

What Zeal for God Looks like (From the life of King Jehu)

1. Zeal for God is shameless (9:1-20)
2. Zeal for God hates sin (9:22-10:10)
3. Zeal for God doesn't go beyond scripture (10:11)
4. Zeal for God stays hot (10:12-33)

What is a zealot? If you search the word 'zealot' in google images what do you see? Do you see some fanatical Pharisee or rebel? No, instead you'll see a bunch of images of this alien looking creature with two swords coming out of his hands. It's actually a unit from a game called Starcraft. Only after a few scrolls do you see very sparse images of some Christians, but still mostly the alien character.

I think this really shows us that no one really knows what a zealot is. When I first heard the word zealot as a kid, I had no idea what the word it meant. Automatically I thought it meant a weird person, and sometimes I thought it was a scary person and it frightened me.

Today, you'll never hear the word zeal or zealot. It's so rare, in fact for most of you listening today I'd bet that the only time you've heard that word was in the Bible.

And in the Bible we famously think of when Jesus flipped tables to fulfill Psalm 69 where it says, 'zeal for your house will consume me'. So Jesus had zeal, therefore Jesus was a zealot. And zeal means you're angry?

Does zeal or passion mean anger? Is zeal an angry protester?

Today, in going along with the obscure word, 'zeal' we will also examine an obscure person from biblical history, Jehu. And from his life, we're going to learn what zeal for God looks like. To help I want to give a definition of zeal of which we will see supported by in Jehu's life. Zeal is a shameless, passionate love for God amidst opposition . (repeat)

But before we meet Jehu, we need some context. In the book of Kings, Israel is divided into two separate kingdoms: the kingdom of Israel in the north and the kingdom of Judah in the south. Kind of like North Korea and South Korea in terms of location (and morality). However Israel and Judah were usually at peaceful terms except for a few instances.

Now the whole point of the book of Kings is to show what happens when people choose a king to reign over them over God. We remember this back in Samuel, where Israel asked the prophet Samuel to have a king rule over them just like the other nations, In essence they were rejecting God as their king.

So what we see in the book of Kings are the lives of the kings of Israel and Judah. And we see that the vast majority of these kings were wicked and brought both Israel and Judah into pagan worship and reliance on surrounding nations such as Assyria in the north or Egypt in the south instead of relying on God.

One of these infamous kings was Ahab and his wife Jezebel. Not only did they advance the worship of the pagan god Baal, but they also sought to kill the prophets of the one true god, Yahweh. And that's exactly what Ahab and Jezebel try to do in 1 Kings 17, where they try very hard to kill one particular prophet that was a thorn in their side: Elijah who we know his story quite well.

As Elijah runs away from Ahab, he becomes disheartened because him and the only remaining prophets of Yahweh (of which there are only 100 at this time) are also hiding in caves. And God encourages Elijah by telling him that he will anoint some new kings that will wipe out Ahab for his idolatry and murder of God's prophets. One of those kings that God will anoint is Jehu, as we see in 1 Kings 19:16-17.

But before this, Ahab commits another act of evil. In the city of Jezreel in Israel, Ahab sees the vineyard of a citizen named Naboth, and Ahab covets his vineyard. He offers to buy it from Naboth but Naboth refuses to buy it. So what does Ahab do? Well nothing, he becomes sad, so instead Jezebel decides to have Naboth killed, by lying that he cursed God and Ahab. So not only are Jezebel and Ahab, idolators but also lying murderers who do anything to get what they want.

So God also tells Elijah tells that he will judge Ahab for this by eliminating him and his entire bloodline and he will have Jezebel eaten by dogs in the same city where they murdered Naboth: Jezreel.

Fast forward to 2 Kings 8, and Elisha has succeeded Elijah as prophet and Ahab since died earlier, his son Joram becomes king in Israel, and Ahab's grandson becomes king in Judah.

Not much has changed in the 11+ years when God promised to wipe out Ahab and his descendants. The world is still the same. The world hates God and his prophets and are actively trying to kill them and there are very, very few believers left in the world. Everyone worshipped the fake God: Baal.

