

2 Kings 1

Written by K B Napier
Monday, 05 September 2016 13:57

When a ruler dies it is the opportune moment for others to rebel. Fortunately, Moab was on the other side of the Dead Sea, so it was cumbersome for Moabites to attack Israel... though they did, frequently.

Similarly, attacks are common when Christian witness and authority is lost. We see this throughout the Western world today. Satan, though powerful, knows better than to attack when Christians are strong. Today, Christians are not strong, but weak and weak-spirited. They hide from trouble and refuse to speak out when evil men reign in any sphere of life. It is why homosexuality has gained power and Islam is following hard behind their victory. Both are wicked, but the latter will destroy the former if and when it gains absolute power in any Western country. It is how evil works – one evil will destroy another! If this happens it will be an example of God's judgment.

In this mayhem many Christians plead with God for His mercy, but none will be shown until they repent and obey. Thus far, Western Christians have ignored God and His demands. Now, when they see their safety threatened, they fall on their knees, not so much in obedience or worship but out of fear of mankind. This is not repentance and God will not come to their aid, until they show true repentance.

Until that time genuine believers must continue to pray to the Lord for His help, and live as they should. Most modern Christians see this requirement as a kind of imprisonment, and they resent it, but not openly. In itself this is a sign of their abandonment of the Lord. Those who are genuine have been so for much time and so their continued repentance is accepted by the Lord. Such a very small number of a 'remnant of a remnant' (re Isaiah) exists today, and that remnant is very feeble (Isaiah 16:14), hardly able to resist the evils around them – but they **MUST** stay strong and we **MUST** pray to the Lord for these few (Isaiah 37:4). The few of us who remain loyal to the Lord must always stay loyal, no matter what is the provocation and attacks and woes. Thus saith the Lord in His word.

□ Verse 1

1.

Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

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Moab's mother was the eldest daughter of Lot. The 'Moab' mentioned here refers to the land occupied by Moab's descendants who lived the other side of the river Jordan, east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites rebelled against Israel's new king, Ahaziah, son of Ahab, and against paying tribute. It was considered to be the right time, coming hard on the heels of Ahab's death.

Verse 2

1.

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, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.

With the wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel in his immediate family, Ahaziah, 12th king of Israel, continued in the same wickedness. It should be of no surprise, then, that he died after only two years as king of Israel. His death was the result of falling through a 'lattice' in a first floor room. That is, a net-design kind of fence separating the upper room from the ground floor, as seen in many Arabic houses today.

The king lay injured and ill after his fall and, persisting in his wickedness, he commanded servants to go to the pagan priests of Baal-zebub (same as 'Beelzebub'), to enquire whether or not he would recover. Baal-zebub ('lord of the fly') was a Philistine god worshipped at the city of Ekron in the lowlands of Judah about 30 miles west of Jerusalem, and about 15 miles north of the city of Gath.

Today, the name of this pagan god is used for the devil. Roman Catholics cite him as 'one of the seven princes of hell'. This, of course, is nonsense, for a false god is not real, so cannot exist in hell with Satan, a real person. Baalzebub is an extended name-version of the pagan god Ba-al ('Lord' in Ugaritic literature). Ancient Hebrews appear to have used the term as a pun for 'lord of the manor', to offend enemies of the Hebrews who worshipped him. The same false god is found in later Hellenic sources, where he is named *Zeus Apomyios*, or *Myiagros* ('he who chases flies').

Why did Ahaziah go to this false god instead of to another false god? The Philistine worship was of Ba'al-zebub as lord of the flies. The flies were pests and fed on excrement. Thus, Ba'al supposedly got rid of flies so as to effect healing in a person. The question from Ahaziah may,

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then, be put this way: 'Will Ba'al get rid of the flies that are causing my sickness?' In the Philistine and later hellenistic culture, if Ba'al approved of the sacrifice, he would cause the flies to die immediately.

What we have, then, is an Israelite king, bound to the God Who gave kings their authority, and yet rejecting Him, going to a pagan false god for help. Not detailed, but inherent in going to priests of Ba'al, were sacrifices made by the king's servants at the temple of Ba'al before he supposedly gave an answer. In itself this was a terrible sin, and so he suffered death as a result. If Ahaziah had instead repented and approached God, it is probable that his injury would have been healed.

Today, many foolish Christians seek the help of non-Christian 'healers', including those who claim to have their powers from God, or, commit to using useless remedies such as homeopathy and 'Therapeutic Hands'. This is the same error, and can bring about many bad effects on the one making the enquiry. Not only does the Christian thereby open himself up to the evil inroads of demons, but he offends God by going to a demonic source of healing. It is fact that some who have long-standing ailments are tempted to visit such false healers, or to use fake remedies, who/which can, at times, produce pseudo-healings by way of demonic influence on the body and mind. This is always spiritually damaging or even fatal.

Verses 3-4

1.

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 enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?

2.

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.

The leader of any group or country must be very careful to obey God. If he does not he influences the nation to do evil, and does evil himself. This is why a pastor or preacher, for example, is always held liable to a far greater degree than those who listen to, and follow, his words. Because he can encourage others to sin, his own sin is counted to be worse than the

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same sin in those who follow him.

An angel was sent by God to speak to Elijah. He was to go to the route taken by the king's servants, warning them that Ahaziah was king of Israel and therefore a king set up by God – he had no business going to a false deity worshipped by enemies. Elijah told the servants to return to the king and tell him that for his sin he would not recover, but would die. Elijah then left and returned home.

People in our modern age are turning to false gods and forces in large numbers, even though they claim they are in an 'age of science'. They have no fear of those they go to, even if Satan is shown to be the head of the movement or practitioner. For this reason the world is currently deteriorating quickly, as Satan moves amongst us. This leads to suicides, great wickedness (homosexuality is a current example) and death (such as through Islam), diseases (such as AIDS) and natural phenomena (such as volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, intense weather, etc.).

