

2 Kings 1 (ESV)

¹After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel.

²Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness.” ³But 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?’ ⁴Now 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 went.

⁵The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, “Why have you returned?” ⁶And they said to him, “There came a man to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go back 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.’” ⁷He said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?” ⁸They answered him, “He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

⁹Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’” ¹⁰But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

¹¹Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty men with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, “O man of God, this is the king's order, ‘Come down quickly!’” ¹²But Elijah answered them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

¹³Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, “O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. ¹⁴Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight.” ¹⁵Then 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 ¹⁶and 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.’”

¹⁷So he died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son. ¹⁸Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

Discussion Questions

Have you ever wanted to know the future? If you could know the future but you could not change it, would you still want to know?

2 Kings 1

Bible Study Questions

1. Who was King Ahaziah? What were the two challenges that he faced when he became king? (See 1 Kings 22:40-51)

2. Who was Baal-zebub, and where was Ekron? What do Ahaziah's actions reveal about his emotional, mental and spiritual state? (See Luke 11:14-15)

3. Why do you suppose the first group of soldiers from Ahaziah stopped to listen to Elijah and then returned to the king?

4. Why would Ahaziah be familiar with Elijah? Why did he send for him in the manner that he did? Why did Elijah call down fire on the first two delegations of soldiers and not on the third?

5. How did Elijah's message to the king in person differ from his first message?

6. What does this story tell us about the responsibility and use of political authority? What does it teach us about spiritual authority? What does it teach us about the nature of God?

7. What surprises you about this text and why?

8. What impacted you the most about this study? What changes do you want to make?
