

- The manner of this 2nd captain towards the prophet was even more insolent than that of the 1st captain – *come down quickly*..... The 2nd captain repeated the same error as the first captain, but with even more guilt because he knew what happened to the first captain and his men. Elijah answered him just as he had answered the first captain, and with the same disastrous results. Elijah left the matter in God’s hands, and God again responded in dramatic judgment. This has become one of Elijah’s trademarks, calling fire down from heaven.
- Did Ahaziah repent? No. Again, he sent another captain and fifty men to apprehend Elijah. This 3rd captain, however, approached his mission in a completely different manner. He came to Elijah humbly, recognizing that he really was a man of God. He fell on his knees before Elijah pleading for his life and for the lives of his men. This humble and reverential manner showed utmost respect for Elijah and his God, and turned away the fierce anger of God. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (Prov 3:34). Humility is the proper attitude in approaching the Lord. God always honours such an attitude as this. With the froward, God shows Himself froward; with the merciful, merciful (Ps 18:25-26). The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10).
- God assured Elijah that he had nothing to fear from Ahaziah. Elijah followed the 3rd captain back to Samaria and delivered his message in person to Ahaziah. Elijah waited to know God’s will and he obeyed the command of his God. He did not even regard his personal safety or his life; he went without the least hesitation to the king. Elijah was the ambassador of the King eternal, and his honour and life were in the hands of his God (Ps 34:7).

(ii) *God’s Judgment of Ahaziah, 1:16-18*

- Before the king, Elijah delivered the same message he gave to the men Ahaziah sent to inquire of Baal-Zebub. This was Ahaziah’s final opportunity to repent but he did not (Prov 28:13). Because Ahaziah had not acknowledged God of Israel, and desired to inquire of a false god, therefore the God of Israel had passed sentence that Ahaziah would die in his bed. Ahaziah did not recover from his fall. He died, as Elijah had announced, as punishment for his failure to submit to God’s authority. Elijah is again proven to be a man of God because his prophecy was fulfilled as spoken.
- Ahaziah’s unspectacular reign lasted only 2 years. Ahaziah was weak, and faithless; he achieved nothing but ruin and failure because he sought help in a wrong place, from a pagan god (Ps 37:23-24). Because Ahaziah had no son, Jehoram, his brother (3:1), became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

2 Kings 1 – The Lord’s Judgment on Ahaziah

- 1 Kings 22 concludes abruptly with the reign of King Ahaziah of Israel. 2 Kings 1 continues with the narrative on Ahaziah. Ahaziah’s rule was marked by more of the same policies instituted under his idolatrous mother Jezebel and his godless father Ahab (1 Kings 22:51-53).

1. Ahaziah’s Rejection of God (1:1-8)

(i) Ahaziah’s Fall & Folly in Seeking Baal-Zebub, 1:1-2

- Very soon after Ahab’s death and Israel’s defeat by the Syrians, Moab rebelled against Israel (cf 3:5). The Moabites had been in subjection to Israel since the days of David (2 Sam 8:2). This rebellion of Moab in the days of Ahaziah is significant of the decline of Israel’s power and the judgment of God. Ahaziah was a Baal worshipper like his father and mother, and God judged him.
- When Ahaziah did not repent, God dealt with Ahaziah in a different way. Back at the main palace in Samaria, Ahaziah somehow fell through a lattice from his balcony. The fall was serious and the king was severely injured. Like so many people do, Ahaziah desired to know whether he would recover from the fall.
- Having been thoroughly immersed in the worship of Baal because of his idolatrous parents, Ahaziah dispatched his servants to Ekron, a Philistine city, to consult with the priests of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, a localised version of Baal. Ahaziah was not only seeking to learn what his fate would be, but he was also hopeful that Baal-Zebub might somehow influence the outcome. As king of Israel, Ahaziah did not seek the Lord, the God of Israel; instead, he inquired of the Philistine god, Baal-Zebub.
 - Baal-Zebub means, literally, “the Lord of the flies.” Flies in the East constitute one of the most terrible of plagues (Ps 105:31; Ex 8:24). This god was credited with having healing powers.
 - Most commentators believe that the actual name of the Philistine god was “Baal-Zebul”, which means “exalted Lord”. It is possible that Baal-Zebub here is a deliberate Hebrew corruption, a mockery or pun on the name Baal-Zebul. By Jesus’ day, Baal-Zebub (or Beel-Zebub) became a synonym for Satan himself (Mt 12:22-28).
- To inquire of Baal-Zebub was practically to deny God (v3). Ahaziah would rather trust in the false god Baal-Zebub than to seek the God of Israel. In this time of serious sickness, as he was facing death, Ahaziah showed his heart’s ultimate allegiance. He was a worshipper of the pagan god Baal-Zebub. When we are at our wit’s end, we will reveal in who we are trusting (cf Ps 46:1).

