

## 2 Kings Chapter 1

### **2 Kings 1:1 "Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab."**

“Moab rebelled”: Paid them no more tribute, but utterly disclaimed their authority over them. Moab had been subdued by David, as Edom was; and, upon the division of his kingdom, the former was adjoined to that of Israel, and the latter to that of Judah, each to that kingdom upon which it bordered. But when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were weak, and forsaken by God, they took that opportunity to revolt from them: Moab here, and Edom a little after.

See (note on Gen. 19:37-38 and Introduction to Ruth).

Ahab had been a powerful, though evil, king. He had kept the subjection of Moab going during his reign. Many believe that Moab had payed tribute for at least 40 years. At the death of Ahab, they saw their opportunity to get free, and took it.

### **2 Kings 1:2 "And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that [was] in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease."**

“Ahaziah”: This king of the northern kingdom of Israel is not to be confused with Ahaziah of Judah (8:25 – 9:29).

Ahaziah’s story begins (in 1 Kings 22:51). Failing to “inquire” of Israel’s God revealed the depth of his apostasy. “Baal-Zebub” (lord of the flies”; Matt. 10:25), was one of many fertility gods whose name was a form of Baal (“lord”). This suggests that he was the storm god who controlled diseases brought by flies.

“Ahaziah fell down through a lattice” that enclosed the upper balcony. Ahaziah’s rooftop room was enclosed with crossbars of interwoven reed or wood strips, which shut out direct sunlight while letting in cool breezes. It was not sturdy enough to keep Ahaziah from falling to the ground below (for unexplained reasons). This took place in 852 B.C.

The name “Baal-zebub” may conceal a more original Baal-zebul, meaning “Baal Is Prince.” The Canaanite deity’s name was also corrupted by Hebrew writers to Baal-zebel, “Lord of Dung.” The word “inquire” is usually reserved for the consulting of an oracle. Philistine soothsayers enjoyed a wide reputation in those times (1 Sam. 6:2; Isa. 2:6). Apparently, Baal was uniquely the cult “god of Ekron.”

“Ekron”: The northernmost of the major Philistine cities, located about 22 miles west of Jerusalem (see note on 1 Sam. 5:10).

Ahaziah had followed his father Ahab to the throne. This means that Ahaziah had fallen from the second floor, and injured himself severely. He was, possibly, so broken up, that he was near death. Ahab and Jezebel were worshippers of Baal. It is logical that their son would be, too. This

Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, was a false deity. Ahaziah had placed his faith in a nothing. This false god could not help him.

**2 Kings 1:3 "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 unto them, [Is it] not because [there is] not a God in Israel, [that] ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?"**

“The angel of the Lord”: Although some interpret this as a reference to the pre-incarnate Christ (e.g. Gen. 16:7-14; Judges 2:1-4; see note on Exodus 3:2). Probably here the reference is to an angelic messenger, like the one sent earlier by the Lord to Elijah (19:35; 1 Kings 19:17). The Lord’s messenger was in contrast to the messengers of the wicked king (verses 2, 3, 5).

“Elijah”: The record of this unusual prophet to Israel begins (in 1 Kings 17:1 see note; and extends to 2 Kings 2:11).

A “king” was often designated by his capital city (1 Kings 21:1; Jonah 3:6).

We see from this, that Elijah was still prophet for the LORD in the land. The LORD sent Elijah to stop him from inquiring of the false god. This is a message, which speaks truth. They had turned their backs on the One True God, to worship Baal. They were not seeking God, but Baal.

Verses 4-8: Incredibly, Ahaziah’s “messengers” did not recognize Elijah even though he was his father Ahab’s enemy (1 Kings 21:20). “Hairy man” may refer either to Elijah’s garment or to having a long beard or long hair, like someone who had taken a Nazirite vow (Num. 6:5). Ahaziah died from the injuries from his fall (in 850 B.C.; 1:2-17).

**2 Kings 1:4 "Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed."**

“Shalt surely die”: The Lord’s punishment on Ahaziah for consulting a false god instead of the true God was that he would fail to recover from his injuries. This was a merciful application of the Mosaic Law (Exodus 22:20), which demanded death (verses 16-17).

Elijah gave the messengers the message the LORD had sent him with, and departed. He did not want to be hunted down and killed. Ahaziah would die for his worship of the evil false gods. This was not what he wanted to hear, but was the truth.