Now we arrive at our text for today in 2 Kings 9. In a world of rampant immorality where very few believers are left, in a sea of unbelievers we will meet Jehu. Now it's in the life of Jehu where we will learn, what zeal looks like: particularly what zeal for God looks like. And the first thing we learn what zeal for God looks like is:

1. Zeal for God is shameless (2 Ki 9:1-20)

God decides to execute his judgement on Ahab in v.1 where Elisha sends out a prophet to anoint Jehu as king (read v.1-3).

Remember we are in the kingdom of Israel in the north keep this mind as we read. So the prophet goes to anoint Jehu in Ramoth-Gilead in v.4 (read v.4). Israel is defending Ramoth-Gilead, a city near the border of Israel from invaders. This is where Jehu is, who is a captain of the army.

Meanwhile, the king, Joram (remember son of Ahab) is in Jezreel which is more inland from the border to rest from fighting off invaders. Remember, Jezreel is where Ahab and Jezebel murdered Naboth to get his vineyard, keep this also in mind as we read through.

So the prophet goes meet Jehu in v.5 (read v.5-10). The prophet immediately runs away for fear that anybody loyal to Ahab's family might overhear and kill him.

So seeing what looks a very strange incident, Jehu's servants say in v.11 (read v.11). It's interesting they call him 'mad' the Hebrew word being 'meshuggah'.

You see this is what people think of Christians. They think they are crazy! They think they are insane! Yet this prophet did not care at all what people thought of him and ran off anyway as God told him. He had no shame.

So Jehu tells his servants what he said in v.11-12 (read v.11-12). And they declare Jehu is king. Now this is not an official declaration. When it is an official declaration they would say, 'long live the king!' While Jehu's men were very supportive of him, they were still hesitant to outright declare it everywhere. This was a more private declaration unknown to the rest of Israel just yet. As we see here, the world is in unbelief and therefore often hesitant.

But as Christians, we see here that zeal for God is shameless and not at all hesitant like the world.

So Jehu plans to do as God says and eliminate the bloodline of Ahab by starting with his son Joram, the current king of Israel in v.14 (read v.14).

However, Jehu couldn't do it immediately as remember, that Joram is in a different city, Jezreel to rest from his battles against invaders. So Jehu tells the people in the city he is in, Ramoth-Gilead that if they really want him to be king then no one is it leave the city and tell the rest of Israel what happened. (read v.15).

So Jehu goes to Jezreel in his chariot and Joram concerned of what's going on sends a rider to meet him(read v.16-18). And Jehu commands the horseman to instead follow him. Joram sends another rider, who I'm sure is growing in anxiousness in v.19-20 (read v.19-20).

They can tell that it's Jehu approaching because he drives 'furiously' or in other words like a crazy person. The Philippines streets are full of Jehu!

Notice that the same Hebrew word to describe Jehu's driving is the word 'meshuggah' is the same word to describe the prophet who ran away back in v.11. Meshugagh means crazy! You see, Christians are regarded as crazy people. Yet Jehu here does not care at all of what people think about him. Just like the fellow believer in Yahweh, the prophet from earlier, he is shameless in his love, his zeal for God.

If you do a google search on the Hebrew word, Meshuggah, you're actually going to get results on a Swedish metal band, named Meshuggah. And just by seeing pictures of them you'll think they're crazy, and if you hear their songs, you'll think their crazy in their inhuman ability to play their instruments, or if you don't like there genre of music, you'll just think their music is crazy in general!

So zeal for God as we see in Jehu, is a shameless love for God. No matter what people say or think, even if they think you are crazy, you have no shame at all in your obedience to God!

This is what Paul wrote in Romans 1:16, ¹⁶For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.'

So the question you need to ask yourself is, 'am I ashamed of God? Am I shamed of the gospel?'

Jesus said in Luke 9:26, 'For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory and *the glory* of the Father and the holy angels.'

If people think you're a little crazy because of your beliefs in God, have no shame, because Jesus was not ashamed at all when he died for you on the cross. Let God not be ashamed of us when he returns!

2. Zeal for God hates sin (9:22-10:10)

Let's continue in v.21 where not only Joram comes out to meet Jehu but also Ahaziah king of Judah who is also Ahab's grandson (read.v.21).

So Joram asks Jehu is it peace in v.22 (read v.22). Notice how Jehu is saying that there is no peace when Israel is worshipping pagan deities. There is no peace when sin is around!

