

## 2 Kings 1:1-18

### The LORD's Judgment on Ahaziah

<sup>1</sup> After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel. <sup>2</sup> Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So, he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury."

<sup>3</sup> But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' <sup>4</sup> Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" So, Elijah went.

<sup>5</sup> When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you come back?"

<sup>6</sup> "A man came to meet us," they replied. "And he said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, "This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore, you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'"'"

<sup>7</sup> The king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?"

<sup>8</sup> They replied, "He had a garment of hair and had a leather belt around his waist."

The king said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite."

<sup>9</sup> Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'"

<sup>10</sup> Elijah answered the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

<sup>11</sup> At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, this is what the king says, 'Come down at once!'"

<sup>12</sup> "If I am a man of God," Elijah replied, "may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

<sup>13</sup> So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. "Man of God," he begged, "please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants!" <sup>14</sup> See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!"

<sup>15</sup> The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So, Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

<sup>16</sup> He told the king, "This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!" <sup>17</sup> So he died, according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken.

Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. <sup>18</sup> As for all the other

events of Ahaziah's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

## **Acts 17:22-31**

<sup>22</sup> Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So, you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

<sup>24</sup> "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup> And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. <sup>26</sup> From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. <sup>28</sup> 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

<sup>29</sup> "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. <sup>30</sup> In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. <sup>31</sup> For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

We're beginning a **series** on the Old Testament **Book of 2 Kings**

We looked at 1 Kings last year – so I thought it would be good for us to continue with the story of the Kings of Israel – and pick up where we left off last year.

Please keep your Bibles open at chapter 1 of 2 Kings.

You can follow the **outline** in your bulletin and take notes if you wish.

Let me pray first...

## Context

Just so we can get the context.

The **year** is about **853BC**

The **12 tribes** of Israel have been **divided** into **two kingdoms** which we saw when we looked at the book of 1 Kings last year

## **Slide – The Divided Kingdom**



The **northern kingdom** consists of **10 of those 12 tribes** – and is known as **Israel**

The **southern kingdom** consists of **2 tribes** – **Judah and Benjamin** – and is known as **Judah**.

As we begin chapter 1 – the **King of Israel** (the Northern Kingdom) is **Ahaziah** – and the **King of Judah** (the Southern Kingdom) is **Jehoshaphat**.

## Intro

This morning we are looking at King Ahaziah of Israel

### Slide-Intensify Ahaziah

If we flick back one page in our Bibles to the last chapter of 1 Kings chapter 22 – we read this:

*<sup>51</sup> Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. <sup>52</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he **followed the ways of his father and mother** and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. <sup>53</sup> He served and worshiped Baal and aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.*

### Slide-Ahab, Jezebel, Baal and Ahaziah



So, what we have here is a King – **Ahaziah** - who is **following in the footsteps** of his **wicked father, Ahab, and wicked mother, Jezebel**. They worship the false god of **Baal-Zebub** who had a temple in the city of **Ekron** in the land of the **Philistines**. **Ahab and Jezebel** were entirely **responsible for turning most of the Northern Kingdom away from worshipping the one true God – and worshipping the false god – Baal**.

Now it would be **easy** this morning **to make the focus** of our look at 2 Kings 1 – on the **ungodly behaviour of Ahaziah** – or to focus on the **faithfulness of the prophet Elijah** – which are both true and I will mention that.

But I'd like us to **focus this morning – on our God** – and the **Character of the One true God!**

### **God is a holy, holy, holy God – He detests idols** (2 Kings 1:1-8)

So, we pick up the story in **verse 1**

And we're told that **Ahab is dead** and that **Moab has rebelled** against Israel.

We're not told what this **rebellion is** – but in chapter 3:4-5

We're told that the **King of Moab** (Mesha) used to pay the King of Israel a tribute (a payment to remain independent) of **100,000 lambs and the wool of a 100, 000 rams** – but after Ahab died – the **King of Moab** – **thought he'd stop paying** – perhaps thinking Ahab's son, Ahaziah, might not be as wicked as his father!