**2 Kings 1:5 "And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?"**

To Ahaziah king of Israel, as they did as soon as Elijah was gone from them; concluding from his habit, his gravity, and the authority with which he spoke, that he was a prophet of the Lord, and especially from his knowledge of them, and of what they were sent about.

"He said unto them, why are ye now turned back?" for, by the time they had been gone, he knew they could never have been at Ekron and returned.

Ahaziah knew that the messengers had not been gone long enough to receive a message from the false god. He wants them to explain why, they are back so soon.

**2 Kings 1:6 "And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, [Is it] not because [there is] not a God in Israel, [that] thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die."**

"And say unto him": King Ahaziah. Then they repeated all that is said by the angel to Elijah, and he had delivered to them (2 Kings 1:3). And which was a sufficient reason for their turning back, since they got a full answer from a man of God, of what they were to inquire of at Ekron. Which was, whether the king would recover of this disease or not.

They gave the message to him the very way that Elijah had told them to. They did not tell him, however, that the message had been given them by Elijah.

**2 Kings 1:7 "And he said unto them, What manner of man [was he] which came up to meet you, and told you these words?"**

What appearance or figure did he make? What was his habit or clothing?

"Which came up to meet you, and told you these words?" That they had related to him.

**2 Kings 1:8 "And they answered him, [He was] a hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It [is] Elijah the Tishbite."**

"A hairy man": Literally "possessor of hair." This has been interpreted in two ways:

- (1) Elijah was physically hairy; or
- (2) Elijah wore a garment made of hair.

The language supports the second viewpoint that Elijah wore a coarse wool garment girded at the waist with a leather belt. (Zechariah 13:4), describes such a garment as belonging to prophets (Matthew 7:15). Further, the New Testament describes John the Baptist, who came in the spirit and likeness of Elijah, as clothed in camel's hair (Matthew 3:4).

"Elijah" probably wore a "hairy" garment with a "leather" belt at the waist (Zech. 13:4; Matt. 3:4).

It is highly unlikely that they had not known Elijah and his reputation. They were, probably, afraid to tell him who the prophet was. They were afraid for their own lives. Notice, how a true prophet is dressed.

Matthew 3:4 "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."

**2 Kings 1:9 "Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down."**

“Thou man of God”: A technical title for a man who spoke for God (1 Kings 12:22, Tim. 6:11 and notes on Deut. 33:1).

Ahaziah had probably heard how Elijah called down fire from heaven, and then killed 450 prophets of Baal. He would take no chances with him not coming. He sent 50 of his best men to bring him back. He was sitting on the top of a hill, when they found him. They call him "man of God".

Verses 10-16: “Man of God” is synonymous with prophet, used for Shemaiah (1 Kings 12:22), Elijah, (seven times; 1:9, 10-13; 1 Kings 17:18, 24), Elisha (more than two dozen times between 4:7 and 13:19), and two unnamed prophets (23:16-17; 1 Kings chapter 13; 20:28). Repeating the phrase shows that God’s reputation is at stake.

“Fire come down from heaven”: This was the proof that Elijah was a prophet of the Lord and entitled to respect. Additionally, it was an indication that Elijah was like Moses, who also was validated as the Lord’s prophet by fire from heaven (Num. 16:35).

**2 Kings 1:10 "And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I [be] a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."**

“Fire come down from heaven” was often a sign of divine judgment (1 Kings 18:36-38; Luke 9:54).

There is a reference to this very thing in the following Scripture in the New Testament.

Luke 9:54 "And when his disciples James and John saw [this], they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?"

Elijah had tremendous power to call down fire. He could have been known as the prophet of fire. He had no sooner said it, than the fifty were consumed of the fire.

**2 Kings 1:11 "Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly."**

The king, not being at all terrified with the awful judgment upon the former, sends another.

"And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, come down quickly": He flouts the prophet in the same manner as the former, and in the king's name commands him to come down, and that immediately. Which the king added to his orders, or he himself, signifying he would not be trifled with, if he did not come down directly, he would force him.

Verses 12-14: The "fire ... from heaven" (possibly lightning), demonstrated God as Israel's ruler, the One to whom Ahaziah should submit (Luke 9:54). The "third captain" had more respect for God and His prophet than Ahaziah did, so God would depose Ahaziah. A similar message was given earlier to the king's messengers (1:3-4).

**2 Kings 1:12 "And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I [be] a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty."**

The same as he had to the first captain, and made the same request of fire from heaven; which accordingly came down, and destroyed this captain and his fifty also.

