

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

As I mentioned Friday morning, we are going to start a new study today.

We are going to begin to go through 2 Kings.

So please turn your bibles to 2 Kings – it is right after 1 Kings

Now, originally 1 Kings and 2 Kings was one book - and because books were written back then in scrolls and because of the length and difficulty of carrying around a large scroll, it was divided into two scrolls or two books.

The division between 1 Kings and 2 Kings is simply an attempt at an even division of the book of Kings – they simply looked at the scrolls and said – “This is the halfway mark”

This is 1 Kings and this is 2 Kings – there is no narrative reason to begin 2 Kings here.

The book of Kings begins with the reign and death of King Solomon and then provides details on how the nation split into the Northern Kingdom – referred to as Israel and the Southern Kingdom – Judah.

So what the book of Kings Chronicles is the different Kings that ruled both in both Kingdoms – and it goes back in forth.

Now, the Kings of the Northern Kingdom – were all wicked, some of the Kings in the Southern Kingdom – Judah, were good – but they also had their share of kings who did evil in the sight of the Lord and eventually God judges both Kingdoms.

As He uses the Assyrians to judge the North and Babylon to judge the South – yet through all of the disobedience, we see God’s grace by sending prophets to warn the Kings and the people that they needed to repent.

Let’s pray...

[2Ki 1:1-18 NKJV] 1 Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.

As I mentioned before, the Northern Kingdom or Israel, all of their kings were wicked. But the bible tells us multiple times that Ahab, “did more evil in the eyes of the LORD than any of those before him”

And one of the events that the bible provides for us that led to his wickedness was that he married a pagan woman named Jezebel, who hated God’s people and embraced the worship of the false gods, Baal and Asherah.

Ahaziah, who we are going to meet in the next verse, is their son – he is the king here in 2 Kings 1.

Even though the Northern Kingdom was in spiritual decay under the leadership of King Ahab – they were still prospering as a kingdom.

But after the death of Ahab, it began to weaken – and some of the kingdoms that David had conquered – they see the weakness and they begin to break away.

And we will get details of this when we get to chapter three.

2 Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury."

King Ahaziah – fell through the lattice – we don't get much details on how this happened –

Back then they didn't have glass windows – so they used to have cloth on their windows to allow fresh air and light in and those were supported by a lattice.

So Ahaziah most likely fell from a window and unto the ground and suffered injuries where he thought he was going to die.

So he sends messengers to inquire his fate from one of the false gods –

And the name of the false god was Baal – Zebub (Baal – Zebul)

Baal-Zebul might have been the given name which means "Exalted Lord" but the Israelites used a slur to change it to Zebub and changed the meaning to "Lord of the flies"

Now, the problem with this church is Ahaziah had the prophet Elijah in his own kingdom.

Elijah had proven himself to Ahaziah's father over and over again – he was a man of God.

Why would Ahaziah then turn to an idol to find out his fate – instead of the One True God???

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 to them, '[Is it] because [there is] no God in Israel [that] you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?'

Church, it is sad that the world will turn everywhere but to God for needs, direction and council.

We have an All Knowing God at our disposal – but when it comes to making any decision that is going to impact our lives – we turn elsewhere.

There was a book that became popular in 2006 – even among Christian circles.

It was called "The Secret"

And the entire book claimed that the secret to life was the "Law of Attraction"

That if we really wanted something – all we had to do is imagine it and it would become reality.

If you really wanted that new car – all you have to do is imagine having it.

If you really wanted to lose weight – right the number of your goal weight on the fridge and eventually – you will hit your weight goal.

And the reason that it infiltrated the church was because the author stated that this Law of Attraction was something that Jesus taught His disciples - therefore, the Secret was compatible with Christianity.

And they even took scripture out of context -

[Mar 11:24 NKJV] 24 “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them], and you will have [them].

This verse does not teach us that we can manipulate God’s will – it speaks of personal communion and interaction with the transcendent God of the universe—the loving, holy, and just Creator.

It speaks of us bringing all of our needs to Him and trusting that He will supply our needs according to His will.

Ahaziah had no communion with God -

That is why the angel of the Lord tells Elijah to tell have the messengers to tell Ahaziah – “Does God not exist – is that why you are seeking idols?”

4 "Now 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 departed. 5 And when the messengers returned to him, he said to them, "Why have you come back?"

The second half of the message that they were going to bring to the king was God revealing to the king that his injuries were fatal – that he was going to die.

It's interesting that Ahaziah is willing to have his messengers go forty miles for an answer, when all he needs to do is repent and call on God.

Church, sometimes we forget that the answer is much closer than we think.

6 So they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return 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.' " ' " 7 Then he said to them, "What kind of man [was it] who came up to meet you and told you these words?" 8 So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." And he said, "It [is] Elijah the Tishbite."

Growing up as the crown-prince, Ahaziah had seen Elijah before when he came to challenge Ahab about his evil deeds.

It had been some time since he'd seen the prophet, but the description made it clear who he was.

Elijah had been the proverbial "thorn in the side" of his father & this pronouncement of royal doom was all Ahaziah thought he needed to enact revenge on him.

So Ahaziah was going to get back at Elijah for what he did to his father and for the message that was brought back to him.

By killing Elijah – he would then stop the curse against him.

The problem that Ahaziah had was that Elijah simply reported the message that God gave him – the judgment didn't come from Elijah, it came from God.

9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!' " 10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I [am] a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

One of the things that is missing here in the text is the disdain by both the king and the captain toward Elijah as well as toward Elijah's God.