We're then told in verse 2 – that **King Ahaziah** had **fallen through the lattice** of his upper room in his palace in Samaria.

Whether it was the shock of Moab's rebellion – and the shock of the loss of this income that made him unsteady on his feet – who knows?

But here is **a door of opportunity** for **Ahaziah** to **repent** of following false gods and turn to the one true God – YHWH – the God of Israel.

But **Ahaziah** **doesn't** take the opportunity – he continues to follow in the footsteps of his wicked father and mother – and he **sends messengers to consult the false god Baal-Zebub in Ekron** – to see if he will recover from his injury. Baal-Zebub was apparently very good at predicting the future!

### Application

Whose footsteps are we following in? Are we following in **Jesus'** footsteps or someone else's?

Would we **want our children and grandchildren** to follow in our footsteps?

(pause)

King Ahaziah's messengers trot off to Ekron

Meanwhile an **angel speaks to Elijah the prophet** (v3) and **gives** him a **message** to give to King Ahaziah's messengers

*"Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?"*

In the original Hebrew this message has a double negative, so it reads *"Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that you go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron"*

In other words – **there's definitely** is a God in Israel – the One true God – and you're ignoring Him, Ahaziah!

And because Ahaziah is ignoring God – v4 – the message Elijah is to deliver is that **Ahaziah will not get off his sick bed – and he will die!**

Why will he **die**?

**Slide-God detests idols**

Because: **God is a holy, holy, holy God – He detests idols**

We only have to look at the **first two commandments** to see the problem

1<sup>st</sup> commandment – “*You shall have no other gods before me*”

2<sup>nd</sup> commandment – “*You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments*” **(Exodus 20:3-6)**

**God demands undivided loyalty** – His relationship with us – is like a marriage – **we are exclusively His.**

And He does not want us giving our loyalty to other people or things ahead of Him.

Application

We might not go off to a place like Ekron – to worship a yucky idol like Baal-Zebub



But we too can have idols

I'll give us 3 for now...

**1<sup>st</sup> idol** – our **Self** – If we think about it – whenever we break any of God's commandments – **we are choosing to put ourselves ahead of God.**

If we lie – we're **not** trusting God's truth and not trusting God's plan for us.

If we steal – we're **not** trusting in God's provision – we're saying we know better than God!

If we cheat in a relationship – **we're saying our needs are more important than the other person** – and **we're saying God's requirement for us to be faithful is not as important as what we want!**

**2<sup>nd</sup> idol** – our **Security** - We might find our security in our career then we lose our job! We might find our security in our relationship then the relationship breaks up. We might put our security in our wealth – then the stock market crashes or we have a major health crisis and all our money goes on that! **See how flimsy our security is!**

**3<sup>rd</sup> idol** – **Approval** – **we want to be so liked by people** – we compromise on our behaviour and suddenly **we're not following God's rules anymore** – we want to be approved by someone so badly – **we give in to their demands and ditch God's demands.** As Jesus says in Matthew 6:24 – “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other”

We need to be - **quick** and **regular** - in repenting of these idols in our lives...

Back to 2 Kings 1 – the messengers return to King Ahaziah to tell him what Elijah said. When Ahaziah gets a description of the prophet – he knows it's Elijah – he's heard all about Elijah from his mum and dad!

What will Ahaziah do?

Will he repent and turn back to the one true God?

### God Must Punishes Sin (2 Kings 1:9-12)

Well - that would have been the **smart thing to do**

But no - see v9 – he **sends a captain with fifty soldiers to Elijah**

We **need to realize the intent** here – it's not for **friendly chat**

You don't send 51 soldiers to have a chat

They are **sent to silence** Elijah

But v10 – **Elijah calls down fire from heaven** – and the **51 men** are **BBQed**

You'd think Ahaziah might have a **rethink** here

But no – v11 – he **sends another captain with 50 soldiers**

And v12 – the same thing happens – **51 men BBQed**

### **Slide-God must punish sin**

My next point this morning: **God must punish sin**

Because God is holy – He **must** punish sin – He cannot turn a **blind eye** to it.

