this plot of ground, according to the word of the LORD.'"

This passage tells us a few things about Jehu. (1) Jehu did not let grass grow beneath his feet. He was a hasty, impetuous man. He got on the conspiracy right away. He controlled all of his men and took off to Jezreel to kill his king. (2) His words, "What have you to do with peace?" reflects upon both Joram and Jehu. Neither were men of peace. They were going to butt heads and there was no question of who was going to come out on top. (3) His chariot driving style describes him as a furious person. If your driving style is anything like that, you may want to think a little bit about that. Maybe it is your inner character coming out. Jehu was a furious man. The man obviously had a temper.

He was enraged. (4) The way he killed the king showed that he had no qualms about assassination. He even put an arrow through the man's back as he ran. He was callous and had no honor. He would not even face him straight up. He had to use his bow and kill Joram from afar.

II Kings 9:27 But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw this, he fled by the road to Beth Haggan. [He must have been a better chariot driver than Joram.] So Jehu pursued him, and said, "Shoot him also in the chariot." And they shot him at the Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there.

Now Jehu took out the king of Judah. He was a grandson of Jezebel and Ahab. Now he has spread the killing to Judah; he killed the king of Judah. We can see that he had little respect for life.

II Kings 9:30-35 Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window. Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?" [Jezebel calls him Zimri because Zimri was a former king killer.] And he looked up at the window, and said, "Who is on my side? Who?" So two or three eunuchs looked out at him. Then he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and some of her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot. And when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Then he said, "Go now, see to this accursed woman, and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands.

We understand more about Jehu here. He is almost blasé about Jezebel's death. He orders her thrown down, tramples her under his chariot, and then goes inside the palace for a nice meal. He is a stone-cold killer. It gets no better. In the next chapter he sends letters to the people in Samaria. He orders Ahab's seventy sons to be beheaded and send their heads to him at Jezreel. He did the same thing and more in Jezreel.

II Kings 10:11 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.

Talk about a man of blood! But he was not done! You would think he would be done by now.

II Kings 10:12-14 And he arose and departed and went to Samaria. On the way, at Beth Eked of the Shepherds, Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, "Who are you?" So they answered, "We are the brothers of Ahaziah; we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother." And he said, "Take them alive!" So they took them alive, and killed them at the well of Beth Eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.

He slaughtered all of Ahaziah's brothers. Forty-two of them who were coming up for a visit. They had no idea of all of the commotion that was going on in Israel. They were just there for a visit. They were coming to see their brother. Jehu had them all killed. All forty-two of them!

II Kings 10:17 And when he came to Samaria, he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to Elijah.

There were a few that Jehu had missed that were in Samaria. A few that the people had not beheaded, so he went through and cleaned up himself.

His final bloody purge, I will just tell you about it, for lack of time. It involved a massacre of all of those who worshipped Baal. He sent out letters and told them all to come to the temple of Baal. He got them all inside of the temple. Then he sent in eighty of his most loyal officers and told them to kill them all. He killed all of the worshippers of Baal that remained in Israel. He took down the pillars and destroyed them completely. Then he destroyed the temple of Baal and wiped it clean. Then he redeveloped it as a public latrine.

Nice guy, huh? All of this took place, believe it or not, in a matter of a few weeks. Possibly a couple of months. When he did a job, he did it all of the way! This may be the most telling paragraph of all.

II Kings 10:29-31 However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. And the Lord said to Jehu,

A Different Kind of Savior by Richard T. Ritenbaugh (<http://www.cgg.org>)

"Because you have done well in doing what is right in My sight, and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation." But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LOORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

So God said, "As your reward for being so good at killing, you can have your generation and four more sit on the throne. That is it. You could have had the throne in Israel for a much longer time; but the way you went about it was wrong, and you did not turn to Me at all. The result was not peace." Notice verse 32.

II Kings 10:32 In those days the LOORD began to cut off parts of Israel; and Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead—Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh—from Aroer, which is by the River Arnon, including Gilead and Bashan.

They lost some of the best land in the whole country. It was good land for cattle in Bashan and Giliad. They lost it to Syria. The result of Jehu's saving Israel was not peace, strength, or prosperity, but weakness and defeat. In his purges, Jehu killed the majority of Israel's leadership. His assassinations made him enemies in Sidon and Judah. We see here that Hazael bit off huge chunks of territory. We know from the black obelisk of Nimrod, which is now in the British Museum, that in his first year Jehu had to pay tribute to the king of Assyria. Things were falling down around him even as he started. The bottom line is that his murderous rampages isolated Israel and actually set the stage for its ultimate fall not too long after.

Jehu's kind of salvation is all vengeance and no righteousness. He saved Israel from Ahab and Jezebel and from their idolatries, but he left the vacuum that remained afterward empty. He did not put God's way back in. The nation imploded in short order.

In some ways, Israel was actually worse off after his method of salvation than before. They went from one kind of oppression to another. It was a trade. There was barely a respite in between. As one commentator said, "Here we have violence that judges but does not heal. Only at Calvary did fierce judgment of sin bring restoration and health for sinners."

I want you to see the contrast in what Jehu did and what Jesus did. In Matthew 11, we see John's disciples coming to Jesus, even after Jesus started His ministry. John, at this

point, is in prison. He is depressed. He thought sure that everything has worked out like it is supposed to.

Matthew 11:1-4 Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."

Even John and his disciples, at this point, were wondering. They did not really know what to look for. John knew Jesus was the Lamb of God, and he knew He was coming to take the sins of the world. But he did not know how it was going to happen or how it was going to work. In John's own life, he was in prison, and he was going to have his head cut off soon. It is not the way he had expected it to happen.

Jesus answered the question that John's disciples had asked by telling them to look at what He is doing. "Look at what I have done." They wanted someone to deliver them from the physical and political oppression that they were going through. But Jesus told them, "That is not My way. I have to do something else first." What He did is essentially paraphrased in Isaiah 61:1-2. He also said this when He started His ministry in Luke 4.

Isaiah 61:1-2 "The Spirit of the LORD God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.

That is where He stopped in Luke 4. Jesus' answer to John's disciples basically says, before the day of vengeance, before defeating the oppressors, we must first free God's people from their sins. That is where the true oppression lies. We must give them freedom. That is real deliverance. Freedom from sin is true salvation. Being redeemed in that way is true salvation.

What we see of Jehu and others who have set themselves up as physical messiahs is that they kick the oppressors out. They have all put the cart before the horse. They got

things totally backwards. They chose vengeance first, while God puts conquering sin and putting on righteousness first. Then the vengeance will be done right. When Jehu did it, he did not do it right. It was all blood, lust, and murder for him. He put himself on the throne.

Hebrews 10:12-17 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

First, He must come as the Lamb of God, and then He can come as the Lion of Judah. This is the path of a true Savior. He pays for the sins of those who believe and accept Him. He perfects them for service under Him. Then, as it says, in the fullness of time, He takes vengeance on His enemies and establishes His government.

The world always looks for a political savior, a deliverer who will rid them of their enemies, but we have a different kind of Savior. A true Savior, One who loves His people, One who sacrifices Himself for their sins and makes them worthy of His deliverance.

Thank God that we have been called to follow the true Savior who saves us from our sins.