Nations that forget or scoff-at God have much strife and are surrounded by external and internal enemies, including murderers, thieves, violent men, failing economies, and so on. Christians who follow the same ideas will know much trouble in their lives and may even die because of their duplicity and godlessness. It is also why they should never vote for evil leaders.

Verses 5-8

1.

And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back?

2.

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 enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

3.

And he said unto them, What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?

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4.

And they answered him, He was an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, It is Elijah the Tishbite.

The servants actually listened and went back to Samaria. This was because they recognised Elijah as a prophet by his dress and manner. The king demanded to know why they returned so soon. The servants repeated what Elijah told them. The king wanted to know who the prophet was, and they described Elijah as one with a lot of hair, wearing a leather band around his waist. Straight away the king knew who it was – Elijah! His heart must have feared, for he knew Elijah spoke from God and his prophecies came true.

Do people know you by your beliefs, words and actions? They should do! You should represent the Lord by everything in and from you, and be recognisable by the constancy of your mind and heart. And those who are evil should fear you, because you speak from God through His word.

Verses 9-12

1.

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 an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.

2.

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.

3.

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.

4.

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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.

Stupidly, the king sent a captain (commander) with fifty men, with an order to bring Elijah to the city of Samaria. The men duly left the city and later found Elijah sitting on top of a hill. The captain called out to him, demanding that he come to the bottom. (Note: 'Fifty', *chamishshiyim*, can mean the cardinal number – 50, or 50 times another number. As no other numbers are given, or indications otherwise, e.g. 'fifty companies', the number must refer to the cardinal number, 50).

Elijah then gave an astonishing reply – if he was indeed a man of God, then let God devour the captain and all his men with fire from Heaven! This is exactly what happened, and the men were instantly burnt to ashes where they stood. The word for 'fire' in this text is *'esh*, which carries the meanings of fire, divine fire, or the anger of God. We may legitimately interpret the word as real fire sent by an angry Lord. As he had done with Ahab, God had given Ahaziah many opportunities to repent, but he did not. Now, he called upon a pagan god to heal him.

No Christian should ever assume that God has unlimited compassion! He does not – and Ahaziah and his men found this out to their cost. Why the destruction of the captain and his men? Simply, because they obeyed an ungodly king who set a very bad example to Israel, and, because the captain was arrogant in demanding Elijah should obey him. No true believer is under the command of ungodly men! Elijah proved this by calling on God to kill his enemy (an example of imprecatory prayer). In Syria and elsewhere wicked men are murdering fellow believers in Islam. This is a judgment by God upon an idolatrous people, who we are commanded not to help.

The king sent out a second captain with another fifty men. The captain impudently demanded that Elijah come down the hill. The captain and his fifty soldiers died by fire, as did the previous band of men.

Verses 13-15

1.

And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up,

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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.

2.

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.

3.

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.

The king thus sent a third captain and fifty soldiers to get Elijah. But, this captain was more astute and went on his knees to Elijah, asking him to spare his life and the lives of the soldiers. Note how he called the soldiers Elijah's servants and not servants of the king. This is how it ought to be!

(Note; The number seven denotes perfection and completeness. The number three denotes the same thing but of lesser import. The third captain therefore represented God's perfection and authority).

It is obvious that the third captain had heard of the destruction of the other two groups, so he pleaded for Elijah's mercy. What this means is that the captain was not only aware of the facts, but he was also willing to obey Elijah and God. It could be argued that he only did so because he was afraid... but is not fear of God the beginning of wisdom?

After the captain pleaded, an angel spoke directly to Elijah, telling him that it was safe to go down the hill to the soldiers, and to meet Ahaziah. This is how Christians today should fear God and follow His word. This word can come in a strong indisputable way to Christians at times of crisis or dire need, whether through words spoken externally or within the mind. I have experienced both. Sadly, many reformed believers deny such an experience (based on poor exegesis of scripture, or through ignorance)... but the one who has the experience cannot by any means deny it has occurred! And so Elijah believed the word given by the angel and went.

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Another sadness is that most modern believers are so spiritually unaware, they do not even think God will answer their prayers or that He comes to them with a strong arm of help. Yet, they utter superficial (and thereby useless) prayers (which are *not* prayers)!

Verses 16-18

1.

And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron, is it not because there is no God in Israel to enquire of his word? therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

2.

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.

3.

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?

When before Ahaziah, Elijah was bold to the king, who was laying on his bed of sickness. Any Christian who really knows God can speak with similar boldness which, in itself, is a sign of inner strength given by the Lord. It is a strength that gives a nerve of steel, and a will bound by an assurance that cannot be shaken.

Elijah told Ahaziah that because he had sent an enquiry to a pagan false god, it showed that the king had previously declared that the one true God of Israel was no longer attendant. For this reason, Ahaziah would not get out of his bed but would die. We are not told how soon after this prophecy that the king died, but it could not have been long, so that the prophecy would be directly linked to what the prophet had said. This is an important proof. Note also that king Saul died (committed suicide) as a direct result of his godless rule, after being warned by God.

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Ahaziah's 'son' (brother) then took the throne of Israel. (More information on Ahaziah's rule is found in Chronicles). Like Jezebel, Jehoram's wife was wicked and led the king to allow pagan worship of Ba'al in Judah. As Ahaziah (of Israel) had no son, Jehoram the son of Ahab was next in line. When Ahaziah (of Judah) died his mother, Athaliah, daughter of wicked king Omri, ruled for seven years, during which time she murdered almost all the royal line.

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