

2 KINGS 1; WHO YOU GONNA CALL?

“Who you gone call?” is most likely a familiar phrase to you, if you grew up with the movie, “Ghostbusters.” In that movie, there was a demonic presence beginning to manifest in New York. Malevolent supernatural activity was on the increase, so the city turned to a group of paranormal investigators to end it. Their (the Ghostbusters) tv ads asked the question, “Who you gone call?” That was also the title of a hit song from the movie’s soundtrack.

But today, as we move into 2 Kings, chapter one, the question, “Who you gone call,” is to be asked again. Ahab has died in battle and his son, Ahaziah, has taken the throne. All of this takes place as a political upheaval is taking place in the region. The small “empires” of Edom and Moab are moving towards rebellion after having been under the thumb of Israel for some time. Edom doesn’t have a true king, and Moab wants her independence. These things are mentioned at the end of 1 Kings and the first verse of 2 Kings. They come into play later. They are set-up for future political and military campaigns.

To the south, Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, has made many reforms to restore the true worship of YHWH. Judah, at this time, is in a far better place than Israel, though the two sister countries are now at peace. However, the wickedness of the Israelite kings is still growing, as we read in 1 Kings chapter 22: 51 – 53, that Ahaziah walked in the way of his father, who made Israel to sin. He served Baal and provoked the LORD of Israel in every way his father, Ahab, had done. As we open 2 Kings, a personal tragedy has befallen Ahaziah, King of Israel and he has need to inquire of God. But who is he going to call upon? That is the question for him, as well as us.

2Kings 1:1 After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel.

2Kings 1:2 Now Ahaziah fell through the lattice in his upper chamber in Samaria, and lay sick; so he sent messengers, telling them, “Go, inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover from this sickness.”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?’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 went.

- When Ahab died, Moab took advantage of a new, young king. They are tired of paying tribute and want their independence. As I said earlier, this will come into play later in the story.
- Ahaziah fell through the lattice work on the roof of his palace. (Explain what the lattice work was and what its function was.)
- Ahaziah wants to inquire of “Baal – Zebub” a corruption of the name, “Baal-Zebul,” meaning “Baal the exalted or Baal, Master of the heights.” Baal-Zebub means “Lord of the flies.” This is an Israelite pejorative, making fun of the name. This is not the same Baal that was defeated at Mt. Carmel, but a more localized, lesser pagan deity. He is the “patron god” of Ekron, a Philistine city, several miles West of Jerusalem.
- Ahaziah wants a word, an oracle from the prophets of this god, to know whether he would live or die from his injuries. This was common. He wasn’t asking for a healing, but a prophecy, of sorts.
- In response to this request, God sends Elijah, His prophet, to intercept Ahaziah’s messengers. God sent His messenger to intercept the messengers of Ahaziah.
- Elijah asks them the key question and theme for this chapter – ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, god of Ekron?’
- The meaning of this question is straightforward. Why go to another source for your answer, if YHWH is the God of Israel? God is asking, “Why didn’t you come to me for your answer?” And if he had, the answer to his question would most likely have been much different. So, who are you gonna call?
- Elijah answers Ahaziah’s question. He tells Ahaziah’s messengers that because Ahaziah has consulted Baal-Zebub, he will die of his injuries. It didn’t have to end this way.

2Kings 1:5 The messengers returned to the king, and he said to them, “Why have you returned?”⁶ And they said to him, “There came a man to meet us, and said to us, ‘Go back 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 He said to them, “What kind of man was he who came to meet you and told you these things?”⁸ They answered him, “He wore a garment of hair, with a belt of leather about his waist.” And he said, “It is Elijah the Tishbite.”

- The messengers returned much sooner than expected and therefore Ahaziah wants to know why. His messengers tell him of their meeting with “a man.”

- Ahaziah wants to know what the man looked like. When given a description, he knows it is Elijah.
- His manner of dress should remind us of John the Baptist.

Matt. 3:4 Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

- This manner of dress helped the people of Jesus' day to know that John was a prophet. They would have hyperlinked to this scene.
- **Also read Zechariah 13.**
- When Ahaziah heard this description, he knew exactly who his men had seen. What was his reaction to the words of the prophet? We shall see.

