

2 Kings Ch 1

Though we have a break here in the books, the historical account doesn't break but simply continues where 1st Kings left off. And though there was a brief bleep regarding the southern kingdom of Judah there at the end of 1st Kings, by and large as of late the subject matter has been dealing with the northern kingdom of Israel, and that's where 2nd Kings picks back up. King Ahab has died, and his son Ahaziah has ascended to the throne.

And if I were to title this chapter, which I didn't, but I would have to summarize this chapter with the phrase, "The Fatality Of Forsaking God." Now the bible is very clear regarding the fact that God will never leave nor forsake us, but to disregard Him, and walk away from Him is to invite upon ourselves our own unfortunate fate. The overall picture that this chapter presents is that of a fallen man who is fatally injured who refuses to cry out to God and thus he dies. And really that's a picture of all of mankind, the bible says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit; The poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes."* Rom 3:10-18 Which is kind of the exhaustive way of saying that through one man, that is Adam, sin came to all. All of mankind is in that fatally fallen position due to sin in their life. And there's only one way that man can be healed, that is made whole that he might live and not die in his sin and that's through the person of Jesus Christ. And God in His word pleads with mankind to turn from their wicked ways and cry out to Him, *"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die,"* The bible teaches us that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Yet how many people lay around in their fatally fallen position, looking to this, crying out to that, hoping that the other thing will fix them, heal their hurts and make them whole yet they refuse to seek the Lord? Therefore they die in their sin and subject themselves to the fate of their own destructive decision. forsaking the Lord is fatal for your soul, Jesus said, *"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"* Mark 8:36-37 Or to understand that another way, as far as God is concerned there's no even exchange for your soul found in all the power, or possessions or anything else this world has to offer. Because our lives are but a vapor, but eternity lasts forever, and the decisions we make in this blink of time called life determines our eternal destiny. We're appointed once to die, and then the judgment.

God is the God of as many chances as we need on this side of eternity, but once we breathe our last, our destiny is determined and there's no changing it, no chance from that point forward. And the moral of this chapter is that we're all but one step away from death, I doubt that Ahaziah planned to have a fatal fall that day. And we don't plan to get hit by a car tonight, or have a massive heart attack by morning, but things happen, we're not all guaranteed that we'll live to ripe old age and die a nice peaceful death in our sleep. That's why it is so critical that we decide *now* to follow Jesus Christ. Because to forsake the Lord is fatal. (We read in vs 1)

Vs1

The Moabites had been the longtime enemy of Israel, and during the days of the Judges they had begun to gain the upper hand on the Moabites and then David brought them into total subjection. You recall that Moab was born due to the relationship that took place when Lot's daughters got him drunk after that whole "Sodom and Gomorrah" incident and they took advantage of Lot in that way. And it was the Moabites who hired Balaam to curse the children of Israel in the wilderness wanderings.

And of course he couldn't curse them since the Lord had purposed to bless them and so what he did was tell Balak how to cause the children of Israel to bring a curse on themselves. And He said, "Go ahead and have your women go down there and entice their men that they might lie with them and introduce to them your gods and that will provoke the Lord to jealousy and they'll bring a curse upon themselves." And that's exactly what happened, well to make a long story short that really caused God to set Himself against the people of Moab and through David they were brought under total subjection to the nation of Israel. But now that Ahab has died, the Moabites see an opportunity to revolt and take advantage of the weakened state of leadership in the nation of Israel. And it was common for cultures in that day to make their break or attack in some way when the present leader of a particular people died. But in this is a principle that we do well to glean because I believe it's still common today for *our* enemy, (Satan) to employ this same tactic. And I'm not by any means seeking to suggest that Satan won't attack a ministry or a particular group that has strong leadership or a strong leader because he will. But he really seeks to zero in for the kill in those areas where either A) There is no leader, and no structure, just scattered sheep meandering around, or B) There is weak leadership. That's why he seems to especially set his sights on leaders because if you strike the shepherd the sheep will scatter and then it's a matter of simply picking them off one by one. But in the absence of a leader, or where there's weak leadership, the enemy will capitalize upon that. Paul told the Eph elders, "*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.*" Acts 20:29-31 Paul was not ignorant of his enemy's devices and even though he'd spent 3 yrs warning them night and day with a passion and a singleness of drive, he knew that when he was gone the enemy would set his sights upon them and seek to make havoc of the flock in the absence of his leadership. He didn't say, this might happen, or you might be prepared in case it does happen, he said, "I *know* this."

So pray for the leaders here, #1 That God would cause us to be strong and sensitive to His leading, being on guard not only for ourselves but for the protective purposes of the flock. But then for all of us together that we wouldn't stray from the personal protection that we find in the flock, but rather we would stay under the provision of protection that He's provided for us in this, the corporate body of believers. Because we start straying from the flock, becoming stragglers and drifting out towards the peripheral edges, that's where you get picked off. Remember that's what we learned way back in Deut 25 when the children of Israel were coming out of Egypt, Amalek took advantage of the weak and weary those who were falling behind from the fold, he came up on the rear and picked off the easy prey who had strayed towards the outer edges. Moab attacked in the absence of leadership, in that transition period when things were still unstable, and we read in verse 2.

