

2 Kings 1 – Thursday, February 4th, 2016

1 Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. 2 Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, “Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury.”

- Couple of thoughts here as we begin this chapter, and the first has to do with Ahaziah seeking this Philistine god, Baal-Zebub.
- I suppose in a way, we shouldn't be surprised this evil king would do this given his father was Ahab and mother was Jezebel.
- Lest we be too quick to condemn Ahaziah, I think we would do well to ask ourselves whom we seek first when adversity strikes.

Ecclesiastes 7:14 (NKJV) — 14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, But in the day of adversity consider: Surely God has appointed the one as well as the other, So that man can find out nothing that will come after him.

- It's important to understand that this god Ahaziah seeks in his day of adversity Baal-Zebub, was known as the “god of the flies.”

Adam Clarke - “He was the local god of Ekron, and probably was used at first to drive away flies. Afterwards, he became a very respectable devil, and was supposed to have great power and influence. In the New Testament, Beelzebub is a common name for Satan himself, or the prince of devils.”

Of these false gods, Psalm 115:8 tells us that we become like the gods we worship: “Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.”

Matthew 12:24–28 24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.” 25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

- The second thought has to do with what we're told in verse one, about Moab rebelling against Israel after the death of Ahab.
- The reason I point this out is because; it seems to indicate that the blessing of God on the nation of Israel was being removed.
- In other words, because Israel disobeyed God and sought after, even worshipped, other gods, a curse came on them instead.

Proverbs 16:7 (NKJV) — 7 When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

3 But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ 4 Now therefore, thus says the LORD: ‘You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’ ” So Elijah departed.

- To me, this brings up two questions, the first of which is, why did Ahaziah send messengers to Baal-Zebub in the first place.
- I'm of the belief it's because Ahaziah knew the answer he would receive were he to have sought out the true and living God.
- This is a textbook case of only wanting to hear only what you want to hear and never wanting to hear what you need to hear.

- The second question has to do with why Elijah prophesies that Ahaziah will in fact die. Was it because he sought a false god?
- Yes and no in the sense that his death sentence was due to Ahaziah not only worshipping false gods but leading Israel to also.
- This because of the Law of Moses, which is explicit in it's instruction to stone to death anyone who leads Israel into this idolatry.

Deuteronomy 13:6–11 (NKJV) — 6 “If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, 7 of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth, 8 you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; 9 but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. 10 And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. 11 So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

5 And when the messengers returned to him, he said to them, “Why have you come back?” 6 So they said to him, “A man came up to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.’ ” ’ ” 7 Then he said to them, “What kind of man was it who came up to meet you and told you these words?” 8 So they answered him, “A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

- I can't help but wonder what's going through Ahaziah's mind as he hears that none other than Elijah has intercepted his men.
- This confirms that he never wanted to seek the Lord concerning his fate as evidenced by his reaction to the prophet of God.
- In other words, he doesn't repent, nor does he wish to see this prophecy come to pass, just like his father Ahab before him.

9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!'" 10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that Elijah once again is able to call fire down from heaven.
- The last time God did this for Elijah it consumed the sacrifice on the altar in the contest between he and the prophets of Baal.
- The reason I find this interesting is because you would think Ahaziah and his first group of fifty men would have learned from it.

- I would suggest that not only does Ahaziah know he's defying God and the prophet of God so too do his men know this as well.
- The reason being is that they even acknowledge that Elijah is a Man of God when they command him to come down to them.
- For them to do this wasn't so much a defiance of Elijah as much as it was a defiance of Elijah's God, which is why they're killed.

F.B. Meyer - "Either they did not hold him to be a prophet, or they gloried in putting the power of their master above that of Jehovah. In any case, the insult was less against Elijah than Elijah's God."

Adam Clarke - "Some have blamed the prophet for destroying these men, by bringing down fire from heaven upon them. But they do not consider that it was no more possible for Elijah to bring down fire from heaven, than for them to do it. God alone could send the fire; and as he is just and good, he would not have destroyed these men had there not been a sufficient cause to justify the act."

11 Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!'" 12 So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

- It could be argued that this second captain and his fifty men were deserving of a greater judgment than were the first fifty men.
- This because, they would have known what God did the first time, and as such, realized that God had spoken through Elijah.
- Notice how that they are even more forceful than the first such that, they order Elijah to not only come down, but to do it quickly.

There's an interesting account in Luke 9:51-56 where James and John refer to this passage and ask Jesus if they should call fire down from heaven. -- Luke 9:51-56 (NKJV) — 51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

13 Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight."

- This third captain is clearly displaying his wisdom by virtue of his genuine humility and it's right from the start when he goes up.
- It's notable that instead of commanding Elijah to come down and to do it immediately he goes up to Elijah and humbles himself.
- As we'll see next, this will prove to be a game changer if you will in that the Lord will tell Elijah to go with this captain to Ahaziah.

15 And the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king.

- Notice how that the Lord tells Elijah to go and not be afraid of Ahaziah. It seems that he feared he wanted to kill him like Ahab.
- While this may be one reason that Ahaziah sent his men to arrest Elijah, it's been suggested there were other reasons as well.
- Namely, that he wanted to force Elijah to recant his prophetic word concerning Ahaziah, which as we'll see next, he will not do.

16 Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, is it because there is no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.'" 17 So Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

- So the chapter ends with this horrible end of a horrible king, from whom we can learn many lessons, lest we repeat his folly.

Of this foolish king one commentator wrote, "Everything he did was weak, faithless, and miserable; he achieved nothing but ruin and failure. He let Moab rebel. He hurt himself in a clumsy accident. He foolishly attempted to use military force against Elijah. And worse, he sought help in the wrong place—in Philistia at the altar of a pagan god."