SECOND KINGS

Chapter 1

***The Lord’s Judgment on Ahaziah***

**After Ahab’s death, Moab rebelled against Israel. 2 Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, “Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury.” 3 But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ 4 Therefore this is what the Lord says: ‘You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!’ ” So Elijah went. 5 When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, “Why have you come back?” 6 “A man came to meet us,” they replied. “And he said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, “This is what the Lord says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending men to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!” ’ ” 7 The king asked them, “What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?” 8 They replied, “He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist.” The king said, “That was Elijah the Tishbite.” 9 Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, “Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’ ” 10 Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men. 11 At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, “Man of God, this is what the king says, ‘Come down at once!’ ” 12 “If I am a man of God,” Elijah replied, “may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!” Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men. 13 So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. “Man of God,” he begged, “please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! 14 See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!” 15 The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, “Go down with him; do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king. 16 He told the king, “This is what the Lord says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!” 17 So he died, according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken. Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. 18 As for all the other events of Ahaziah’s reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?**

**1:1** *After Ahab’s death.* See 1Ki 22:37. (CSB)

*Moab rebelled.* Moab had been brought into subjection by David (see 2Sa 8:2), but when the northern and Transjordan tribes rebelled and made Jeroboam their king, political domination of Moab probably also shifted to the northern kingdom. An inscription of Mesha king of Moab (see chart on “Ancient Texts Relating to the OT”) indicates that during the reign of Omri’s “son” (probably a reference to his grandson Joram, not to Ahab) the Moabites were able to free the area of Medeba from Israelite control (see map No. 5 at the end of the Study Bible). (CSB)

**1:2** *Baal-Zebub.* See note on Jdg 10:6. (CSB)

*Ekron.* The northernmost of the five major Philistine cities (see Jos 13:3; 1Sa 5:10 and notes). (CSB)

*if I will recover.* Ahaziah appears to have feared that his injury would be fatal. He turned to the pagan deity for a revelatory oracle, not for healing. (CSB)

**1:3** *angel of the Lord*. See 1Ki 19:7; see also note on Ge 16:7. The Lord usually spoke directly to the consciousness of the prophet (1Ki 17:2, 8; 18:1; 19:9; 21:17). Perhaps the means of revelation was changed in this instance to heighten the contrast between the messengers of Ahaziah (vv. 2–3, 5) and the angel (which means “messenger”) of the Lord. (CSB)

*Elijah the Tishbite.* See note on 1Ki 17:1. (CSB)

*king of Samaria.* See note on 1Ki 21:1. (CSB)

**1:4** *You will certainly die!* Ahaziah will receive the oracle he sought, but it will come from the Lord through Elijah, not from Baal-Zebub. (CSB)

**1:5** *Why have you come back?* Ahaziah realized the messengers could not have traveled so quickly to Ekron and back. (CSB)

**1:8** *garment of hair.* See 1Ki 19:19. Elijah’s cloak was probably of sheepskin or camel’s hair, tied with a simple leather thong (cf. Mt 3:4). His dress contrasted sharply with the fine linen clothing (see Jer 13:1) of his wealthy contemporaries and constituted a protest against the materialistic attitudes of the king and the upper classes (cf. Mt 11:7–8; Lk 7:24–25). (CSB)

*That was Elijah the Tishbite.* Ahaziah was familiar with Elijah’s appearance because of the prophet’s many encounters with Ahab, his father. (CSB)

**1:9** *he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men.* The pagan people of that time thought that the magical power of curses could be nullified either by forcing the pronouncer of the curse to retract his statement or by killing him so that his curse would go with him to the netherworld. It appears that Ahaziah shared this view and desired to take Elijah prisoner in order to counteract the pronouncement of his death. (CSB)

*Man of God, the king says, ‘Come down!’* Ahaziah attempted to place the prophet under the authority of the king. This constituted a violation of the covenant nature of Israelite kingship, in which the king’s actions were always to be placed under the scrutiny and authority of the word of the Lord spoken by his prophets (see notes on 1Sa 10:25; 12:23). (CSB)

**1:10** *fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.* See 1Ki 18:38. Another link between the ministries of Elijah and Moses (see Lev 10:2; Nu 16:35). At stake in this incident was the question of who was sovereign in Israel. Would Ahaziah recognize that the king in Israel was only a vice-regent under the authority and kingship of the Lord, or would he exercise despotic power, like pagan kings (see notes on 1Sa 12:14–15)? At Mount Carmel the Lord had revealed himself and authenticated his prophet by fire from heaven (see 1Ki 18:38–39). Now this previous revelation is confirmed to Ahaziah. Jesus’ rebuke of his disciples for suggesting that fire be called down from heaven to destroy the Samaritans (Lk 9:51–56) is not to be understood as a disapproval of Elijah’s action, but as an indication that the disciples failed to discern the difference between the issue at stake in Elijah’s day and the unbelief of the Samaritans in their own day. (CSB)

**1:11** *the king sent to Elijah another captain.* Ahaziah refused to submit to the word of the Lord in spite of the dramatic revelation of God’s power. (CSB)

**1:13** *fell on his knees before Elijah.* The third captain, recognizing that Elijah was the bearer of the word of the Lord, feared for his life and bowed before him with a humble request. (CSB)

**1:15** *The angel of the Lord said to Elijah.* See note on v. 3. (CSB)

**1:17** *died, according to the word of the Lord*. In the end Ahaziah was punished for turning away from the God of Israel to a pagan deity, and the word of the Lord was shown to be both reliable and beyond the power of the king to annul. (CSB)

*Joram.* Ahaziah’s younger brother (see 3:1; 1Ki 22:51). (CSB)

*second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat.* Jehoram’s reign overlapped that of his father Jehoshaphat from 853 to 848 b.c. (see note on 8:16). The reference here is to the second year of that co-regency. The 18th year of Jehoshaphat (3:1) is therefore the same as the second year of Jehoram’s co-regency (852). (CSB)

**1:18** *annals of the kings of Israel.* See note on 1Ki 14:19. (CSB)