If there is sin in your life that you are aware of, are you at peace with it? Do you keep sin around and take care of it like a pet? Everyone hates cockroaches. No one would dare make a cockroach into a pet. But when we make peace with sin we make pets out of cockroaches. Especially those big flying ones in the Philippines.

So Jehu ends Joram's life in v.23. (read v.23). The Hebrew used to describe Jehu's shot is usually used in expert archery. This took a lot of skill. Jehu shot the arrow perfectly into Joram's back through his heart while on a moving chariot.

And then Jehu remembered God's word in v.25-26 (read v.25-26). You see, Jehu loved God's word. He went through the trouble of doing this just to obey God's word.

If there's anything that fuels zeal for God, it's loving God's word. And if there's anything that fuels hatred for sin it's a love for his word!

So Jehu continues to fulfill God's wrath by eliminating Ahaziah, Ahab's grandson in v.27 (read v.27-28).

He then moves on to eliminate Jezebel (v.29-30). Jezebel the odd woman that she is, put on black eye makeup and spoke to Jehu from her woman perhaps to intimidate Jehu.

She then mocks Jehu in v. 31 (read v.31). Zimri was a traitor in Jewish history, so she was calling Jehu a traitor.

So Jehu responds by garnering support in v.32 (read v.32-37).

If there is anything here that teaches us that God hates sin, it is God's judgement on Jezebel. This is very violent graphic language, and is really almost offensive. You're supposed to feel a bit uncomfortable reading this, which I feel as well.

But the point is not to be violent for the sake of being violent, or offensive or being offensive like many inappropriate media today. The point here is to show how much God really hates sin. Jesus is not a hippie. When Jesus returns as king, it says in Isaiah 63:1-6 his white garment will be stained with the blood of his enemies.

63 Who is this who comes from Edom,
With garments of [a]glowing colors from Bozrah,
This One who is majestic in His apparel,
[b]Marching in the greatness of His strength?
“It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

2 Why is Your apparel red,
And Your garments like the one who treads in the wine press?

3 “I have trodden the wine trough alone,

And from the peoples there was no man with Me.

I also trod them in My anger

And trampled them in My wrath;

And their [c]lifblood is sprinkled on My garments,

And I [d]stained all My raiment.

4 “For the day of vengeance was in My heart,

And My year of redemption has come.

5 “I looked, and there was no one to help,

And I was astonished and there was no one to uphold;

So My own arm brought salvation to Me,

And My wrath upheld Me.

6 “I trod down the peoples in My anger

And made them drunk in My wrath,

And I [e]poured out their lifblood on the earth.”

This is confirmed in Revelation 14 where Jesus brings judgement. Zeal for God hates sin, because God hates sin.

So Jehu continues to destroy the rest of Ahab’s bloodline in chapter 10:1 (read 10:1-4). So Jehu tells the guardians of Ahab’s sons, since Ahab had over 70 sons through multiple women to choose the best fighter out of all the 70 to be king, and then to fight Jehu in a duel.

So the guardians refuse knowing Jehu is too strong and instead offers to obey him in v.5 (read v.5). So Jehu says if they want to obey him they need to kill all 70 of Ahab's sons in v.6 (read v.6-8).

In doing this, God killed all of Ahab's sons through Jehu.

We see here that zeal for God hates sin clearly. But noticed Jehu fought the enemies of God, and killed them all.

We are not in the theocracy of Israel where God himself is the government and is executing capital punishment on criminals who have broken his law for decade after decade and even centuries. As Christians, we are not under the law of Israel not because OT is useless, but because we don't currently live in the kingdom of Israel where God is actively and directly governing the kingdom. Even the current Israel is not currently being directly governed by God through prophets and such. When Jesus returns he will reinstall the kingdom of Israel on earth and we will live in his perfect kingdom forever.

But right now we live in the kingdom of God in our hearts, where God reigns. So for Christians, our enemies are the sins in our flesh. And we are to hate those sins!

Can Christians hate? Yes! The only thing Christians can hate is sin! So like Jehu, we need to be fighting and killing all the sin in our life!