**Ahaziah blatantly disregards God's message from Elijah** – thinking Elijah can be silenced

Over the centuries people have tried to silence God – **by killing His people – even by trying to get rid of the Bible**

But all that happened was – **more of God's people spread the word – more Bibles were produced** – and the **Bible is still the most sold book in the world!**

No-one and nothing **can stop God's Word**

And there **will always be consequences** when **we don't follow God's Word** – as the 102 soldiers just found out – they were sent to their death because Ahaziah refused to bow down to the one true God!

Application

Ahaziah has had **several opportunities to repent**

His **fall** from the upper room – the **message from Elijah** – the **first 51 men killed** – the **second 51 men killed**

There are **many Ahaziah's** in our world **today** – ignoring opportunities to repent

Many people – knowing their life is out of control – knowing they're not following God's way – but they say to themselves – **I'll sort my life out tomorrow**

**"Tomorrow"** is **Satan's favourite word!**

**The road to hell is paved with good intentions!**

Is there a sin in our life – that **we're ignoring?**

There will be **consequences!**

(pause)

**God brings people to their knees** (2 Kings 1:13-15)

There's a saying – ***"you can't keep doing the same thing and expecting a different result"***

That's precisely what **Ahaziah does** – see v13 - he **sends a 3<sup>rd</sup> captain with 50 soldiers!**

However, the **3<sup>rd</sup> captain** is a bit smarter than Ahaziah though

And he **approaches Elijah** a lot more carefully than the first two captains

The 3<sup>rd</sup> captain **falls down on his knees at Elijah's feet and begs for his life** – v14.

That does the trick – and the **angel of the Lord** tells Elijah it is safe to go with the **3<sup>rd</sup> captain to see King Ahaziah** – v15.

**Slide-God brings people to their knees**

My next point is – ***God brings people to their knees***

Isn't the 3<sup>rd</sup> captain a **picture of what God wanted Ahaziah to do?**

Application

Isn't that what God wants each sinner to do – to **get down on their knees** and **confess their sin** – and **say sorry** – and **repent** – and **accept that Jesus died on a cruel cross for our sins to be forgiven** – Doesn't God want each sinner - **to submit their lives in allegiance to Him – the One True God?**

Aren't we meant to see the roadblocks that God put in Ahaziah's way? His fall?

The message from Elijah? The first two captains?

We too - are meant to **heed the roadblocks that God puts in our way!**

They are there!

We **just have to** heed **them!**

Isn't that what the Apostle Paul means in **1 Corinthians 10:13** when he says:

*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

**God provides the way out – we just have to take it!**

(pause)

### **God Always Delivers on His Word** (2 Kings 1:16-18)

Unfortunately, King **Ahaziah** ignores the roadblocks

See v16 – Elijah delivers God's message to Ahaziah – **Ahaziah will not recover from his fall – he will certainly die!**

As v17 says – *So he died, according to the word of the Lord that Elijah spoke*

**Slide-God delivers on His Word**

My next point is – ***God Always Delivers on His Word***

Application

You see – the **end result** for those who continue to trust in false gods and idols – who continue to ignore the roadblocks God sends – and refuse to repent – the door of opportunity to repent – eventually closes – time runs out – they don't get off their sick bed of sin – it's too late!

The writer of 2 Kings – leaves us with a sorry picture of Ahaziah – vv17-18

**He dies** – with no son to succeed him – his brother Joram takes the throne – **will Joram follow in his father, Ahab's footsteps?**

The only details we've actually heard about Ahaziah is how he rejected the One true God. That's all the writer of 2 Kings is interested in – **did Ahaziah follow the one True God?**

It's the same for us – that's all that really matters – **are we saved for Heaven – because we're following God's Son – Jesus?**

### Response and Challenge (Acts 17:22-31)

#### Slide-Response and Challenge

How will we respond this morning to this story in 2 Kings 1

Well **perhaps** our New Testament reading from **Acts 17:22-31** will help

[\[Please turn there now\]](#)

It's about 900 years after the time of Ahaziah and Elijah

The **Apostle Paul** is spreading the **Good News** of Jesus throughout **Asia Minor and Europe**.

