

c. He is Judicator. vv. 5-12.

The messengers of Ahaziah returned quicker than their trip to Ekron should have taken. They revealed what had happened. The enraged king immediately recognized that it was God's man Elijah who had intervened (v. 8). Elijah's position on the hill (v. 9) presupposes his mountain-top experience of communion with God. Impiously, Ahaziah became frantic and moved to demand Elijah's punishment. Twice his emissaries are judged by fire (vv. 10-12). This did not deter the idolatrous and sin ridden king, for the record indicated he again sent to Elijah demanding him to go to Samaria (v. 13). It must be noted that it is "fire from heaven" and "the fire of God" which brings the judgment upon Ahaziah's soldiers. God could not remain silent.

d. He is Benefactor. vv. 13-17.

The marvelous grace of an infinite God to those who humble themselves before Him is shown here (Prov. 3:34; James 4:4; 1 Peter 5:5). The third captain sent to command God's servant turns rather to the place of the penitent. Note: he fell down on his knees and besought Elijah. This latter verb really means to "implore" or "make supplication." Indeed, the verb "pray" means to "cry aloud." This man acknowledged that God was God and he wanted grace! God granted it to him (Luke 18:13).

Conclusion Ahaziah is an Old Testament example of a man who knew the truth, was socialized to pattern his life after sinfulness and false religious practices, defied the God of Israel, and finally died without hope of a right standing with God (v. 17). If ONLY he had turned from his wickedness unto the Lord! The call of Ezekiel is still relevant (Ezek. 33:11). Amen.

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES ON ELIJAH

"There is a God in Israel"

2 Kings 1:1-18

Introduction

1. The witness of Elijah to the God of Israel is absolutely thrilling. Following the Naboth incident (1 Kings 21), he disappears from the scene, but God brings him back with a fresh commission.
2. The present text shows that Elijah is still a fond tool in the hand of God. He stands before kings (Prov. 18:16). This time it is to declare the fearful judgment of death!
3. Judgment must fall because of sin and neglect of God. This is always the case. None in any age who ultimately refuse to bend the knees to the Lord will enjoy heaven; such will be doomed to an eternity without hope! But why a message of death here? Two big reasons:

1. THE CONDITION OF AHAZIAH.

Ahab had fallen under the hand of the Lord. The throne was filled by his son, Ahaziah (1 Kings 22:40, 51). But look at the Word and see the kind of man he is. Then you will have sure ground for the judgment given him.

a. Morally. 1 Kings 22:52, 53.

- 1) He did evil. The word "evil" is a common one in Hebrew. It connotes moral degeneration. The standard by which he is measured is "in the sight of the Lord." Evil gains its definition according to the standard of the Lord! All the modern humbug of "acceptance" is out of step with the Bible.
- 2) He walked in the way of sin. Three specific illustrations are given: Ahab, Jezebel, and Jeroboam. The final word of this verse (v. 52) is the Hebrew verb meaning "to miss the mark." It is clear that the models which Ahaziah had for his tender growing years were all evil (cf. 1 Kings 16:31). He took their counsel and followed their paths. No other passage of the

Bible more clearly points to the significant influence of parental and associate models as this one. What a lesson for modern homes!

3) He served Baal. The verb here means that Ahaziah took the place of servanthood with those of Baal. One would have thought the experience of Carmel would have affected his home about this. The addition of "worshipped" makes it quite certain that Ahaziah, like his father (1 Kings 16:31), had chosen Baal over the God of Israel. Indeed the Bible states this forthwith (v. 53).

4) He provoked God. This is the height of indignity for a king who should have known better. To "provoke" God is paramount to bringing God's wrath down in view of sin. The heinousness of the sin is noted by the fact that it is against the LORD (Jehovah) God (Elohim) Who in fact belongs to Israel!

b. Internationally. 2 Kings 1:1. It is clear from extra-Biblical evidence found in 1868 on the famous Moabite Stone which King Mesha of Moab set up about 840 B.C. that Omri, Ahab's father, gained control of northern Moab and occupied its cities and exacted a heavy tribute. Upon the death of Ahab, the Moabites rebelled and the account of this is given here (2 Kings 1:1). Ahaziah found himself in the midst of an international conflict. Pressures moved in upon him in his sinfulness!

c. Physically. 2 Kings 1:2. As if with a vengeance, the life which Ahaziah lived brought problems upon his body. Drunk with sin and threatened from an enemy force, the king fell through a balustrade in his palace balcony which was in Samaria and he was "sick." This verb has its root in a word which means "to rub smooth" or "to be polished." Apparently the fall was disastrous. Another judgment had stricken the sinful king.

d. Religiously. 2 Kings 1:2. In his sickness, Ahaziah did not turn to the Lord. One would have hoped this would be the response of his heart.

On the contrary, his whole being turned to the devotion which he had learned from his fathers and it focused on Baalzebub. This is the name under which Baal was worshipped at Ekron. The name actually means the "lord of the fly." Baal dominated the Canaanite pantheon. The Ugaritic epic literature has helped to show the depth of depravity which characterized the Canaanite religion. Some of the most demoralizing practices of the time were entailed in the religion, e.g. sacred prostitution, child sacrifice, and snake worship. This was the "god" to whom Ahaziah sent for help!

NOTE: Any careful reading of the text will show the honest heart that God had solid reason out of the life of Ahaziah for judgment. Sin is abhorrent to a holy God. False worship is a denial of the one true God (Isa. 45:22). Death was consistent with His righteous judgment of sin (Ezek. 18:4, 20; Rom. 6:23).

## 2. THE POSITION OF GOD.

a. He is Intervener. v. 3. This is an amazing revelation. God knew all the while what Ahaziah was doing. The perfect knowledge of God is patent (Psa. 139). Hence, He sends through His Angel a message to Elijah who in turn is to bring a word to Ahaziah. The "Angel" here is unquestionably a Christophany, a preincarnate appearance of Christ (see Scofield Bible at Judges 2:1). You can count upon it: God will intervene to save the sinner from his sin, but it is up to the sinner to respond!

b. He is Revealer.

1) Of idolatry. v. 3. It may have appeared to Ahaziah that his false worship was hidden from the vision of God. But the faithful prophet Elijah shows that God knows that Israel is not acknowledging the true God. God knows your heart right now.

2) Of destiny. v. 4. The phrase used here for "surely die" is identical with God's word to Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:17). The departure of Elijah marks the finality of the decree of God. This is the case also with eternity (John 3:16).