2Kings 1:9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty men with his fifty. He went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, ¹“O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’” ¹⁰ But Elijah answered the captain of fifty, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

2Kings 1:11 Again the king sent to him another captain of fifty men with his fifty. And he answered and said to him, “O man of God, this is the king's order, ‘Come down quickly!’” ¹² But Elijah answered them, “If I am a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty.” Then the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

2Kings 1:13 Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his

knees before Elijah and entreated him, “O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. ¹⁴ Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight.” ¹⁵ Then 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 ¹⁶ and 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.’”

- Ahaziah isn't happy with the prophet's words, so he sends one of his military leaders, with 50 men to bring Elijah back to the palace.
- Remember how we are to look at the story when a prophet enters the picture. He is speaking for God. And we can see once again, that when a prophet enters the picture, God is intervening in the narrative. Now think about how that effects the story, in light of how the prophet is approached.
- The captain demands that the prophet come down from the hilltop.
- He addresses Elijah as a, “Man of God.” They recognize his status as a prophet.
- Now look at how Elijah answers the captain. “If I am a man of God, then let fire from heaven come down and devour you and your fifty.” The fire came down.
- Does this sound familiar? If so, then what are we to remember – to hyperlink back to? We are to remember the battle at Mt. Carmel.
- In that battle, two entities were vying for the worship of Israel. And that is what is happening here. God is vying against Baal-Zebub, for the heart of the king. God is giving the king a chance here. He can repent at any time. But we can see the heart of the king in his response to Elijah's words. Instead of hearkening to the word of God and repenting, he is attempting to capture the prophet. He wants him imprisoned, or worse.
- He believes he can stifle the word of God in his own power, as king. Think about that.
- Also, Elijah didn't call the fire down from Heaven, he merely said that if he was who they thought he was, then let the fire fall. And it did, confirming who Elijah was and that God was behind what had been said. This should have been enough to back Ahaziah down, but it wasn't. Once again, we see the heart of the king.
- This whole thing is repeated in verses 11 and 12. Then Ahaziah sends a third military envoy. But this time it goes much differently. Look at how this captain approached the prophet.

2Kings 1:13 Again the king sent the captain of a third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up and came and fell on his knees before Elijah and entreated him, “O man of God, please let my life, and the life of these fifty servants of yours, be precious in your sight. ¹⁴ Behold, fire came down from heaven and consumed the two former captains of fifty men with their fifties, but now let my life be precious in your sight.” ¹⁵ Then 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 ¹⁶ and 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.’”

- This captain is no fool. He doesn’t want to be roasted as his predecessors were. He is probably standing amidst the charred remains of the others who went before him. This captain approached the prophet with humility. He was much wiser than Ahaziah or the two previous captains. This man recognizes that Elijah truly speaks for God.
- It is at this time that an angel tells Elijah not to fear, but to go with the captain.
- With God’s assurance of his safety, Elijah goes with them to see the king, where he repeats what God has told him.

2Kings 1:17 *So he died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Jehoram became king in his place in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, because Ahaziah had no son. ¹⁸ Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?*

- Ahaziah eventually died from his injuries, just as God had said. And a new king had to be placed over Israel.
- God is in control of all things, including kings and governments.

APPLICATION:

What are we to take from this?

1. There is a God in Israel, and therefore we have no need to look any other for our answers. The same God, YHWH, who was and is the God of Israel, is our God also. We have no need to look elsewhere. Who else is there? God numbers the very hairs on our heads. He has the answers we desire.
2. Are there two entities vying for our worship and allegiance? The answer is yes. There is God and there is the flesh, which Satan seeks to churn up in our hearts.

1John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the **flesh** and ~~the desires of the eyes and pride of life~~—is not from the Father but is from the world.

3. Ahaziah was acting in the flesh. He actually thought he could thwart the word of God by capturing the prophet. He thought he could change God's word or silence it by the power of the flesh. But we see that he couldn't.
4. There is only one way to change something God has declared, and that is through prayer and repentance. Those are the things that move the heart of God. And Ahaziah had that opportunity, but he didn't take advantage of it. He continued in the flesh.
5. Look at how Ahaziah approached the prophet, and by doing so, we can see how he approached God. The wrong way.
6. How do we approach God?