

NOON BIBLE STUDY: 2 KINGS 1

2 KINGS IS ORIGINALLY NOT A SEPARATE BOOK. IT IS UNITED WITH WHAT WE CALL "1 KINGS" AND IS ONE LARGE COLLECTION OF THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE TIME OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH. THE STORY OF 1 KINGS CONTINUES IN 2 KINGS, AS DO THE CHARACTERS, SETTINGS AND SPIRITUAL REALITIES.

AHAB, THE WORST KING OF ISRAEL RULED FOR 22 YEARS (1 KINGS 16:29-30)

1 KINGS 22:51-53 - AHAZIAH BECOMES KING OVER ISRAEL

2 KINGS 1:1-2 - AHAZIAH INJURED, INQUIRES OF BAAL-ZEBUB

V. 2 - CP. 1 KINGS 22:51-53 - THIS IS WHAT AHAZIAH DID. HIS APPEAL TO BAAL-ZEBUB IS NOT SOME NEW IDEA IN TIME OF CRISIS BUT WHAT HIS HEART AND LIFE CONSISTENTLY DID.

BAAL-ZEBUB - "EKRON WAS AN IMPORTANT PHILISTINE CITY ABOUT 25 MILES (40 KM) WEST OF JERUSALEM. BAAL-ZEBUB MEANS "LORD OF THE FLIES" AND IS PROBABLY A DELIBERATE HEBREW CORRUPTION OF "BAAL-ZEBUL" ("BAAL THE EXALTED" OR "BAAL/MASTER OF THE HEIGHT" OR POSSIBLY "BAAL/MASTER OF THE DWELLING";) INTENDED TO EXPRESS THE AUTHOR'S SCORN OF OR HOSTILITY TOWARD THIS "DEITY." AHAZIAH LOOKS FOR HELP FROM THIS LOCAL MANIFESTATION OF THE GOD BAAL, PERHAPS REGARDING THE EKRONITE VERSION OF THE DEITY AS ESPECIALLY POWERFUL." (ESV STUDY BIBLE NOTE 2 KINGS 1:2)

2 KINGS 1:3-4 - ELIJAH MEETS MESSENGERS

ELIJAH WHO BATTLED WITH AHAB THROUGHOUT HIS REIGN, NOW CONFRONTS AHAZIAH. AHAZIAH FOLLOWS IN HIS FATHER'S IDOLATROUS FOOTSTEPS AND ELIJAH DECLARES THAT HE WILL DIE AS A RESULT OF THIS ACCIDENT.

2 KINGS 1:5-8 - MESSENGERS RETURN

THERE MUST HAVE BEEN SOME AUTHORITY IN THE WORDS OF ELIJAH. THE ROYALLY APPOINTED MESSENGERS RETURN FROM THEIR ASSIGNMENT WITHOUT COMPLETING THE KING'S TASK. INSTEAD THEY INFORM HIM OF ELIJAH'S WORDS. AND YET THEY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT ELIJAH WAS ELIJAH! THEY ONLY DESCRIBE HIS APPEARANCE TO THE KING.

V. 8 - ELIJAH HAD A UNIQUE IDENTIFYING LOOK.

2 KINGS 1:9-12 - THE CONFRONTATION CONTINUES

AHAZIAH SENDS TWO GROUPS OF CAPTAINS WITH 50 SOLDIERS. IT WOULD SEEM THAT SUCH A GROUPING WOULD BE A SPECIAL OR ELITE GROUP OF THE KING'S ARMY. BOTH CAPTAINS COME TO ELIJAH PRESUMABLY TO ARREST HIM. 50 MEN FOR ONE MAN? YET IN BOTH CASES ELIJAH CALLS FIRE DOWN FROM HEAVEN, WITHOUT LEAVING THE TOP OF THE HILL, WHICH CONSUMES THE ENTIRE GROUP. ELIJAH IS NOT

INTIMIDATED BY THE MIGHT OF HUMANS, FOR HE IS PROTECTED BY THE LORD. ALL THE KING'S HORSES AND ALL THE KING'S MEN COULDN'T GET ELIJAH TO COME OFF THE HILL AGAIN.

ISN'T IT INTERESTING THAT AHAZIAH SENDS A SECOND GROUPING OF 50 MEN. HIS PRIDE IS THICK. THIS MOMENT SHOULD TAKE US BACK TO ONE OF THE GREAT MOMENTS OF 1 KINGS. THE SETTING IS SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT AND SOME OF THE FACES HAVE CHANGED BUT THIS IS ANOTHER BATTLE BETWEEN THE LORD AND BAAL.

YEARS AGO THERE WAS A GREAT DROUGHT IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL AS A CONSEQUENCE FOR THE IDOLATRY OF THE NATION. THE PEOPLE PRAYED TO BAAL FOR RAIN AND FERTILE GROUND AND FOR THREE YEARS, THE LORD SHUT UP THE HEAVENS AT THE WORD OF ELIJAH - THIS WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THE BAAL WAS POWERLESS IN THE ONE AREA HE WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE STRENGTH. AND SO WHEN IT WAS TIME FOR YAHWEH TO END THE DROUGHT, HE WAS FIRST GOING TO DECLARE TO ALL THE NATION, THAT HE ALONE WAS GOD IN ISRAEL.