Vs2

You see here's the fatal fall, I doubt that when Ahaziah woke up that morning he thought, "Think I'll fall through my lattice today." And this is what I was saying, things happen. And they happen to the *wicked* and the *righteous* alike, not every tragedy that enters into our lives is necessarily judgment from God. Remember there in Luke 13, Jesus was teaching and inner acting with the people, and we read, "*There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem?"*" Luke 13:1-4.

And the answer is "No" sometimes things happen. That's why it's so important to make sure that you're prepared to meet your Maker *today*. Where should've Ahaziah been? He should've been out there on the battlefield, waging war with Moab, and had he been there this never would've happened. But he was probably a bit skittish because his dad had just been killed in a battle, and so "I know where the safest place for me to be is, that's right here at home. You go to war and you get killed." But his dad didn't die on the battlefield because he went to war, he died on the battlefield because rebelled against the Lord and refused to heed the Word of God. It makes no difference where I find myself on this planet, as long as I know I'm in God's will, it's the safest place for me to be. And if I get taken home at that point then I trust it was God's timing for me to come home, and if I get on a plane and it goes down, if I was supposed to get on the plane and didn't than it would probably crash on me. So as believers we understand that it's not so much where I'm at geographically as it is, "Am I walking in the will of God for me personally?" Because that's the safest place for me to be.

But even still there's grace available, the bible teaches us "...*where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,*" Rom 5:20 Yeah, Ahaziah blew it, shouldn't have been where he was, but he could've called *on the Lord*, found *grace* to help in his time of need, sought *after Him* to make him whole.

But instead he called on “Mrs. Cleo” to read the tarot cards for him, sought after the psychics of his day there in Philistine territory at Ekron who were the priests of Baal-Zebub. And this is the same things that happens today, people are empty, they’re hurting, want some sort of certainty regarding their future so who do they call on? “The Lord?” Not generally, the psychic hot line, Mrs. Cleo, John Edwards (Not the politician) and this is what Ahaziah is doing.

Vs3-4

Elijah enters the scene once again for pretty much his final mission. The angel of the Lord appears to him, and this “angel” notice isn’t “an” angel of the Lord it’s “The” angel of the Lord meaning what we’re seeing here is a Theophany. This is an OT appearance of Jesus Christ prior to His incarnation, remember the word “Angel” simply means “messenger.” And even as we’ve seen the Angel of the Lord appearing to Abraham, Hagar, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and Samson’s parents, even so we’re seeing Him appear to Elijah here with a message to give to Ahaziah. And the general message is this, “Why are you seeking the god of a foreign land who in reality is no god at all, when the 1 true living God is right here just waiting for you to call upon *Him* that *He* might deliver you in your time of trouble?” We’re to call upon the Lord in our times of trouble, not look to other resources of the world. Now when it comes to medical conditions am I for seeking medical help? You bet, but even still, call upon the Lord 1st, seek the Lord 1st, God wants us to turn *to* Him, to depend *upon* Him. The Lord our God is a jealous God who wants our hearts *exclusively*, He doesn’t want to share your love, and your devotion with *anyone*, or *anything* else. And in reality Ahaziah is insulting the Lord as though He doesn’t even exist and there is no God of Israel so he’s turning to pagan idols of foreign lands. And the implication here is that had he called on the Lord, God would’ve restored him, but because he called upon a god who wasn’t *real*, he wasn’t going to get any *real* help but he would die from his fall. The bible says, “*Those who regard worthless idols Forsake their own Mercy.*” Jonah 2:8 He’s just reaping the reward of his own ways, and again “*As righteousness leads to life, So he who pursues evil pursues it to his own death.*” But even still, in God’s telling Ahaziah the fact that he would die He was showing mercy to him. How many people get the opportunity to know the fact they’re going to die in a certain period of time? This was a chance for him to repent and get right with God, yet he refused.

Vs5-8

You can just sense his frustration, “No!” “He was harassing my dad all his life, and now here he is hammering on me!” Now when he’s described as a “hairy” man, that doesn’t necessarily mean that he had hair all over him like Esau, needed to wax his back or anything like that. More than likely it’s a reference to the type of clothing he wore, the sackcloth or camels hair sort of a thing, the garb of a prophet that spoke of repentance. And this was Elijah’s calling to herald the message of repentance to the nation of Israel. And this is another similarity between Elijah and J.B. J.B. was noted for wearing camel’s hair, having a big leather belt around his waist, and his dad was told that John would go forth in the *spirit and the power of Elijah*. And His message to the nation of Israel was that of repentance, calling the people back to that personal/1st love relationship with God.