The very same thing happened to the captain and his fifty of the second group that happened to the first group. Notice, the statement, "if I be a man of God". It is as if he is saying, you say I am, let's see if I am.

**2 Kings 1:13 "And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight."**

Which was most daring and insolent, and showed him to be dreadfully hardened, to persist in his messages after such rebuffs. And the third captain of fifty went up; instead of calling to the prophet at the bottom of the hill as the other did, he went up to the top of it.

And came and fell on his knees before Elijah": In reverence of him as a prophet of the Lord, and under a dread of the power he was possessed of, of calling for fire from heaven on him and his men, as the former instances showed.

"And besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight": He knows their lives lay at his mercy; he begs they might be spared, since it was not in contempt of him, and through ill will to him as the prophet of the Lord, but in obedience to the king's command, that they were come to him.

News had travelled back about what had happened to the first two groups. This third captain came, because his king sent him. He humbled himself before Elijah, recognizing Elijah and Elijah's God. He wanted to live, but he had to carry out the message of the king. He begs for his life, and the life of his men.

**2 Kings 1:14 "Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight."**

He owns the facts, and ascribes the death of them to the true cause, and appears to have an awful sense of the judgment of God on them, fearing the same would befall him and his.

"Therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight": By sparing it, what is precious and valuable being spared.

He makes Elijah aware that he knows of the other groups, who had come to get him.

**2 Kings 1:15 "And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king."**

"Angel of the Lord" (see note on 1:3).

This is a re-assurance from the LORD that He would be with Elijah. The appearance of the angel is bringing the message to Elijah, to have no fear of what might happen to him. Elijah obeyed the message sent to him by the angel of the LORD.

**2 Kings 1:16 "And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, [is it] not because [there is] no God in Israel to inquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die."**

For the third time, God's question includes the phrase "is it because there is no God in Israel?" (1:3, 6), which implies foolishness when trusting anything else. Yahweh controls life and well-being. When people do not pray or they turn to things like money, sex, or status for what only God can provide, they act like God does not exist.

"Baal-zebub" (see note on 1:2).

This implies, that he would have been saved, if he had sent to Elijah in the first place, rather than to the false god.

**2 Kings 1:17 "So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son."**

Two kings named "Jehoram" are in view here. Jehoram the son of Ahab and brother of Ahaziah reigned over the northern kingdom from 852 to 841 B.C. Jehoram "the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah", reigned as co-regent with his father from 853 to 848 B.C. and in his own right from 848 to 841 B.C.

"Second year": 852 B.C. this was the second year of Jehoram of Judah's co-regency with Jehoshaphat his father (see notes on 3:1; 8:17; 2 Chron. 21:4-20).

He was condemned for his worship of false gods, and died, just as the LORD had said through Elijah. Some believe Jehoram was the brother of Ahaziah. Jehoram and Joram are the same person. "Jehoram" means whom Jehovah exalts. We can see that Ahab had high hopes for this son, as well, by the name he gave him. Ahaziah did not even finish his second year of reign. Jehoram began, before the second year was up. This is a bit confusing speaking of Jehoram as the son of Jehoshaphat. We will not belabor that here. The main thing we must know, is that he was evil, and the last of the family of Ahab to reign.

**2 Kings 1:18 "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?"**

During his two years' reign, which yet were imperfect, and his acts must be but few.

“Are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? In which were written his father Ahab's also, and his predecessors' (see 1 Kings 22:39).

The historical book is mentioned again.

## **2 Kings Chapter 1 Questions**

Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of \_\_\_\_\_.

How long had Moab paid tribute to Israel?

What accident did Ahaziah have?

Where did he send messengers?

What did he send them for?

Who was the god of Ekron?

How did Elijah know to go and meet them on the road?

What did Elijah say to the messengers?

What message did Elijah tell them to give their king?

Why would Ahaziah have to die?

What did the king ask the messengers, when they arrived?

What did the messengers call Elijah?

What was Elijah wearing?

The minute the king heard what the man was wearing, he said it was \_\_\_\_\_.

Who did the king send to get Elijah?

What happened to them?

Who did he next send?

What happened to them?

What did the third captain do differently?

What was he really doing, when he knelt and said what he did?

Why did Elijah go with him to see the king?

What does verse 16 imply?

Who took his place as king, when he died?

What does "Jehoram" mean?