What are 50 men going to do against an All Powerful God?

So the captain calls out Elijah and tells him, Man of God come down –

And what does Elijah do?

I want you to notice that Elijah did not say, “You bet I am a man of God.”

Instead, he answered **If** I am a man of God.

Essentially Elijah said, “You say I am a man of God even though you are not acting like it.

Because if you really thought I was a man of God – you wouldn’t be treating me this way by ordering me to come down.

Maybe I am and maybe I am not.

“Let’s let God decide by fire whether I am a man of God or not”

Turn with me to 1 Kings 18

Because Elijah has been through this before.

[1Ki 18:20-24 NKJV] 20 So Ahab (Ahaziah’s wicked father) sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD [is] God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets [are] four hundred and fifty men.

(remember Ahaziah only sent 50 to go get Elijah – here Elijah had 450 against him) **23**

"Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay [it] on the wood, but put no fire [under it]; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay [it] on the wood, but put no fire [under it]. 24 "Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God." So all the people answered and said, "It is well spoken."

So Israel was going through a period of idolatry and Elijah comes in and tells the people – you have to make up your minds – either worship the one true God or worship Baal.

And because the people wouldn't make up their minds – he holds a contest to show them who the One True God is.

So there was the battle of the God at Mt Carmel – and you could read it on your time but what happens is that Baal's side goes first and nothing is happening and after a few hours, the prophets begin to cut themselves and Elijah begins to mock them –

Why isn't Baal answering the challenge?

Maybe he is too busy

Maybe he is in the toilet

And then Elijah goes and he has them soak the altar with water and he calls upon God and the entire altar is consumed immediately and immediately the people fell on their faces and said, The LORD, He is God – The LORD, He is God

Then Elijah ordered them to arrest the prophets of Baal and they executed the 450 prophets of Baal right there.

Elijah showed that YAHWEH was God at Mt Carmel

And he shows the first group of 50 that he is indeed a man of god.

11 Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men. And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!" **12 So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I [am] a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men."** And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

The captain of the second group is even more arrogant than the first one – he tells Elijah to come down quickly

But once again, Elijah calls down fire from heaven and they are consumed.

Turn with me to Luke 9

[Luk 9:51-56 NKJV] 51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent

messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But they did not receive Him, because His face was [set] for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples James and John saw [this], they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, **just as Elijah did?**" 55 But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. 56 "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save [them]." And they went to another village.

So the question becomes –

Why was it ok for Elijah to call down fire from heaven and while James and John were rebuked by Jesus for trying to do the same???

Because Elijah was doing it out self-defense – Ahaziah wanted him killed, Jezebel had previously given an order to have him killed as well.

James and John were doing it to get even with the people that did not receive them.

That is why Jesus questions their manner of spirit –

Not everyone deserves to have fire called down on them.

There is wisdom in knowing when it is right.

Church, we ought to be more concerned about people's salvation than trying to destroy them.

But unfortunately, many times we have same manner of spirit that James and John had instead of the one that Jesus had.

By the way – this Wednesday night – as we study chapter 11 in Revelation, we are going to see the two witnesses.

And they were given the power of fire to proceed from their mouth and devour their enemies – one of the witnesses is believed to be Elijah.

13 Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be precious in your sight. 14 "Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight." 15 And 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.

This captain comes with a totally different attitude than the previous 2.

He shows reverence & honor towards Elijah, acknowledging him as an agent of the true & living God.

Note that he even said – we are your servants

Because of this, he's treated differently.

But notice that it was the angel of the Lord that gave Elijah the direction – Elijah was scared of the third one.

And I believe the implication of all of this is that Elijah dealt with the first two under the direction of the Spirit or the angel of the Lord– he didn't call down fire because he could or because he wanted to show off– he was always under the direction of God.

One of my favorite comforting bible verse regarding fear is -

[Psa 34:7 NKJV] 7 The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them.

And that is exactly what we see here with Elijah.

16 Then he 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.' "

So Elijah comes down and goes with the captain of the third group to see the king and delivers the same exact message that the first messengers brought the king.

One of the things we always have to remember is that God has a message for all of us – and He is not going to change it – just because we refuse to hear it the first time –

So if God has been trying to you something and we ignore Him or we cover our ears like a little kid – that message is not going to be changed.

17 So [Ahaziah] died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Because he had no son, Jehoram became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

God's word was, as always true as Elijah's prophesy came to pass.

If God says it – it will come to pass.

This is going to sound a little complicated -

We have 2 kings, both named Jehoram – one in Israel, the other in Judah.

The Jehoram that replaced Ahaziah in Israel was Ahaziah's brother, not his son.

Ahab was father to both Ahaziah & Jehoram.

Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah also had a son named Jehoram who inherited

the throne.

And if you think that is complicated – in scripture both of them are sometimes identified by Joram –

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?

Ahazaiah's reign as king was deemed a failure

He was weak, faithless, and miserable; he achieved nothing but ruin and failure.

He let Moab rebel.

He hurt himself in a clumsy accident.

He foolishly attempted to use military force against Elijah.

He also sought help in the wrong place – at the altar of a pagan god.

But his worse failure was that he refused to repent when Elijah told him the news that he was going to die.

Ahaziah should have humbled himself like the captain of the third arresting party.

That captain understood realized where life comes from – unfortunately, the king did not.

Church, sin has a way of hardening our hearts.

But as long as we are living, our opportunities to repent are not yet exhausted.

But it is up to us to use the opportunities that God gives us!

Amen

Let's pray...