Jesus said in, Matthew 5:27-30

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’;²⁸ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye makes you ^[w]stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you ^[x]to lose one of the parts of your body, ^[y]than for your whole body to be thrown into ^[z]hell. ³⁰ If your right hand makes you ^[aa]stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you ^[ab]to lose one of the parts of your body, ^[ac]than for your whole body to go into ^[ad]hell.

So we just read here how Jesus uses violent warlike imagery to describe our relationship with sin in our life. This would apply to sin in general, but especially sins of lust and sexual immorality. Jesus point is not that you literally cut your hand off or tear out your eye, although some people in church history have done this, they had the right intention, but missed the point! The point Jesus is making is that you need to go to the extreme the eliminate sin in your life!

So in Jehu’s life we see that zeal for God hates sin. Do you hate sin like God hates sin? Do you fight sin like Jehu did? Even more look at the perfect example of the one whose zeal hates sin: Jesus in John 2:13-17,

¹³The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.¹⁴ And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated *at their tables*. ¹⁵ And He made a scourge of cords, and drove *them* all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their

tables; ¹⁶ and to those who were selling the doves He said, “Take these things away; stop making My Father’s house a ^[1]place of business.” ¹⁷ His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for Your house will consume me.”

This text is often used to support that Jesus was angry, therefore I can be angry right? However, that’s not the point of the passage. The point of the passage is the final verse of the scene, ‘Zeal for your house will consume me’ from Psalm 69.

It is because Jesus had zeal that he cleansed the temple. His unashamed love for God and his hatred of sin! So the people who use this verse to justify their anger, should be convicted because God hates sin, and anger the vast majority of the time is sinful not righteous, and therefore people should be more quick to hating there anger than defending it.

Ultimately, we see the zeal for God Jehu had, and the perfect zeal for God Jesus had.

And it was all again due to a love for the word in 2 Ki 10:10 (read v.10) It is Jehu’s love for God’s word that led him to do this. How do we hate sin and fight it as Christians? With the word of God.

3. Zeal for God doesn’t go beyond scripture

If you read this passage straight sometimes it's easy to miss important small details. Yes in the very next verse, and just this verse, we see Jehu's failure to keep his zeal for God only to scripture, and instead he goes beyond that. (Read v.11)

So the first phrase Jehu did good by eliminating all who remained of the house of Ahab, but this final phrase is when we he went too far 'and all his great men and his acquaintances and his priests'.

You see if you go back earlier, when the prophet anointed Jehu king, God told Jehu to only eliminate Ahab's family. God wanted to keep his judgement internal.

Have you ever invited someone to an event like a wedding or birthday party, that wasn't originally invited, and it didn't go well? That's what Jehu did here.

He went beyond who God wanted to judge, and instead killed not only Ahab's family but also his employees and acquaintances.

Usually when people fail in the bible, it's because they fall short in obeying God in everything he commanded them to.

Remember King Saul? God told him to kill an entire city of idol worshippers including the animals, and instead Saul kept the animals alive and spoil for himself. Remember Samuel who said, 'what is this bleating of sheep I hear?'

And God rebuked Saul for failing to obey God in everything.

Here Jehu did the opposite and went beyond God's command. In fact in Hosea 1:4 God later punished the family of Jehu for going overboard with the killings.

You know as Christians, especially those who became believers later in life are guilty of doing this, including myself!

I remember when I first became Christian, super zealous and on fire for the lord, I was getting rid of garbage in my life that I had before I was a Christian. However, sometimes I went too far and would declare things such as a particular genre of music or entertainment as evil when the bible never said such things!

Alcohol, is a very common example. Now I want you to know that I don't have a preference for alcohol so I have no bias toward one way or the other. But I know for certain the bible doesn't condemn the drinking of the beverage. The only things it condemns is drunkenness! Yet I know many who declare the mere act of drinking a sin! That is going beyond scripture! Now if we ask the question, 'is it wise to drink alcohol?' The bible has a lot to say about wisdom and even directly about alcohol and you can search the scriptures on that yourself. The point is, that it's much easier to go beyond scripture and declare things as sinful than it is to do the hard work and ask when the bible is silent, 'is it wise according to the bible?'

