

Elijah, Elisha, and Ahab's Descendants

Commentary for February 1, 2018 — ... God's Instructions, God's Prophecies

A long-running prophecy first presented by Elijah the prophet to King **Ahab** of Israel predicting the downfall of the house of **Ahab** comes to fulfillment in this month's article, "Israel and Judah: 28. The Reign of King Jehu of Israel." Please read the "[February 2018 Newsletter](#)." The information is complex, but I hope I can make it clear.

After the prophet Elijah's victory over the pagan priests of Baal, Elijah fled from Jezebel to Horeb where YHWH gave him three commands and a 2-part prophecy:

"Now Yahweh said to him, Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. When you enter there, then

[1] **you will anoint Hazael as king over Syria.** And [later]

[2] **Jehu** son of Nimshi **shall you anoint as king over Israel.** And

[3] **Elisha** son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah **shall you anoint as prophet in your stead.**

It will occur

to the one escaping from Hazael's sword that Jehu shall put him to death, and

to the one escaping from Jehu's sword that Elisha shall put him to death."

**• 1 Kings 19:15–17,
Concordant Literal Version**

Hazael, Jehu, and Elisha have futures. Elijah, however, does not do what God tells him to do. He does not go to Damascus. He does not anoint Hazael, Elisha personally anoints him.

There are some strange elements to God's command. Elijah never anointed Hazael. Elijah never anointed Jehu, but Elijah did anoint Elisha as prophet to succeed himself (1 Kings 19: 19). Elijah did only the third command right away, and that was Elisha's anointing. What changed the prophetic fulfillment? An answer comes when we look at what transpired (events are from several episodes of "Israel and Judah"). Examine the sequence of events of **God's instruction** and **God's prophecies** and their fulfillment:

1. Elijah anoints Elisha (1 Kings 19:19).
2. King **Ahab**, *king of Israel* tells Queen Jezebel that he wants to own a vineyard outside the city of Jezreel owned by a man named Naboth. Naboth will not sell the vineyard to him (1Kings 21:1-4). **Ahab** is depressed and pouts.
3. Jezebel acts on **Ahab's** behalf, laying false charges against Naboth. Naboth is killed (1 Kings 21:5–16) and his sons are killed (as we find out later in 2 Kings 9:26). **Ahab** takes possession of the vineyard.
4. Elijah tells **Ahab** a prophecy from God. For murdering Naboth and his sons, YHWH sentences **Ahab** with death, and the death of all his descendants. God will cause the dynasty

of Omri (**Ahab's** father) to end because all male descendants of **Ahab** shall die (1 Kings 21:22). This was God's vengeance for what happened to Naboth and his family.

5. In a prophecy specific to **Ahab**, dogs would lap his blood as they lapped Naboth's blood (1 Kings 21:19). Jezebel was predicted to die a gruesome death (verse 23).
6. Surprisingly, **Ahab** has a sincere repentance of his deeds. God has mercy on **Ahab** and delays judgment upon **Ahab's** family (1 Kings 21:27–29).
7. **Ahab** dies in battle (1 Kings 22:33–35; 2 Chronicles 18:33–34) with Syria. His body is washed in a large vessel of water. From there dogs lap his blood (1 Kings 22:37–38) **fulfilling **Ahab's** part of Elijah's prophecy**.
8. **Ahab's** and Jezebel's evil son, Ahaziah, becomes *king of Israel* (he is a different person and king from Ahaziah of Judah). He rules 2 years (1 Kings 22:51). Jezebel is still alive.
9. An angel instructs Elijah to denounce Ahaziah and **he does so**. Ahaziah sends troops to seize Elijah. Elijah requests YHWH to send fire from heaven to kill those troops. YHWH does so, twice. An angel instructs Elijah to go to Ahaziah's bed, tell him he will die (2 Kings chapter 1). **Elijah does so**. Ahaziah dies (1:17) **fulfilling Elijah's prophecy**.
10. Elisha succeeds Elijah as chief prophet in Israel (2 Kings 2:1–19), **fulfilling God's instruction to Elijah**.
11. Joram (also named Jehoram) becomes *king of Israel*, another son of Jezebel and **Ahab**, reigns for 12 years (2 Kings 3:1).
12. Elisha anoints Hazael as *king of Syria*, **fulfilling God's instruction to Elijah**. Elisha laments over horrors of what Hazael will do to people in Israel and Judah (2 Kings 8:7–15).
13. Another Joram becomes *king of Judah*, ruling 8 years. His wife, Athaliah, was **Ahab** and Jezebel's daughter. When Joram dies, Ahaziah becomes *king of Judah* for just 1 year.
14. *Joram of Israel* allies with *Ahaziah of Judah*. They go to war with Syria.
15. Elisha sends a messenger to anoint Jehu as king of Israel (2 Kings 9:1–13), **fulfilling God's instruction to Elijah**.
16. Jehu consolidates his power as a usurper king by acting decisively to:
 - kill Joram of Israel, **Ahab's** son, **fulfilling God's prophecy**,
 - kill Ahaziah of Judah, **Ahab's** grandson, **fulfilling God's prophecy**,
 - kill Jezebel, **Ahab's** favorite wife, **fulfilling God's prophecy**,
 - kill 70 of **Ahab's** sons, **fulfilling God's prophecy**,
 - kill other relatives of **Ahab**, **fulfilling God's prophecy**, and
 - kill Ahaziah of Judah's relatives (and then Jehu kills many priests of Baal).

There are differences between **God's instructions** and **God's prophecies**. We do not understand why God gave Elijah leeway in fulfilling God's instructions, leaving some for Elisha. Perhaps God gives leeway in His instructions to His obedient servants. His prophecies, however, are under His control and subject to change. In this case, God's will is done when Jehu eliminated all of Ahab's male descendants. Referring to this sequence of events may help as you read "Israel and Judah: 28. The Reign of King Jehu of Israel."