

The Books of 1 and 2 Kings

Lesson 14: Elijah Taken Up; Elisha Begins -- 2 Kings 1:1-2:25

Ahab is dead. His son Ahaziah has the throne of Israel, and within a very short time he falls through a lattice in his upper chamber at Samaria and is badly injured. So now we see what kind of king Ahaziah is. Whom does he send to? Whose counsel does he seek when his life is on the line? He sends messengers to Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, a Philistine city. Not to the LORD, the God of Israel. Not to His prophet. To a pagan deity whose very name means 'Lord of the flies.' The apple has not fallen far from the tree. Ahab and Jezebel raised a son who does not even think to look to the God of his own people in a moment of personal crisis.

Into that moment of royal apostasy steps the same prophet who has shaped the entire era: Elijah the Tishbite, appearing suddenly on a road to intercept Ahaziah's messengers with a word from God that is as crisp and certain as everything he has ever said: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going 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.' And then, as if to underscore just how seriously God takes His word, the fire falls twice from heaven when the king sends soldiers to arrest the prophet.

But the drama of these two chapters is not only about judgment on a godless king. It is about a transition of the most extraordinary kind. The greatest prophet in Israel's history is about to leave the earth, not by dying, but by being caught up into heaven in a whirlwind with a chariot of fire. And a younger man, Elisha the son of Shaphat, who has followed him faithfully for years, is about to receive the mantle and the double portion. The parting of the Jordan, the whirlwind, the divided waters, the healing of Jericho's spring, the judgment at Bethel: these are not random wonders. They are the authentication of a new servant and the beginning of a new chapter in God's word going forth into Israel.

These two chapters press us to ask ourselves: Whose counsel do we seek first when our world falls apart? And do we really believe that God's word, fully revealed now in the completed Scripture, is the living and sufficient guide we need? The contrast between Ahaziah consulting a dead idol and Elijah walking with the living God is not just ancient history. It is a mirror held up to every generation, including ours.

Group Discussion: When a crisis hits, what is the first place you instinctively turn for guidance or reassurance? What does that instinct reveal about where your real trust actually rests?

Personal Reflection: What would it mean for you to seek God first, not as a last resort, in the specific situation that feels most uncertain in your life right now? What one step would that actually require?

Read 2 Kings 1:1-2:25

Study Questions

1. Read 2 Kings 1:1–8. Ahaziah is injured and immediately sends messengers to Baal-zebub of Ekron. What does this act of consultation reveal about Ahaziah's understanding of the LORD, and what does God's response through Elijah tell us about how seriously God takes the question of where we turn in a crisis?
2. Ahaziah's first instinct in a life-threatening situation is to seek a pagan oracle rather than the God of Israel. Be honest with yourself: in moments of real fear or uncertainty, where do you find yourself turning first, and what does that habit reveal about where your deepest trust actually lies?
3. Read 2 Kings 1:9–16. Two companies of fifty soldiers are sent to arrest Elijah, and fire falls from heaven on each of them. The third captain comes in humility and his life is spared. What does this sequence of events teach us about the authority of God's prophet and the seriousness with which God guards His spoken word?
4. The third captain falls on his knees before Elijah and pleads for his life with a recognition that Elijah is 'a man of God' whose word carries divine authority. In what areas of your life are you genuinely on your knees before God's authority, and where are you still, more subtly, sending soldiers to make terms on your own?
5. Read 2 Kings 2:1–12. Elijah and Elisha travel together to Bethel, Jericho, and the Jordan. At each stop Elijah gives Elisha the opportunity to stay behind, and at each stop Elisha refuses with the words, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' What does Elisha's persistent loyalty to his mentor reveal about the kind of character required to receive spiritual authority?

6. Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2:9). This was the inheritance request of the firstborn son and was the language of covenant succession, not personal ambition. How does the way Elisha framed this request reflect a right spirit before God? Where in your own life might you be seeking influence, gifting, or responsibility in a way that is more about self-advancement than about faithful service?
7. Read 2 Kings 2:9-18. Elijah is taken up in a whirlwind with a chariot and horses of fire, and Elisha picks up the fallen mantle. He strikes the Jordan with it and the water parts just as it had for Elijah. What was God demonstrating through this exact repetition of the miracle, and what did the company of prophets at Jericho conclude from what they witnessed?
8. Elisha's grief at losing Elijah is raw and real: 'My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' (2:12). He had given years of his life to a relationship with this mentor. Who in your life has played the role of a spiritual father or mother, and are you investing that same kind of relational depth in someone who might need you to play that role for them?
9. The miracles of Elijah and Elisha in 2 Kings 1 and 2 serve a specific purpose: they authenticate Elisha as the confirmed successor and spokesman of God at a time when Israel was saturated with Baal worship and false religion. Read Hebrews 2:3-4, which says that the salvation proclaimed by Jesus 'was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles.' How does this pattern of miraculous authentication work in biblical history, and why do we not look for the same kind of ongoing miraculous confirmation today, now that the completed New Testament stands as the fully confirmed word of God?
10. Looking back across 2 Kings 1 and 2, from Ahaziah consulting a pagan idol to Elisha striking the Jordan with the mantle, what is the one truth or image from these chapters that has

most moved you or unsettled you? Name one concrete, specific way you intend, by God's grace, to live differently because of it.

Digging Deeper

Reflect on these passages: Deuteronomy 18:9–14, God's prohibition of consulting diviners and sorcerers, which Ahaziah violated; Malachi 4:5–6, the prophecy that Elijah would come before the great day of the LORD, fulfilled in John the Baptist (Matthew 11:14); Hebrews 11:5, Enoch as the other figure taken without dying, pointing to bodily translation; Hebrews 2:3–4, miracles as divine attestation of the apostolic message in the first century; 2 Timothy 3:16–17, the completed Scripture as fully sufficient for every good work

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