How are you doing tonight with regards to that? Perhaps you've begun to stray towards the outer edges of the flock, or you've begun to associate your righteousness with your works, what you do for God, or perhaps don't do because of God. The message to you is "Repent" turn from those things back to that simple 1st love relationship you once had with the Lord. When it wasn't about what *you do* but it was all about what *He did* and just basking in the finished work of the cross, growing to know Him by His word and prayer. Not out of legal obligation, but out of love and opportunity. Don't be deceived; having begun in the Spirit, you're not going to be made perfect in the flesh, just repent. Ahaziah hears this description and rather than sensing God's mercy presenting itself to him, he's all "It's Elijah the Tishbite." And it infuriates him, so he presumes to have him arrested.

Vs 9

Easy there big fella! Seeing Elijah up there on top of the hill probably ought to remind you of another time Elijah was challenged on top of another hill, MT Carmel that is. And that didn't fare to well for his opponents; there was fire from heaven, and death for those who set themselves against him. And now this officer comes to him with 50 other men, dispatched from the king, the king's personal authority behind him. And he says, "Man of God, the king has said 'Come down!'" And I would imagine there was a bit of sarcasm and cynicism in his voice regarding Elijah as a man of God, sort of belittling him and all. And if not, he was confessing the reality of his righteousness and placing himself admittedly in the wrong. Because the bible is clear that we're to obey our governing authorities, and be submitting and subservient to them. However there is one exception to that rule and that is when the law of the land forces us into direct opposition with the word of God. Remember when Peter and John were on trial in Acts chapter 4, being reprimanded for preaching in the name of Jesus and all, the religious leaders were threatening them, and we read, "...Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'" Acts 4:19-20. And in chapter 5 Peter told them straight up, "*We ought to obey God rather than men.*" Acts 5:29. And if this guy really believed that Elijah was a man of God, then he was admittedly in the wrong by seeking to detain him for doing what God had called him to do. But the crux of this encounter here revolves around authority. Who's in control? Ahaziah, or the Lord, God has said "This" now the king is seeking to detain the man of God, seeking to maintain control, force Elijah into his will rather than staying true to God's will for him.

Vs 10-12

Now let's not get too upset with Elijah here for frying these guys, because in reality Elijah can do nothing in and of Himself, this is the Lord's judgment. And in reality it's the same judgment that befalls anyone who arrogantly defies the Lord.

The 1st guy boldly stepped up, demanded Elijah to come down. Which is what the world will always seek to do to the godly, bring them "down." Elijah said, "If I be a man of God let fire come down and consume you and your 50" quite a bold move of faith.

But that's exactly what happened, the man of God didn't come down, but the *fire* of God did. The next guy comes up and ups the ante, says, "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down *quickly!*'" "If I be a man of God let fire come down and consume you and your 50" fire comes down and we have "seared soldiers." What's happening? The pride of Ahaziah is getting people hurt, getting people killed, you've heard the scripture many times, "*Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.*" Prov 16:18 Pride and arrogance is getting these guys killed, and this is what sin does, it destroys peoples lives.

Vs13-15

"*Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, And before honor is humility.*" Prov 18:12 These other men were puffed up with pride, got up in "God's face" so to speak and in so doing invited swift destruction upon their lives. Now here comes this 3rd company, this man looks around, observes the situation, and he humbles himself, cries out for mercy, and asks if he and his men please might live. And God looks upon this mans humility and says, "Ok, Elijah you can go." What's happened, rather than this guy presuming to be the authority over the situation he consented to the fact that God was in control and he was humbling himself before the Lord and begging for mercy. "Hey, I'm just doing my job, I know you don't have to come with me but please let our lives be precious in your sight." and God says, "That's what I'm talking about." God will respond to humility but He hates pride. And as to where Ahaziah and the other 2 captains were acting as though there *was no God* in Israel, this man readily consented and humbled himself.

And take note of the fact that Elijah was a man just like you and me, he was a bit freaked out personally, God had to reassure him so that he wouldn't be afraid. What's the implication, that Elijah was afraid! This guy wanted his head on a platter and was sending entire little military squads to apprehend him. But when God assured him, we also note his ready obedience. He was willing to trust the Lord even when it when against the grain of his human tendencies. He got up and went to the king.

Vs16-18

And just like that his story ends, he found himself in an incredible book, the bible. But the most important book, the book of life, his name isn't in. Learn the lesson, see the situation, perceive the point, he should've fallen on his face before the Lord, but instead he forsook the Lord to his own fatality. Just like his dad, rather than respond *to* God's Word, he rebelled *against* God's Word. And to despise God's Word is to invite destruction into our lives. Be careful to take heed, and be obedient to the Word of God, because obedience brings a blessing, but disobedience brings destruction. How shall a young man *cleanse* his way? By taking heed according to Your Word. God help us to heed His Word.

Prayer Points: Strong leadership, sensitive to the Spirit, that the sheep would be safeguarded against the wiles of the wicked one. That we would call on the Lord in times of trouble and be careful to follow after God, rather than suffer the fatality of forsaking the Lord.