One more example, I remember in my previous Filipino church, we had a church retreat, and an entire session was on why Pokemon was evil! We all know the word Pokemon is not even in the bible! I mean the word Pokemon didn't even exist until the 1990s let alone 100 BC! Their argument was that since Pokemon had some ghosts in it and stuff like that, then it's evil. Then I guess Chronicles of Narnia is evil because it has a witch in it as well! That doesn't work. The point of Pokemon is not to make you practice the occult just because there is a ghost in it nor is the Chronicle of Narnia for having a witch. The point of Pokemon is to get you to take out your wallet whereas the point of the Chronicles of Narnia is to point you to the gospel! Now if you ask, 'is it wise to play Pokemon?' Now we are asking a good question where the Bible does speak on and is also not the point of this sermon!

The whole point is, don't be legalistic. Sometimes when we are so on fire for God, we become legalistic and add new rules to the Bible.

Don't make the mistake Jehu did who was so zealous, but did not rein in his zeal by the word of God. Keep your zeal for God binded to the word of God.

4. Zeal for God stays hot (10:12-33)

Jehu then goes on to eliminate the more of those in Ahab's blood line in v. 13 (read v.13-14).

Now Jehu meets a rare worshipper of Yahweh, Jehonadab of the Rechabites who are a small population of believers who isolated themselves away from Israel and Judah and lived in tents. (read v.15).

V.16 (read v.16 and 17).

Jehu on fire for God, took Jehonadab a fellow believer to see his zeal for God.

We've all met people who are so charismatic that just being around them fires you up and you want to copy they do right?

Jehu's zeal was so hot and infectious that it not only affected himself but others believers as well.

That's right God will use your love, passion, and zeal for God to influence others! If you're zealous for God, don't be ashamed, don't keep it in! Let the fire spread among fellow believers, believers who may be feeling cold in life! Let your zeal make set our church on fire!

Finally, we see the end of Jehu's zealous fire in v.18 (read v.18). He aims to eliminate the worshippers of Baal, however, notice that he lies.

(read v.19-28)

Jehu was so on fire that he literally burned the temple of Baal to the ground and turned it into a public restroom.

That is a hot zeal for God. We can all remember the times when we're on fire for God no? Especially when you just became a believer how you were always talking about Jesus!

But later on life, we begin to cool down, and we don't talk about Jesus so much and we just go through the motion of getting in the car in Sunday morning, sitting in a seat, and going home.

Unfortunately this is what happened to Jehu in v.29 (read v.29-33).

So Jehu eliminated all the Baal worshippers, but he failed to remove all pagan idolatry, by leaving the worship of the golden calf intact.

So God began to reduce the size of the territory of Israel.

And this is why we are to go to extremes with sin in our life as Jesus commanded. Because if you leave just one little sin around, it will cool the fire, just as one small crack in the bedroom window can make your bed freeze overnight.

Rev 3:14-22 ¹⁴“To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the ^[k]Beginning of the creation of God, says this:

¹⁵ ‘I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will ^Uspit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, “I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,” and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and *that* the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”

Notice how this Jesus rebukes this lukewarm church. Many times we’ve heard the term ‘lukewarm Christian’ right? It’s true Christians can go through difficult seasons, but can a Christian be lukewarm for many years, decades, or their entire life?

According to Jesus no, because if you notice in v.20 Jesus is standing outside of the church! He’s locked out of the church, meaning he’s not in this lukewarm church! According to Jesus, ‘lukewarm Christians are not Christians, he spits them out of his mouth.

So that’s the final lesson on zeal we see in Jehu’s life, is that we need to keep our zeal for God hot. Don’t let it go cold, not even lukewarm!

(GOSPEL)

Now I want to conclude this by looking back at King Jehu. You might be reading this and might not like King Jehu at all and I can understand that. You know, he's not perfect. But remember the world he lived in, There were almost no other believers around. Everybody was a pagan and anyone who was worshipping Yahweh would be killed. And note that, God does indeed commend Jehu. In fact of all the kings of Israel, Jehu is the only one whom God deemed a good king. Judah had a few good, but mostly bad. And Jehu is the only good king of Israel! So just think about Jehu's situation and appreciate his good as God did, and recognize his faults of course. King Jehu stood against an entire world of God haters, and it was his zeal for God that enabled him to do so.