And he visits the city of **Athens in Greece**.

And Paul makes a **speech on a hill in Athens** called the **Areopagus** (The Hill of Ares – Ares is the Greek God of war – Romans call it Mars Hill)

In his speech **Paul** mentions that - he **noticed as he walked around that the Greeks are very religious** (v22) and that they have **many objects of worship** (v23) because they worshipped different gods/goddesses for different things (like **Poseidon** – god of the sea – **Ares** – the god of war; **Aphrodite** – goddess of love, sex and beauty).

So, the Greeks were just like King Ahaziah – **worshipping false gods**.

But in his travels – Paul noticed an altar with an inscription “to an unknown God” (v23). The Greeks in their travels knew that there were perhaps other gods they knew nothing about – **so they built an extra altar just in case for an unknown God!**

Paul makes the point that **this unknown God** – they have an altar for - **is actually the God they NEED TO KNOW and BELIEVE in.** He’s not unknown – **He is the one true God and they only need to look around and see that He is the God who created everything and controls everything** (vv26).

And Paul says this one true God wants a relationship with people (v27-28) – and **in fact** – **Paul says - we are His offspring.**

And Paul says - **He’s the ONE TRUE GOD and not a God who is represented by a statue or idol or altar made of gold, silver or stone** (v29) – **He is a Living God!**

Paul says in v30 – God overlooked this sort of ignorance in the past – but now – and this is the bottom line - for the Greeks – and for the people of Israel - and for us – **God commands (not a suggestion) – He commands all people everywhere to repent.**

So, there’s our response this morning

**Slide-God commands all people everywhere to repent!**

**God commands all people everywhere to repent!**

Why?

V31 tells us why!

*"For he [God] has set a day when **he will judge the world** with justice by the man **he has appointed [that man is Jesus]**. God has given proof of this to everyone by raising him [Jesus] from the dead."*

So, God wants everyone to repent – before they face Jesus the judge!

Because that will make the difference between going to Heaven or going to Hell

So, with that response – **I'd like to also give us a challenge**

### **Slide-Challenge**

Ahaziah's door of mercy closed on him – but our unbelieving family members and unbelieving friends' door of mercy is still open.

Why not tell a family member or friend - the story of King Ahaziah's refusal to turn back to God – tell it in your words – I think anyone hearing that story would see how foolish Ahaziah was in going to ask a statue in a temple for help – and would see how terrible the consequences of his stubborn refusal to repent and trust in the one true God were!

Or if we're not comfortable with telling the story of Ahaziah – how about telling the story of Paul going to Athens and seeing all these lumps of metal and stone that the Athenians worshipped – instead of worshipping the one true God. **Again, I think your family member or friend would see how dumb it is to worship those idols instead of trusting in God and His Son Jesus!**



To finish up then...

**Elijah was God's ambassador – as Christians - we are Christ's ambassadors.**

Let's finish with Paul's words to the Greeks in Corinth:

*We are therefore **Christ's ambassadors**, as though God were making his appeal through us. **We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.***

*(2 Corinthians 5:20)*

Let's pray...

*Father God, forgives us for the times we seek help and comfort in other places rather than coming to you, the One True God.*

*Help us to learn from the failure of King Ahaziah.*

*Help us to take a board your desire that all people everywhere should repent.*

*Help us to understand we are Christ ambassadors – and that we are to make the appeal for people to repent whilst they still have the door of mercy open – and before it's too late.*

*Father we ask that you would give us opportunities to tell people the Good News of Jesus – and give us the words to say. In Jesus name, Amen.*