AND SO ON TOP OF MOUNT CARMEL, THIS SAME ELIJAH BATTLED THE 400 PROPHETS OF BAAL ON MOUNT CARMEL (1 KINGS 18) AND FIRE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN AT THE MOMENT THAT YAHWEH PROVED HE WAS (IS) THE TRUE GOD. ON THAT DAY, AHAZIAH'S FATHER AHAB WAS CONFRONTED WITH THE TRUTH THAT BAAL HAD NO POWER AND THAT THE LORD WAS THE LIVING AND MIGHTY GOD. AND THEN AT ELIJAH'S WORD, THE 3 YEAR LONG DROUGHT ENDED AND THE RAIN STARTED TO FALL.

SURELY AHAB'S SON WOULD HAVE HEARD OF THAT WILD DAY YEARS AGO. AND YET, WHEN FACING SICKNESS AND POSSIBLE DEATH HE DOES NOT SEEK THE ONE TRUE GOD, BUT SEEKS BAAL. AND SO ELIJAH PERFORMS A MINI-REENACTMENT OF THAT POWERFUL DAY. HE POSES AGAIN THE QUESTION "IS THERE NO GOD IN ISRAEL"? AND FIRE COMES DOWN FROM HEAVEN, NOT ONCE BUT TWICE.

AND AHAZIAH CAUSES THE DEATH OF HIS MEN. WHEN HIS FIRST 50 MEN DIE, HE THINKS HE'LL TRY THE SAME TACTIC AGAIN. BECAUSE HE THINK HE'S GOT THE POWER AND AUTHORITY AND THINK HIS GOD IS THE TRUE GOD. THE FIRE FROM HEAVEN SHOULD HAVE BEEN A BLAZING REMINDER OF WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY ON MOUNT CARMEL - AND WHAT THE CONCLUSION OF THAT DAY WAS - THE LORD IS GOD. YET AHAZIAH IS NOT IMPRESSED OR REMINDED. AND SO HIS PRIDE, NOT HIS FALL FROM HIS UPPER CHAMBER, WILL KILL HIM.

2 KINGS 1:13-15 - THE SOLDIER'S WISE UP

THOUGH AHAZIAH DOESN'T HUMBLE HIMSELF BEFORE ELIJAH, THE THIRD CAPTAIN OF THE 50 DOES. HIS APPROACH DEMONSTRATES THAT HE RECOGNIZES WHO HAS THE REAL AUTHORITY HERE - ELIJAH (AS THE PROPHET OF THE LORD) DOES, NOT THE CAPTAIN.

V. 15 - THIS TIME THE ANGEL OF THE LORD INSTRUCTS ELIJAH TO GO WITH THE MEN TO SPEAK TO THE KING.

2 KINGS 1:16-18 - AHAZIAH DIES

THE REIGN OF AHAZIAH IS SHORT LIVED AND UNEVENTFUL (2 YEARS PER 1 KINGS 22:51) . HE HAS NO SON AND SO HIS BROTHER JEHOAM (ANOTHER SON OF AHAB) BECOMES KING IN HIS PLACE. THE REIGN OF AHAB'S CURSED SONS CONTINUES, BUT NOT FOR LONG.

LET US REMEMBER THE TIMES THE LORD HAS PROVEN HIMSELF FAITHFUL AND POWERFUL TO US. LET US REMEMBER THE TIMES WE HAVE HAD TO FALL ON OUR FACE AND THEN TO OUR KNEES BECAUSE OF OUR FOOLISH ATTEMPTS TO RULE OUR LIVES. LET US REMEMBER THE LORD'S MERCY TO OFTEN REMIND US THAT HE ALONE IS THE TRUE GOD. LET US REMEMBER AND NOT FORGET.

LIKE AHAZIAH RUNNING TO BAAL-ZEBUB, THE FORGETFUL RUN AGAIN TO THOSE THINGS THEY HAVE BEEN DELIVERED AND FREED FROM, DEAD THINGS WHICH DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO SAVE. LIKE AHAZIAH, THE FORGETFUL AND PROUD DON'T "TAKE THE HINT" WHEN WE RUN INTO WALLS (OR GET "BURNED" SO TO SPEAK) AND TRY AGAIN TO FIND ANSWERS AND DIRECTION OR DELIVERANCE IN POWERLESS, DEAD, AND EVIL "IDOLS".

REMEMBER TODAY THAT YOU HAVE FOUND THE ONE WHO IS GOD, WHO IS POWERFUL, WHO IS LIVING, AND WHO HAS WISDOM AND DIRECTION AND COMFORT AND _____ AND _____ AND _____ (AKA ALL THAT WE COULD EVER NEED). REMEMBER TODAY THAT WE KNOW THAT THE LORD IS GOD, OR IF NOT, KNOW IT IS TRUE FOR THE FIRST TIME. AND IF AND WHEN, IN HIS MERCY, HE AWAKENS US AGAIN TO THE FACT THAT WE ARE BLINDLY OR FOOLISHLY LOOKING FOR HELP FROM SOME OTHER SOURCE (OR PERHAPS PRIDEFULLY NOT LOOKING FOR HELP AT ALL), DON'T KEEP WALKING DOWN THAT ROAD TOWARDS BAAL-ZEBUB, INSTEAD QUICKLY AND JOYFULLY RETURN HOME TO THE WORD OF THE LORD.