(ii) *God's Indictment of Ahaziah, 1:3-8*

- When Ahaziah inquired of Baal-Zebub, God was not about to ignore such blatant disregard of Himself or His law. It was a direct insult to God to ask the help of Baal-Zebub. It was as if there was no God in Israel. God sent His angel who commanded the prophet Elijah to intercept the contingent the king had sent forth to inquire of Baal-Zebub and to announce the coming death of Ahaziah. Elijah was to remonstrate with Ahaziah's contingent about their effrontery in consulting pagan gods.
- Because of his unbelief & insult of God, the angel of the Lord added the solemn pronouncement that Ahaziah would not leave his bed, but die (v4). This inquiry of a strange god was a violation of the 1st Commandment of the Decalogue (Ex 20:3) and an utter rejection of God, and deserved the judgment of death (cf King Saul in 1 Sam 28; 1 Chron 10:13-14). At the same time God was merciful to Ahaziah. God told the king that his death was imminent so that he had time to repent and prepare to meet God. Lessons:
 - Be careful where you go for answers (Deut 18:9-14; Isa 8:19-20). A Christian must never seek the occult for answers.
 - Go to God for your answers! You will find God's answers in His Word - 2 Tim 3:16-17; Ps 119:105. There is a place for asking advice of other people (Prov 11:14). But we must not go to other people just to avoid going to God.
- It was evident to Ahaziah that his messengers had not made the 40 mile trip to Ekron and back. The messengers told their king of the man who met them and of his message from God. Ahaziah had rejected the God of Israel. To inquire about the future from another "god" was to deny any faith in the one true God. Because of this, he would never leave his bed, but that he would die. Ahaziah's first response was not to repent, but to question his messengers so he might discern the identity of the bearer of these bad tidings. Their description of this hairy man with a leather belt around his waist left no doubt in Ahaziah's mind as to the identity of this prophet—it was Elijah the Tishbite! Identifying Elijah by his clothes also connects him to the ministry of John the Baptist, who was dressed in hairy skins from animals (Matt 3:4; Jn 1:19-21).

2. God's Judgment of Ahaziah (1:9-18)

(i) *Ahaziah's Defiance of God, 1:9-15*

- Ahaziah did not repent, as his father Ahab had done (1 Kings 21:27-29), but instead he hardened his heart. Even though he was dying, he determined to defy and oppose God. A captain with fifty men was dispatched by Ahaziah to arrest Elijah. What Ahaziah intended to do with Elijah is not clear, but Elijah's arrest would certainly not avert the death of the king, who ought to have been concerned about his relationship to God now that death threatened him.

- Elijah was found sitting on the top of a hill and the captain arrogantly and contemptuously ordered him, "*Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down*". But the poor captain learnt that in dealing with God or His servant, it is utmost folly to adopt a haughty attitude. The manner and action of the captain and his 50 men seem to have been as defiant and insulting as the order from the king itself, and hence the reason for the severe judgment to follow.
- If Elijah really were a man of God, then the captain and his men were on an ungodly mission. Since Elijah could not bring down fire from heaven without divine approval, he asked God to evaluate these men and their rightness of their actions against God's prophet. Either they did not hold him to be a prophet, or they gloried in putting the power of their king above that of God. In any case, the insult was less against Elijah than Elijah's God.
- The captain commanded Elijah to "come down"! The man of God didn't come down, but the fire of God did and consumed the captain and his men. This was not to avenge a personal insult of Elijah, but an insult upon God in the person of His prophet; and the punishment was inflicted, not by the prophet, but by the direct hand of God. God brought judgment on these men who acted as if God was not a real God and as if Elijah was not truly His servant. Was God's reaction harsh?
 - Ahaziah had, as it were, challenged God to a trial of strength by sending a band of 51 men to arrest His servant. Ahaziah showed complete contempt for God's prophet and God, whom he represented. Elijah's desire did not proceed from a carnal and malicious spirit; but from a pure zeal to vindicate God's name and honour.
 - God alone could send the fire; and as He is just and good, He would not have destroyed these men had there not been a sufficient cause to justify the act. No invocation by Elijah could have induced God to have performed an act that was wrong in itself. The severe judgment was the work of Elijah's God, not Elijah's (Heb 12:29).
 - Christ did not condemn this act of Elijah - Luke 9:51-56. The spirit of Elijah was needed in those evil and idolatrous days. But Jesus said these times have passed away (Luke 9:56). Elijah was God's minister for executing His divine judgment. The two disciples of Jesus in Luke's gospel were but the servants of their own anger. We are to imitate Christ.
- Elijah was trusting that the Lord would validate his words. He had complete confidence that he was a man of God and that the Lord would follow through on His word. This fearful judgment fell immediately upon the captain and his whole company. Such an act of God ought to have been warning enough to Ahaziah. It was really another opportunity for Ahaziah to repent and humble himself before God. Again, Ahaziah did not repent. Instead, he sent another captain and fifty men to apprehend Elijah.